

INSPECTION REPORT

RIBBLE DRIVE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitefield, Manchester

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105300

Headteacher: Mrs S Erswell

Lead inspector: Julie Moore

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th March 2005

Inspection number: 267559

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:	248
School address:	Ribble Drive Whitefield Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M45 8TD
Telephone number:	(0161) 766 6625
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr A Matthews
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ribble Drive Community Primary School is an average-sized school that is situated in Whitefield, a suburb of Bury. The school serves the nearby housing estate and most pupils live locally. Statistical information from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister indicates that the area is socially and economically deprived. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak fluent English. An-above average percentage of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is also above average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. When the children join the nursery, their skills and understanding are well below average. A high proportion of pupils leave the school, or join it, during any one school year. The school has received a number of national awards in recent years. These include *Investors in People*, *Basic Skills Quality Mark*, *School Achievement award* and *Healthy Schools award*.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Lead inspector	Science Geography Physical education English as an additional language
9411	Rosemary Last	Lay inspector	
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Art and design History Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
18346	Rod Bristow	Team Inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs
22182	Fiona Robinson	Team inspector	English Music Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ribble Drive Community Primary is a **good** school that is moving forward confidently. The leadership of the senior team and governors is good, as is pupils' achievement. Standards have improved significantly over the last two years, especially by the end of Year 6. Every class has an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of pupils move into and out of the school each year. Both these factors inhibit standards. Teaching is good overall. The school has received a number of national awards in recent years. These include *Investors in People*, *Basic Skills Quality Mark*, *School Achievement Award* and *Healthy School Award*. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership is very good and teamwork is strong.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in English and science are above average.
- Standards are below average in mathematics throughout the school and in writing and science in Year 2.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 has many strengths and pupils' achievement is consistently good or better.
- There are weaknesses in marking and many pupils do not know what they need to do to achieve their targets.
- Pupils with special educational needs have good support, which helps them to achieve well.
- The provision for outdoor activities in the Foundation Stage¹ is not good enough and there are limited resources.
- Attendance levels are unsatisfactory and too many pupils are late for school.
- Learning is enhanced by the good links between different subjects.

The school was last inspected almost six years ago. There were many issues to be tackled and there has been a **good** improvement overall. Standards are significantly higher than they were in Years 3 to 6 but standards have dropped in Year 2; this is a weakness that the school has identified and is tackling appropriately.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	E	A	C
mathematics	C	E	C	E
science	B	D	A	C

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall but there are variations. Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage. The seven-year-olds achieved well-below- average standards in the 2004 national tests in reading, writing and

¹ The Foundation Stage is the nursery and Reception classes.

mathematics but overall standards are improving this year. The 11-year-olds achieved well-above-average standards in their tests in English and science and average standards in mathematics. This year, standards are above average in English and science, average in religious education and information and communication technology, and below average in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Standards in Years 2 and 6 fluctuate year by year for the reasons already discussed, and improved teaching in Years 3 to 6 is having a positive impact on standards and achievement in these year groups. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve soundly. They join the nursery with skills and understanding that are well below average when compared with children of a similar age. Progress is satisfactory, but there is much ground to make up and many of them will not achieve their goals by the end of the Reception Year.

Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. School is enjoyed and pupils try hard to do their best. Behaviour is good. Attendance levels are below average and too many parents find it difficult to get their children to school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**, with many very good features in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are interesting and challenging, which is why pupils are keen to learn. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in every aspect of school life. In the main subjects, teachers make good use of all the information from pupils' assessments and this helps them to pitch tasks at the right levels. There are weaknesses in marking as pupils are not given clear pointers about what needs to be done to improve their work or to achieve their targets. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but there are gaps in the provision and resources for the children's outdoor activities. The overall curriculum in the school is good, and there are good links between the subjects. Accommodation is good. Subjects are well resourced and there are no gaps. Pupils are well cared for and there are good links with other schools and the local community. Links with parents are sound.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Teamwork is strong and everyone works together successfully to improve standards and boost achievement. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met. The school's management is good. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, importantly, what needs to be done to maintain improvements. The school is moving forward positively and new appointments have been carefully selected to strengthen the school team. The school's future is bright.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are well pleased with the education that the school provides for their children. Pupils enjoy learning and they are happy at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards and achievement in writing and science by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils are clear what they have to do to achieve their targets.
- Work closely with parents who find it difficult to get their children to attend school regularly, as well as those who fail to get their children to school on time.
- Extend the outdoor provision and improve the resources in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **good**. Standards have improved significantly, especially by the end of Year 6. Standards in Year 2 are average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, coupled with a high percentage of pupils moving into and out of the school during the school year, depresses standards overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are above average in English and science.
- Standards are below average in mathematics across the school and in writing and science by the end of Year 2.
- Achievement is good for pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs.

Commentary

1. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were well below average in the national tests at the end of Year 6. In the most recent tests, in 2004, standards were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. This is a very good improvement overall. When compared to similar schools, standards were average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. Currently, standards are above average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is good and attainment is improving faster than average over time. The school's targets were exceeded last year. This year's targets are challenging and achievable.
2. In Year 6, many pupils read fluently with a very good understanding of how authors develop their characters and the plot. Written work, both fiction and non-fiction, is of a good standard. In science, pupils are secure in their understanding of how to plan and set up an investigation that is fair. In mathematics the higher-attaining pupils estimate and measure angles confidently but the others are not at this level. Pupils are slow and they lack confidence when working out number facts mentally or when they are solving mathematical problems. Despite this, pupils' understanding is secure and their standards are improving across the board.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (24.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (24.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In 2004, standards in Year 2 dipped to well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was due to issues linked to teaching and learning that were outside the school's control, and a number of temporary teachers taught the class. Standards in Year 2 are starting to improve now that the situation has stabilised and the class has one teacher. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are broadly average. Standards in mathematics, science and writing are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory for the higher, average and lower attainers, but attainment has slowed over time for the reasons outlined above.
- Pupils read with understanding and they use a range of strategies to identify unknown words. Their vocabulary is limited and pupils work slowly to produce their final piece of work but the content of their work is sound. In mathematics, a number of average and lower-attaining pupils struggle with the four rules of number; others have a secure understanding. In science, pupils have too little time to participate in science investigations, but when they do they work independently and many of them record their findings accurately. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards and achievement are starting to improve now that the school has strengthened its provision in Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.6 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Across the school, standards and achievement in religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT) are average. In many subjects, girls achieve higher standards than boys, especially in Years 1 and 2. This levels out by the time pupils reach Year 6. Inspectors found very little difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily overall. They achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. When children join the nursery their skills and understanding are well below those expected for children of similar ages. A minority are on course achieve their targets by the end of the Reception Year in all areas of learning. The others are not at this level. Their achievement is satisfactory but that is not enough for them to reach their learning targets by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given work that is well matched to their age and attainment level. Planned intervention programmes enable pupils to achieve well in groups. Clearly focused plans enable pupils to make good progress week-by-week. Pupils are included in all activities and they are provided with a full range of

