

INSPECTION REPORT

DIDSBURY CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Didsbury, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105506

Headteacher: Mrs P S Good

Reporting inspector: Mrs C E Waine
23081

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th February 2000

Inspection number: 189733

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:	Elm Grove Didsbury Manchester
Postcode:	M20 6RL
Telephone number:	0161 445 7144
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. D M Hughes
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs C E Waine	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Special educational needs	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements.
		Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector		How well are pupils cared for?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M Bowers	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Information and communication technology	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Science	How high are standards? – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs B Rogers	Team inspector	Children under five	
		Art	
		History	
		Music	

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The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Didsbury CE Primary is an average sized school situated in an urban village in South Manchester. There are 23 children in the nursery, with seven more to enter at Easter, and 214 pupils in the main school. Of these 20 are still under five years old. Pupils are taught in seven classes, with an average size of 31. The school is popular and is oversubscribed each year. Children enter the nursery the term after their third birthday. Older ones transfer to the reception class in September and younger ones in January.

The school is housed in an old building of architectural significance and is well established in the local community. The majority of pupils are drawn from the immediate area but a significant proportion travel from further afield. They represent a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, which are, overall, above average. Similarly, children's attainment is above the average on entry to the nursery and to Key Stage 1.

There are 16 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is well below average and 1 pupil has a statement of special needs. Nine pupils have English as an additional language, which is above average, and they represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds. One is at an early stage of language acquisition. There are 14 pupils eligible for free school meals, six percent, and this is below average.

The school aims to promote high achievement for all in the context of a caring, Christian community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that has made many improvements over the last two years, despite the severe financial constraints caused by a deficit budget. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Behaviour is very good. There is a broad curriculum, which is enriched by close links with the local community, Manchester Arts in Education Festival and Greater Manchester Police. Leadership is strong and efficient planning has put the school in a good position to raise its standards further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Teaching is good and often very good and results in pupils achieving well.
- The school benefits from strong leadership. The headteacher and governing body have a shared commitment to high standards within a caring, Christian ethos.
- Work in art, drama, music and physical education is better than that in most schools.
- Behaviour and relationships are very good and pupils develop very good attitudes to their work and towards others.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by many visits and its links with the local community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well provided for.
- Parents and the local community are supportive of the school and are generous in giving their time and financial contributions.

What could be improved

- Short-term planning for the children under five in the nursery does not provide for a wide enough range of purposeful activities.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent and below average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- New assessment procedures are not yet consistently implemented across the school and, occasionally, this results in a mismatch of work.
- The monitoring role of curriculum co-ordinators is not fully developed.
- Written reports to parents do not give a clear picture of pupils' progress.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996. Since that time the school has made improvements in several areas. In response to the Key Issues of that inspection:

- The school has developed a new planning system that identifies assessment points but new assessment procedures are not fully in place. This results in occasional mismatch of work, particularly for the lower attainers in mathematics and science. (Issue 1)
- Severe financial restraints have limited the development of the role of curriculum co-ordinators but the school is now once more able to provide time for them to monitor classroom teaching. This is in its early stages. (Issue 2)
- Standards have been raised effectively in information and communication technology and art. Despite poor resources, work in art is better than that in most schools. (Issue 3)
- The school is successful in identifying and meeting the needs of higher attainers and is now targeting lower attainers effectively through the Additional Literacy Support project and special educational needs support. (Issue 4)

Other improvements

- Governors are much more involved than they were at the time of the last inspection and fully accept their responsibilities. They have been successful in reducing the large financial deficit.
- There has been a rise in attainment in science since 1996 and this is continuing to improve.
- A new and well-equipped information and communication technology suite has been established.
- The school has formed a very effective partnership with the local education authority arts project, which is promoting high standards in art, drama and music.
- Playgrounds have been imaginatively developed and separate outdoor provision has been created for the children under five.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A*	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	A*	B	C	
science	D	A*	B	D	

At the end of Key Stage 2, in 1999, attainment in the national tests was well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This reflects good achievement for this year group in view of their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1996. In comparison with schools of a similar background attainment is above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Over the last four years the trend in attainment shows a rise in line with the national average but in science there has been a significant increase in standards. Yearly differences in attainment in English and mathematics largely reflect the natural variation in groups of pupils. Overall there are no significant differences between particular groups of pupils within a year group, but, in 1999, girls attained much higher standards than boys, working about a year ahead in all three subjects. This was a natural yearly variation in intake. In 1999 the school did not meet its targets for attainment, largely because of a change in the cohort after the targets were set. Inspection evidence shows that standards are being at least maintained in all three subjects but notes that standards in handwriting and presentation are below average at the end of Key Stage 2.

At age five, children exceed the levels expected for their age in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics and match the levels expected in all other areas. In the national tests, in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, it was well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. In teacher assessments in science, attainment was high. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are being maintained.

In information and communication technology pupils' work matches the levels expected at the end of both key stages. New developments in the subject are providing for rapid progress. In art, drama music and physical education, work is better than that generally found in pupils of the same age. In design and technology, geography and history, work is similar to that of other pupils of the same age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are keen to learn. They concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in classrooms, around the school and in the playgrounds.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and pupils respect and care for each other. Personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with the national average. Punctuality at the start of the day and at the beginning of lessons is good.

The pupils' attitudes and values are a strength of the school and have a positive impact on their learning and achievements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	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.

During the inspection 55 lessons were observed and in 98 percent of these teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good in 47 percent, very good in 22 percent and excellent in 11 percent. Teaching is good in most subjects and in English and mathematics it is often very good and occasionally excellent. The quality of teaching promotes pupils' learning well and personal achievement is good. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in the nursery, where there was an insufficient number of adults to ensure safety or promote learning in an outdoor session. Specialist teaching of drama and music is particularly good and pupils achieve well in these lessons, including those who have a particular talent. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and support pupils' learning across the whole curriculum. Teaching of handwriting is less effective and an insufficiently strong emphasis on written presentation, in some classes, results in below average standards. Work is usually matched well to the needs of pupils but, occasionally, in science, some of the older, lower attaining pupils find the work in whole class sessions too difficult. Additional teaching provision, in small groups, for lower and higher attainers is of very good quality and promotes good progress towards their targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for the children in the foundation stage. Teachers have begun to plan for the new curriculum and this is implemented effectively in the reception class. However, short-term planning in the nursery is less focused on providing stimulating experiences in all daily activities. In both key stages the school has worked hard to maintain a good, broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by specialist teaching of French and drama in Year 6. Good attention is paid to literacy and numeracy. Very good links with local authority initiatives and the local community also support the curriculum very well. Provision of homework is inconsistent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall. Most of their work is well matched to their needs and, within the limited resources of the school, the governing body has made appropriate provision for extra support for both lower and higher attaining pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils with English as an additional language are mostly also fluent in English and the school makes appropriate provision to support the very small minority whose understanding is more limited.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is very good in all areas. It is firmly based in the school's Church of England ethos and is effective in promoting pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has sound procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. There are very effective policies for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. New assessment procedures are being introduced which will provide well for monitoring of pupils' academic progress but these are not yet consistently applied. Written reports to parents are unsatisfactory.

The school has many effective links with parents through support with homework and through a good number of parents who work in classrooms. In a period of financial crisis, parents have been generous in their financial support and this has helped the school make improvements to the curriculum and the accommodation. Although teachers give good information orally to parents about their children's progress, written reports do not give sufficient information and are unsatisfactory as they do not help parents to support their children's improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a strong and effective leader with a clear view of how the school can improve. She is well supported by a committed staff team. The role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring the teaching of their subjects has not been fully developed because of financial constraints. However this is now beginning to be addressed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The members of the governing body are committed to the school and fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have actively promoted school improvements, particularly in improving provision for pupils who are higher or lower attainers.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes a sound analysis of its performance against national standards and those for similar schools. As a result, it is now taking action to improve the curriculum and target particular groups of pupils for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its available resources, including imaginative use of the internal and external accommodation. Developments have been constrained as the school struggled to eliminate its large financial deficit but is now in a position to move forward.

The levels of staffing are appropriate for teaching the National Curriculum and governors have recently enhanced the numbers to provide for additional teaching for both lower and higher attainers. Over the last two years the school has worked very hard and successfully to eliminate the large financial deficit which has constrained developments over a long period. The staff and governors have been active in securing large grants and financial donations to fund improvements and parents have been extremely generous. As a result, good improvements have been made to the accommodation and new reading and mathematics schemes have been purchased. Resources are generally satisfactory, although there are shortages of books for English, the library stock is in need of expansion and resources for art are poor. Staff work hard to overcome the stringent budgetary restraints by borrowing resources and by providing some themselves. Financial planning is very good and the governors ensure that they get the best value that they can.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents agree that behaviour is good. • They believe that the quality of the teaching is good and that the school has high expectations. • The school helps their children to mature and become responsible individuals. • Parents think highly of the way the school is led and managed. • Parents report that their children like going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents would like more information about their children's progress • Many parents feel that the range of out-of-school clubs is narrow • Parents would like a more consistent approach to homework • Some parents feel that the nursery curriculum is too narrow.

Parents are mainly very supportive of the school and the inspection team confirms their positive views. In respect of the negative views the team finds that:

1. Although oral information given to parents about their children's progress is good the annual written reports to parents are unsatisfactory. They do not provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses or inform parents how they might help their child improve.

