

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHRIST THE KING VOLUNTARY AIDED
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119601

Headteacher: Ms S Bartlett

Reporting inspector: Mrs E M D Mackie
23482

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 November 2002

Inspection number: 248038

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bathurst Avenue
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Postcode: FY3 7RJ

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Hough

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23482	Mrs D Mackie Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Provision for children in the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Mrs V Lamb Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18344	Mr D Earley Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Educational inclusion Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
19041	Mr R Linstead Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ the King Catholic Primary School is a 'Beacon School', chosen nationally because of the high standards it promotes. It is popular in the neighbourhood because of its very good reputation. The school is located in a residential area consisting of a mixture of local authority built and privately owned property. Most pupils are from families who live near the school, and about 50 per cent are from the Catholic community strongly centred in the mission of the local church. There is a high level of social and economic deprivation in the area. There are 225 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11 years old, 56 of whom are in the nursery and reception classes. Of these, 26 children attend the nursery class part-time. Children start school with overall attainment that is well below that typical for three-year-olds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (37%) is above the national average. There are 11 pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Pakistani, Indian and Nepalese heritages. The percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language is low. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs for learning, physical or behavioural difficulties; this is broadly in line with the national average. Three per cent have statements of special educational needs. In addition to extra funding from acquiring Beacon status, the school benefits from participation in a range of national and local initiatives, including 'Healthy Schools', 'Sure Start' and 'ArtXtra'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6. Teaching is of high quality and the curriculum is broad, relevant and stimulating. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is ably supported by the conscientious deputy headteacher and other key staff. Management is very good and the governors fulfil their roles very well and contribute significantly to the school's work. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well and the school's overall performance by the end of Year 6 is very good in comparison with similar schools.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave very well, and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, the school provides a very good curriculum and provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is excellent for their moral development.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good.
- The leadership is excellent and the school is very well managed.
- The governors fulfil their roles very well and work conscientiously in the service of the pupils and staff.
- The school has excellent relationships with local schools and colleges.

What could be improved

- *Standards of reading are below the national expectations by the end of Year 2.
- *Attendance is below the national average.

**The school has identified these areas for improvement and is already addressing them.
The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in February 1998. All the key issues have been dealt with successfully and the school has the excellent capacity to improve

further. Safe landing areas have been installed underneath climbing equipment in the nursery. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment have been greatly improved and are now very good. Teachers keep examples of pupils' work and take photographs to ensure appropriate standards in all subjects for all year groups. Monitoring of teaching and learning is regularly carried out, and is being gradually extended to all subjects. In addition, standards in mathematics have improved greatly, the quality of teaching and curricular provision has improved and the leadership and management have also improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	D	C	A
mathematics	B	C	A	A*
science	B	E	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Overall standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained since the last inspection and in Year 6 are now on course to match national expectations by the end of the school year. In the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's performance in mathematics, in comparison with similar schools, was in the highest five per cent. The results in the table above reflect the abilities of different groups of pupils from year-to-year. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for English, mathematics and science has been slightly upward and broadly in line with the national trend over the past five years. Targets set with the local education authority were met in mathematics but not in English in 2002. However, the school is well set to reach challenging targets set for 2003.

By the end of Year 2, pupils are on course to achieve national expectations in mathematics and science, but not in reading or writing. In comparison with all schools nationally in the 2002 tests for pupils in Year 2, the school's performance was well below average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results were below average in reading, average in writing and very good in mathematics. The trend over the past five years has been downward in reading, slightly upward in writing and dramatically upward in mathematics.

Standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 other than in physical education, where the standard is above the national expectations by the end of Year 6.

In the nursery and reception classes, children make very good progress and are on course to reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals in personal and social development, physical development and creative development. They make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, but, because of their weak language skills, are not on course to reach the goals in these areas of learning by the time they join Year 1. Pupils' overall achievement from the beginning of the Nursery to the end of Year 6 is very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This is because teachers manage the pupils very well and encourage them to reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility for it.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. From the earliest days in the nursery, children learn to plan their time and organise their activities. As they grow older, pupils gradually become increasingly thoughtful for the needs and views of others. They are considerate for other people and are becoming good young citizens. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, and below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is very good, and the school meets the needs of all pupils very well. Throughout the school, teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge, plan their lessons very well and take into account what pupils already know and can do. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from teachers' detailed planning to address their particular requirements. Those who speak English as an additional language are supported well. Teachers manage pupils very well and they are enthusiastic, encouraging and rewarding so that the pupils want to please them. They listen to pupils and engage with them thoughtfully in order to draw out their thoughts and guide their understanding. Thorough teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that pupils regularly make at least good progress. The staff have introduced the literacy and daily mathematics lessons very effectively. Lessons move at a brisk pace, so that pupils maintain their interest. They work productively, enjoy what they do and build systematically on their earlier learning. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants embrace the school's firmly held Christian aims with enthusiasm and commitment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It is very well planned and stimulating for children in the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 to 6, the school provides an interesting and broad range of activities which help pupils to achieve very well overall. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils benefit from the very good planning of appropriate work and the very effective levels of support in lessons and in withdrawal groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils integrate well and achieve as well as others because of the school's firm commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, the high expectations of pupils and the sensitive support given to them in the early stages of learning to speak English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social	Very good overall. It is supported very effectively by the school's clear aims based on Christian values. The very well planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education underpins all of the

and cultural development	school's work. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is a caring community and staff know the pupils well. There are very good procedures for keeping track of pupils' personal development and their academic progress.

The school has good links with parents and provides them with a good range of information so that they know about their children's progress and what is going on in the school. Teachers work hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Reading diaries are completed well by the majority of parents but a significant minority do not do so, despite the school's efforts. Although parents do not always attend meetings about curricular developments, they support social events very well and think very highly of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is an outstanding role model who sets challenging goals for herself, the staff and the pupils. The deputy headteacher and other key staff fulfil their roles in a highly effective and supportive way.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and manage the school very effectively and efficiently. They give willingly of their talents to ensure the smooth management of the school, and work closely in partnership with the headteacher and other staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All areas of school life are reviewed and evaluated so that appropriate priorities can be identified for development. The governors' regular evaluations ensure that the school keeps focused on what really benefits the pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funding for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, is used appropriately. Governors ensure that the school gets 'best value' for the money it spends and that expenditure is evaluated against the benefits it brings to the pupils' achievement and welfare.

There is a very good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. The high quality of lunchtime, caretaking and administrative staff contributes well to the ethos of the school. Accommodation, including outdoor provision, is adequate and well cared for. Most learning resources are satisfactory and they are well organised and stored. Resources for English and ICT are good. Resources are obtained at the most competitive prices and the school uses them in the best possible way to achieve its aims.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The children make good progress. • The school has high expectations of children and helps them to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. 	<p>A few parents think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not work closely with parents. • Children do not get the right amount of homework • Parents are not well informed about their children's progress.

The inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents' positive views. The school goes out of its way to work closely with parents and inform them of their children's progress. The amount of homework set is very good when compared with that often seen in primary schools. Even in the

nursery, children take home books, and homework provides older pupils with valuable opportunities to consolidate and extend what they learn in lessons. At the pre-inspection meeting for parents and in the parental questionnaires, the vast majority of parents gave the school their full support.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. The school has taken a rigorous approach to improving standards in English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, the percentage of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected levels in national tests has risen:

from 53 per cent to 77 per cent in English;
from 60 per cent to 90 per cent in mathematics;
from 64 per cent to 97 per cent in science.

2. Over the past four years, the overall trend in the school's performance in English, mathematics and science has been slightly upward, in line with the national trend. The national average has risen since the last inspection. The targets set with the local education authority in 2002 were exceeded in mathematics but were not met in English by one per cent because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs. The targets for 2003 present a tough challenge but the school is well set to achieve them. The school works hard to improve the attendance of a few but significant number of persistent absentees, and this has a positive effect on the attainment and progress of these pupils.

3. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, nor is there any difference in achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Gifted and talented pupils, for example in music, are identified and supported very effectively so that they achieve very well. The progress of pupils from ethnic minorities is monitored well so that they achieve well, have high self-esteem and benefit from the wide range of activities in the school. Pupils' attainment and achievement are carefully monitored so that the school has a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. This information is used very well to plan appropriate work for all pupils.

4. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet national expectations in English and mathematics and science by the end of the school year. This represents very good achievement for this year group, based on the school's regular and well-monitored assessments of the pupils.

5. There was an improvement in the performance of pupils in Year 2 in national tests between 1998 and 2002. Results rose:

from 76 per cent to 77 per cent in reading;
from 77 per cent to 92 per cent in writing;
from 77 per cent to 96 per cent in mathematics.

6. Standards in reading fell in 2002 and standards in reading and writing are below national expectations in the current Year 2. This reflects the abilities of the particular year groups. Staff are using information from assessments of pupils' performance and monitoring of teaching and learning to deal with standards in reading and writing as a priority. They have analysed the school's results in national tests in order to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses. Lessons are planned with increasing attention to the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Higher-attaining pupils are provided with challenging tasks to help them to achieve the higher levels in reading and writing.

7. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment which are well below those expected for their age. Despite very good teaching and good progress in the nursery and reception classes, the children do not achieve the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal and social development, physical development and creative development, children make very good progress and reach the goals. The planning of the curriculum is very good and staff create an

encouraging atmosphere in which children learn systematically and happily.

8. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed their speaking and listening skills satisfactorily and widened their vocabulary consistently in all subjects. Pupils experience a wide range of texts so that they practise their skills in all areas of the curriculum. The school emphasises the systematic teaching and learning of letter sounds and patterns so that pupils make good gains in reading, writing and spelling. Even so, pupils do not reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2. Teachers are using increasingly detailed monitoring of each individual pupil's progress to further improve standards in reading. Pupils develop a growing awareness of the use of mathematics in everyday life; for example, in weighing, measuring and shopping. In science, practical investigations help pupils to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the world around them.

9. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils express themselves confidently and explain their answers during discussion periods. Pupils benefit from reading together from enlarged texts during the literacy hour and exploring a broad range of literature which includes non-fiction and poetry. Pupils' development of skills for research is hampered because of the inadequate library facilities. Consistent teaching of spelling and regular practice in basic grammar give pupils a good grounding so that they achieve increasingly effective writing skills. They write for a good range of purposes and use their literacy skills capably in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils experience a range of interesting activities, so that they gain an increasingly secure knowledge of the four rules of number. Pupils use this knowledge effectively to solve practical problems which are expressed in words rather than figures. The school's commitment to improve standards through the provision of extra classes for older pupils on Saturday mornings is leading to pupils' improved attainment, and is an example of why Christ the King is a Beacon School. In science, pupils benefit from learning through relevant tasks which help them to make sense of scientific ideas.

10. In ICT, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve at levels in line with those expected for their age, with good achievement in some aspects of the subject. Improvements since the last inspection reflect the very good organisation and teaching in the computer suite. In the classroom, teachers are gradually increasing the opportunities for pupils to use and enhance their skills in ICT in other subjects.