opportunities. Their talents are fully explored. Pupils work well together, are well behaved, and are proud of their achievements. Higher-attaining pupils in the Year 3 to 6 classes are challenged well in English. They work in groups with other pupils of similar attainment in mathematics, all of which gives a sharper focus to teaching and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are all **good**. The levels of attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to be included in learning activities.
- The quality of relationships is good, helping to create a positive climate for learning.
- The school fosters all aspects of pupils' personal development well, helping them to take responsibility for their actions and grow in independence.
- Behaviour is good and learning takes place unhindered.
- Attendance levels are below average and some pupils are regularly late. Work is missed, and this holds back pupils' achievement.

Commentary

8. As at the time of the previous inspection, throughout the school pupils have a positive attitude to their work which impacts favourably on their achievement. They want to do their best and are prepared to make maximum efforts in their lessons. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson for a set of Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils, the subject of equivalent fractions was introduced. Pupils made sustained efforts to understand the concept of equivalence, achieving very well.
9. Relationships between pupils are good. They collaborate and co-operate with each other happily and are willing to celebrate each other's successes. There is general respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. All this contributes to the friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Boys and girls of all ages talk of respecting and liking their teachers; this helps them learn and achieve effectively. They take care of their resources, such as library books, and take pride in ensuring there is no litter in the school or in the grounds.
10. Behaviour in and around the school is good overall. In lessons it is frequently very good, which allows learning to take place without hindrance. Teachers communicate their high expectations for behaviour well and consistently apply the policy. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions. They respond positively, especially to the reward of 'golden time'. Any unsuitable behaviour is appropriately checked and improvement is supported well. Bullying, racial discrimination and other forms of harassment are rarely problems. The majority of pupils and parents are confident that any such issues will be dealt with swiftly and fairly.
11. Pupils' personal development is good. Staff encourage pupils to take care of, and be responsible for, those younger than themselves, and this is seen in such features as playground buddies and reading buddies. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural

aspects of their development are also good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Social and moral education remains strong, with pupils demonstrating a good understanding of the responsibilities that come from living in a community and how to distinguish right from wrong. There is a mature awareness in Years 5 and 6 of ethical dilemmas and the choices arising from these. Spiritual development is strong. One element of this is time for pupil reflection being built into planning, not only in circle time, but also in other lessons. The staff have communicated a sense of excitement about learning. Instances of this include the youngest pupils talking about the wonder of watching “things grow” and older ones speaking about the thrill of doing science experiments and “learning new things”. Pupils’ knowledge and understanding of their own culture remains good and their knowledge of our multi-ethnic society has increased. Pupils are very aware of the diversity of world cultures as well as the richness of their own. The school works hard to achieve its aim of creating “a shared identity in which to promote our children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development”. It is effective in this.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003/4)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.7	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

- In spite of the range of strategies which the school has put in place, which include prosecution, the levels of attendance have fallen and are now below average. Last term the figure dropped again to approximately 92 per cent, but this was aggravated by a higher-than-usual incidence of illness. Punctuality is also difficult for some families who find it hard to ensure their children arrive on time. Lessons start promptly and the latecomers can prove distracting to other pupils, as well as missing their own work, which slows up their learning. The school tries hard to work with those families which have problems in ensuring their children get to school and arrive in good time. Registration is accurate, with the time of the closure of the registers adhered to rigorously. There were no exclusions in the last complete reporting year (2003/4) but in this school year there have been two necessary fixed-term exclusions. Exclusions are rare and are only used as a last resort.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Teachers make good links between the different subjects and this makes learning much more meaningful for all the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teamwork is strong and there is a co-ordinated approach to planning work and assessing how well pupils are doing.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good.
- Pupils’ targets are in place but these are not driving up standards as well as they should, especially in mathematics.

- There are weaknesses in some marking because teachers are missing opportunities to point out what pupils need to do to improve the standard of their work or to achieve their targets.
- Pupils enjoy learning because their lessons are interesting and exciting.

Commentary

13. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, when there was a significant percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during this inspection. Teaching is good overall. It is very good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	12 (31%)	16 (41%)	11 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. On going assessment is sound, and this enables teachers to pitch tasks at the right level so that children's learning is meaningful for them. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development results in good teaching and the children achieve well in this aspect of their curriculum. They make satisfactory progress in the other curriculum areas, both in the nursery and Reception classes, and a minority of children are on course to achieve their targets by the end of the Reception Year. Starting points are low in all areas of learning. There is much learning to be covered and children progress at a satisfactory pace, but many of them will fail to reach their targets by the end of the Reception Year. The lack of appropriate provision in the outdoor area holds back children's achievement, especially in their physical development.
15. There have been a number of staffing issues in the lower part of the school, which have been totally outside the school's control. This has meant that standards dipped in Year 2 last year. The school is now in a position to tackle the issue, which is being dealt with appropriately, and standards are improving. They have not reached average levels as yet, but standards in reading are now broadly average in Year 2, a good improvement all round. Tasks are planned at suitable levels for the higher, average and lower attaining pupils, as well as those with special educational needs. Pupils' progress and achievement is tracked and charted well, especially in literacy and numeracy. What is missing is a sharp focus on pupils' individual targets, as well as good communication with pupils about what needs to be done to achieve their targets. Pupils are fully engaged in learning in the majority of lessons. When learning slows, this is because the adults in the class are working with groups and cannot give other groups the necessary support. Attention wanders when the support is not forthcoming straight away and so learning slows for a short time.
16. Stronger teaching in Years 3 to 6 means that learning moves forward at a good pace and no time is wasted. Teachers' good knowledge of their subjects, including literacy and numeracy, means that they have high expectations about what their pupils are capable of achieving and pupils rise to the challenges set for them. A good example was in a Year 5 numeracy lesson when the teacher motivated pupils very well as she successfully and speedily built on and developed pupils' previous understanding of the