2. More formal aspects of provision in the nursery are appropriate but short-term planning does not provide a wide variety of purposeful activities or support independent learning.
3. Although the amount of homework is broadly similar to that in other schools there is no consistent pattern of provision and it does not build appropriately towards the end of Key Stage 2.
4. Although the range of out-of-school clubs is somewhat narrow the school provides a wide range of activities to enrich the curriculum, such as through close links with the Manchester Arts in Education Festival, provision for specialist teaching of music and drama and a wide range of visits.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the nursery and reception class with a very wide range of experiences and overall attainment is above average. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and it is good in the reception class and children achieve well. On entry to Key Stage 1, they exceed the levels expected in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and some aspects of knowledge and understanding. In the other areas of knowledge and understanding, creative and physical development they attain the levels expected at age five.
2. In 1999, pupils' attainment in the national tests for seven-year-olds was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with schools of similar backgrounds attainment was well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Over a period of four years standards have been maintained in reading and writing and have risen in mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that this is still the case. There are some differences between the test results of boys and girls, with girls significantly outperforming boys, particularly in reading, in 1999. The school has recognised this and has replaced the school reading scheme with one that holds more appeal for the boys. No significant gender differences were noted during the inspection. In teacher assessments in science, in 1999, attainment was very high, with all pupils attaining the expected level and an above average proportion exceeding it. The results reflect good levels of achievement.
3. In 1999, in the results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was well above the national average and that for similar schools. In mathematics and science, it was above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in mathematics was average and in science it was below average. The results reflected good achievement for most pupils in the light of their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The school did not meet its targets in English and mathematics, which was largely because several pupils left the school and new ones entered after targets had been set. In 1999 girls outperformed boys significantly and by a greater degree than nationally. This is not typical of the school and reflects the nature of that year group. Over a four year period, standards have risen in line with national trends, although in science there has been a significant improvement because of a greater focus on independent investigational work. Inspection evidence shows that standards are being at least maintained and that pupils are achieving well. Specialist teaching of lower and higher attainers, although limited in terms of time, is having a positive impact on their learning.
4. Pupils are articulate and, at the end of both key stages standards, of speaking and listening are well above average. Most have a rich vocabulary and use it confidently in discussion and questioning across the curriculum. The specialist teaching of drama in Year 6 promotes this very well. Reading is also well above average at the end of both key stages and pupils apply their skills very well in work in all subjects. They read fluently, with good expression and a good understanding of texts, including those with specific technical language. At ages seven and eleven pupils write at good length in many different styles, such as lists, reports, stories and poetry, and the content of their work is interesting. Stories and poetry are imaginative and make good use of their rich vocabulary. Pupils know a wide range of punctuation but, at age seven, do not always apply this as well as they could. At age eleven, although punctuation is well above average, handwriting is below average and presentation does not fully reflect the quality of work produced.
5. In mathematics, attainment is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils have very good numeracy skills. These are being further enhanced by the introduction of mental mathematics sessions in

Numeracy Hours. They achieve well and are confident in their use of numeracy skills in solving problems, both in Numeracy Hour and in other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are working at the level expected and a good number are exceeding it. They are all confident in applying their skills across a wide range of subjects, such as design and technology and make very good use of computers to analyse and represent data in a graphical form. A few are reaching very high levels of competency.

6. In science, attainment is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils achieve well. Most have a good knowledge of all aspects of the subject and are beginning to understand how to conduct a fair test. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils demonstrate good achievement and are working at the level expected. A good number are working at a higher level and a few at very high levels. Pupils have good subject knowledge and are confident in planning their own investigations. They understand how to make tests fair and observe and measure accurately, recording their findings well.
7. In information technology, pupils are achieving well and attaining the levels expected at the end of both key stages. Recent enhancement of resources and direct teaching of skills in the information and communication technology suite is now providing for good progress. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average.
8. Close links with the Manchester Arts in Education Festival have had a beneficial effect on the quality of work in art, music, dance and drama, which is better than in most schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards in art were below average and there was little provision for drama. Work in physical education is also better than is generally found. In design and technology, geography and history work is similar to that of other pupils at ages seven and eleven.
9. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainments, particularly in English. The extra teaching recently introduced for pupils with special educational needs and those who are lower or higher attainers is enhancing their progress. There are several pupils with English as an additional language and the majority are fluent in English and have good understanding. There is no specific provision for the few whose comprehension is more limited, but the school encompasses them within the lower attaining groups and supports their achievement well. Literacy Hours are effective in enhancing pupils' skills and effective Numeracy Hours are beginning to have an impact on promoting pupils' learning, although the effects of this are not fully felt at the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The school is successful in maintaining the very high standards noted in the last inspection report and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development continue to be strengths of the school. The children under five quickly settle into school routines and are happy and confident, both in the nursery and in the reception class. They are eager to learn and join in activities with enthusiasm. Pupils in both key stages are also keen to learn and show enthusiasm for joining in lessons. They are sometimes so engrossed that they wish to continue past the end of the session, as observed in a Year 6 drama lesson. They are keen to ask and answer questions in class, and confident in expressing their opinions in discussion. For instance, in Year 6 pupils were very highly motivated to ask perceptive questions in a science and personal, social and health education session led by their teacher and visiting police officers. They considered issues seriously and contributed their own ideas thoughtfully. The purposeful working atmosphere established throughout the school enables pupils to sustain concentration and complete tasks to the best of their ability, even when not directly supervised, such as when working on the computer or carrying out a science investigation outside the classroom. Many are particularly eager to contribute to lessons, and often bring ideas and artefacts from home to enhance topic work in subjects such as geography, history, and religious education. Ninety-one percent of the parents who answered the questionnaire agree that their child likes school and ninety percent think the school promotes good attitudes and values.
11. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is very good, and contributes greatly to the smooth running of the school. Pupils respond very well to the teachers' effective, positive management strategies, such as the effectively promoted system of incentives for good behaviour, and sanctions are rarely required. The vast majority are helpful and polite to each other and to adults. At lunchtime, they are independent and sensible in the dining room, showing consideration for others in waiting their turn and choosing a place to sit. There were four fixed-term and one permanent exclusion last year. This is unusual for the school and concerned one family who were new to the school. No incidents of

bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection and discussions with pupils indicate that they are confident in their safety in school. Ninety-five percent of parents agree that behaviour is good.

12. Throughout the school, relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good and make a significant contribution to the high standards of personal development achieved by pupils. Pupils co-operate and collaborate successfully in the many opportunities provided for working in pairs or small groups. They enjoy representing the school in team games and festivals, and work harmoniously in the orchestra and the choir. Older pupils are sensitive and constructive in evaluating each other's work, and accept criticism with a high degree of maturity. Pupils in Year 6 are learning to set their own targets in English and mathematics and review their progress towards them. All observe prayers respectfully in class and in assembly and show respect and consideration for the feelings and beliefs of others. They get on well with each other, and develop independent social skills on the annual residential visit. Pupils accept responsibility gladly when given the opportunity, for instance, for looking after younger pupils or carrying out minor administrative tasks.
13. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. The most recently published figure is similar to that of previous years. However the 1999 autumn term figures show an improvement and if this trend is maintained the school will meet its target of 96% by 2001. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average.
14. Registers are well kept and meet statutory regulations. Absences are correctly coded and the school is rigorous in following up reasons for absence, supported by the Educational Welfare Service. The vast majority of parents do not take holidays during term time. Punctuality is good and registrations are prompt, giving a positive start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall teaching is good and has a significant impact on pupils' achievements. Fifty-five lessons were observed and in these teaching was at least satisfactory in all but one. In 47 percent teaching was good, in 22 percent it was very good and in 11 percent teaching was excellent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and this related to a matter of inadequate supervision of an outdoor physical development session in the nursery. Only one person was present in the secure area and this not only posed a health and safety risk but also meant that the teachers' role was merely supervisory, rather than a teaching one. Excellent teaching was seen in the specialist teaching of drama and music, in a special educational needs lesson and in lessons in Years 4 and 5. Excellent teaching was also observed in a Year 6 science lesson on dangers of the misuse of substances.
16. Teaching for the children under five is satisfactory, overall, but good and often very good, in the reception class. In this class the teacher has high expectations and very good knowledge of the needs of young children. She uses this well to plan a good variety of activities with clear learning targets and children make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. In the nursery this varies considerably. Activities which are the focus of the teacher and nursery nurse are purposeful and interesting and lead to sound learning by the children but many of the independent activities lack a clear learning focus and do not stimulate the children's interest sufficiently. Expectations of work in these activities are not high enough and, although children play quite happily, they do not learn as much as they could. For example, there is no variation of resources in the role-play area, which is always a home corner, and this limits the development of imaginative play and language enrichment.
17. Teaching is good in both key stages and, in Key Stage 2, it is often very good. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use this well in planning interesting lessons with clear learning targets. This is particularly so in the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy hours, where teachers and pupils respond well to the structure of the national strategies. In the best lessons, including those taught by visiting specialists in music and drama, teachers have very good knowledge and very high expectations and provide activities that are challenging for all pupils. Teachers make good use of challenging questions and pupils are encouraged to think things out for themselves, explaining their reasoning or providing evidence from texts. This promotes learning very well as pupils concentrate hard and respond very thoughtfully. All teachers make very good links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 research history and geography in literacy lessons on making notes from a variety of texts, sometimes using CD-ROM. Good use is made of the expertise of parents and the local community to enhance class teaching. This was observed in Years 3 and 6 and in the use of the computer suite.

18. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who respond well to the positive way in which they manage their classes. They provide many valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and value their responses. This promotes pupils' self esteem well and, by the time pupils leave the school, they are very confident in expressing opinions and questioning teachers to extend their own learning. For example, in a very well taught science lesson in Year 6, pupils questioned the teacher and visiting police officers about the effects of misuse of drugs in a very mature way. The teacher's response was sensitive and honest and promoted learning very well. Teachers constantly assess their pupils and make good use of marking to identify points for development. Some teachers make good use of homework to consolidate and extend learning but this is inconsistent and is a valid concern of a significant minority of parents.
19. The pupils with special educational needs are well taught and teachers plan work to meet the targets of their individual work programmes. Sometimes appropriate specific tasks are set but most work is linked to that of the whole class and the teacher, or a well-informed classroom support assistant, gives pupils extra support. Those in Key Stage 2 have limited extra teaching support from the Key Stage 2 special needs co-ordinator, alongside lower attainers and this is of high quality. The teacher has an excellent relationship with the pupils. She is very enthusiastic and they respond very well to her positive encouragement and the challenges she provides for them. Their self-esteem and learning are promoted very well and they make very good progress towards their individual targets. She also provides a teaching session for the older higher attainers, which again promotes their progress well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, who were identified in the analysis of national tests results at the end of Key Stage 1 as lower attainers are given extra teaching support in literacy hours. This teaching is very good and work is very well planned to meet the needs of the small numbers in the groups and promotes their progress well. Relationships are very good and promote pupils' self esteem and confidence.
20. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, there are no consistent weaknesses. Occasionally, time is not well used, as in a physical education lesson, where the teacher tried to do too much in a very short space of time. Occasionally the high standard of whole class work in Year 6 is too difficult for lower attainers, particularly in science, and they do not learn as well as others in their class.

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

21. The curriculum for the children under five is satisfactory overall. All areas of learning appropriate for this age group are taught, and the school has begun to plan for the new curriculum for children in the foundation stage. Priority is rightly given to the development of personal and social skills, to language and literacy and to mathematics in both the nursery and reception classes. A few parents have concerns about the narrowness of the nursery curriculum and the inspection found that some of these concerns are valid. Whilst a range of experiences are provided in the nursery, independent activities are not always sufficiently interesting and purposeful to enable the children to build up skills systematically over time. In the reception class, a wide variety of lively and carefully structured activities are well organised and promote children's learning successfully. At age five, the vast majority of the children have established a firm foundation for learning and for their work on the National Curriculum.
22. The school provides a good curriculum, which meets the needs of its pupils and promotes equal opportunities well. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and to promote pupils' personal and social development successfully. Following analysis of the results of national tests, the school has identified points for development in the curriculum and taken appropriate action. For example, the science curriculum has been re-organised to provide a more structured approach and ensure systematic development of investigational skills. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the curriculum significantly in information technology and art as required by the Key Issues of the report. The new computer suite provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and Trinity CE High School provides both teaching and technical support, which forges a beneficial link.
23. In art, dance, drama and music the curriculum is considerably enhanced by the school's involvement in the Manchester Arts Education Festival. The work pupils undertake as part of this project makes an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments, through the study of a wide variety of challenging texts, artists and music representing British and world cultures. It provides opportunities for discussions on moral issues and gives pupils many opportunities to demonstrate their skills by performing

in school, in professional theatres and in city venues. For instance, pupils perform at the annual Didsbury Festival. A group of pupils will also represent the school at the Millennium Dome. A new, local education authority scheme of work for music has greatly improved the expertise of non-specialist teachers. The quality of provision is further enhanced for some pupils by the provision of peripatetic music lessons, and extracurricular activities in choir and orchestra. About 67 pupils take advantage of these musical opportunities.

24. Appropriate priority is given to the teaching of English and mathematics in all classes. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Pupils' appreciation and enthusiasm for literature is encouraged through the use of a wide range of texts. The lively mental mathematics element of the National Numeracy Strategy is significantly improving their ability to manipulate numbers in their heads.
25. The teaching of French to Year 6, by a teacher from Parrs Wood High School, further extends the curriculum, and strengthens links with that school. The provision of swimming lessons from Key Stage 1 is better than that in most schools. The school has good links with the local community and these have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school has a long history as an integral part of the community and local citizens value its existence. Pupils benefit from old students' enthusiasm for visiting the school, for instance bringing history to life by talking about bygone times in Didsbury. Local business and organisations are very generous in their financial support and this was particularly important during the school's recent problems. The school has very effective links with Greater Manchester Police, whose liaison officer contributes well to a wide range of lessons throughout the school.
26. The school makes satisfactory provision for extracurricular activities but the range of regular after-school clubs, including musical and sports activities is narrow and mainly limited to the older pupils. For example, there are weekly netball and football practices for pupils in Years 5 and 6. About twelve pupils attend a daily computer club. This limited provision is considerably enhanced by less regular, but high quality experiences outside the school day. Through the Manchester Arts Education Festival, and a connection with the Royal Northern College of Music, pupils take part in 'professional' dramatic and musical productions. Almost all Year 6 pupils experience a residential visit in the Lake District, and a number enjoy representing the school in sports tournaments and festivals. A good range of educational visits regularly supports the curriculum particularly in history and geography.
27. Although there is no written scheme of work, the school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education. Considerable emphasis is given to the promotion of healthy life styles through diet and exercise. Very good support from outside agencies, such as the police, is used sensitively by the school to raise the older pupils' awareness and increase their understanding of citizenship.
28. The few pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are well supported in lessons by work that is specifically planned to meet their needs. Combined with additional help from the teacher or support staff this enables them to take a full part in the curriculum. Lower attaining pupils have additional teaching time each week, either from an additional literacy support teacher or the special educational needs teacher, who focuses on work that these pupils have found difficult in class sessions. Higher attainers also have an extra session, which enables them to work at higher levels.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the corporate life of the school, the act of worship and many subjects within the curriculum. There has been improvement in this aspect of school life since the previous inspection, particularly in the development of insights into the cultures of non-European societies and the initiatives to broaden pupils' knowledge of the famous artists of the world. The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos and effectively shares its aims, values and expectations with parents who are happy that the school values have a positive effect on their children.
30. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. There are daily acts of worship, many of which are of good quality. These benefit from a variety of formats and styles, making good use of visitors, such as local clergy, to extend the range experiences. Very effective planning ensures that pupils gain insights into the spirituality of world religions. Moments of reflection are planned through the study of the work of famous world artists and the use of sacred artefacts and these enrich pupils' learning. Christian values are firmly based on the teachings of the Church of England. The playing of introductory music as pupils enter the hall for daily worship effectively sets the mood for quiet reflection.

31. The provision for promoting pupils' moral development is very good. All staff consistently reinforce pupils' understanding of right from wrong. The school rules communicated to pupils in the form of 'Didsbury Smilers' are well understood and respected. Many classes identify their own thoughts for the week and issues such as bullying and doing the right thing in respect of drugs are regularly examined and debated. Assemblies successfully promote pupils' self awareness through the system of rewards for endeavour in all aspects of school and leisure activities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
32. Pupils' social development is also very well provided for, through supporting and encouraging very good relationships throughout the school. Year 6 pupils carry out regular duties, which help in the daily running of the school and promote their sense of citizenship. For example, they look after younger pupils in the playgrounds at lunchtime. They have opportunities to use their initiative to raise money for local, national and international charities and develop a sense of social responsibility. The programme of residential education provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend their relationships with adults and their classmates. In many lessons there are very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and share ideas. Older pupils have high levels of participation in the range of extra curricular activities provided.
33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. This includes the use of the locality to raise pupils' awareness of the historical background and geographical make up of the area in which they live. This is extended through the studies of the Ancient Greek civilisation and research into modern life in India and Africa. Valuable arrangements are made for pupils to study a good range of artists, including African Art. Pupils learn about the Chinese New Year and there are links with a school in Uganda.
34. Pupils mainly transfer to Trinity CE High School or Parrs Wood High School and relationships with both are good. These links have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school looks after pupils well. It is a friendly, caring, Christian community, where pupils are valued as individuals. The headteacher knows each child by name. Teachers, support staff, helpers, lunchtime supervisors, catering staff and office staff get on well with pupils and provide good role models. Pupils feel safe and secure and the school environment is conducive to learning. Playgrounds are free from oppressive behaviour.
36. Health and safety is generally taken seriously – there is adequate first aid cover, accidents are correctly recorded, equipment is regularly checked and safety is stressed in lessons. However supervision in the play areas is not always adequate. In the nursery it is unrealistic for one person to supervise satisfactorily the whole of the play area including the area containing the sand. In the large playground, supervisors do not always position themselves so that they can see clearly all the areas where pupils play. The school has a number of flights of stone steps. The steps to the music room, which are used by pupils as young as four, are steep and smooth and do not have a handrail at a suitable height for small children. This is a potential hazard.
37. Child protection procedures are good. The responsible person has been trained and staff are familiar with the school's procedures. The school has effective and professional relationships with the outside agencies.
38. Appropriate assessments are made when children enter the nursery and reception class and information gained is well used in planning in the reception class. Statutory assessments in English, mathematics and science are carried out efficiently at the end of each key stage. The headteacher has begun to analyse the results of the National Curriculum tests in order to identify areas of the curriculum for development. This has resulted in training being provided to improve teaching of shape and measures in mathematics and in greater emphasis on the development of investigative methods in science. Optional national tests in English and mathematics were introduced in Years 3, 4 and 5 last year.
39. At the time of the last inspection little evidence was found of the use of assessment to inform planning. This situation has been improved and new planning systems put into place. Available assessment information is usually used well by teachers but there are inconsistencies in recording that occasionally result in a mismatch of work. The school's assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. A clear and relevant policy

has recently been introduced and procedures are being implemented in each age group to support teachers in making appropriate judgements on pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. Whilst there are examples of very good practice, much of this work is new, and the systems are not yet being used consistently by all staff. Portfolios of moderated work are not yet all available to support teachers in their judgements of National Curriculum levels, although some are now being compiled by the new assessment co-ordinator.