11. Good curricular provision and the systematic teaching of skills have ensured that standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music are on course to meet with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Because of the school's good provision for physical education, pupils are likely to achieve in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and exceed them by the end of Year 6. Older pupils benefit from the well-organised opportunities to take part in team games in local competitions.

12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. They are identified at an early stage and realistic targets are set for them to achieve regular success and make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the school's increasingly practical and investigative approach to the teaching and learning of all subjects, and they achieve as well as their classmates. Teaching support is good and teaching assistants help pupils to achieve well in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school because of the teachers' high expectations. Parents of higher-attaining pupils praise the school's provision.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. This concurs with the judgement at the last inspection and these aspects continue to be a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to come to school and their generally very positive attitudes are one reason why their rate of learning is usually very good. There were no exclusions during the last academic year. Most pupils take part enthusiastically in the wide range of extra curricular activities and visits. Nearly all of the 98 parents who answered the parents' questionnaire indicated that their children like school.

Children soon settle in the nursery and get on well with other children and the staff. They keep the simple rules and learn to respect the views of other people. As they grow older, most pupils are happy and generally increase in confidence and enthusiasm. In most lessons, pupils work hard and are eager to join in because they want to live up to their teachers' high expectations. Most pupils are confident to ask and answer questions because relationships are very good and they know that their contributions will be valued. In assemblies, pupils demonstrate their positive attitudes to school by contributing items of work, singing with enthusiasm and celebrating each other's successes and achievements. Pupils with special educational needs join in activities and are equally enthusiastic about school.

14. The behaviour of pupils in lessons, and in and around the school, is generally very good. This is because the school has a clear behaviour policy and it is implemented very well. Pupils move about the school in a quiet and orderly way. They are very polite to visitors and to each other. For example, pupils open doors without being prompted, wait their turn in the tuck shop and take the initiative in offering to help visitors. Most pupils respect property and handle resources well. There is no evidence of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour. During lessons, pupils generally behave very well because teachers control them very effectively, relationships are very good and work is usually interesting and suited to their abilities. This is significant in the good progress made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils clearly understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour and are encouraged to behave well by the school's high expectations and by its comprehensive system of rewards. There are 'golden rules' for the whole school. These provide clear guidelines for what is acceptable, or unacceptable, in school. Pupils negotiate their own classroom rules and share the high aspirations in the golden rules. 'Golden time' – time when pupils enjoy a range of activities of their choice as a reward for good behaviour - is greatly appreciated by the pupils and helps to contribute to the very good behaviour and very positive attitudes.

15. Most pupils respond well to the systems in the school for promoting personal development. As a result of the very good provision for spiritual development, pupils learn to respect and celebrate each person's uniqueness and importance. They understand that there are different systems of belief, and respect the faiths of others. Pupils listen thoughtfully to stories in assembly and talk confidently about friendship and generosity. The school council offers pupils the opportunity to represent the opinions of their peers, and to make important contributions to the running of the school. For example, the council's recommendations led to improvements in the decoration of the toilets and to the implementation of the 'bus stop buddy' system which ensures that pupils are not lonely at playtime. Pupils collaborate very well during lessons. For example, in Year 5, pupils worked together well in researching aspects of life in Ancient Greece. They entered into thoughtful discussions as they worked in a group to produce a poster indicating the importance of olives to the economy of Ancient Greece.

16. Pupils willingly accept responsibility. They help with the smooth running of the school, and older pupils carefully look after younger ones. Pupils in Year 3 discussed how they should show consideration for the caretaker by clearing away after art and craft lessons. Older pupils accept the responsibility for setting up and caring for the toys and games' equipment which pupils use at break time. The school has a well-structured programme for the teaching of personal, social and health education. Pupils have well planned opportunities to listen to others and reflect on their opinions; for example, when they sit in a circle for 'circle time'.

17. Most pupils with special educational needs are very eager to improve their work. They work hard, behave very well and co-operate well. This is because teachers and teaching assistants know them very well, establish very good relationships with them, and present them with work which is challenging and suited to their abilities. They respond very well to the school's very caring and supportive ethos for all pupils in school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have very good attitudes to learning. They are very interested in new work and are keen to contribute.

18. Attendance figures are below the national average and are unsatisfactory. The school

monitors attendance vigilantly and follows up absences rigorously, impressing on parents the importance of regular attendance on their children's academic progress. Rewards, such as certificates, are given to pupils with improved or very good attendance. These measures ensure that most pupils attend regularly and on time, but a significant minority of pupils do not do so.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Learning is promoted very effectively throughout the school because teachers plan lessons very well, teach them at a very good pace and expect a great deal of the pupils. Teachers use a range of methods, from short, sharp sessions of probing questions to longer, focused periods when pupils complete challenging tasks which help them to build effectively on what they already know and understand. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It was never less than good during the inspection. In more than half of the lessons, teaching was very good or better, and some excellent teaching was seen. Teaching was excellent when elements such as the teachers' enthusiasm, knowledge of the subject, use of interesting resources and management of the pupils came together very effectively so that pupils enjoyed the lessons and were involved and productive. In such lessons the pupils' keenness to learn was almost tangible.

20. In the nursery and reception class, teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants have a secure understanding of the needs of young children and of the required curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The stepping-stones of learning, outlined in the curriculum, are planned for carefully. Because a significant proportion of children enter school with weak levels of language, the staff take every opportunity to interact with them, extending their vocabulary and encouraging them to express their ideas. Children's social skills improve as staff reinforce routines, promote independence and encourage thought for the needs and views of others. In the nursery, decision-making is encouraged as children are involved in a very well balanced range of self-chosen and staff-directed activities. This ensures that children have time to explore different ways of learning and of expressing themselves. In the reception class, the 'High Scope' method of planning is used very effectively to help children to make decisions and account for their actions - at the beginning of the session children choose activities and record what they have chosen very simply with pictures or cards, and at the end of the session, staff question them on what they have done.

21. Throughout the school, there is a purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms, and pupils act responsibly as they concentrate. They ask for help when they need it and are confident that the teachers will help them to sort out their problems. A pupil said, 'The teachers seem to always know why you're getting things wrong and they help you to get it right.' Teachers question pupils very well to find out what they know and understand. This questioning is an effective method of assessing what needs to be taught next, and it is used very effectively to inform teachers' planning of lessons. Because relationships in the classroom are very good, teachers can be demanding in their expectations of pupils during quick-fire sessions of mental arithmetic; for example, they can say, 'No', when an answer is wrong. They do not have to suggest that it's 'nearly right', or 'almost there' in order to maintain pupils' self-esteem. When the right answer is eventually given, they return to pupils who gave wrong answers and quickly review the problem and the strategies used to solve it. Simpler questions are then asked so that pupils of all abilities are successful during the lesson. This was very effective in Year 6.

22. Literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively. Teachers implement the nationally recommended strategies very well. The three-part lessons begin with brisk questioning. Teachers ask searching questions which help them to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Activities which follow are carefully planned to suit the needs of all pupils, including those who learn at a faster or slower pace than most pupils. There is challenge for all. During this period, it is noticeable that teachers and teaching assistants interact with pupils very well, helping them to tease out their ideas and improve their work. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 3, the teaching assistant questioned the pupils carefully to identify words in a text which could be used to describe the character of the queen in the story. Teachers are making increasing use of

assessments to help pupils make faster progress in Years 1 and 2.

23. Management of the pupils seems effortless because teachers know the pupils well and are vigilant and supportive. Pupils are encouraged to be productively involved in activities, learning at a very good pace. Occasionally, if pupils' concentration slackens, an adult moves to help them and get them back to work, rather than chastising them or interrupting the learning of other pupils with loud remarks.

24. Teachers use modelling as an effective method of showing pupils what to do. In physical education, teachers identify pupils who are performing well and get them to demonstrate for the rest of the class. For example, in Year 1, the teacher picked out a pupil who performed a dance routine well and the class watched, evaluated and considered how they could improve their own work. Teachers model appropriate work on the board, collaborating with pupils to produce examples of good quality. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, the teacher helped pupils write an interesting paragraph by including metaphors and adjectives to brighten it up. Specialist skills are used productively to strengthen the teaching of some subjects. In some year groups, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and dance are taught by specialist teachers, and the quality of teaching is usually very good in these lessons. Pupils benefit from brisk lessons from knowledgeable staff, and this increases their skills, knowledge and understanding at a very good rate. In ICT, as a result of the school's decision to set up a suite of computers and use a specialist teacher with pupils in Years 5 and 6, standards are rising fast.

25. Teachers use resources very effectively to enhance their teaching and promote pupils' learning. In Year 2, the class was enthralled by the teacher's use of a range of artefacts to enrich work in history. Using the overhead projector as a way to share a text with pupils, she showed a diary entry for 1666, which gave an idea of what happened during the Great Fire of London. The teacher also encouraged pupils to carefully examine a contemporary engraving, to see how people were portrayed fleeing with goods, taking as much as they could as they got away from the fire. In the two classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards linked to computers, teachers illustrate points in their teaching very well; for example, when pupils in Year 4 were considering ways of describing their grandparents. The teacher promoted learning very well by displaying words and pictures of characters, which pupils used to produce work of good quality. Throughout the school, teachers increasingly use ICT to enhance pupils' learning. Appropriate programs are explored in many subjects to enhance pupils' skills and extend their knowledge; for example, to improve spelling and to access information on the Internet. Teachers increasingly use ICT as a regular tool for learning.

26. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the teachers' work at this school. Teachers believe that pupils learn and progress better when they are confident and achieving. Teachers care for the pupils very well and encourage them to care for each other. All pupils are valued, and those from ethnic minorities are integrated very well as teachers thoughtfully and sensitively provide for their particular needs, such as lunchtime prayer. The caring ethos of the school is evident in class liturgies, when pupils often show a deep sense of responsibility as they organise the services and contribute prayers. Teachers promote pupils' personal development in 'circle time', when pupils and adults sit in a circle to discuss social matters. For example, a teacher talked with Year 3 about keeping rules – rules of life and rules in school – and then went on to question the pupils about the kind of rules there might be in the museum they were to visit later in the week. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they say and do.

27. Teaching assistants play a significant role in the teaching of groups of pupils and of individuals. The school's very effective programme of professional training ensures that all who work in the school are well prepared for the tasks they are expected to do. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, and teachers welcome the feedback which helps them improve their work. Teaching assistants are enthusiastic, and all of them have taken advantage of the school's training opportunities and then gained further qualifications at local colleges. As a result, pupils benefit from support of high quality.