addition and subtraction of fractions. Well-structured lessons enable higher, average and lower attaining pupils' achievement to be good or better. There are similar weaknesses in the teaching in Years 3 to 6 as there are in Years 1 and 2, and this focuses around the quality of marking. At its best, work is marked very well and pupils have very good pointers about what needs to be done to achieve their targets or to improve their standards. However, there are some inconsistencies between subjects and classes and this is not good enough.

17. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and their activities are well matched to their needs. Relationships are strong and pupils' self-esteem is high. Teaching assistants are well briefed, their input is good and pupils achieve well.

The curriculum

The curriculum is well planned, of **good** quality, and meets all National Curriculum requirements. It is **well** enriched by a good range of visits, special events and extra-curricular activities. The accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning of the curriculum is good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum.
- There is good provision overall for pupils with special educational needs.
- Subjects are well resourced.
- The outdoor area for the Foundation Stage is not fully developed.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given a curriculum that meets their needs and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve the curriculum since the time of the previous inspection. There have been good improvements in the planning of work and cross-curricular links are good. Schemes of work for all subjects are now in place and pupils of all abilities and ages work on a curriculum at an appropriate level for their needs. This has had a good impact on teaching and learning, especially in the junior phase. More opportunities for investigational work in mathematics and science have been provided.
19. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, including a residential experience for Years 5 and 6 at Winmarleigh Activity Centre, as well as visits to the zoo, and museums at Manchester and Halifax and Southport. The school makes good use of local community facilities, including the church and library. A good range of theatre, dance and music groups and performers visits the school, and the school's curriculum year includes a book week, which enhances pupils' personal development and their understanding of the curriculum effectively. The school has used its good partnerships with secondary schools and other schools well to provide wider experiences. There is also good provision for arts and other extra-curricular activities.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs have good support, which enables them to achieve well. Through their planning, teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs can understand their tasks in all subjects. This is done especially well in the junior phase.

Teachers take good account of the individual programmes for learning that are devised for each pupil.

21. Accommodation and resources are good overall. The outdoor play provision for the Foundation Stage is identified as a current area for development, but is unsatisfactory at present. Since the last inspection, resources for ICT have been improved satisfactorily. The school library is satisfactory. It is used systematically and effectively to help develop pupils' study skills. The school hall is spacious and enhances the development of pupils' gymnastic and dance skills. The school is well resourced with learning equipment and books, all of which supports learning successfully.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is **good**, as are the support, advice and guidance they receive throughout their time at Ribble Drive. The school involves pupils in the life of the school **soundly**, treating with respect their suggestions and ideas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff build good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They receive good care from the school community.
- Pupils are well supported, with good advice and guidance given to all of them. However, better marking would help them to focus on what they need to do to improve.
- Staff know their pupils well and effectively support their personal development.
- The achievement of every pupil, in all aspects of school life, is celebrated well; this helps to enhance their self-esteem and confidence.
- Induction arrangements for all pupils are good, helping those new to the school to take a full part in the life of the school.

Commentary

22. Ribble Drive Community Primary School is a caring, friendly and happy place where pupils feel secure. Relationships are nurtured and the quality of rapport between staff and pupils is good. Most pupils say that it is easy to talk to members of staff and that time is given to them to share any concerns. The induction of new children, from the youngest to the oldest, is effective and handled considerately. New pupils are befriended and helped to settle happily, so that they can play a full part in school life.
23. Staff take good care of all pupils. The health and safety of pupils is given a high priority by the governing body, staff and children alike. The qualified first aiders and the caretaker make significant contributions to the care and welfare of everybody on site. A risk assessment programme is fully in place, helping to identify any problems. Supervision at lunchtimes is sound and the lunchtime supervisors have regular meetings with the teacher who has responsibility for supporting them and pinpointing their training needs. The before-and after- school clubs offer wrap-around care in the school, which is appreciated by parents.
24. In general, pupils have a good idea of how to achieve more, especially in their personal development and in English, science and mathematics. There is increasing use of self-assessment during lessons and peer appraisal is also integrated into lessons. This was evident in a good Year 4 physical education session when pupils identified the best movements by other pupils. However, in some other subjects and classes, marking is less focused and pupils are not clear about what needs to be done to improve the standard of their

work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they achieve well. Their individual needs are identified early and teaching and non-teaching support is managed and organised effectively. Targets for improvement are shared with parents and carers, and gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are recorded. Outside agencies are used very well to support and enhance learning. Pupils are present at their reviews and their views are encouraged. The achievements of everyone are monitored and celebrated, both in the classroom and in assemblies. This is helping to build the confidence and self-esteem of all.

25. Pupils know that their views matter and their opinions are asked for both informally and more formally, sometimes in circle time. The school council, now in its second year, acts as a good forum for views expressed by junior pupils. Next term, it is planned to extend the council and include representation from Year 2, thus ensuring younger pupils have a formal voice in helping to shape their lives in school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **sound**, whilst the links with the community and other schools are **good**. Such links improve and augment the learning opportunities for all pupils well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with this school and what it offers and achieves.
- Links with the community and other schools are productive.
- Class assemblies bring the curriculum alive, enhancing the parents' understanding of the curriculum.
- The 'Friends of Ribble Drive School' offer good support, both through fundraising and social events.
- Parents, pupils and the community raise funds to care for others, forming a strong partnership.