40. A tracking system is being introduced to use the results of all these tests to monitor individuals' progress, the school's performance from year to year and to identify trends. This is enabling the school to target specific groups of pupils and areas of work, and make best use of the available support.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance and targets have recently been set to improve the overall rate. Certificates for good attendance are given annually but their effectiveness might be improved by considering a shorter period. Hand-over procedures at the end of the day are good.
42. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective and have the full support of the vast majority of parents – all of whom have received a copy of the school's policy. Rules are clear and simple and based on the concept of a child achieving the status of a 'Didsbury Smiler'. Procedures are applied consistently throughout the school and pupils understand the rules and the sanctions very well. Good behaviour is positively rewarded and the ability of the lunchtime supervisors to issue their own certificates is particularly effective. Very good records are kept both of rewards for good behaviour and any sanctions applied for inappropriate behaviour. The records of bad behaviour are monitored regularly and parents involved when necessary. The school does not tolerate bullying or racism and neither is a problem.
43. Teachers know their pupils well, as can be seen from the good quality of the personal comments on pupils' annual reports. However a formal system of recording and monitoring pupils' personal development fell into disuse two years ago and the current system is largely informal. The school is planning to introduce new procedures but these are not yet available.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The partnership between school and parents is largely effective. The school is very popular and has a very good local reputation. Parents are very supportive of the school and report that their children like attending. In a well attended pre-inspection meeting and in the high response to the questionnaire, parents say that they particularly approve of the standards of behaviour, the quality of teaching, the school's high expectations and that the school helps their children to mature and become responsible individuals. Parents also think highly of the way the school is led and managed. The inspection endorsed these positive views.
45. However some parents have concerns. Homework is inconsistent in terms of frequency and quantity. The inspection confirmed parents' concerns. The inconsistency is particularly noticeable between Year 5 and Year 6, where provision does not increase appropriately towards the end of the key stage.
46. A significant minority of parents have concerns about the information they receive on their child's progress. Parents are given an outline of what is going to be taught early in the school year and this is good practice. There are appropriate opportunities to meet the child's teacher both informally and at formal meetings in the spring and summer terms. This provides parents with satisfactory information on progress. However the quality of pupils' reports is not satisfactory. The core subjects are dealt with by pre-printed one line description of each National Curriculum level and the teacher simply circles the level number appropriate to the child's attainment. As most children are expected to take two years to progress from one level to the next, this system is far too crude to give parents a clear indication of what their child can do or what progress has been made. There is no mention of what a child needs to do to improve and the school is missing an opportunity to involve parents further in their children's learning – something many clearly want to do. The inspection confirms parents' concerns on this matter.
47. Parents are kept very well informed on developments in the school by regular newsletters. The home/school agreement has been signed by 90% of parents, although the school has not yet any clear indication that that this has impacted on what was already a very high level of parental involvement in their children's learning. Many parents regularly help in classrooms and this help is well organised and makes a positive contribution

to pupils' learning. However this is not mirrored in the nursery where there is an unusually small amount of parental help. The active Parent Teacher Association is extremely successful in organising events and raising funds for the school. Their contributions have added significantly to the school's resources particularly with computers and books for Literacy and Numeracy Hours.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school is well led by a strong headteacher and governing body who share a commitment to high standards in the context of a caring, Christian community. The school's aims are well reflected in its work. The very good relationships and teamwork between staff and governors makes a significant contribution to the progress and well-being of pupils.
49. The headteacher has been in post for two years and in this time has been active in promoting improvement. Together with her deputy, in post for one year, she has begun to analyse assessment results to identify development points for the school. She has introduced measures that are beginning to impact upon standards, such as a greater focus on investigative work in mathematics and science and the targeting of specific groups of pupils for extra teaching support. For example, lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 and both lower and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 receive extra support and work is planned specifically to meet their needs. Effective Literacy and Numeracy Hours are having a positive effect in promoting good progress.
50. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified staff, with a sound balance of very experienced and more recently qualified teachers. All staff are committed to high achievement and work well together as a team to promote high standards. Responsibilities are appropriately shared to take advantage of individual strengths and all of the staff are aware of the school's priorities. The number of support staff employed by the school is below average. The role of the nursery nurse in Key Stage 1 is well defined, and she is deployed appropriately to meet the school's changing needs from term to term. However, this does result in full-time support not being available for the reception class of thirty children. Her talents as a qualified swimming instructor are used very well by the school to provide good levels of swimming tuition.
51. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has developed only slowly since the last inspection because of the school's financial situation. They check teachers' planning and examine pupils' work but their role in observing and supporting in classrooms had to be curtailed some time ago. It is now being re-introduced as financial pressures have eased but is not yet making an impact on raising standards of teaching or learning. Co-ordinators have not had a budget to resource their subjects and this has resulted in some shortages, particularly in English and art. Overall expertise in information technology and art have been considerably enhanced since the last inspection. A good level of support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body has made provision for additional teaching time for those pupils who are lower or higher attainers, both by qualified teachers and support staff. This is well organised by the special educational needs co-ordinators.
52. The governing body is experienced and effective, fulfilling its statutory requirements well. Governors are highly committed to their roles and support staff well, whilst also maintaining a watching, evaluative role. They take an appropriate part in school improvement planning and oversee the implementation of the plan. Governors observe some lessons, which informs them about what is happening in classrooms as a result of their decisions. They also evaluate the success of their decisions by investigating standards of attainment in national tests and comparing this with schools with a similar intake. The school improvement plan is a good working document, with appropriate priorities which supports the school in its drive to raise standards, although the lack of finance has limited some developments. The success of the plan is evaluated annually and built upon appropriately in the subsequent year.
53. The school has had a very large financial deficit for some years, which has limited developments in many areas. For example, the classroom monitoring role of curriculum co-ordinators and provision of resources. Through careful planning, by the headteacher and governing body, and stringent economies made by the whole staff over the last two years, the school is now likely to have small surplus at the end of this financial year. During this period the school has been very active in seeking alternative financial resources. Parents, the church family, local businesses and the community have been very generous in their support. This has enabled the school to enhance resources and the accommodation to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Financial procedures and day-to-day administration are efficiently handled by the school administrator and this allows teachers to concentrate on their professional activities.

54. Overall, the school has sufficient, although not plentiful, resources to teach the curriculum. These are often supplemented by the hard work of the staff in providing their own interesting artefacts and by the individual support of parents. Money raised by parents has financed a new reading scheme for use throughout the school. Resources for information technology are now very good and are being used efficiently to improve learning. Resources for the teaching of music, including percussion instruments and a new scheme of work, are good. There are, however, limited resources for art, and a shortage of large books for Literacy Hour and of good quality library books to support pupils' learning.
55. Whilst the school makes the best use of its accommodation, classrooms are small for the number of pupils in each class and storage space is very limited. Overall, it is just adequate. Excellent facilities for information technology are provided in the computer suite. There is an attractive library but the lack of a wide range of good quality books and its use as a teaching base detracts from its availability for independent research. Much energy has also gone into planning and organising huge improvements to the outside play areas. The landscaping, and provision of garden and quiet areas has greatly enhanced the quality of play and of relationships for all the children at break-times and for the under fives in the nursery area. Good use is made of the local park for team games and practices, as the school has no football pitch. The caretaking and cleaning staff work hard to maintain high standards of cleanliness and care.
56. The partnership between the governing body and headteacher has been effective in directing the school's response to the key issues raised by the previous inspection. There has been good progress towards the issues and the structures put into place put the school in a strong position to improve still further. The cost per pupil is average and considering the standards of attainment and pupils' achievement, the quality of provision, particularly teaching and the quality of leadership the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) improve short-term planning in the nursery to provide a wider range of more interesting and purposeful activities through training and by closer co-ordination with the reception class;

(Paragraphs 16, 21, 60)

- (2) improve the standard of handwriting and presentation throughout the school;

(Paragraphs 4, 72, 100)

- (3) fully implement the new assessment procedures to provide good information for planning of work and tracking of the progress of individuals;

(Paragraphs 20, 39, 43, 74, 86, 87,111)

- (4) ensure that the monitoring role of curriculum co-ordinators is fully developed and sharply focused.