28. Pupils with special educational needs learn at a very good rate and, based on their earlier learning, achieve well. The school has achieved a good balance between work done in class and work done in withdrawal groups. The teachers, together with the teaching assistants, the school's co-ordinators for special educational needs and the children's parents, write individual education plans which help pupils learn in a systematic, step-by-step way. Support is very closely linked to these plans. As a result, these pupils achieve regular success and gain confidence which often helps them to return gradually to learn with the rest of the class. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. The strengths of teaching for these pupils are: the teachers' knowledge of any difficulties pupils have in understanding English; the good match of work to the stage of their language development; and the effective teamwork of teachers and support staff to promote their learning. Pupils make rapid progress and soon achieve in line with their peers. Teachers work well with the parents of these pupils to accelerate their learning; for example, when a pupil achieved the expected standards in national tests after being at the school for only a few months.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

29. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes the teaching of religious education, sex education and lessons on the dangers relating to drugs. The effective introduction of national initiatives, such as the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the revised National Curriculum, has improved the quality of teaching and learning. There is very good provision for pupils of all abilities so that they enjoy equal opportunities and benefit from what the school has to offer. For example, there is effective extra support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, those with special educational needs, and those who are falling behind in reading, writing and mathematics. The school recognises the importance of pupils' physical education and gives it more time than most schools

30. The curriculum for pupils in the nursery and reception classes has been introduced very effectively and staff use the 'stepping stones' of learning skilfully in their planning. The six recommended areas of learning are planned imaginatively so that children gradually acquire skills, knowledge and understanding which give them a very good start to their education. There is appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and learning in communication, language and literacy.

31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and the opportunity to succeed. Individual education plans, based on very thorough assessments of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, provide clear targets for improvement and outline the steps taken in order to meet them. Where pupils show exceptional talent in particular subjects, class teachers and subject co-ordinators ensure that curricular provision is enhanced in order to meet their needs. There are very good systems for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. Very good support is provided in lessons and when pupils are withdrawn to work individually or in small groups. The school collaborates very well with outside agencies to ensure that specialist help is available.

32. Pupils in Year 6 gain a great deal from going on a residential outdoor pursuits course which includes orienteering. For example, pupils said, 'We did things I didn't know I could do.' In addition, pupils in Years 3 to 6 take part in lunchtime and after-school activities, which develop their skills, confidence and interests. Activities include sports, athletics, gymnastics, dance, drama, music, computer club and film making. Support from ArtXtra, a locally funded project to promote the arts, has enabled pupils to participate in interesting artistic and creative activities. Teachers enrich the curriculum further with a good range of visits linked to lessons. Visits increase pupils' first hand experience and, in part, make up for the limited opportunities of pupils from a significant number of

homes.

33. Provision for personal, social and health education continues to be very good. For example, all classes learn about healthy eating. Pupils are encouraged to eat fruit at break times. Teachers guide pupils sensitively through consideration of social and environmental issues such as prejudice, pollution and recycling. Sex and drugs education and an introduction to citizenship are very carefully planned into science and religious education lessons and weekly class discussions.

34. The community makes a very important contribution to pupils' learning. For example, generous local financial support ensures that all pupils now have better opportunities to play musical instruments, enjoy adventurous activities, take part in games and sports, get fitter, dance, and visit concerts, historical sites, plays, films and museums.

35. The school has excellent relationships with its partner institutions, particularly the Catholic Church and the local Catholic secondary school to which nearly all pupils transfer. There is, therefore, very effective continuity in pupils' growth in body, mind and spirit. Relationships of very high quality have been forged with the local education authority, local primary schools, the Catholic diocese and the local teacher training college. These relationships energise and support the school's curricular work and influence the school's status as a Beacon school. For example, most teachers are associate tutors of St Martin's teacher training college.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

36. The school has maintained the high quality of provision for pupils' personal development reported at the last inspection. This is because staff work consistently to fulfil the school's mission that 'The character and daily life of the school are centred on the teachings of Jesus Christ'.

37. The school promotes spiritual development very well. It is at the heart of the school's education of the whole child. Knowing well that the school values them, pupils are soon confident and enthusiastic learners. Nearly all, therefore, want to do their best. This is one of the main reasons for the high standards of achievement in the school. Teachers also give pupils very good opportunities in lessons and in worship to consider themselves, to consider others and to contemplate on the nature of the world. Lessons and attractive displays demonstrate to pupils the marvels and laws of both the Creation and civilisation. For example, an ICT program of high quality, used in a science lesson, showed pupils in Year 5 how the relative positions of the earth and the sun affected the size and direction of shadows. Class and school assemblies, liturgies and visits to the parish church, enrich pupils' sense of spirituality. Teachers enable pupils to give as well as receive spiritual experiences. For example, pupils in Year 5 not only take responsibility for their own weekly class liturgies but also reflect on them. They value the peace and relevance of worship which they have helped to plan. Pupils said that 'the room was like a church' and that they were 'part of it – not just a spectator'.

38. Moral education is rooted in the spiritual development of the pupils, and is of an excellent standard. For example, an assembly on friendship and generosity began with the enthusiastic singing of the hymn, 'He came down that we may love.' Pupils listened intently to the parable of 'The Giving Tree'. Because the atmosphere was warm, welcoming and secure, pupils confidently described the good qualities of their friends. They then realised that this applied to school, and that they should give of themselves generously to others. Pupils value and respond extremely well to the systems of rewards which encourage them to persevere with good work and good deeds. For example, although significant numbers of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties, there have been no exclusions for over a year. Simple 'golden rules' furnish a clear code of conduct which all pupils understand and which nearly all follow most of the time. Pupils in Year 3 made an excellent class book of agreed conduct. The teacher illustrated it with photographs of pupils at work and play. The standard of behaviour in lessons was consistently very high. Pupils in Year 1 took to heart the importance of love for one another as the basis for action and relationships, as the teacher read them a story about a teddy giving and receiving presents. They then took great delight

in drawing the picture of a friend, and making and giving each other 'friendship necklaces'. They told the teacher that it made them happy. In the daily life of the school, and, in particular in lessons and assemblies, teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong, the need to consider others and what is the 'right' action.

39. Pupils' social development is promoted very well. Teachers and other staff are very good role models. Lessons of high quality develop social skills very effectively as pupils learn with and from each other. The school is particularly strong in its development of pupils' personal confidence, consideration, reliability and team spirit, through its rich extra-curricular programme; for example, through trips, teams, clubs and events, such as the weekly 'celebration' assembly. Pupils in Year 6 valued the social aspect of their residential course at Borwick Hall; they noted, 'We all found out more about ourselves.' Pupils like to meet and talk to visitors. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility or use their initiative. For example, pupils play key roles in worship and help teachers in preparing classrooms and resources for lessons. Pupils in Year 1 volunteer to 'cheer up' pupils who are upset. There are also many opportunities for pupils to give to charity. Teachers cultivate pupils' sense of belonging to a class and to the school community, and of responsibility within these groups. Pupils are very proud of the school.

40. Provision for cultural development is very good. Well taught lessons in English, religious education, art and design, geography, history and music, increase pupils' knowledge and experience of their own and others' cultures. Other cultures are studied and celebrated, so that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds feel valued and all pupils gain a wider view and understanding of the varied ways of life in contemporary Britain. Pupils' knowledge of a wide range of cultures is promoted in music and art lessons. Visits to plays, films, pantomimes, museums, the local zoo and historic sites, such as Ribchester, further broaden pupils' cultural experiences. Other opportunities to develop pupils' cultural talents include flute and clarinet lessons, the school choir and strong participation in arts events organised in conjunction with local schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school is highly conscious of its duty of care towards pupils and has developed very good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff are knowledgeable and conscientious and supervise pupils carefully. Staff know pupils well and pupils know whom to turn to for help or advice. Parents are satisfied with day-to-day arrangements and feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. The school has made very good arrangements to meet health and safety obligations. These include ensuring that suitably qualified staff administer first aid. Accidents and illness are handled with care and consideration and clear procedures are established. Parents are informed of the school's arrangements for pupils' safe use of the Internet and electronic mail.

42. Very good procedures are in place for child protection. Staff are provided with appropriate advice to guide their responses should they have concerns about a child's welfare. Children in the nursery and reception class are well prepared for life at school. Staff visit their homes and children come into school to get a 'flavour' of what it is like to be away from home. A few children start school at a time so that all are inducted smoothly.

43. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are very good and are effectively used to support pupils whose attendance is erratic or infrequent. There is a culture of non-attendance in a significant number of families, and the school works hard to break this habit. The school and the education welfare service work in partnership to improve attendance rates. The school promotes good attendance by saying what it expects and by giving rewards to pupils who improve their attendance or achieve a very high rate of attendance.

44. Very good procedures have been established for monitoring and promoting high standards of behaviour. These build on work undertaken in personal, social and health education and have

involved pupils in devising the rules. Staff are very good role models and show pupils how to get along together. Support staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a very significant contribution to ensuring good behaviour. The school ensures that there are a wide range of well-managed activities to usefully occupy pupils during break time and lunchtime. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Parents are satisfied that behaviour is well managed and are confident that any concerns are taken seriously and quickly resolved. Parents are pleased that their children like going to school.

45. Pupils' personal development is very well supported through very positive relationships within the school, and through pupils' involvement in a wide range of activities that help them share views, understand issues and make valued contributions to school life. There is a formal programme for personal, social and health education that provides a forum for pupils to express their views and feelings. This guides them in learning how to make responsible choices and how to take an active role in school developments and in developments in the wider world. Events such as 'celebration' assemblies highlight and reward pupils' significant achievements. Opportunities provided for all to help around school and in class support pupils' sense of achievement and self-worth. The school seeks pupils' views and takes their suggestions seriously. As well as contributing to the personal development of all pupils through opportunities to take an active role in school life, the school council provides representatives with significant experience of taking personal and group responsibility. Groups of pupils are involved in projects that help them learn practical and interpersonal skills. The school takes part in fundraising events that help pupils to develop responsible attitudes to the needs of others. Significant aspects of pupils' personal development are included in reports to parents. Parents confirm that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.

46. At the last inspection, the school was judged to be providing effective support for its pupils within a warm, caring family atmosphere. The school continues to provide a safe and caring environment within a framework of well-considered procedures which support and promote the well being of its pupils.

47. The school very carefully monitors the academic performance and personal development of pupils with special educational needs. The very experienced co-ordinator uses very thorough assessment procedures to help plan and set targets for improvement. Pupils and parents have appropriate opportunities to help set targets for improvement in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very thoroughly assessed and their targets for improvement are clear and manageable. The school works very closely with outside agencies, such as the local education authority support services, educational psychologist, social services and speech therapy. In this way the school aims to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and the opportunity to succeed. The school meets all statutory requirements for the provision of statements of special educational needs. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to 'exercise their brains' in a simple, structured programme of exercises at the beginning of lessons. This helps them to settle down and to concentrate. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are treated with great patience and given relaxation exercises at the beginning of individual sessions of support; this helps them to focus on what is being taught. Arrangements to assess the achievements and progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language have improved since the last inspection and are now very good.

48. The school has very thorough and comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are tested regularly using a range of assessments including National Curriculum tests. The school very carefully analyses its results. This identifies areas that need improvement and helps with planning. For example, in mathematics the school identified the need to provide more practical measuring activities, while in English results of analysis were used to set targets for improving reading and writing in different ability groups. In Years 1 and 2, the monitoring of pupils' progress in reading is not sufficiently rigorous. The school keeps careful records in English, mathematics and science so that pupils' progress can be followed and future attainment can be more reliably predicted. The school has effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the other subjects. These assist with planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. As at the time of the last inspection, the school continues to work well in partnership with parents and helps them become actively involved in their children's education. Overall, parents hold the school in very high esteem with very few expressing concerns. Parents are pleased that it has high expectations of pupils' work and helps their children become mature and responsible. They believe that teaching and behaviour are good, find the staff approachable and feel well informed about how their children are getting on. A number of parents are unhappy about homework and extra-curricular activities, and feel that the school does not work closely enough with them. Parents' general satisfaction with the school is endorsed by this inspection.