Commentary

26. Overwhelmingly, parents are pleased with the school. They appreciate what it provides and achieves and they recognise the value of its caring ethos. A few parents were unsure if children behaved well at school and raised issues concerning harassment. However, inspectors found that these concerns were not well founded. If worrying incidents do occur, pupils are taught appropriate strategies to deal with them and staff support them well.
27. The school provides a range of helpful written information for parents, both about the school and their child's achievements. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The end- of-year report gives a good picture of each child's progress. This is expanded at the parent consultation sessions at the end of the summer term. There are sound opportunities for parents to feed back comments to staff by using, for example, homework diaries and report supply slips. Some documents, such as the governors' annual report to parents, are not reader-friendly for parents who lack literacy skills. This is one reason why parents value the easy accessibility of staff and the more formal consultations. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed following termly reviews and regular meetings. Parents particularly appreciate the class assemblies, which demonstrate what the children are learning very effectively, as in an excellent Year 3 assembly held during the inspection.

28. Several parents help by hearing children read, participating in special activities in school, and during the annual activity week and on school trips. This has a positive influence on pupils' attitudes to learning. Volunteers feel their assistance is appreciated by both children and staff. All help from parents is valued by the school, which works hard to make best use of the partnership between school and parents.
29. Parents, staff and members of the local community are active in supporting the long-established "Friends", which contributes not only money but organises social events. Funds raised purchase resources to support the children's education. Children also regularly organise fund raising activities for charities and are supported well by their parents and the community.
30. Community links have improved and are now good. The school maintains strong links with the local church, and the vicar regularly takes assemblies and contributes to RE lessons. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example, the highly regarded carol concert in the church. Bury Football Club is involved in school life as well as enhancing the provision for physical education. The school supports a wide range of local events which enhance its provision successfully.
31. The school works effectively with other primary and secondary schools to develop and improve the quality of education for its pupils. School improvement is enhanced through such means as joint training, sharing of staff expertise and shared learning experiences. Partnership with training organisations, such as Bury College, is strong.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance, leadership and the management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher drives improvement forward successfully.
- Key staff and governors provide a clear direction for the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the priorities of the school.
- Teamwork is a strength.
- There are very good systems for ensuring that pupils achieve well.
- The leadership and management of subjects are good.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

32. The headteacher is a dedicated leader, devoted to providing the best for the pupils of Ribble Drive. Under her committed leadership, teamwork has become a key factor in driving improvement. This teamwork has moved the school forward since the last inspection and there is a shared commitment to raise standards. The deputy headteacher and other key staff are influential in managing improvement and there has been marked improvement since the last inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6, where the quality of teaching and learning has been transformed. Years 1 and 2 have had staffing difficulties, but these have been overcome and standards, achievement, teaching and learning are starting to improve. Subject leaders are becoming more actively involved in raising standards by producing action plans for their subjects and by analysing strengths and areas for development. Teaching assistants play an

increasingly important role when matching teaching and learning to the needs of individuals and groups, regardless of ability or gender. Temporary and long-term absences have been managed well to ensure that disruption was kept to a minimum.

33. Governors support the school's work and make a good contribution to the leadership of the school. They share the high expectations and play an improved role in monitoring and evaluating decisions. Governors fulfil their statutory duties efficiently. They visit classrooms, oversee provision in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs and receive reports from, and hold discussions with, subject leaders before sharing their findings with colleagues. Consequently, there is a very good understanding of the priorities at Ribble Drive. Governors ensure that pupils benefit from the decisions made and are very well prepared to contribute to planning for the future. They are excited about their involvement in the proposed 'Children's Centre' and with increasing confidence are willing to become more actively involved in managing the good committee structure, thus freeing the headteacher to concentrate on managing the school.
34. Systems and procedures have become more rigorous and self-evaluation is an effective tool in driving improvement. Subjects are monitored consistently well and good assessment procedures are being used increasingly effectively to plan for improvement for groups and individuals. Day-to-day administration is capably managed by the school secretary. The recent audit report compliments the school on the effectiveness of its financial procedures. Governors are well informed and prudent financial planning and careful monitoring of a very tight budget ensure that the school is able to meet its priorities. Principles of best value are given a high priority, with a close monitoring of spending decisions and a determination to ensure that pupils benefit.
35. Greater efficiency has resulted in the school now providing good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	530,217
Total expenditure	515,738
Expenditure per pupil	2,282

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9,513
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,992

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the nursery and Reception class is **satisfactory**. It is providing children with a sound start to their life in school.

Children receive a sound start to their education in the nursery and this is built upon steadily in the Reception class. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching observed on occasions. A satisfactory curriculum provides an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Teachers plan independently of each other in the nursery and Reception classes and this does not contribute effectively to a cohesive approach to learning across the Foundation Stage. Children are not sufficiently involved in planning and reviewing their work and this limits their understanding. The strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills and the contribution of support staff, as well as appropriate assessment procedures, enhance learning soundly.

Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below the level expected for children of this age, particularly in the areas of personal and social development and in their literacy skills. Overall achievement is satisfactory, but despite this many children will not achieve the goals identified for the end of the Reception Year. Children with special educational needs make the same progress as others in their class. There is a satisfactory range of resources in the classrooms but outdoor provision is inadequate, as are the resources. The headteacher and the governors have very good plans to tackle this issue as part of the development of the new children's centre. Building work begins very soon after the end of this inspection.

Teachers provide a sound range of activities to develop children's learning in most areas of the curriculum, although higher-attaining children are not always challenged well enough. The lack of clear leadership, direction and overall responsibility for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory at present but is being tackled successfully as part of the development plan for the new children's centre.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in this area is good in both classes and children achieve well.
- Classroom routines are well established; children have good levels of independence.
- Personal, social and emotional development is integral to all class activities.

Commentary

36. Children enter the nursery with skills below those expected for children of this age. They achieve well, acquiring increasing confidence and independence and developing positive attitudes to learning as they progress through the nursery and Reception classes. Children quickly learn classroom routines. Teaching is good and teachers provide many opportunities to work in groups, to take turns and to share and exercise independence. Learning is effective. The children listen carefully to instructions and

follow these obediently. In both classes, teachers use good strategies to develop children's understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. Staff interact well with children. They have high expectations of good behaviour. Children respond and behave well. Good teaching ensures that the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected level at the end of the Reception Year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those expected for children of this age.
- Some good opportunities are provided for children to develop their early literacy skills.