(Paragraphs 51, 74, 81, 88,100)

- (5) improve the quality of written reports to parents so that they can clearly identify strengths and weaknesses in their child's work and help them to improve.

(Paragraph 46)

The following minor issues were identified in the report, in paragraphs 15, 18, 26, 36, 39, 45, 47, 54, 61, 74, 87, and 92.

Homework provision is inconsistent.

There is an unusually small amount of parental help in the nursery.

There are shortages of resources in English and art.

The range of after-school clubs is limited.

There is sometimes insufficient supervision of outdoor areas.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11%	22%	47%	10%	2%	0	0

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

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)	27	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

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	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	0.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	17
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	88 (97)	94 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	19
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (96)	88 (100)	94 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (86)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	24	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (97)	73 (97)	80 (94)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	13
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	22	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (97)	77 (93)	90 (97)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	392781
Total expenditure	373223
Expenditure per pupil	1588
Balance brought forward from previous year	-29642
Balance carried forward to next year	-10084

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	245
Number of questionnaires returned	138

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	29	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	44	10	4	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	43	19	3	7
The teaching is good.	42	47	3	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	32	30	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	30	14	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	27	5	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	37	44	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	61	37	1	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	2	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	33	25	7	10

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concern that the curriculum in the nursery was too narrow.

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

58. Children under five are taught full-time in the nursery and reception class. There are three admissions a year into the nursery and two to the reception class, in September and January. At the time of the inspection there were 23 children on roll in the nursery and 30 in the reception class. The vast majority of children in the reception class have attended the nursery. Attainment on entry is above that expected for this age group.
59. At the age of five, attainment exceeds the level expected for this age group in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social education. In some aspects of knowledge and understanding, such as history and technology, children also exceed expectations. In creative and physical development and other aspects of knowledge and understanding children achieve the levels expected by the age of five. This shows a marked improvement in attainment since the previous inspection, largely due to the good teaching and well-planned curriculum for children in the reception class.
60. The curriculum is firmly based on the six areas of learning, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and pupils' personal and social development. Priority is rightly given to the development of language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social education. There is no co-ordinator for Early Years education and, although teachers co-operate well in producing long and medium-term plans that provide for a suitable range of experiences in both classes, there are inconsistencies in short-term planning. Plans for the reception year are effective but those in the nursery do not provide sufficient interest and purpose within activities. They do not focus sharply enough on exactly what the children are to learn to enable them to build up skills systematically. Expectations in the reception class are high and lesson targets for learning are clearly focused on children's needs.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and, in the reception class, it is often very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in the nursery. In this lesson the teacher was alone in the outside area, resulting in inadequate supervision levels of all play areas and too little input to develop pupils' skills and range of language. The way in which teachers manage children's behaviour is good and in the reception class it is very good. Well-qualified and informed support staff make a considerable contribution to children's progress and well-being. Appropriate assessment is made on entry to the nursery and before children transfer to the reception class. A formal entry assessment is carried out as children enter the reception class and this information is used well to plan tasks to match children's needs. Overall, children establish a firm foundation for learning and are well prepared to start work on the National Curriculum.

Personal and social development

62. There is a clear focus on children's personal and social development and they make good progress. Attainment in this area of learning is good and exceeds the level expected at age five. Development is planned through play activities and through individual reading time in the reception class. Children, from the nursery upward, behave very well and respond positively to adults and peers. They play together well, taking turns, such as during snack-time in the nursery, or when sharing equipment in the reception class. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect. All children under five are developing independence and improving their social skills. Teachers plan a range of visits, such as to a farm, to extend their personal and social education. Visitors to school, such as the local police officer and the dental team, make significant contributions to this area of learning.

Language and literacy

63. Teachers give high priority to language development and this ensures that children make good progress. Daily routines, such as the weatherboard, encourage children to talk and share their experiences with others. By the time children are five, they are ready to ask and answer appropriate questions and join in discussion with confidence. Teaching of letter recognition is good and many children in the reception class know more than 20 letter sounds. All children under five choose their own books to share in school or at home and they know that print carries meaning. Children's early book skills are well taught, especially during story or carpet time activities. The reading level of many children in the reception class exceeds that expected for their age. They are interested in books and share them enthusiastically with adults. Many take extended stories home to share with parents and this adds much to their reading competence. All the children in the nursery recognise their names on milk bottles or coat pegs and at least half copy it. The vast majority of

children in the reception class write their own names and older children are starting to write independently, some using a word book to support their spelling. At age five, the majority of children exceed the level expected and the effective support of parents is an important factor in this aspect.

Mathematics

64. Children are becoming familiar with a range of nursery rhymes, number songs and counting activities. In the nursery they sort and match objects, colours and shapes and follow patterns. They are beginning to use mathematical language such as over and under. About a quarter of the nursery children can count and write some numbers. In the reception class, most children can count numbers to 10 and over half can count to 20 or beyond. A substantial number order numerals and are aware of number operations. All children write some numerals independently. Most children are on target to exceed the level expected at age five.

Knowledge and understanding

65. Children make good progress and, at age five, the majority are exceeding the expected levels in some aspects of this area of learning. In the nursery, children use the computer mouse with confidence and some independence. In the reception class they are familiar with basic skills and find their way around the computer keyboard. Technology is used effectively to help children to understand their world, as for example, when nursery children make cakes and ice them. In history, children are developing a sense of chronology. Reception children sequence a range of pictures according to people's ages. They have a growing understanding about how they have changed since they were babies and how people age with time. The local area is used for walks and older children make simple route maps of their journeys. Teachers make good use of visits, such as to museums and the church, to support learning.

Physical development

66. There is satisfactory provision for physical development. Children make at least sound progress and achieve the levels expected at age five. The nursery has a safe, secure outdoor play area with a suitable range of provision for riding and climbing, including a covered walkway with space for children to ride their wheeled toys. They ride and climb with increasing control, taking turns fairly and showing an awareness of their own space and that of others. The bay for sand play is separated from the playground by a dividing wall and it is difficult to supervise all the children at one time unless there are several adults in attendance. Children in the reception class have time allocated for outdoor play in this area. They demonstrate increasing control over their bodies, using space confidently with an awareness of others. Children develop their own ideas in response to music as well as watching and copying movements of a puppet. Cross-curricular links with religious education are well developed, providing an integrated approach to lessons. For example, in dance they respond imaginatively when they interpret the story of Creation. Children cut, draw write and paint with growing control of simple tools.

Creative development

67. Children enjoy a variety of experiences in painting and collage and make satisfactory progress in developing their ability to express their ideas in creative ways. They are on target to meet the level expected for this aspect of their development. They print frames for their portraits, make bubble paintings and make models using junk materials. In both the nursery and reception class children enjoy singing, making music and exploring sound with percussion instruments and all make good progress. Although there is provision in the nursery for children to dress up and use their imagination freely in the playhouse, there is a significant lack of stimulating and interesting things to play with and this limits creative expression. Some tabletop activities, such as construction toys and playdoh, lack purpose and guidance and children are not challenged sufficiently. Again, in the reception class these activities do have a clear focus and promote the development of skills appropriately.

ENGLISH

68. In the results of national tests in reading and writing, in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well above the national average and that for schools with similar intakes. The proportion exceeding expected levels in reading was over half of the year group, which was well above average in both comparisons. In writing tests, the proportion attaining a higher level was also well above the average. Teacher assessments in speaking and listening were very high. At the end of Key Stage 2, in the national tests in English, in 1999, attainment was well above the national average and above that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining a higher level was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. This high standard has been maintained for several years and is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