50. The school provides parents with information of a high quality, and seeks their views on school life as a contribution to new developments. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents provide straightforward information about school procedures, the curriculum and test results, but showing clearly throughout both documents are the attitudes and values that the school likes to promote. Teachers are readily available to speak to parents informally on a day-to-day basis, or more formally with an appointment. Written reports tell parents effectively how their children are progressing both academically and in their personal development. Parents are invited to comment on reports and there are opportunities for parents to discuss them with the teachers. Parents are sent frequent newsletters which contain information about activities at the school and in the wider community. The school runs courses for parents, promoting new skills which they can then share with their children. Financial support from central government through 'Sure Start' helps the school to enhance pupils' learning in this way.

51. Parents of children new to the nursery and the reception class are given helpful information and can come to meetings to find out about what their children will be learning and doing at school. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved from an early stage in discussions with the school about pupils' needs, targets for improvement, individual education plans, statements and reviews. The headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers readily respond to concerns from parents and carers. The school has very good links with parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language; this helps to improve the quality of support provided for these pupils.

52. The school is committed to working closely with parents and provides a wide range of opportunities for parents and staff to work together. Many parents are deeply involved in the work of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning. The vast majority ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually, and that they are dressed in school uniform and that they are suitably equipped for the day's activities. Many parents hear their children read, ensure that homework is completed and returned on time, and write messages to staff explaining how they think their children are getting on. Unfortunately, a significant minority of parents do not help their children by listening to them read at home, and this has an adverse effect on reading standards in the school. The staff work with these parents, through day-to-day contact and parenting classes, to promote reading at home – with some success.

53. A persistent minority of parents bring their children to school late or keep them away from school, often without saying why. The school recognises the difficulties some parents face and provides opportunities for parents to discuss them, with the possibility that they may be offered some help. On the other hand, parents are often very open when confronted about their children's poor attendance or punctuality, and are very willing to give reasons for absence and offer to try harder to comply with the requirement for their children to attend school regularly.

54. Some parents are reluctant to get involved with school activities, but a significant number are very much involved in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to their children's academic and personal development. A small group of hardworking parents, staff and friends of

the school welcome all other parents to its meetings. Very few attend but many rally round and make donations and provide practical help with fundraising and social events. Most parents attend these events and concerts, sports days and celebration assemblies organised by staff. Funds raised by parents, friends and staff are used to buy learning resources, to help improve safety and security in the school and to pay for school trips. A number of parents, grandparents and friends work in the school, some on special projects; for instance, several people work as trained volunteers to support pupils' reading.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The aims and values of the school are strongly promoted through the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who provides educational direction of very high quality for the school. During the short time since her appointment, she has established her position securely and embraced the high ideals promoted consistently since the last inspection. She is ably supported by the conscientious and talented deputy headteacher, committed senior teachers and hardworking subject co-ordinators. The school's inclusive atmosphere is based on the very strong Christian ethos which values every member of the community. The school demonstrates its status as a 'Beacon School' in its strong management of the curriculum. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. The management of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very effective so that children get a very good start to their education. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language are soon integrated into school life. Throughout the school, staff work together as a team. There is a very high level of commitment to very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This leads to a shared commitment to improvement and an excellent capacity for the school to succeed in its aims.

56. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and very effectively, so that teachers find ways to overcome any identified weaknesses in curricular provision or teaching methods. In Years 1 and 2, increasingly detailed monitoring of reading is helping pupils to progress more quickly. Monitoring of lessons has focused on general principles of teaching and learning and on literacy, numeracy, science, ICT and music. There are clear plans for a rolling programme of classroom monitoring in all subjects.

57. All co-ordinators monitor teachers' plans and pupils' work. Teachers are keen to improve their work and, because the monitoring process is implemented sensitively and with agreed criteria, they recognise the benefits which accrue from feedback after monitoring. Staff new to the school, particularly newly qualified teachers, benefit especially from the support given by senior teachers. The school's implementation of procedures for performance management of staff is very good. Procedures are used very well to carry forward improvements identified in the school's development plan. It is a telling judgement on the high quality of the school's procedures for monitoring teachers' work that the nursery nurses and teaching assistants are keen to join in the performance management process. Plans are in hand for this, after appropriate discussions and agreement on methods. Because of the school's very effective management of staff development, the match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good.

58. Governors play a significant role in the leadership and management of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. During a difficult period when the school had no permanent headteacher, the governors worked very effectively with the deputy headteacher to maintain standards and keep the school running efficiently. As a result, the high standard of leadership and management has been maintained since the last inspection. The chair of governors fulfils his role as 'critical friend' very well in discussing issues and offering advice to the headteacher. Governors spend time in school to show their interest and gain a broader view of what goes on. Governors with specific roles fulfil them very well; for example, when governors work with teachers to become more knowledgeable about aspects such as special educational needs, literacy and numeracy.

59. The process for the evaluation of the school's work is very good, so that governors have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors seek the views of pupils, parents, staff, the parish community and their own committees in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the school's work. These views, together with analysis of the school's performance in national and school tests, information from the monitoring of teaching and learning and guidance from subject co-ordinators, feeds effectively into the annual plan for school development. The information is also used by governors for longer-term strategic planning; for example, in considering the development of the school grounds to enhance opportunities for pupils' social and academic development. Planning includes the enhancement of professional skills and knowledge for all staff, including administrative and caretaking staff. There is a clear focus on meeting the targets set with the local educational authority to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Targets for 2002 were exceeded in mathematics but, despite the hard work of pupils and staff, were not met in English. Challenging targets have been set for 2003. Resources are considered, as governors are keen to ensure that staff and pupils have appropriate equipment of good quality to carry out their work. Overall, current accommodation and resources are satisfactory and co-ordinators are providing governors with valuable information from audits which identify where improvements could be made. Improvement of the centrally located library facilities is needed in order to extend pupils' research skills in Years 3 to 6.

60. Financial planning is very good, and funding for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, is used very effectively. 'Beacon' status funding has enabled the school to provide staff training of high quality for its own staff and also for teachers from other schools. Shared funding with local schools for 'Sure Start' enables the school to extend its work well. The school looks for ways to attract further funding; for example, in the bid with other local schools for a shared floodlit play area and to set up Network Learning Communities – a group of primary and secondary schools who work together to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching and learning. The governors' finance committee monitors spending regularly and bases its reviews and decisions on good levels of current advice. In the last financial year, there were difficulties in managing the school's budget because of changes in the procedures of the local education authority, but these were resolved effectively. The school's own efficient accounting records kept the management well informed. Governors consider 'best value' in their spending. They look for improvements in pupils' attainment and welfare when they have directed funding to particular areas of school development; for example, in ICT, where standards of pupils' attainment have risen. ICT is used very effectively in the administration of the school: in managing financial matters, timetabling and planning lessons and recording assessments of pupils' progress.

61. Bearing in mind that pupils achieve very well overall and have very positive attitudes to school, the teaching is very good, the leadership is excellent and the management is very good, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to further raise standards in the school:

(i) *Improve standards in reading by the end of Year 2 by:

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to read individually to adults;
- Closer monitoring of the teaching and learning of reading.

(Paragraphs 6, 8, 22, 48, 56, 78, 81, 87)

(ii) *Improve attendance figures by:

Following through the school's well-planned strategies to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly and on time, and stressing the importance of good attendance on the children's personal and academic progress.

(Paragraphs 2, 18, 42)

**The school has identified these areas for improvement and is already addressing them.*

Other aspects which the governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improving library facilities and establishing a plan to extend the research skills of pupils in Years 3 to 6.

(Paragraphs 9, 59, 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	22	21	0	0	0	0
Percentage	10	46	44	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	199
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	79

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.96
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.78
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	20	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (83)	92 (86)	96 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	20	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (93)	81 (100)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	15
	Girls	11	13	14
	Total	23	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (77)	90 (73)	97 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	14
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	22	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (77)	87 (77)	90 (73)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
186	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	562,458
Total expenditure	554,607
Expenditure per pupil	2,592
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,127
Balance carried forward to next year	36,978

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	98

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	30	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	32	6	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	39	10	1	1
The teaching is good.	69	26	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	34	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	19	3	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	25	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	32	7	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	67	24	2	5	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	29	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	27	7	1	5

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment, but overall levels of attainment are well below those usually seen for three-year-olds. Attainment in language is particularly weak, and standards are also low in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress overall and, by the end of the reception class, are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development. Despite good achievement due to the very good teaching and well-planned curricular provision, most children do not reach the goals for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The staff are vigilant in identifying any children who have special educational needs, and these children are very well supported so that they progress well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are soon integrated into the life of the school because they are valued and appreciated. All children's progress and attainment are assessed regularly in both the nursery and reception classes, and teachers use the information from these assessments very well to plan lessons and activities which match the needs of all children. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants play a significant role in the teaching process and they work very effectively with groups of children. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Teaching is of very good quality, and children soon settle into the school's routines because they are guided and supported well by experienced staff. With sensitive support, children in the nursery concentrate for increasing lengths of time and develop greater levels of independence in dressing and personal hygiene. For some, this is a significant step, as they come to school with weak social skills. Girls and boys are encouraged to play and work together; opportunities are provided, for example, for boys to be nurses and girls to be doctors, to avoid stereotyping. The teacher and the nursery nurse listen well to the children, and are patient in the way they spend time with them to ensure that the simple, well-founded classroom rules are understood. The strong moral ethos of the school is evident in the way children's self control becomes stronger and they gradually develop an understanding of right and wrong. Children become increasingly confident in asking for help. They show a developing sense of responsibility as they help to clear up and keep the classroom tidy; for example, when a boy accidentally spilt sand on the floor and quickly got the dustpan and brush to sweep it up.

65. When children join the reception class, they adapt confidently to the brisker pace of lessons because of the very good teaching and support. The staff promote children's independence through the 'High Scope' method of teaching and learning, whereby children choose two or three activities from a given list and are expected to do what they have chosen and report on what they have done at the end of the lesson. Because of the growing sense of trust and responsibility, children develop good self-esteem and improved levels of attention which help them to learn at a good rate. They play happily with older pupils in the playground and move around the school sensibly; for example, when they go to the hall for singing. In both the nursery and the reception class, relationships are very good. Increasingly, children consider the needs and views of other people; for example, when they share equipment, listen to one another in discussions and learn about different cultures and ways of life. The staff provide very good role models. They avoid criticism, and guide children towards doing the right things.