Commentary

37. Children enter the nursery with well-below-average skills in this area of learning. Sound teaching in the nursery and good teaching in the Reception class enable children to make steady progress in developing their skills. Achievement is satisfactory but many children are unlikely to achieve their goals at the end of the Reception Year. Children listen well and respond with enjoyment to stories, songs and rhymes. In the nursery, expressive reading of *The Bear Hunt* holds the children's attention, with reassuring comments to the teacher such as "Don't worry, I'm very brave of bears!" The teacher actively engages the children in stories and most participate well. Early reading skills are developed systematically and higher attainers in the Reception class know terms such as 'title', 'author' and 'blurb'. They are beginning to read and understand the early books in the scheme and to write sentences independently. Although children take books home to share, not enough value is placed on this activity in the nursery and these books are of unsatisfactory quality. Children are not encouraged to use books bags and so books are not kept in ideal conditions.
38. Some nursery children recognise each other's names through self-registration. "I know that's Charlotte 'coz its long" says one boy. A good number of children in the Reception class write their names independently but many are not secure with letter formation for all letters.
39. Some good opportunities are provided for children to develop early literacy skills. For example, the good use of role-play in the Reception class promotes speaking and listening skills well, with good intervention by support staff to extend the play. Higher attainers are likely to achieve their targets but standards remain below average at the end of the Reception Year for many children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of the Reception Year.
- Mathematical vocabulary is reinforced well in lessons.
- Role-play contributes well to mathematical development.

Commentary

40. When children start in the nursery their mathematical skills are well below average. They make steady gains in learning in the nursery and Reception classes as a result of sound teaching. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The teachers use number rhymes and songs well to help the children develop mathematical language and understanding. An appropriate range of practical activities such as sorting, matching and ordering helps to consolidate learning. Higher attainers and some average children in the Reception class count reliably beyond ten. They write and order numbers to ten and make simple addition sentences. A significant proportion recognise two-dimensional shapes such as circle, triangle and square and can name these shapes, while higher attainers describe shapes using mathematical language. Average and higher attainers create a repeating pattern using two or more colours. Lower attainers have more difficulty with identifying shapes and creating repeating patterns. In the Reception class mathematical vocabulary is reinforced well in lessons. Role-play, such as in the clinic, effectively supports mathematical development. Children measured their height and used comparative language to find the tallest/shortest in the class. Whilst higher attainers are likely to achieve their goals by the end of the Reception Year, standards are below average for a significant proportion of children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of the Reception Year.
- Activity week supports learning effectively.
- Visits and visitors support the curriculum well.

Commentary

41. Children enter the nursery with standards well below the level expected for their age. Teaching is satisfactory and teachers provide an adequate range of learning experiences that enable the children to develop their knowledge about the world appropriately. These include nursery children exploring the properties of magnets and Reception children investigating freezing and melting and how cars move. An activity week, focused on China, provided many good opportunities for children to explore, investigate, taste and smell, using and developing their senses effectively. Children are familiar with stories from the Bible. They can identify people who help us in the community and know about some religious celebrations such as christenings and weddings, Harvest and Christmas. Visits and visitors support this learning well, with people such as the nurse, policeman and 'lollipop' lady among the many visitors. Whilst achievement is satisfactory, a significant number of children are unlikely to achieve the goals identified for the end of the Reception Year and standards are below average at the end of the Foundation Stage.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor provision is inadequate and resources are limited.
- Planning does not identify clearly what children in the nursery are expected to learn from the activities they choose for themselves.

Commentary

42. When children start in the nursery their physical skills are below average. The very limited outdoor space is unsatisfactory and does not allow enough space for activities such as pedalling bikes, running and climbing. The adults utilise the outdoor area as best they can with limited resources, of poor quality in some cases. There is no provision for children to climb, swing or slide. Outdoor play for children in the nursery lacks a clear purpose, challenge and imagination. It is not clear from the planning what children are expected to learn from the activities they choose for themselves. The issue relating to the unsatisfactory outdoor play area will be addressed as part of the development of the children's centre, as identified earlier in this report.
43. All children have access to the hall, but standards are below average. Children do not change properly for physical education and skills such as hopping and skipping are not taught effectively. Many children are unable to perform these tasks properly as a result. Overall teaching in this area of learning is unsatisfactory and children do not achieve as well as they should. A significant number of children are unlikely to achieve the goals for this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of the Reception Year.
- Children enjoy the activities and attitudes are positive.
- In the Reception class singing is taught well and children sing in tune with a good sense of pitch.

Commentary

44. Skills in this area of learning are well below average when children start in the nursery. Satisfactory teaching overall enables children to make steady progress in developing their creative skills. There are opportunities for drawing, painting, printing, modelling and collage. The majority of children control brushes and pencils with reasonable co-ordination, although a significant minority still have difficulty. Children enjoy cutting, sticking and pasting. Good use is made of role-play in the Reception class, with well-timed intervention extending play well. Links to literacy and numeracy through this role-play are good. Children enjoy a range of songs and rhymes. They listen well and participate fully and with much enjoyment. Singing is taught well in the Reception class and standards are average in music. The children achieve well as a result of good teaching. Whilst higher attainers are likely to achieve the goals identified by the end of the Reception Year, a significant number of other children are unlikely to do so, in spite of satisfactory achievement overall.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. Overall, the quality of the teaching and the work planned for pupils are good and this ensures that they achieve **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average by Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching and learning.
- Standards in writing are below average by Year 2.
- Pupils with special needs make good progress against their targets.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- English makes a very effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Commentary