69. At both key stages girls outperformed boys and, whilst this represented a yearly difference in the intake at Key Stage 2, it has been a regular feature at Key Stage 1. The school has analysed its results carefully and changed the reading scheme to one that has more appeal for boys. There have also been changes to the writing curriculum to support pupils in planning their written work more carefully. Both these initiatives are having a positive impact on learning and no significant gender differences were observed during the inspection. Standards in both key stages are being maintained and represent good achievement for all pupils. Specific support is provided for both higher and lower attainers, together with the few pupils with English as an additional language who need support with their understanding of written English, to enable them to achieve as well as they can.
70. Speaking and listening skills are well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils are confident and articulate and use a rich vocabulary, including a wide range of technical language. Throughout the school they listen carefully during explanations and discussions and ask questions for clarification. They answer questions well, providing reasons to support their opinions, and they express their feelings clearly. There are many opportunities for pupils to use and develop their speaking and listening skills through discussions, both in literacy hours and in other subjects. For pupils in Year 6, specialist teaching of drama promotes very high standards.
71. Standards in reading are well above average at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils read fluently and confidently. They enjoy reading and most read regularly at home, which contributes significantly to their progress. Pupils can use contents and index pages to locate information in non-fiction texts. In Key Stage 2 most pupils enjoy both fiction and non-fiction books and read complex technical vocabulary well. They develop a love of books and are keen to discuss those they read, expressing preferences for types of reading material or favourite authors, and explain their choices. Most use good expression and make effective use of a variety of different ways of reading difficult words. All pupils use their skills very well in other subjects, using classroom book collections to develop their independent research skills. The central library is only just adequate in promoting the development of library skills as the range of books is limited. However, in classrooms, a suitable range of books is provided to allow pupils to apply and extend their literacy skills well in other subjects, such as history.
72. Pupils' writing is well above average at ages seven and eleven. Pupils successfully write for a very wide variety of purposes and audiences. This is an improvement on work at the time of the last inspection, when the range was narrow. At age seven, pupils write stories, poetry, letters and accounts of good length and the quality of the content of their writing is very good. Stories are well structured and lengthy and some pupils already begin to write in paragraphs. They know when to apply basic punctuation with reasonable accuracy, but only a few do so on a regular basis. Spelling is good and pupils use simple dictionaries and wordbooks well. Work is built on well in Key Stage 2 and pupils write thoughtfully and imaginatively, developing characters and creating atmosphere. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards of spelling and punctuation are good. Although printing in the early stages is reasonably well formed and neat, many pupils do not develop a good pencil grip. In Key Stage 2 they practise handwriting in well-formed joined script but most do not apply this successfully in their work. Standards of handwriting and presentation are below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and do not reflect the very good content of pupils' work in many subjects. Information technology is sometimes used well to enhance presentation. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils used word processing, changing fonts and colours and adding pictures when writing Winter poetry.
73. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching is good in both key stages and often very good in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and teachers manage their pupils well. In both key stages, where teaching is very good, teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it well to plan a range of interesting and stimulating activities to motivate pupils. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on description, when a visiting police officer supported the teacher and asked them to be witnesses and describe an intruder on their premises. They also had fingerprints taken and had to describe similarities and differences between their own and their friends. Pupils enjoy these lessons and are keen to contribute in whole class sessions. Teachers make it clear what it is that they expect pupils to learn and pupils respond well, concentrating hard to complete their tasks, organising themselves and their resources with a minimum of fuss. Expectations of work and behaviour are high and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and respond well to teachers' high expectations. They listen carefully, are eager to answer questions and concentrate well on written tasks. Most teachers make good use of questioning and marking to check pupils' understanding, giving good quality oral and written comments to help pupils improve their work. They use their information well in

planning future lessons. Support staff are used very well and make a good contribution to learning. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to work together and on these occasions they support each other well, sharing resources sensibly. A mature confidence is apparent in many discussions and pupils respect others' points of view. Teachers plan good links with other subjects. For example, in an independent task session in a Year 5 Literacy Hour, pupils learning about note-taking conducted independent research into geographical or historical topics. Group teaching for pupils who have special educational needs, including both higher and lower attainers and for those who have English as an additional language is very good. It is well focused on pupils' needs and promotes their achievement well.

74. The school's literacy strategy is effective in promoting high standards and good care is taken to provide for other aspects of the English curriculum, such as speaking and listening and extended writing. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and pupils' books but has only just begun to observe classroom teaching of English. This has not a sharp enough focus to raise standards of teaching and learning, although that carried out by the headteacher for the last two years has been effective. Assessment procedures are inconsistent throughout the school, although teachers keep good records of their own and carefully check the progress of individuals. New procedures are being introduced which should provide good information, to enable pupils' progress to be tracked through the school but these are, as yet, mainly limited to Key Stage 2. There is very good practice in Year 6, where pupils set their own target for improvement each half term and review their progress on a weekly basis. There are some shortages of resources, such as big books for whole class sessions, and teachers have to work very hard to produce alternatives, sometimes writing out long texts by hand. The library is also short of a wide range of good quality books to further promote independent research and a love of literature.

MATHEMATICS

75. In the 1999 national tests, standards in Key Stage 1 were well above the national average, with most pupils reaching the expected level and many exceeding it. Since the last inspection, standards in the subject rose in 1997 from a slightly above average position to be well above average. The school maintained this position in 1998 and 1999. When compared with schools with similar backgrounds attainment was above average. Whilst both boys and girls reach standards that are well above the national average, girls consistently outperform boys. Inspectors found no reason for this pattern. Pupils currently in Year 2, are on course to achieve similar standards to those of the previous year.
76. In the 1999 national tests, standards in Key Stage 2 were above the national average for all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were average, with a lower than average proportion attaining the expected level but an above average proportion exceeding it. Standards rose between 1996 and 1998, when they were very high in comparison with all schools but in 1999 fell because a small but significant percentage of pupils left the district and were replaced by a group of pupils, whose previous levels of attainment were low. There have been fluctuations in attainment in recent years, since the last inspection, relating to the natural variations in intake groups. Overall, standards have risen slightly. The average test results, over four years, places the school well above the national average with both boys and girls performing at similar levels. In both key stages, the proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected has improved since the previous inspection.
77. The findings of the current inspection indicate that standards in Key Stage 2 are being at least maintained, with more pupils on course to reach expected levels when they take the national tests. Good teaching is ensuring that higher attainers are being fully challenged and about a quarter are working towards the next higher level, with about 10 percent working beyond this. The current Year 6 has made considerable gains in learning when compared with its performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1.
78. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a basic understanding of the use of co-ordinates and how they are used to locate positions on a grid pattern made up of columns and rows. There is very good organisation of group work where pupils concentrate well when working independently to complete their tasks. Effective planning ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, are involved in appropriately challenging work, enabling them to make very good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Occasionally, there is an over-emphasis on work sheets and pupils, whilst being taught specific mathematical skills, are not challenged to set out their work independently or experiment with different forms of calculation.

79. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 effectively apply their mathematical knowledge of co-ordinates and right angles to compass directions and location in geography. Higher attainers quickly learn that 45 degrees is half a right angle and corresponds with NE or SW on a compass. Very good, sometimes excellent, teaching in Year 4 enables pupils to make very good gains in skills and understanding of different types of triangles and accurate conversions of fractions to decimals. Year 5 pupils have a very good knowledge of their tables and use protractors accurately to measure the size of angles to check on the accuracy of their estimations which have been carefully considered and are accurate. There are very good examples of mathematics being used in scientific investigations with pupils constructing bar graphs to analyse the results of porosity tests. In Year 6, the highest attainers carefully study the relationships between right angle triangles and the squares of each side, as they are introduced to the theorem of Pythagoras. They confidently round decimals up and down to the nearest one or two places. Pupils with special educational needs recognise obtuse, acute and right angles and learn to use a protractor accurately to measure the amount of turn.
80. At Key Stage 1, teaching is generally good and very good teaching was observed in Year 2. Teaching is generally good throughout Key Stage 2, often very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are well planned and initial teacher explanations are clear and concise. Planning builds carefully on pupils' previous attainments and learning objectives are often shared with them, helping them to recognise their targets. Teachers have secure knowledge of the numeracy initiative and provide challenging introductions to lessons through the mental mathematics strategy. Lively question and answer sessions actively exercise pupils' knowledge of place position, multiplication facts and number bonds. Their concentration spans are increased, encouraging them to recall number relationships quickly, when calculating answers. Where lessons are very good, the pace is brisk; questions are carefully framed and pupils are challenged to explain their calculations. Group work is organised to respond to pupils' levels of knowledge, skills and confidence. This high quality of teaching enables pupils to work at their own levels in Year 6, although the teaching area is cramped and the open space area alongside the classroom is not used sufficiently to enable identified groups to work independently. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and, where a lesson is considered to be excellent, the teacher continually emphasises pupils' developing abilities, effectively enhancing their own knowledge of their learning. Where skilled and enthusiastic classroom assistants are available, they are well deployed and effectively contribute to pupils' learning.
81. The subject is effectively managed. The school's national test results have been evaluated and this has resulted in a greater emphasis on the programmes of study relating to shape and space. Teachers' planning is monitored by the co-ordinator and the headteacher evaluates the teaching of mathematics. The co-ordinator is just beginning to observe and support classroom teaching of the subject. Resources are adequate but can be stretched when the same programme of study is being taught throughout the school. Assessment systems are in place and are used effectively by teachers to organise the groupings within their classes.

SCIENCE

82. In 1999, in the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was very high in comparison with the national average and that for similar schools. The proportion attaining a higher level was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Whilst all pupils attained, or exceeded, the expected level in the study of living things, materials and physical processes, the school's performance in investigative science was well below the national average and no pupils attained the higher level. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, in 1999, attainment was above the national average but was below the average for similar schools. Results have been variable from year to year, since the time of the last inspection, in 1996, but improvement over that time is better than the national trend. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
83. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that the school is at least maintaining these standards in both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged as meeting national expectation throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress since then, and in Year 2 pupils have made good progress over Key Stage 1. Progress in lessons during the inspection was good.
84. The school is very committed to promoting high attainment, and has analysed the test results to identify areas of the curriculum for further development. Greater emphasis has recently been put on the teaching of investigative methods in all classes and this is already raising standards. The recent implementation of

national guidelines in Years 3 and 4 and of a scheme of work specifically to meet the school's present needs in Years 5 and 6 is providing a well balanced and purposeful curriculum. Whilst it is too early to judge its effects, the school is well placed to raise standards further.