Communication, language and literacy

66. In both the nursery and the reception class, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. In the nursery, children talk to one another as they play and learn together. They chat in the 'home corner' and as they play with sand, roll and shape dough and play with 'small world' toys such as the doll's house and the small teddy bears. A significant number of children have speech difficulties, but they all want to communicate and share their thoughts. The staff are skilful in extending conversations so that children sort out their ideas and become more confident and able to explain what they mean. Children enjoy nursery rhymes and looking at the interesting and exciting range of books in the well-organised book corner. Children 'read' stories by following the illustrations, and staff encourage them to look at words; for example, in the titles of books. Displays are labelled well so that children gradually connect words with topics. The teacher's plans include rhymes and stories which link with topics such as 'the weather'. Children sing and say rhymes such as 'The north wind doth blow' and 'Here we go round the mulberry bush on a cold and frosty morning'. Writing is encouraged, and there are opportunities for children to write in nearly all parts of the room; for example, when paper and pencils are placed strategically by the telephone in the home corner. Although children's making of marks on paper is often immature for their age, they want to communicate and happily write notes and messages.

67. In the reception class, staff build well on the good start children made in the nursery. Children are encouraged to contribute to discussions and to use appropriate vocabulary as they describe things. Throughout the day, the nursery nurse and teaching assistants help children to express their ideas and speak clearly. In discussions, most children talk to the class confidently but they need help to say exactly what they mean. The teacher works well with small groups of children of similar ability; in particular, the teaching of letter sounds and shapes is very good indeed. Children learn through well-focused activities which are taught at a very good pace. The teacher uses a very good range of resources and games in which all the children are involved. The sense of fun helps children enjoy learning. Slower-learning children consolidate and reinforce their knowledge before they move on to the next step, and children who learn more quickly press on with suitably more difficult work, so that all are challenged. The teacher has high expectations of all the children. There is daily work on sounds, and higher-attaining children gradually blend sounds together to make words. Few children read simple texts, but all children enjoy looking at books and they recognise that script is read from left to right. Writing is encouraged, as in the nursery, and more formal work is introduced as the year progresses. All children record their choice of activities each day. Some children copy pictures to describe what they are going to do. Most make marks below their pictures, and higher-attaining children copy the teacher's writing legibly. Few children show any sense of narrative in their writing, though higher-attaining children begin to do so by the time they join Year 1.

Mathematical development

68. In the nursery, children develop mathematical skills in practical ways throughout the day, and teaching is very good. Through a wide range of sorting, matching and ordering activities, they develop a growing vocabulary to express number, shape, size and colour. In story time, children learn about the 'Three Bears', and order them by size. As they play in the sand and water, children are encouraged to talk about 'more' and 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. The nursery nurse works skilfully with children during social sessions, such as snack time, when she gets the children to count and share as they sort out the drinks and the food. In a very good session, the teacher worked very effectively with children, questioning them closely and encouraging them to explain their answers, to reinforce and extend their understanding of counting and numbers as they matched numerals with pictures of objects. In story time, children extend their counting skills as they sing counting songs such as 'Five little birds sitting in a tree'. The staff promote children's mathematical development in outdoor activities, too, and encourage children to appreciate natural shapes, and to play and count with natural objects, such as leaves, seeds, stones and twigs. Children look carefully at the different shapes and colours of leaves and organise them attractively in an art and craft activities.

69. In the reception class, the early stages of the National Numeracy Strategy are gradually introduced. In addition to the mathematical ideas incorporated into activities such as story telling, art and craft and playing with construction kits, children benefit from very good teaching in small

groups, when specific mathematical ideas are developed. The teacher begins these sessions with brisk games and questions which keep children focused and maintain their interest. As a result, children build effectively on what they already know. Next the children work individually or in pairs with the teacher to reinforce what has been taught. The children then have time to play with the equipment to consolidate their learning. Higher attaining children understand 'one more' and 'one less', and average-attaining children do so with help. The progress of lower-attaining children is hampered by their weak language skills. Support staff intervene well to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary. The sessions are very well organised and children enjoy them because of the encouraging and supportive approach of the staff. All children are challenged; brighter children do well, and all achieve well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. In the nursery, children develop early investigative skills as they explore the school grounds and learn about seasonal changes during the year. They sow seeds and learn that plants need water to grow. In the autumn, they collect leaves and observe them closely through magnifying glasses. Higher-attaining children talk about what they can see and say they can 'see things bigger'. Very good teaching ensures that maximum value, in terms of children's learning, comes from such activities. Many children have limited experiences of the area outside school and know little about the wider world. The staff take the children for walks, read books with them and bring visitors into school to widen children's knowledge and bring relevance to their learning; for example, when an Asian parent came in to cook with the children. The teacher and nursery nurse bring a sense of fun to the children's learning; for example, when they freeze water, containing small toys, inside balloons. There is a sense of excitement when the children find the toys as the ice melts. Staff make the most of the well-developed school garden. They encourage the children to use their five senses and to use scientific equipment. Children use binoculars to look at birds and make simple charts to record the kinds they have seen. Care for wild life and the environment is promoted as children put food out for the birds. Children's understanding in science and technology develops well as they make porridge and talk about the changes which have occurred during the cooking. The overriding benefit of this work is that it enhances children's experiences and extends their vocabulary. Staff do it all very well. Skills in design and technology and ICT are developed well as children make models and explore simple programs on the computer.

71. In the reception class, the very good teaching continues and children enjoy learning about the world around them. The staff prepare stimulating activities which engage pupils' interest and sustain their concentration; for example, when children listen to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', which is linked with learning about creatures and new life. Children's scientific understanding is developed as children consider how they themselves have grown and changed since they were babies. Children become more adventurous as they make models from construction kits and develop appropriate skills for evaluating their work. Children learn more about the wider environment and develop early geographical skills as they explore the school grounds and make simple maps. On the computer, they play simple games and gradually extend their skills in responding to signals; they drag images across the screen, match pictures and reinforce their learning in literacy and numeracy. Children join and fix components with increasing skill and make models of simple vehicles and buildings from construction kits. Most children's understanding of the wider world is hindered by their narrow experiences and weak language skills prior to joining the school, but the staff do very well in the nursery and reception classes to compensate for these deficiencies. Staff are enthusiastic, caring and imaginative in their provision for the children.

Physical development

72. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, children run, jump, climb and balance with confidence and develop appropriate levels of muscular control and co-ordination. Most children move around with an awareness of space and are controlled and purposeful. This comes about because teachers ensure that there is a range of equipment available for children to practise balancing, climbing, sliding, and riding on wheeled toys.

Teachers plan well for the children to develop skills for handwriting, cutting, modelling with construction kits and painting. Children's manipulative control improves and, by the time they join the reception class, they demonstrate satisfactory control in making models from construction kits, using paintbrushes and scissors and practising letter shapes. Children handle pencils with varying degrees of success as they make marks in the well-organised writing areas.

73. Children in the reception class run about the playground safely and play games confidently. Very good provision includes opportunities for children in the reception class to use the nursery equipment regularly, and children also enjoy well-planned physical education lessons. In both the nursery and the reception class, children have many opportunities to use simple craft equipment, construct models from reclaimed materials, model with dough, play with model vehicles and build with construction kits. The children's models made from construction kits become more complex; for example when they add trailers to wheeled vehicles.

Creative development

74. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Both classrooms are organised effectively to provide opportunities for children's creative development. In the nursery, children practise making marks with thick brushes and bright colours and use a wide variety of paints, colour sticks, papers and malleable materials, such as modelling dough. Higher-attaining pupils draw and paint pictures well, showing detailed features. Activities are planned to be inviting so that children experiment with a range of materials, use their imagination and enjoy what they do. Children dab, swirl and stroke the paint onto paper to make bold patterns. They create bright pictures of themselves, print with a variety of objects and explore contrasting colours. Musical activities are linked well to other areas of learning; for example, when children sing songs about autumn, or the weather. They extend their imaginative skills as they pretend to keep house and be mothers and fathers in the home corner.

75. In the reception class, children extend their skills and create pictures and collages with a wide range of materials, including fabric and pasta. Children join with older pupils to sing songs with more words and more complicated rhythms. They use tape recorders confidently to listen to music, and they play percussion instruments to perform for one another. Excellent teaching was observed when the teacher encouraged the children to listen carefully, repeat rhythms and create short sequences of notes on chime bars. The teacher plans well to ensure that children have a wide range of opportunities to exercise their imagination and benefit from creative and expressive activities. Children's artwork is displayed attractively to promote the children's self-esteem and brighten the classroom.

ENGLISH

76. By the end of the school year, pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve nationally expected standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This represents very good achievement from the well below language standards of many pupils when they start school. More than three-quarters of Year 6 pupils are in line to reach the standard expected for their age by the end of the year. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. This is because the school has consistently improved boys' standards over the last four years.

77. The school's performances in the national English tests for pupils in Year 6 tell the same story. For example, in the 2002 tests, pupils' standards were in line with national averages, with a third of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their ages. Standards were very much higher than those reached by pupils in schools similar to Christ the King. These results show that very good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to achieve their best.

78. Standards in reading and writing are below those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2. They are also lower than those reported at the last inspection. This appears to reflect lower

language standards when pupils first come to school and many pupils' limited speech skills. However, there is good achievement in writing in view of many children's very low language standards when they start in the nursery. Although reading standards have improved since last year, they are not yet high enough. The standard of pupils' speech improves in Years 1 and 2, but is still lower than expected for pupils' ages in Year 2.

79. Speaking and listening skills develop well in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils are good listeners' but lower-attaining pupils still find it difficult to listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's questions and answers all the time. However, teachers expect and develop high standards of concentration, hold pupils' interest and create a good atmosphere for work in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 listened intently to their teacher's very expressive reading of a poem called 'Washday'. The teacher also set an excellent example of listening by hearing pupils out fully even when they were struggling to find the words to express their ideas.

80. Most pupils in Year 6 speak confidently. For example, a group described in detail and expressively how, in history, they had found out about Blackpool in Victorian times. In a geography lesson in Year 6, pupils talked with their teacher for over 40 minutes about issues related to the use of water from the River Severn. Higher-attaining pupils expressed their views well. The teacher questioned lower-attaining pupils well to ensure that they gained confidence and contributed to the discussion. Confident speech in assemblies shows that pupils are not afraid to speak in public.

81. Pupils are not making enough progress in reading in Years 1 and 2. Through daily practice in the literacy hour they build on the good teaching and learning of letter sounds in the Foundation Stage. However, progress is slow because average and lower-attaining pupils do not retain this key basic reading skill. Pupils' ability to find information from books using indexes and contents pages is as expected for their ages. Higher-attaining pupils read fluently. Average and lower-attaining pupils read with much less expression and understanding. Most continue to need some help, as they rely too much on pictures and guessing. Although most pupils are not fluent readers, they do enjoy books. As one pupil put it, 'I imagine I'm doing it.'

82. Reading standards are as expected for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Nine out of ten pupils in Year 6 reached the standard for their ages in last year's national tests. High quality teaching is enabling pupils in Years 4 and 5 to catch up. Many lower-attaining pupils lose interest in reading by themselves, because it is too much of a struggle. Other pupils often miss meanings which are suggested rather than stated. In Year 6 higher attaining pupils do a lot of reading by themselves, often of favourite writers. Teachers use literacy hours well to improve the reading skills of pupils of all abilities. Nearly all pupils read their own and other pupils' writing accurately by the end of Year 6 and use dictionaries effectively to improve the quality of their work. They use indexes to find information in books. However, library skills are not developed well enough; for example, pupils do not know how to use catalogues and number systems to find information. This is partly because the school has inadequate library facilities and no planned programme to develop pupils' library skills. However, there is a good supply of non-fiction in each classroom for pupils to use in subjects such as history and geography.