45. Standards are above average in English in Year 6. Pupils are well placed to meet or exceed the targets set for them. The positive standards reached are due to very good planning and good or better teaching. Effective use is also made of assessment and achievement is good. The analysis of pupils' work, together with lesson observations, confirms this picture.
46. From a well-below-average starting point, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well during their time in school to attain above-average standards by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons. There is a wide span of attainment in all year groups, with high proportions of pupils with special educational needs and pupils who constantly move in and out of school, all of which depresses standards and holds back achievement. Girls tend to do better than boys; however, the school has worked successfully in the last two years to raise boys' achievement and the gap has narrowed. Staff work hard to raise pupils' attainment by carefully planned work and good support and encouragement.
47. Standards in speaking are average in Years 1 and 2, and above average in Years 3 to 6. Many pupils speak confidently and clearly and their language skills and vocabulary are developed well by good quality cross-curricular opportunities. Good teaching is having an effective impact on pupils' learning. There is good provision for pupils who have speech and language difficulties. Staff use effective strategies to help pupils to extend their vocabulary well.
48. Pupils achieve well in reading, with their knowledge and enjoyment of books being developed successfully alongside their reading skills. Standards are currently broadly average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. There are valuable opportunities provided for pupils to engage in silent reading, in pairs, in groups and individually, and this boosts achievement well. Pupils enjoy reading with parents and carers at home and take their books home on a regular basis. This helps them to make good progress and develop their confidence. Most pupils are clear about the strategies that they need to use to work out how to read words, sentences and read passages. Pupils enjoy reading the books of Jacqueline Smith, Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling. Book areas in classrooms are well organised and the library is in frequent use, developing pupils' independent learning skills well.

49. Younger pupils read accurately and fluently because reading skills are well taught. By Year 6, pupils read in a mature and expressive manner. The school provides regular, targeted support for pupils with difficulties with their reading, and for pupils almost attaining average levels, this boosts achievement successfully. Older pupils' use their good speaking skills sensibly to enable them to understand harder words and to explore books at a deeper level of meaning.
50. Attainment in writing is below average for seven-year-olds and above average for 11 year-olds. Standards have risen in Years 3 to 6 because of very good in-service training led by the co-ordinator, very well planned lessons and valuable opportunities provided for extended writing. Pupils' writing is celebrated well in displays, and interesting writing tasks are based on a good range of different curriculum areas.
51. The school is continuing to target writing for improvement, especially in Years 1 and 2 where standards remain below average. Pupils experience problems with handwriting and spelling and good strategies have been put in place, which are starting to raise standards. Targets are being set which help pupils to be clear about what they have to do to improve. The following is an example of good writing, written in the style of John Masefield by a Year 6 pupil on the theme of 'Cargoes'.

*'Plundering pirate galleon sailing
 Across the Caribbean sea,
 Speeding through the waves by the Palm Beach shore,
 With a cargo of spices,
 Swords, emeralds,
 Diamonds, armour and gold coins.'*

52. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching observed in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard. Where teaching is very good there is an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through enjoyable and purposeful topics. This enables pupils to achieve well. In Year 6, very good motivating strategies enabled pupils to write convincing arguments. In Year 1, there were good cross-curricular links with religious education resulting in pupils creating books entitled *'My Christian Faith'*. Story-planning skills were developed well in a Year 3 lesson because pupils had a clear understanding as to how to use their story plans. Teachers and teaching assistants have a secure understanding of the subject and generally teach it well.
53. The subject leadership is very good and the teaching, planning and learning are very well monitored. Good use is made of assessment to formulate pupils' targets. Marking does not always identify what pupils need to do to improve their work, especially in Years 1 and 2. There has been a good improvement in the teaching of reading since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Overall, pupils use their literacy skills well to support work in other subjects. Their good skills in speaking and listening are used extensively across the curriculum. ICT is used successfully to help pupils to make a final presentation of their work. Writing skills are not fully developed in Years 1 and 2 but they are put to good effect in Years 3 to 6 in such subjects as history, geography, religious education and science. Pupils are able to successfully research, retrieve and collate information from a range of resources.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average by the age of seven, and below average by the age of 11.
- Achievement is good for all pupils, regardless of age or ability.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and have good attitudes to learning.
- The leadership and management of mathematics are very good.
- Good assessment procedures are in place.
- ICT is used effectively to support learning.

Commentary

55. Standards have been consistently below average, or worse, in mathematics for a number of years until 2004, when standards were average for the 11-year-olds. Standards have been affected significantly by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the significant number of pupils moving in and out of the school on a regular basis, and teaching being not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils in the past. Standards are currently well below average for the seven-year-olds and below average for the 11-year-olds. Achievement is now good owing to improved teaching.
56. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore place value, patterns and sequences but some activities do not challenge or extend pupils' mathematical skills sufficiently. Pupils take their time working out number facts or solving problems and this slows their learning. Pupils have a good understanding about shapes and measures. Most parents have contributed to an improvement in mental accuracy by encouraging their children to complete homework tasks, which are matched to the wide range of abilities, including the learning of table facts. There is an increasing level of pupils performing at the higher Level 5, with at least one in five being challenged to choose from the wide range of strategies being taught effectively. Pupils are expected to explain how they have solved their problems. This strategy has improved mathematical understanding as well as improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.
57. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection in 1999. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good or better, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where it is often very good. The organisation of pupils into sets according to their abilities has given a sharper and more challenging focus to teaching and learning. This management decision has increased the level of challenge for pupils included in older age groupings. For example, higher-achieving pupils in Year 5 are already working at levels aimed for in Year 6. The decision to concentrate on mental and oral skills, to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning, and to apply their skills and understanding to mathematical investigations has resulted in pupils becoming more assured when carrying out investigations.
58. Teaching and learning are good overall, with consistently very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Well-qualified teaching assistants are managed effectively. They are fully

involved at the planning and evaluative stages, and they contribute well to the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Where learning is at its most effective, pupils were highly motivated by challenging teaching and resources designed to make learning more exciting. Pupils enjoy mathematics and share the enthusiasm of their teachers. The quality of learning benefits from very good behaviour and good attitudes, with pupils eager to complete their tasks. Although resources for ICT are limited, personal computers and laptops are managed increasingly well to reinforce learning. The two interactive whiteboards are used very well by teachers and pupils, especially when teachers were demonstrating the use of protractors to measure angles.