85. The curriculum in both key stages provides appropriate coverage of all attainment targets. In Year 1, pupils have good knowledge about life processes and living things. From first-hand observation, they recognise and describe differences between a baby and a toddler, appreciating that they have both some similar needs and some different ones. They record their conclusions in picture form. By the end of Key Stage 1 in Year 2, pupils explore forces and motion. When investigating the bounce of a ball, the higher attainers identify factors, such as the amount of force used, which might affect the bounce of the ball. Most pupils follow teachers' suggestions on how to test their ideas, and make a simple prediction of the result. They are beginning to recognise some ways of making the test fair, and record their observations in a simple table. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are becoming independent in planning their own investigations to a set format. They know how to make a test fair, and observe and measure accurately. Almost all record results in bar or line graphs and are beginning to identify patterns and suggest explanations. They use their investigational skills to explore and experiment in the other areas, for instance, in separating solids, in considering the effect of rainwater in erosion, and in investigating living things. At the end of the key stage, many pupils have good knowledge of life processes and living things, with a significant minority working at a high level. They describe the functions of the most important human and plant organs and explain how these functions are essential to life. Pupils are perceptive in asking and answering questions to extend their knowledge.
86. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In four out of six sessions, teaching was good, in one lesson it was very good and in one, it was satisfactory. This is an improvement on the standards of teaching seen in the last inspection. Excellent input is given by outside agency support from the PRIDE drug project. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is clearly supported by national guidance and by the expertise of the curriculum co-ordinator. This enables them to plan work, which extends pupils' thinking systematically. Basic skills are taught well so that pupils learn to observe, measure, and organise their work accurately to enable them to reach reliable conclusions. The care taken to use appropriate vocabulary, such as when pupils are asked to observe the size of 'particles' or 'classify' materials according to specific 'properties', extends and reinforces their ability to exchange ideas and explain what they are doing. Teachers use skilful questioning techniques, which not only extend pupils' thinking, but also enable teachers to gauge how much pupils have understood. There are good relationships in all classes, and teachers have positive management strategies. This promotes pupils' self esteem and confidence and encourages them to think independently and make valuable contributions to class activities. In Years 2 and Year 5, there are good examples of careful assessment of pupils' attainment leading to accurate planning of new work. There are occasional instances however, particularly involving the few older lower attaining pupils, where the pace of lessons, or suitability of tasks is not well matched to individual need. This leads to some confusion and slows the pace of their learning. Groupwork is well organised and resources appropriately prepared so that no time is wasted and pupils and teachers concentrate on the tasks in hand. Homework is not used consistently to support learning. Good use of well planned educational visits such as to Manchester Science Museum or Platt Hall has a beneficial effect on learning.
87. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the school's present position, and is providing determined leadership. She checks teachers' planning and provides support, but has not yet observed and supported teaching and learning in the subject, although this is soon to begin. She is working with other teachers to ensure consistency in judgements of National Curriculum levels and is instrumental in preparing new record and planning sheets to improve the school's assessment of investigational skills. A portfolio of moderated work is in preparation.

ART

88. The previous inspection found that standards of attainment were below expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school. Evidence from this inspection indicates that standards are considerably improved. Pupils are achieving well at the end of Key Stage 1 and their work is better than that of most seven-year-olds. In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve even more and at age 11 work is of much better quality than that of most eleven-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in art lessons and achieve

equally well. The school has given appropriate priority to curriculum planning and become closely involved with the local authority arts project and these have had a significant impact upon standards.

89. Pupils gain increasing skills in handling a variety of tools and materials as they move through the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 they use their senses well to explore and investigate paint and materials. They have sound skills with different pencils, crayons and brushes, showing a growing control and attention to detail. Drawings and paintings often reflect the style of famous artists. They use colour and shape imaginatively. Work is often linked well to other subjects, for example in technology, when pupils use various media such as polystyrene and coloured paper to represent 3D plates of food. Following a visit to a local church, Year 1 pupils created their own stained glass windows, blending oil pastels appropriately to create the right effect.
90. Artistic skills are further developed in Key Stage 2. At the end of the Key Stage pupils explore shape, colour and line and discuss their observations with a growing maturity. They develop a good range of techniques to create effect and extend their art into other subjects. For example, in science, they explore their fluorescent paintings under ultraviolet light in a box. They make good progress throughout the key stage. Year 3 pupils investigate how natural and man-made landscapes mirror each other. Methods such as smudging and blending oil pastels are used to create their own contrasting or complementary designs. In Year 4, pupils closely observe daffodils, taking time to mix the right shade and thickness of colour to indicate texture. A visit to a local museum has stimulated pupils to produce good quality African masks, decorated with individual flair. Artwork is well linked to other curriculum areas such as miniatures of Tudor monarchs in Year 4, and in information technology. Throughout the school and especially in Key Stage 2, pupils are making considerable progress in their understanding of the work of a wide range of artists such as Klimt, Kandinsky, Mondrian and Van Gogh. This has done much to ensure the appropriate development of skills and to broaden the experience of all pupils.
91. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons are well organised and pupils develop good attitudes because their interest is engaged. Artistic skills are well taught, especially in Key Stage 2, and this contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Teachers use available resources well and provide pupils with opportunities to select and organise their own resources and work independently. Teachers manage their pupils positively, through the provision of interesting and stimulating lessons. Behaviour is very good because pupils enjoy their work and concentrate well. They discuss it with others in the class and share evaluative comments.
92. Although the subject has been allocated minimal funding in recent years, the limited resources are well organised and augmented by personal contributions from the art co-ordinator. She is very effective in supporting colleagues and has produced a comprehensive draft scheme of work, which corrects the weaknesses found in the previous inspection. The study of the work of artists is particularly well focused. The school's participation in the Manchester Arts in Education Festival is making a positive contribution to the development and promotion of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. During the inspection no design and technology lessons were observed. However, available evidence indicates that, ages seven and eleven pupils' work is at similar levels to others of the same age. Overall, the standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, although designing and recording skills are now good, indicating an improvement in that area. Pupils make sound gains in their acquisition of joining and assembling skills.
94. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils draw detailed plans of model wheeled vehicles, listing the required materials and completing to a high standard of accuracy. They include the use of measured and cut wood carefully glued together with cardboard triangles reinforcing the corners and fixtures for attaching the axles and wheels to the chassis. At the end of the project pupils evaluate their products and identify possible ways to improve them. The quality of work is evidence of well planned teaching, based on good subject knowledge. It also indicates high levels of concentration on the part of the pupils. Teachers make very good links with other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils use recyclable materials and construction kits effectively to assemble models of churches of both modern and traditional design connected with studies in religious education and history. The construction of lighthouses with simple battery driven electrical circuits to activate the light is linked to both literacy studies of "The Light-house Keeper's Lunch" and work in science.

95. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils design their products well and follow their plans carefully, using an increasing range of materials to produce finished working models. In Year 6 they successfully use their developing knowledge of parallel circuits to plan and complete question and answer boards as part of their designs for board games. The good quality of finish of these products is an indication of the high levels of concentration and effort made by pupils. Many projects have links with science and healthy eating. For example, pupils in Year 1 design and produce healthy meals and sandwiches.
96. There is a good scheme of work and effective staff development has ensured that teachers understand the design-make-evaluate cycle of the subject. Careful planning has ensured that there are well thought out links with other subjects and that scientific concepts and mathematical skills are applied. The subject is effectively resourced and co-ordinated.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. Evidence gathered from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans, together with cross-curricular studies and discussion with pupils, indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. At ages seven and eleven, pupils' work is similar to that in most primary schools.
98. Pupils achieve soundly throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 describe local weather and record daily descriptions in symbols to build up an overall record of weather in Didsbury. At the end of the key stage, pupils realise the impact of weather on peoples' lives and know that in other parts of the world there are different conditions. For example, they recognise the characteristics of cold climates like the Polar Regions and consider the effect of the frozen conditions on the explorations of Scott and Amundsen. They compare and contrast life in Didsbury with that of the Inuit people. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop skills soundly over time, from recognising and drawing simple bird's-eye views and plans, to studying world maps and drawing their own detailed plans. They use symbols and a detailed key to indicate necessary services, including hospitals, sports facilities, shops, parks, schools, car parks and a motorway network. Pupils consider their own village or city, identify features they like or dislike and suggest improvements. At the end of the key stage, the majority have sound knowledge of the world map, identify specific locations from grid references and describe the relative positions of countries accurately using compass directions. In Year 6, the residential visit to Ghyll Head gives pupils relevant first-hand experience of life in a very different location.
99. Pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes have a significant effect on their learning. Although work is not always neatly presented, most pupils persevere to complete tasks. Teachers' plans indicate sound knowledge and understanding of geography and appropriate coverage of both the skills and knowledge to be taught. Teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. The scheme of work is currently under review, in the light of national guidelines, to provide greater emphasis on environmental change and sustainable development. Good links with other subjects extend pupils' geographical knowledge well. For instance, the work on co-ordinates and directional language in numeracy supports map-reading skills. Tasks which extend pupils' literacy skills through independent research in geography, are successful in promoting learning in geography and English.
100. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is not fully developed. Whilst she checks teachers' plans, she does not evaluate samples of pupils' work or teaching and learning in the classroom. Consistent assessment systems are not yet in place.

HISTORY

101. At the end of both key stages pupils' work is typical of that of most others of their age. This is a similar picture to that given in the previous inspection report. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and this reflects an improvement in the subject.
102. Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop an awareness of the past by investigating changes in their lives. They explore the differences between themselves now and as babies and sort toys into categories according to the age at which they played with them. Pupils have an appropriate sense of chronology and sequence photographs of people of all ages on a simple time line. They build an appropriate historical vocabulary and extend their

historical understanding through stories of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. Visitors to the school help pupils to make sense of history. For example, during the inspection, a pupil's grandparents brought in and shared examples of food rations they received as children during World War II. This stimulates pupils to ask a good range of questions about the past.