83. Pupils make good progress in writing, because the school has worked hard to raise standards. As teachers closely link reading and writing work, pupils in Years 1 and 2 quickly learn to link the shapes of letters to their sounds. Average and higher-attaining pupils retell stories in sentences with capital letters and full stops. However, shortcomings in speech and reading limit the range of words that pupils use in stories. Although most pupils demonstrate a sense of narrative by the end of Year 2, few describe characters or places in any depth, extend ideas or use interesting vocabulary in their work. Average and higher-attaining pupils use simple dictionaries and read back their own writing to correct and improve expression. Most lower-attaining pupils confidently read their own writing aloud.

84. In Years 3 to 6, teachers use literacy lessons well to build up pupils' experience of writing in a wide range of forms. For example, they write stories, letters, brochures, drama scripts and poems. Pupils achieve well because teachers continue to link reading and writing closely.

Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well in history (narrative writing), in science (individual recording of observations) and in design and technology (planning and evaluation). Very thorough marking and regular writing for homework in Years 5 and 6 improve achievement. This is because pupils know that teachers expect a lot of them, praise real effort, and point out the next steps clearly. The school also encourages pupils to describe their experiences and feelings. As a result pupils' writing develops a clear personal voice. Pupils in Year 2 wrote that they wanted to 'get better at maths', 'swim for longer' and 'skip better.' A pupil in Year 6 reflected that: 'I can't do anything without trying.'

85. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is never less than good and during the inspection, ranged between good and excellent. The main strengths of teaching throughout the school are:

- excellent relationships which encourage pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to contribute well to learning in class;
- teachers' very good knowledge of English and of each pupil's understanding, resulting in confident teaching and effective learning;
- the high level of effective support for lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language;
- the good quality of resources which keep pupils interested;
- the good match and challenge of tasks to each pupil's needs;
- the effective use of paired conversations to improve pupils' speech.

86. This high quality of the teaching is the main reason for pupils' good achievement by the end of Year 6. Teachers use the strategies for the literacy lessons well, but the school does not do enough to encourage individual reading beyond literacy lessons. Standards by the end of Year 2 do not compare well with national standards for the age group, but teachers do very well to compensate for pupils' low attainment on entry to the school and help them to build a secure foundation for future learning. The Beacon School status reflects the very good achievement of pupils at Christ the King from entry to the end of Year 6.

87. The main area for improvement is closer monitoring of each pupil's individual reading in Years 1 and 2, which the school is already addressing. The learning of some pupils is impeded by the lack of opportunities to read to adults. The school provides as many opportunities as possible and many parents help their children with reading at home, but a significant number do not.

88. In the best lessons teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved all the time in speaking, reading and writing. For example, pupils in Years 5 made very good progress in understanding characters in a story. This was because the lesson was brisk and the teacher spoke very clearly, discussed effective and ineffective questions and used role-play very well. The teacher used the electronic whiteboard very well to keep the pupils' interest and reinforce their learning. ICT is used well as pupils word-process their writing and present their prose and poetry in a range of fonts and colours.

89. Skilled support staff significantly improve the standards of pupils with particular language difficulties by tutoring them in small groups or one-to-one. They also raise morale and stop pupils falling behind. The effectiveness of their work shows in the good progress and achievement of bilingual and lower-attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language.

90. Good leadership and management have underpinned the rise in standards in the national tests in 2002. There has also been an increase over the last three years in the number of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their ages. Well-focused monitoring of teaching and learning has led to consistent methods of teaching in the literacy hour throughout the school, but more monitoring of pupils' reading is needed in Years 1 and 2. The school has established the literacy hour well and is constantly improving the quality and effectiveness of assessment procedures.

MATHEMATICS

91. Standards are in line with the findings of the last inspection, when standards were average by the end of Year 6. Most current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve nationally expected standards for their age, with approximately a quarter of pupils on course to achieve the higher level. By the end of the school year, pupils in Year 2 are also likely to achieve nationally expected standards for their age. Current attainment is not as high as last year in Year 6; differences in results from year to year occur because of the different abilities of pupils and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. No significant difference was observed between the performance of girls and boys in lessons.

92. Significant factors in the generally high achievement of pupils are:

- the overall very good and sometimes excellent quality of teaching;
- the good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to help raise standards;
- the very good use of thorough assessment procedures to set targets for improvement in pupils' attainment;
- the good links between mathematics and other subjects;
- the teachers' consistently good use of specific mathematical vocabulary in lessons.

93. Following the analysis of the school's performance in national tests, teachers now provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their problem solving skills. One approach to this has been to challenge older pupils to investigate a specific problem each week, and initiatives of this sort are helping pupils to improve their performance. In Year 2, pupils combined their mathematical and reading comprehension skills when they worked accurately on problem-solving work, and pupils in Year 4 correctly tackled problems described in words involving division and multiplication. Pupils are adept at devising and explaining their own methods for solving problems in mental arithmetic sessions because teachers ask probing questions and ensure that pupils express their ideas clearly. The school has successfully addressed a particular criticism from the last inspection - that it should create opportunities for pupils to engage in more investigative activities.

94. Teachers reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics by planning links with other subjects. For example, in history in Year 5, pupils used a time line to calculate how long it was between the Ancient Greeks and the present. In design and technology, pupils in Year 4 used their knowledge of circles in making books, and in art and design, Year 2 pupils reinforced their understanding of vertical and horizontal lines. Pupils collect information and use ICT to present it in a variety of interesting graphs and charts.

95. Most pupils develop an increasingly secure understanding of number relationships and place value. For example, pupils in Year 2 understand place value and can sequence odd and even numbers. Pupils in Year 5 confidently worked with the four operations of number (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division), and showed increasing understanding of place value when they broke large numbers into parts. Lower-achieving pupils worked with smaller numbers and practised their basic computational skills. By Year 6, most pupils work accurately with fractions and percentages. They recognise the mean, mode and median as different measures of average, and use and interpret co-ordinates in some quadrants. Higher-achieving pupils use and interpret co-ordinates in all quadrants. Good progress in number work throughout the school is achieved because teachers have very good subject knowledge and, as a result, are able to teach the basic skills very well. Teachers generally insist on high standards of presentation. This supports the accuracy of pupils' work. For example, pupils in Year 2 are helped to measure length accurately and show a thorough understanding of three-dimensional shapes because their work is set out clearly. This is extended in Year 3, when pupils confidently refer to faces, vertices and edges and know which measurements of length are appropriate in various circumstances. Similarly, attention to accuracy enabled pupils in Year 5 to calculate the angles in different types of triangles. It helped

Year 6 pupils to use and interpret different types of chart which has been used to record results of investigations into saturated solutions which they carried out in science.

96. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide helpful and supportive comments so that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. They often work alongside pupils clarifying pupils' understanding by working through examples in their books. In Year 4, the teacher challenged pupils to extend their skills, 'Can you think of an equivalent fraction for three-sixths and four-eighths?' Teachers generally plan their work very carefully and share the lesson objectives with pupils so that they too have a clear understanding of what is expected. This helps lessons run smoothly and focuses pupils' attention on the tasks to be carried out. Work in class is reinforced effectively by homework. Pupils' uncertainties are often sorted out when useful comments are made by parents who are helping their children do their homework – a good example of home and school partnership.

97. Teachers are very careful to plan work which is suited to pupils' abilities so that they are challenged to progress at their own levels. An example of this was when the teacher in Year 3 required pupils to create patterns of numbers, arranged in a pyramid shape. Higher-attaining pupils created their own patterns, pupils of average ability finished off partly completed pyramids and then produced some of their own, and pupils of lower-ability finished off partly completed patterns with help from the teaching assistant. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping to raise standards. They are very experienced, well trained and work closely with class teachers to support pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on work in class or when they are withdrawn for individual or group work. This is because the teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff work together very closely to ensure that work is very well suited to these pupils' needs. Where pupils show special talent in mathematics class teachers and the subject co-ordinator work together closely to make sure that activities in class and the homework extend these pupils' knowledge and understanding. A measure of the school's commitment to improve standards is seen in the arrangements the school makes to provide extra classes for older pupils on Saturday mornings.

98. Teachers manage pupils very well and present their work in lively and interesting ways. This helps pupils to behave very well and sustains their interest. For example, in Year 4, because the teacher had good control and made good use of the interactive white board, pupils behaved very well and were eager to learn more about number sequences. Because relationships are very good, pupils are very keen and confident to develop their own methods of calculation and to recall facts about numbers. They know that their efforts are valued and respected. This was the case, for example, in their work on number patterns and odd and even numbers, pupils in Year 3 were confident to make suggestions and answer questions because the teacher said, 'It's okay to make mistakes. We are all different.' In the excellent teaching in Year 6, pupils worked hard and sustained their concentration because the teacher asked challenging questions ensuring that the whole class was involved, and maintained a very brisk pace. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well integrated and they achieve in line with their peers.

99. The subject is very well managed by the knowledgeable and very experienced co-ordinator, who has a very clear understanding of how the subject is to develop further. He monitors teaching and learning effectively, supports other members of staff well, has high expectations and is very enthusiastic and committed to raising standards for all pupils.

SCIENCE

100. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained throughout the school, and pupils are on course to achieve standards in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have risen nationally over the past four years, and the performance of pupils at Christ the King has outstripped the national trend dramatically. This has happened because:

- the school provides increasingly well-planned, challenging activities;
- teachers' knowledge of the subject, especially in Years 3 to 6, has been enhanced through well-organised professional training so that they are more secure with what they have to teach;
- the school has become more adept at analysing test results and setting targets;
- girls and boys are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups.

101. Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress because they build systematically on their earlier learning. As they increase their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, pupils know that animals produce offspring of their own kind. They investigate how they themselves have grown and compare what they can do now with what they could do when they were babies. In Year 1, pupils' interest was engaged as they explored how they used their senses. They recorded what they saw, heard and tasted as they enjoyed a 'teddy bears' picnic'. Pupils enjoy science. The school's approach nurtures their natural curiosity about the world and how things work. Pupils' understanding of forces is developed well. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher used simple resources to help pupils to understand the forces of pulling and pushing. The pupils twisted pieces of string and noticed how they were pushing and pulling as they did so. Teaching assistants give very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

102. In Year 6, pupils' achievement is good, and pupils increasingly use specific vocabulary. Investigative and experimental science is given a high profile and pupils are secure with prediction and fair testing and regularly use graphs to present their data. They explore food chains and know that all chains start with plants. Pupils have good background knowledge of environmental issues and other social and moral aspects of the subject. They show a sensitive attitude and appropriate respect for life, living things and the environment. Pupils record their work very well; higher attaining pupils organise their findings independently in a variety of tables, charts and narrative. Girls and boys work well together, and pupils enjoy science lessons. By the end of a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils knew that movement by the sun across the sky is an illusion, and that the earth spins on its own axis. Pupils in Year 4 work well in pairs and groups and understand that some materials are better heat insulators than others. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all of these activities because of the skilful intervention by teachers and the very good levels of support from teaching assistants.