59. Subject leadership and management have played a significant part in the rate of improvement. Performance has been analysed thoroughly and areas for development identified. Good assessment procedures have been used effectively to target improvement for individuals or groups. Priorities, such as problem solving and mental accuracy, are being addressed effectively by a dedicated and committed team. Marking is not used consistently well, but at its best, informs pupils of their successes and then challenges them to improve. The subject leader has constructive links with the mathematics' governor, and priorities and successes are discussed openly. This ensures that the governing body is fully aware of the subject strengths and areas for development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. The use of mathematical skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is good. Charts, tables and graphs are used effectively to record investigations in science. The understanding of scales improves mapping skills in geography, and time lines foster an understanding of chronology in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average for the 11-year-olds. Their achievement is very good.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied and older pupils are good at planning, organising and recording their science investigations.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good.
- Standards are below average for the seven-year-olds. Their achievement is satisfactory but it could be better.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have limited experiences of science investigations and this holds back their achievement.

Commentary

61. There has been a very good improvement in science since the previous inspection, when standards were well below average. Standards are now above average for the 11-year-olds and their achievement is very good. Standards are below average for the seven-year-olds and their achievement is satisfactory. The main reasons for the difference are the stronger teaching in Years 3 to 6, coupled with higher-than-average numbers of pupils with special

educational needs and the high percentage of pupils who regularly move into and out of the school.

62. The subject has improved very well because the curriculum has been reviewed and changed. Staff have been involved in additional training and there is a co-ordinated approach to planning and assessment, all of which boosts achievement successfully.
63. Teaching is good overall. Science is well planned, especially in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is very good. Pupils' progress and achievement are tracked and recorded at regular intervals, enabling tasks to be pitched at the right levels, for example, in a Year 5 lesson on the heart and its function. The very good use of the interactive whiteboard enabled the teacher to refer back to previous work and link this to pupils' new knowledge, successfully extending their understanding.
64. Older pupils are well organised in their learning. The strong emphasis on science investigations, alongside the system for enabling pupils to work in effective teams, means that pupils are adept at being team leader, changer, controller, measurer or recorder. These skills are generic and transferable, successfully helping pupils to understand the importance of roles and responsibilities in effective teamwork. Younger pupils are less independent in their learning but they are keen to learn and they try hard. Their learning slows when they need extra support and the adults are busy supporting other groups. Teaching at the lower end of the school is satisfactory. Across the school there are variations in marking. At best, pupils are clear about what has to be done to improve their work or to achieve their targets, but this is not apparent in all classes. This means there are missed opportunities to boost standards and achievement.
65. The subject is being looked after on a temporary basis by the headteacher. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning are monitored well, and the subject has moved forward at a good pace. The next areas for development are to improve the teaching at the lower end of the school and to make sure that all the younger pupils have more opportunities to take part in science investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skill development for pupils by the ages of seven and 11 is satisfactory.
- Achievement in ICT is good but pupils are not always aware of how to improve.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.
- The subject is led very well.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- Resources, although becoming outdated, are used well.

Commentary

66. By the age of seven and 11, standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils demonstrate their control of line and colour when using 'Dazzle' to illustrate their observational poetry on the theme 'Winter'. Older pupils use a variety of search engines to research information and handle data appropriately. They use flow charts confidently to explain the use of sensors; they log on independently; use menus accurately; save to floppy

disk and print without assistance. Pupils enjoy using computer technology and demonstrate satisfactory skills throughout. They enjoy each other's company and work well together when practising or applying their skills.

67. Teaching and non-teaching staff promote skill development confidently, especially the use of laptops to support learning in other subjects. Teaching is good. Planning is also good, with activities that are closely matched to pupils' ability. Consequently, achievement is consistently good regardless of gender or ability. Good classroom support ensures that pupils with special educational needs make as much progress as others. The two interactive whiteboards have added a new and exciting medium to teaching and learning.
68. The leadership and management skills of the subject leader are very good. He has been instrumental in raising overall subject knowledge and driving improvement by arranging suitable professional development for others, and selecting software for each curriculum area. His action plan, shared with the link governor, includes the use of locally produced guidelines to encourage planning which responds more closely to the needs of groups and individuals.
69. Severe budgetary limitations have necessitated prudent spending on resources and consequently skill development is limited for higher-attaining pupils. The ten computers that are networked are becoming outdated and no longer respond to the needs of higher attainers. The investment in laptops has added more flexibility to the management of ICT as only one third of a class is able to use the computer room at any one time. Plans to invest further in laptops can only result in a further improvement in standards. Appropriate assessment procedures record gains in skills and understanding but pupils are not always aware of how to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

70. COMPUTERS ARE USED VERY WELL TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN OTHER SUBJECTS BOTH IN THE COMPUTER ROOM AND IN THE CLASSROOMS. PUPILS IN THE HIGHER MATHEMATICS GROUP MASTERED THE USE OF PROTRACTORS QUICKLY AFTER DEMONSTRATING THEIR USE ON THE INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARD. THIS INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY HAS TRANSFORMED THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING. THE USE OF THE INTERNET HAS ADDED SUCCESSFULLY TO HISTORICAL ENQUIRY AND PROVIDED A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF LANDSCAPES AND PLACES. INCREASINGLY, PUPILS USE THEIR SKILLS TO ILLUSTRATE THEIR GAINS IN SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING, AS WHEN USING *POWERPOINT* TO COMPLEMENT VISITS TO PLACES OF INTEREST SUCH AS EDEN CAMP. SURVEYS ARE RECORDED GRAPHICALLY AND WORD TEXT IS USED WELL TO ENABLE PUPILS TO SHARE THEIR WRITING WITH DIFFERENT AUDIENCES.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and are now average by Year 2 and Year 6.

- Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6 as a result of good teaching.
- Cross-curricular links are a strength.
- Very effective use of made of ICT.
- Religious education contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development.
- The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors to school.
- Assessment and marking are areas for further development.