103. Good progress continues through Key Stage 2 and, at age 11, pupils in Year 6 use their local environment well to compare and contrast life in Britain since 1930. Through historical sources such as old maps, artefacts and school documents they develop skills of investigation into the impact of World War II on local society. Pupils describe life in different eras and the causes of significant events and changes. For example, Year 4 pupils study the ways of life in different strata of Tudor society, making comparisons between the lives of rich and poor. In Year 5, pupils show factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of Victorian society and recognise changes within and across the Victorian period, such as electoral reform. Pupils across the school show their understanding of history best in their class discussions, rather than in their written work, because there is an over-use of worksheets.
104. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and pupils consequently develop good attitudes to learning. Teachers have a good grasp of what is required to teach the subject effectively and make lessons interesting by planning a good variety of activities. They bring history to life by using historical artefacts, such as flat irons and candle holders, to encourage pupils to ask and answer questions about the past. Pupils find this particularly interesting and treat resources with care and respect. The school welcomes visitors to school and this has a positive effect on attitudes and progress. A good link with the Greater Manchester Police provides opportunities to extend learning, through work in class and on visits. For example, when studying Roman soldiers, a liaison officer brought modern body armour to compare with Roman armour and pupils created a "Turtle" with the shields. Pupils also visit the Police Museum as part of their research on Victorian law and order. Learning is enhanced by links with other areas of the curriculum, such as art, when pupils study and paint portraits of Tudor monarchs in miniature.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

105. The recent establishment of a new computer suite, in addition to computers in each classroom, is providing for good progress to be made through direct class teaching of skills and the application of these skills within the whole curriculum, ensuring that the subject is not taught in isolation. At the end of both key stages, most pupils are achieving the expected levels of attainment in all aspects of the subject and, at age 11, some demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and skills. These findings are a good improvement on those contained in the previous inspection report. The school has fully responded to the Key Issue of that report and the information technology curriculum fully meets statutory requirements.
106. Pupils are keen to operate the new machines. They concentrate to complete their work and are confident in experimenting with commands, clicking on icons to display menus when the programme does not always follow the expected course. Most pupils are making very good gains in learning to develop their skills within many subjects.
107. At age seven, pupils have sound operational skills, write freely using a wordprocessor and enter data into a simple database. In Year 6 pupils type text directly into a 'pocket book' computer, writing letters to warn others of the dangers of drug misuse as part of their PHSE programme. They skilfully operate the mouse to edit and enhance text, and lift illustrations from a 'clip art' bank, placing them on screen, as they organise a poster to further highlight these dangers. Pupils input information into databases and operate the software to analyse the information through bar charts, line graphs and pie charts.
108. Many teachers have good skill levels and are confident in their teaching. They use their allocated time in the computer suite effectively to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunity to complete their programme of work. They support pupils by giving direct instruction and demonstration. Very good links are made between information technology and other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils develop their keyboard and mouse skills when they change the mood and tone of paragraphs by altering adverbs and adjectives, as part of their literacy work. Knowledgeable parents working in the computer suite also effectively support pupils. Pupils work with increasing confidence, supporting and assisting each other.
109. Work on display covers all aspects of the subject and shows appropriate development of skills through the school. In Year 1, pupils learn how to enter information on a database, recording their favourite puddings,

in a mathematics lesson. They quickly learn how to type in their names and use the arrow keys to move the cursor between columns then produce the bar chart. Year 2 pupils use the data handling application in mathematics to construct bar charts of birthday months. They also use the computer to form patterns in the style of Mondrian. Year 3 pupils operate 'modelling' programmes to draw plans of bedrooms. In Year 4 pupils operate a digital camera to record historical evidence during a visit to a building dating back to Tudor Times and create 'Pointillism' landscapes in the style of Seurat. All year groups use CD-ROM to retrieve information. A very good range of word processing is displayed throughout the school including creative writing about the Millennium Hour, informative writing about Rosh Hashanah and other Jewish festivals and book reviews. This work is of very good quality and indicates very good editing and drafting skills. Pupils learn how to control events by using a programmable toy and screen programs, although the range of these is somewhat limited.

110. Throughout the inspection more skilled pupils were observed assisting others. The Year 6 Downloaders Club meets regularly at lunchtime to learn new skills and pass them on to classmates. This initiative builds well on pupils' enthusiasm, developing their confidence and actively promoting independence.

111. The subject is effectively lead and managed well by the subject co-ordinator. The very good resources are well used but there is, as yet, no link up with the Internet. New assessment procedures are not yet fully operative but ongoing arrangements include the development of individual pupils' attainment files. A governor with specific responsibilities for improvement within the subject, supports the co-ordinator very effectively. Parents with appropriate skills support teaching very well.

MUSIC

112. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress and at the end of both key stages work is better than that of most others of the same age. The school is participating in the Manchester Arts in Education Festival and is currently implementing a curriculum initiative by the local authority's music service. These have done much to raise levels of attainment for all pupils since the previous inspection.

113. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils beat time to recorded music with suitable hand actions and clapping. They are beginning to identify and appreciate beat as opposed to rhythm. Pupils' listening skills are developing very well. They follow the pulse in short musical extracts and trace the shapes of songs on a xylophone. They confidently choose and play a range of percussion instruments.

114. These skills are further developed in Key Stage 2 as pupils beat time to a range of challenging rhythms. Year 6 pupils perform and compose their own rhythmic phrases on both tuned and untuned percussion and use repeated rhythms well in their music making. They listen and appraise a wide range of music, including the work of classical composers, in their lessons. Pupils take charge of their own learning, such as when passing the musical echo on to a second person, who responds rhythmically on their instrument, making clear differences in speed and volume. Many pupils take advantage of specialist teaching and some attain high levels of performance.

115. In their lessons pupils of all ages perform a wide range of voice training exercises, in which they chant and sing repeating musical phrases with increasing accuracy. They incorporate musical elements such as tempo and dynamics in these activities and maintain pitch well, singing or humming tunefully.

116. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good and pupils respond well, enjoying their lessons. Teachers plan a good range of activities and pupils join in willingly and with much enthusiasm, treating the instruments with considerable respect. They listen to teachers and recorded music carefully and concentrate well. The school benefits from the services of specialist music teachers who make an excellent contribution to pupils' musical development and competence, particularly for those pupils with a special interest or talent.

117. The new scheme of work provides a broad and balanced curriculum and supports all teachers, including non-specialists very well. Management is effective and teachers have opportunity to observe other lessons and improve their own effectiveness. The school has a specialist music room and a wide range of good quality instruments that are well used in lessons.

118.The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to widen their musical experiences. Extra-curricular activities include choir and orchestra and lessons for woodwind, strings and guitar. Pupils give performances to other groups in the community and are currently taking part in a noteworthy range of local and national events.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119.No physical education lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and it was not possible to make a balanced judgement on teaching or attainment. At the end of Key Stage 2 the quality of work is better than is generally found at age eleven. In Key Stage 1 pupils participate in dance, games and athletics and additionally, in Key Stage 2 there are adventurous activities. Swimming is a strength of the school and is taught throughout Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. This results in very high standards and all Year 4 pupils gained their 25 metres certificate during the previous year.

120.The school also regularly organises a residential visit, attended by most Year 6 pupils who gain experience in rock climbing, abseiling canoeing and pot holing. This makes a valuable contribution to their social development. A wide range of sporting activities is available in and out of school and some clubs are organised, mainly for Key Stage 2 pupils. Many are introduced to a very good range of games and sporting activities through the link with the local university. School teams are involved in competitive sport against other schools, through team games such as football, rounders, netball and cricket.

121.Good teaching in gymnastics, at Key Stage 2, challenges older pupils to sequence a wide range of different movements which include turning, rolling, jumping, balancing and travelling on hands and feet. Pupils are keen, interested and continually practise to refine and repeat their repertoires and to develop changes in shape and direction. Good use is made of demonstrations, where individual pupils perform their repertoire whilst the teacher makes constructive comments, thereby helping them to develop self-assessment skills. Teaching of the younger pupils in the key stage is well planned but the time given to games lessons is too short, preventing teachers from fully developing pupils skills of throwing, catching and dodging. During lessons pupils' work rate is high. They continually practise their skills showing good levels of concentration and perseverance. In games, they play with co-operation and enthusiasm. In gymnastic activities pupils use space constructively and safely, as they are aware of the performance and actions of their classmates.

122.Dance is a strength of the school and pupils learn traditional English country dancing and a good range of Jewish, Indian and American dances, which effectively enhances their cultural development. This wide variety includes both aerobic and creative dance and the school contributes regularly to city performances, as part of the Manchester Arts in Education Festival. Pupils are currently preparing to take part in a city event at the Millennium Dome.

123.The subject is effectively co-ordinated. A new scheme of work is in place and considerable improvements have been made to the range of resources. However, there is no provision of ropes in the hall to challenge the older pupils and playground space for outdoor lessons is limited. The wide range of activities available to pupils is a direct response to the vision and opportunism of the co-ordinator.