103. The overall quality of teaching has remained good throughout the school since the last inspection. This has been achieved through effective professional training, the monitoring of teachers' planning and the teachers' effective use of appropriate teaching styles. Teachers start lessons by reviewing earlier work and setting out clear objectives for the new lesson. At the end of lessons, teachers ask the class if they think the objectives have been achieved. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning, as it helps them to recognise how much they have gained in lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, particularly with explanation of the scientific vocabulary used within the lesson. Pupils are engaged in a variety of activities, according to their ability and level of skill. The very good reports produced by pupils in Year 6 showed that all had been engrossed by their tasks and had made excellent progress in understanding the sequence of predators in a food chain. Teachers ask searching questions and sensitively extend pupils' answers by probing further to develop their understanding. This maintains the attention of the whole class and, as a result, the lesson moves along at a good pace. Because of the teachers' very good attention to engaging all pupils in discussions, pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make valuable contributions and benefit from the high quality of the teaching. Teachers use the school's marking system very well to make pupils aware of how well they are doing and what they could do better.

104. The school has developed the curriculum for science well. Together with the emphasis on practical investigation, there has been keen attention to the development of specific scientific skills. The depth of their writing and its presentation show that pupils are increasingly using the skills learnt in English lessons. As they measure, make graphs and make comparisons, pupils practise and use their mathematical skills appropriately in science.

105. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a secure scientific background and is established as a good role model and teacher. Staff are supported very well with sound advice and ideas on how to teach particular aspects of science.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Significant factors in the good progress are the use that is made of art in other subjects to extend and reinforce pupils' skills, and the wide range of media, materials and techniques experienced by the pupils. Also important is the good quality of teaching which brings about attractive and well-executed work by pupils.

107. In Year 1, pupils produced attractive collage portraits using a range of materials as they studied different textures. The work of less able pupils was less well presented because their sticking and cutting skills were less well developed. In Year 2, pupils produced well-finished collage designs using bark which they had collected on a forest walk, after studying the work of Andy Goldsworthy. In Year 3, pupils extended their skills in collage; for example, in their historical work, when they produced a well-researched and produced model of an Egyptian queen. There was some interesting work with fabrics; for example, attractive tie/dye work by older pupils.

108. Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to study the work of classical and other well-known artists. This helps pupils extend their knowledge of their own and other cultures. Pupils in Year 2 developed their understanding and skills in the use of tone and line when they investigated the work of Sonia Delaunay. These were enhanced further when they created well-designed geometric shapes, using the computer. Observational work in Year 5 focused on musical instruments, and pupils produced attractive effects when they considered the works of Picasso and Braque. ICT is used increasingly as pupils use graphics packages confidently to create designs, repeating patterns and attractive drawings.

109. Teachers provide well-considered opportunities for younger pupils to learn about primary and secondary colours, and to investigate colour mixing. Year-on-year, pupils' build on earlier experiences and produce attractive work using media such as, paint, crayon, pencil, charcoal and chalk. For example, pupils in Year 2 used a range of media as they reacted in colour and line to stories. In Year 5, pupils used oil crayons in pleasing work on colour, shape, form and texture, and investigated the use of a wash over pastel. They also produced imaginative pictures of themselves as they imagined they how they might look in several years time. However, in these pictures, the work of lower-attaining pupils lacked depth and tone and were less well executed. In Year 2, pupils produced interesting prints from patterns they had painted on table tops. Some pupils produce interesting preparatory work sketchbooks, but the use of sketchbooks is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils have done some well-executed three-dimensional work; for example, when older pupils created interesting paper sculptures of flowers, and younger pupils modelled skeleton pictures using straws. However, work of this kind, including modelling with clay, is not well developed because pupils have had fewer opportunities to work with malleable materials.

110. Most pupils make good progress in their drawing skills because teachers make sure that they build on what they already know and can do. Care is taken to explain tasks clearly to pupils who speak English as an additional language. Discussion is encouraged and all pupils' ideas are welcomed. Boys and girls work well together and collaborate to produce larger pieces of work. In Year 2, as part of a topic on growth and change, pupils produced detailed chalk, pencil and charcoal drawings of plants and seeds. Pupils in Year 4 used pens of different thicknesses and diluted inks to give different tonal effects in creating observational drawings of fruits and vegetables. In Year 5, higher-achieving pupils produced clear, detailed and well finished still-life drawings with well-considered perspective and depth. By Year 6, pupils refine their skills and perceptions when they work on caricatures. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy art lessons because they can express their ideas and feelings without the constraints of having to read or write, both of which are

difficult for some pupils.

111. A strong feature of the lessons seen was the teachers' subject knowledge. For example, in Year 2 the teacher explained the idea of tone, line and colour very clearly, and shared her very comprehensive knowledge of the work of Sonia Delaunay with pupils very carefully. Work from a range of cultures is studied, and pupils have created Rangoli patterns during the festival of Divali. Such work raises the esteem of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds as they realise that their cultures are valued in the school. Teachers organise pupils and materials effectively so that lessons moved at a brisk pace and pupils worked hard; for example, as demonstrated in the lesson in Year 6 on caricatures. Relationships are very good. Pupils in Year 2 were confident to share their investigations into Delaunay's style with the teacher, and the rest of the class, because they knew that their efforts would be valued. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, and works hard to organise the subject and support other staff. The subject is enriched by visits to art galleries and by the school's successful participation in local competitions.

112. Leadership of the subject is good and, in a school where recent emphasis has been on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, teachers have done well to organise bright displays of pupils' work which indicate that art and design is still has importance and continues to play a significant role in developing pupils' cultural and aesthetic awareness. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each unit of work and report to parents in annual reports on pupils' progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with the findings of the last inspection. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching was high, with some that was excellent. This was reflected in the good quality of pupils' learning. Effective leadership is ensuring that standards are gradually rising and pupils are acquiring skills and knowledge at an increasing rate.

114. Teachers generally have a good understanding of the designing and making process. This enables them to encourage pupils to think hard about the things they make. In years 1 and 2 pupils spend much of their time discussing ideas as part of the planning process. In Year 1, pupils produced some clearly labelled diagrams for the model they planned to make. As part of their work in history they made well-finished peg dolls and spinning tops. Most pupils in Year 2 showed good co-ordination when they twisted wire strips and tin foil to make model figures. In producing a multi-coloured 'Joseph's coat', pupils in Year 2 made well-considered paper prototypes and joined them together with glue. Opportunities to practise making repeated patterns using the computer enhanced their work. The teacher carefully displayed this work so that pupils could see that it was valued.

115. As they progress through the school, pupils have good opportunities to improve their skills in the designing, making and evaluation processes. In a series of very well planned food technology lessons in Year 3, pupils planned and finally made sandwiches to take on a school trip. As part of this project they took apart a number of commercially produced sandwiches to see how they had been made. The work was closely linked to science because pupils learned about the contribution to a healthy diet made by different foodstuffs. Pupils discussed with partners their likes and dislikes – boys and girls worked well together. The teacher planned for vegetarian sandwiches so that the activity was inclusive, and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds were able to include their tastes. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and as a result pupils learned to work in a clear sequence, and were helped to evaluate the final product against their original criteria. During one lesson pupils were supervised by a teaching assistant who understood the planning and hygiene requirements clearly. As a result, pupils enjoyed a well-structured and highly beneficial activity. Pupils behaved well and worked hard because the teacher and the teaching assistant had high expectations and valued their efforts.

116. Overall, teaching is good. Because teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills, pupils generally make good progress in activities such as cutting, joining and measuring. Teachers ensure that there is appropriate support for pupils who speak English as an additional language so that they understand instructions. In some excellent specialist teaching in Year 4, pupils learned how to cut, work with a pair of compasses, and use split pins, when they made a book with model inserts which moved in a variety of ways. The teacher used an interactive white board very well to outline pupils' tasks and as a result pupils knew clearly what was expected, and sustained their concentration and interest. The teacher challenged pupils to use their imagination and illustrate an appropriate part of the story, which made very good links with English. Pupils behaved very well and worked safely because they were well managed and relationships were very good.

117. The staff generally ensure that pupils experience a sound range of materials and techniques. For example, pupils in Year 5 produced well-finished wooden moneyboxes with strengthened corners, pupils in Year 6 produced wheeled 'robot' vehicles which were well finished with paint and a range of other materials, while older pupils made attractively furnished model rooms using small boxes. Pupils take a pride in their well-finished products and this contributes to their confidence and self esteem. ICT is used effectively by pupils to plan their work in design and technology. They make lists and label drawings. The school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work with construction kits and to take things apart. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and helps to raise standards by teaching a number of classes and by supporting colleagues. He is clear about how the subject has to develop in order to raise standards.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Pupils are on course to reach nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers have maintained the standards found at the last inspection. They now make good use of topics from the nationally recognised scheme of work for geography. This ensures that pupils cover all the work they should, matches learning to their ages and gradually builds up their geographical skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, therefore, make steady progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys.

119. By the end of Year 2, pupils have the mapping skills expected for their ages. For example, they use names, symbols and simple keys in maps of imaginary islands to show human and natural features. They also recognise differences between island and mainland, seaside and countryside, town and village. Pupils extend their view of the world, and weather and climate by looking at their holiday experiences and by viewing videos. The school usually teaches geography in one half term and history in the next. This gives pupils equal experience of both subjects, and allows for longer teaching periods so that research and practical activities are catered for more effectively. There are good links between history, geography and other subjects. For example, pupils apply and develop their map reading skills when doing work on Egypt in history, and they apply mathematical tallying skills in studies of local roads in geography. By the end of Year 6, pupils have average mapping skills. For example, they are able to use atlases effectively and give grid references to find the big rivers near cities around the world. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages are given opportunities to explore maps of the countries in which many of their relatives live. Pupils also understand that planning to build a bypass round a village leads to difficult choices on environmental grounds. Pupils know how world climate zones affect people's lives, work and leisure. Their work on topics such water and global temperatures shows average knowledge and understanding of geographical issues. By the end of Year 6, pupils' recall and understanding of life in different parts of Britain, and countries such as South America, are as expected for their ages.

120. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Strengths of teaching include effective use of good quality resources. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of local fieldwork.

Outings further afield for the older classes enrich pupils' understanding of the environment; for example, when pupils visit Ribchester and Borwick Hall. Orienteering is part of the curriculum for older pupils and sharpens map-reading and observational skills. Teachers have good knowledge of geography topics and skilfully link learning to pupils' experiences of the world. Pupils are encouraged to research in a variety of ways and to use CD ROMs and the Internet to acquire information to support current work.

HISTORY

121. Pupils are on course to achieve standards in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This concurs with findings at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are making steady progress. Teachers make good use of the latest national guidance for teaching history.