Commentary

71. Standards are broadly average throughout the school. RE was a key issue in the last inspection. This is no longer the case and all of the issues identified have been addressed acceptably. Sufficient time is now allocated to the subject. Planning in all lessons reflects the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have improved well. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is stronger in these classes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve as well as others in their class.
72. Teaching is good overall, with many very good points in Years 3 to 6. As a result, learning is accelerated and pupils achieve very well. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and structured and learning intentions are shared meaningfully at the lesson outset. Cross-curricular links, for example, with literacy, physical education and art and design, are a particular strength. In Year 3, pupils learn Indian dances as part of Diwali celebrations. Pupils in Year 5 explore a newspaper report and create newspaper headlines based on the Creation Story. Year 6 pupils design a piece of religious art to donate to the local church following a recent visit. The use of ICT is very effective to support learning. Pupils confidently explore websites and conduct independent research, all of which boost achievement successfully.
73. Religious education contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development and to their personal development. Multicultural links are strong, following a major thrust by the school. Studies based on African, India and China were evident through displays, as well as work on other faiths such as Judaism. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning, such as in Year 3 where pupils reflected on their own image of Jesus' character. One pupil said "It depends on the view of the artist". In Year 6, pupils respond to a range of different music and compose when explaining faith through the arts.
74. The curriculum is enriched well through the use of visits and visitors to school. Pupils visit the local churches, a synagogue and the Jewish museum. Links with the church are strong. Since the last inspection, resources and artefacts have been greatly improved and now contribute positively to pupils' learning. Assessment is on an informal basis at present and is an area for further development. Marking is inconsistent. It does not provide enough guidance for pupils to know how they can improve their work.
75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has good expertise and much enthusiasm. She supports colleagues well and undertakes monitoring of planning and work in books and on display. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

History

76. This subject was sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Standards in history are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils have access to a good curriculum, enriched effectively by visits and visitors to school. They enjoy a broad range of worthwhile experiences within the subject. History is often used as a basis for literacy work such as the letter they have from a Roman soldier in Year 3 and the diary accounts of a day in the Annexe, writing as Anne Frank. Pupils find out about the past using a wide range of primary and secondary sources. There is a good focus on developing skills in historical enquiry, including the use of computers to research websites.
77. Good cross-curricular links with other subjects such as art and design and literacy enhance the learning opportunities well. Good resources and purposeful displays contribute effectively to pupils' achievement. The recently appointed subject leader is enthusiastic about the subject. She monitors planning and work regularly and provides good, clear direction for the subject.

Geography

78. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Geography has a full role in the school's curriculum and all elements are covered thoroughly. Good classroom displays help all pupils to learn the appropriate geographical vocabulary. Older pupils take part in field trips, which are enjoyed as they learn about the physical and human features of the area. A visit to Southport helps them to learn about contrasting geographical areas as well as developing pupils' mapping skills soundly.
79. Pupils use their numeracy, ICT and literacy skills effectively to support their learning in geography. Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is sound. The subject leadership is good and the leader has a clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

80. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Standards are average in art and design at the end of Years 2 and 6.
81. In most years, pupils have access to a broad range of worthwhile experiences within the subject, including painting, collage, observational drawing and textiles. However, the range of experiences is more limited for pupils in Years 2. Learning opportunities are enhanced as a result of the strong curricular links. For example, in Year 5, pupils use papi r mach  to create Greek pots and vases as part of their history topic on Ancient Greece, while in Year 3 pupils' paintings reflect work in literacy based on the story 'The Whale's Song'. A colourful faith banner, also produced in Year 3, depicts the symbols of major world faiths through needlework and collage. Satisfactory use is made of ICT in art and design.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader monitors planning but opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching, standards and achievement are limited at present.

Design and technology

83. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Standards are broadly average by the ages of seven and 11. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, overall planning and examples of pupils' previous work suggest that there has been much improvement in the provision for design and technology since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory.
84. Skills in designing and making are now developed systematically from year to year, and from Year 1 upwards, pupils are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their making and discuss how to make improvements. Younger pupils make puppets and 'moving pictures', whilst older pupils investigate cams, and use their knowledge of circuits to design a fairground ride. Pupils are aware of the need for safety when handling tools and hygiene when handling food. The subject leader's planning identifies opportunities for assembling and joining using a range of materials, measuring with increased accuracy, and making for a purpose. Suitable assessment procedures now record gains in skills and understanding.

MUSIC

85. Music was sampled during the inspection and very few lessons observed. Music plays an important part in pupils' lives, and there has been good improvement in the planning and development of pupils' composition skills. Pupils sang '*Give it All You've Got*' (the school's song) well, with full awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics. The standard of singing is good throughout the school. Year 3 sang '*How special Mums are*' very well in their class assembly and captured the hearts of all present.
86. Pupils achieve well in their singing and composition work in Years 3 to 6 where there are good cross-curricular links with history and dance. Year 6 pupils benefit from the teaching of a specialist music teacher and this boosts standards. The subject leader regularly monitors planning and pupils' achievement. She is providing good, clear educational direction for the subject. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place and appropriate use is made of assessment to inform planning.

Physical education

87. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Effective planning shows that all areas are covered well. The many out-of-school activities and clubs successfully extend the school's provision for physical education. Swimming lessons take place at a nearby pool and by the end of Year 5 most pupils can swim at least 25 metres. In a Year 3 class assembly, which was shared with parents, every pupil participated fully. Boys and girls focused on poise, posture and accuracy of movement as they performed their dance routine for their parents and carers. Standards were good and pupils achieved very well.
88. In the very small number of lessons observed, pupils' skills were developed successfully as they practised and refined their performance. Pupils were aware of what needed to be done to improve the quality of their movement as they evaluated their own performance. This process enabled the pupils to have clear pointers about improvement, making it easier for them to boost their achievement. The subject is managed soundly. However, some pupils do not have an understanding of the appropriate dress code, including footwear, for physical education. This is an area that needs to be tackled straight away.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Personal, social and health education has a pivotal role in the day-to-day life of the school and the school achieved the Healthy School Award last year.
90. Pupils' views are consulted on a range of issues, as are the views of their parents, all of which makes a valuable contribution to school's work. The School Council provides valuable opportunities for pupils to put forward their ideas and suggestions, which is a good preparation for living in a democratic society such as our own.
91. Pupils' personal development is good. Staff encourage pupils to take care of, and responsibility for, those younger than themselves and this is seen in such features as playground buddies and reading buddies. Pupils collaborate and co-operate with each other happily and they are willing to celebrate each other's successes. There is general respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. All this contributes to the friendly atmosphere throughout the school. The many cross-curricular approaches to learning successfully consolidate and reinforce aspects of a healthy lifestyle and its impact on pupils' life and work.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).