122. By the end of Year 6, pupils appreciate the value of different sources of evidence such as archaeology, pictures, photographs, living memory, CD ROMs and the Internet. They recall key facts about Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations. Pupils used their literacy skills effectively to describe how life for children and families was different from today in both early and late Victorian times in Blackpool. There were good links with geography as pupils discovered how Blackpool developed as a resort. Good teaching helped pupils in Year 3 to gain a deeper understanding of how we know what happened in the past. They explored how and why the Romans settled in England, built roads and defended territory with forts. Teachers promote good levels of historical enquiry as they encourage pupils to study artefacts; for example, when pupils in Year 4 looked at prints of famous paintings to find out more about the lives of Anne Boleyn and Jayne Seymour. Pupils gain a deeper understanding of why some people, such as Henry VIII, are important in British history. The self-esteem of girls is fostered through the inclusion of significant historical female figures.

123. The school provides a good curriculum well linked to first-hand experience. In Year 2, pupils accurately recall major events in national history such as the Great Fire of London. Pupils of all abilities understand how we learn about the past from eyewitnesses who recorded what they saw. They also learn about the more recent past by talking to older members of their families, and comparing old and new objects, such as kitchen utensils, household objects and toys. They begin to make notes about what they discover, labelling pictures and writing simple sentences. For example, pupils in Year 2 described in detailed notes what it felt like to be present at the Great Fire.

124. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and an example of excellent teaching was observed. During the inspection the quality ranged between excellent and good. In the best lessons, teachers have very detailed knowledge of the topics, provide interesting resources, time activities precisely and take pupils through many different learning activities at a brisk pace. For example, pupils in Year 2 investigated the reasons for the rapid spread of the Fire of London. Activities ranged from reading Pepys' diary aloud to watching a video of high quality of a journey through time back to London on 2 September 1666. Prompted by the teacher's skilled questioning, they found information from pictures of the old streets and buildings. Pupils with special educational needs also made very good progress because they were fully involved in the class discussion. In discussions, teachers value the contributions from pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The teachers' highly skilled questions stimulated all pupils to compare the past with the present. For example, the teacher asked: 'Could this happen today?' and 'Why?' Teachers also link work effectively to art and design and to music.

125. Good leadership and management ensure that pupils experience a balanced series of topics. In the good lessons teachers make full use of information from local visits, so that pupils learn from experience. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit a local Roman site and Bolton museum, enjoying opportunities to handle, draw and discuss artefacts, and play out historical roles in costume.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Levels of pupils' attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were in line with national standards. However, a brighter picture emerges than in 1998 because of the wider range of pupils' work and higher expectations of what they can do. Developments in control and monitoring are set to raise standards further.

127. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use ICT to organise information and present their findings in interesting ways in a range of subjects. Lively programs stimulate pupils' interest so that they learn at a good rate. Pupils write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They follow commands effectively and recognise the importance of giving precise instructions. They alter the font type, size and colour of text for emphasis and effect. Higher-attaining pupils begin to edit their written work. In art and design, pupils use graphic packages and select appropriate tools to draw and fill shapes and create colourful pictures with a range of textures; for example, when they draw imaginative pictures of fish. At the end of sessions on the computer, they close programs and shut down the machines correctly and confidently. Control and monitoring are developing features in the school's provision, and pupils are gaining appropriate skills to give a series of instructions for drawing shapes on the screen. Pupils are aware of the use of ICT in everyday life in places such as shops, offices and banks.

128. By the end of Year 6, pupils use a wide range of skills in ICT to support their learning. They word process confidently in a range of subjects. In English, they produce well-written stories, poems and letters. They write interesting articles, using a range of fonts and colours to attract attention. Pupils are increasingly aware of the importance of ICT in communicating rapidly with people far away and their expertise in using the Internet is good. Teachers' planning shows that, by the end of the year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 design websites and create slide shows. Throughout the school, pupils increasingly use the Internet to search for information in subjects such as geography and history. Design skills are appropriately practised and extended as pupils create imaginative pictures. In art and design, pupils in Year 4 made pictures in the Pointillist style, with shapes and shade created with spots of different colours. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate good levels of skill in creating spreadsheets; for example, when they explore how a games teacher could spend her budget to replace sports equipment. Pupils have had insufficient opportunities to enhance their scientific expertise and gain appropriate skills in electronically monitoring such things as temperature, light and sound.

129. Pupils enjoy using computers. As they work together in pairs and groups, pupils develop good levels of social skills; boys and girls share machines and benefit from one another's ideas. They are inquisitive and keen to learn more about the possible operations within programs. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from repetitive practice of letter sounds and spelling and from manipulating figures in simple number programs. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers and are keen to use computers.

130. The overall quality of teaching is good, and specialist teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very good. Teachers have adapted well to the new mode of teaching in the computer suite and in classrooms where there are interactive whiteboards. Because ICT is increasingly integrated into the life of the school, children develop and use ICT skills in a range of ways during the day. Sometimes work is done in the classroom; at others, pupils learn in the suite. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well; they are supported well in activities which involve writing. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they advise, support and encourage pupils so that the subject holds no fear for them. Planning of lessons in the suite is good as pupils are introduced to new ideas and are then given time to practise what they have learned. As they teach classes and groups of pupils, teachers choose interesting programs which engage pupils' interest and extend their expertise.

131. The school has a useful policy for the subject and the co-ordinators have adapted national guidance to form a comprehensive and helpful scheme of work. Skills are taught systematically.

Pupils' skills in control and monitoring in Years 5 and 6 are insufficiently developed, especially in links with science. Assessment procedures are also being developed to take into account the new curriculum. The co-ordinators have opportunities to see the pupils at work in the classrooms, and teachers' plans and pupils' finished work are monitored regularly. This has promoted whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of the subject. Professional training for staff has been of high quality. It has been provided partly by the local education authority and partly by the school's co-ordinators, who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The subject is led very well. Although resources are good overall, there is insufficient equipment for scientific enquiry. Parents are sensibly informed of their children's possible use of the Internet and electronic mail.

MUSIC

132. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to reach national expectations by the end of the school year. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of singing is often good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and enjoy the subject because they are able to express themselves without recourse to language skills which many find difficult.

133. In Years 1 and 2, pupils sing a wide range of songs rhythmically and tunefully. Their diction is clear and they listen carefully to the music between lines and verses. Pupils concentrate well, sing tunefully and learn melodies and words quickly. Pupils in Year 2 make a good contribution to the singing in acts of collective worship and hymn practice, and this helps the younger pupils learn the songs more quickly. Pupils build up a good repertoire of songs and learn to switch their singing to a range of tempi and moods because the songs are interesting and well chosen. Staff help pupils who speak English as an additional language with the words of songs. Pupils build on the skills and techniques learned previously. They are given time to experiment with instruments and enhance their understanding of how some musical instruments work and how sound effects reproduced. Composing is introduced at an early stage and pupils record their work by drawing symbols which other pupils can read and interpret.

134. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build well on previous learning and benefit from enthusiastic teaching by the specialist teacher. Their knowledge of tempi and dynamics is enhanced because the teacher explains carefully what they are to do and insists on the pupils' full attention. The teacher stresses the need for clear enunciation and good performance. The importance of silence is promoted, and pupils listen carefully for their turn to come in when singing part-songs. They concentrate hard when singing a round, keeping time very well and following the teacher's conducting. Instrumentalists are taught by skilled visiting teachers of woodwind instruments, and pupils are encouraged to share their skills with the rest of the school in collective worship and end-of-year concerts. Pupils practise their instruments conscientiously and are heard and seen working alone or in groups during the lunch hour. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well. The choir includes enthusiastic pupils from Years 3 to 6. They sing with verve and precision. Their rendering of songs from the musical, 'Sister Act', includes passages of smooth, calm singing and sharp, bright phrases which are interpreted and sung very well.

135. Teaching is good overall. The teaching of singing in Years 1 and 2 is very good, and it is good for Years 3 to 6. Most pupils work sensibly together and know that it takes effort to achieve good results. Levels of concentration are very good for most pupils, but a few older boys are reluctant to sing. Interest in music is growing as the subject is taught more confidently by teachers, who now use a new, helpful scheme aimed at non-specialist staff. Pupils are given a wide range of interesting opportunities and musical experiences that enables them to learn how to listen to music and improve their skills in playing instruments and composing. Teachers plan lessons effectively to include appropriate practice and extension of what pupils know and can do. When asked about favourite subjects, pupils include music, and in particular, their participation in concerts and visits to musical performances at theatres in Blackpool.

136. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils gave a moving performance of a hymn in sign language, which they had performed at the Mass for the Deaf, held annually at the church. The selection of music for assemblies is helpful in

providing pupils with opportunities to listen and reflect, and to hear music from a range of cultures. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds join in musical activities enthusiastically. The choir includes some enthusiastic boys who enjoy preparing for the forthcoming concert. Music for dance includes modern and classical music to stimulate pupils' interest and link with other subjects. Parents appreciate the enjoyable productions which give their children opportunities to perform to a larger audience. The co-ordinator, who has considerable musical expertise, provides good support for other colleagues who have less experience in teaching music. The curriculum has been developed effectively so that all elements are taught over the year, and computer programs for musical composition are being introduced for older pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of the school year, pupils in Year 6 are likely to be on course to exceed overall standards expected nationally in physical education. They exceed national expectations in swimming, games and dance and meet them in gymnastics. In Year 2, pupils are on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the school year. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

138. There are several reasons for the high standards by the end of Year 6. The physical education programme is enthusiastically led and well managed, and the school recognises the importance of pupils' physical education and gives it more time than most schools. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have weekly swimming lessons because the school recognises that these are of particular importance in a seaside resort. Staff enthusiastically support a full and varied programme of games, competitions and sporting activities both after and away from school, and many activities benefit from specialised coaching.

139. Evidence from last year demonstrates the school's success in the subject. By the end of the year, all pupils in Year 6 swam at least 25 metres without aids, and higher-attaining pupils used a variety of strokes. All pupils completed a course in basic water safety and three quarters of pupils went on to complete training in further water skills. Well-organised swimming sessions and a school climate of appreciation of achievements encourages pupils to try hard and succeed. The school's hockey team won the under-12 competition in the Blackpool Youth Games. Again, pupils are supported through the very good organisation by the staff and the school's belief that pupils' self-esteem is established through achievement in sport. The school ensures that there are equal opportunities for pupils to play games and to join in mixed girl/boy teams.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is most effective when pupils participate well in continuous, vigorous and controlled activities; contribute to learning in observing and evaluating each other's work, and improve social skills in pair, group and team work. In good lessons, very good relationships between teachers and pupils lead to enthusiastic and thoughtful learning. Teachers watch pupils who speak English as an additional language to ensure that they know what to do. Pupils sustain concentration well on practising and improving performance. Teaching is occasionally less effective when pupils do not warm up their muscles prior to exercise or focus their attention at the beginning of lessons. They lose interest at times when there is not enough activity to keep them practising and on the move. Pupils enjoy opportunities to meet physical challenges, work well together, and improve their performances. Lessons often make real contributions to their self-esteem, sense of fair play and team spirit. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds join in teams and enjoy physical activities.