

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Atherton, Manchester

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106478

Headteacher: Mr L Johnson

Reporting inspector: Dr Brian Male
14906

Dates of inspection: 8 - 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 192680

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary aided (CE)
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Leigh Road
Howe Bridge
Atherton
Manchester

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev David Bracey

Date of previous inspection: 17 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr B Male	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Information technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Ms S Boyle	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms P English	Team inspector	English Art Music Under-fives	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr K Sanderson	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St.Michael's is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school situated in Howe Bridge. The school was opened in 1869 and the present building dates from 1888. It takes pupils from four to 11 years old and is maintained by the Wigan Local Education Authority. It serves the former coal mining town where unemployment is high and social and economic conditions vary. Pupils start school with standards of attainment generally in line with those usually found.

At the time of the inspection there were 220 pupils in seven classes. Eight pupils were under five years old. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average. Nineteen per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register which is in line with the national average. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a positive and caring environment where pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well. Relationships are very good and pupils are valued as individuals. There is a positive ethos towards work. Standards of attainment have risen since last year but are still generally below those that would normally be expected. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There are very good relationships across the school.
- Pupils behave well and they have positive attitudes to their work.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school gives children a good start to their education in the reception class.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment could be higher in the core subjects.
- The standards attained by girls needs to be improved.
- The school needs to more rigorous in its analysis of its performance.
- Assessment procedures need to be used more effectively to target teaching.
- The school needs to involve parents more fully in their children's learning.
- Resources need improving particularly for reading and for children under five.

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

The school's strengths outweigh those areas needing improvement, but a more rigorous approach would raise standards.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Since then standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science remain slightly below average overall. Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes have improved. The school has successfully addressed all the issues raised by the last report, although standards have only just begun to rise in information technology and have not yet reached the appropriate level.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	D	E
Mathematics	D	C	D	E
Science	C	D	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In 1999 standards were below the national average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Standards in all three subjects were well below the average of similar schools. Standards have risen this year but are still below average in science and are likely to be below average in all three subjects when compared to similar schools. Standards in information technology have started to improve but are still below average. Standards of attainment for girls are particularly low compared to other schools, and too few pupils attain the highest standards. Standards have been generally in line with the national average in terms of pupils gaining the expected level (Level 4), but comparatively few pupils attain the higher level (Level 5). This has brought the overall standards down. There is a trend of generally below average standards that should be higher.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and are keen to get on with their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good both in class and around the school. Behaviour is generally good in the playground, except when some pupils' play involves kicking.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good across the school.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

In the school as a whole 35 per cent of the teaching is good or better, seven per cent very good and five per cent unsatisfactory. Teaching is stronger in the reception class and at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The best teaching is in Year 5. Teachers have very

good relationships with their pupils and value them as individuals; this encourages the good behaviour and attitudes to work. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately, but more use needs to be made of assessment information to target teaching precisely. The school caters generally well for pupils with special educational needs but there needs to be more challenge for higher attaining pupils and attention to the attainment of girls. Teachers work hard and provide a high standard of care for their pupils. They do well to cope with such large classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a broad curriculum but does not always ensure an appropriate balance of time between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is some good provision for these pupils, but the targets on some individual education plans are not sufficiently specific.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for social and moral development, and appropriate provision for spiritual and cultural development. There needs to be more multi-cultural provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care within a very supportive ethos. Procedures for child protection need to be clearer.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a good model for the caring approach of the school. He and the senior management team need to set a clearer educational direction through monitoring and guidance to teachers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors exercise an appropriate general overview of the school but need to be more detailed in their monitoring of standards and linking expenditure to outcomes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has not been sufficiently rigorous in analysing its performance, or in devising strategies to meet identified needs.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used generally well, but class sizes are large despite the school's average budget.

Class sizes are large although the overall adult to pupil ratio is favourable. The school building is spacious, and the grounds fairly extensive. The school has generally adequate resources, but the library and reading book stock are of poor quality and in poor condition. The quality and range of resources for children under five need to be improved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like coming to school.• The progress children make.• The caring atmosphere of the school.• That the school expects children to work hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent would like a closer partnership with the school.• The amount of information about children's progress.• The consistency of homework.• The range of extra-curricular activities.

The partnership with parents needs strengthening so that they can become more actively involved in their children's learning, and receive more information about the curriculum. Homework does need to be consistent. There was a limited range of extra-curricular activities during the inspection period, most of which were run by the deputy headteacher.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils enter the school as four year olds with standards of attainment generally in line with those expected for children of this age. They make generally satisfactory progress across the school, and by the time they leave at 11 years old, standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics are in line with the national average but standards in science are below average. Standards in all three subjects are below the average for schools with a similar background. This is nevertheless somewhat higher than the standards prevailing at the time of the last inspection. Standards in information technology are below expectations across the school. Standards in music have risen since the last inspection, and in other subjects are broadly in line with the last inspection and those usually found.
2. The targets set by the school for English are lower for 2000, and 2001, than the actual standards in 1999. The target set for mathematics in 2000 would require a significant rise from 1999, but the target for 2001 is lower than for 2000. There is inconsistency here, and the school needs to set targets that are realistic but also challenging.

Children under five

3. There is good provision for children under five and they make good progress during their reception year. By the time they are five, standards of attainment are generally in line with those expected for children of this age.

Key Stage 1

4. In national tests for seven year olds in 1999, the overall standards, as measured by average point scores, were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to schools of similar background, reading and writing were well below average, and mathematics was in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. The 1999 scores were unusually low, as there was a particularly high number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. Over the last three years, standards have tended to be in line with the national average, but below the average of similar schools.
5. Inspection evidence shows that standards have risen this year in reading, writing and mathematics and are now in line with expectations. Compared to schools of similar background, standards in all three are likely to be below average. Standards in science are below average nationally, and below average compared to similar schools. Standards in information technology are below expectations, and in other subjects they are broadly in line with those usually found.

Key Stage 2

6. In national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, standards were below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. Compared to schools of similar background, scores were well below average in all

three subjects. Standards have fluctuated over the last three years but have generally been below the national average overall.

7. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of the present pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen since 1999. Standards in English and mathematics are in line with national average, and in science standards are below average. Compared to similar schools, standards are still below average in all three subjects.
8. Standards in information technology are below average. Standards in other subjects are generally in line with those usually found.

Progress of different groups

9. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities make appropriate progress. Fewer pupils attain the higher levels (Level 3 for seven year olds and Level 5 for 11 year olds) than would usually be expected because there is not always sufficient challenge in lessons.
10. There is a significant and serious disparity between the standards attained by boys and girls. Nationally, girls tend to do better than boys in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, in this school, boys have scored higher than girls in all three subjects at both key stages for the last three years. Most of last year's low standards were caused by the low scores of the girls. The reasons for this are not overt but are related more to deep-seated attitudes and expectations on the part of both staff and the girls themselves. These need to be explored and confronted before standards can rise.

Core subjects

11. Standards are average overall in English, but there is variation within the subject. Standards of speaking and listening are generally above average with most pupils being articulate and keen to explain themselves. Standards in reading are average, particularly in terms of word recognition, but the higher order skills such as the use of inference and deduction are not well established, mainly because there is insufficient good quality literature available. Standards in writing are below average across the school with few pupils attaining the higher levels where language is used imaginatively and writing is varied and interesting. Again, this is linked to the limited availability of good models of writing in pupils' reading books.
12. Standards in the number aspect of mathematics are higher than in other areas. Most pupils have an appropriate recall of number facts and tables, but standards in data handling and understanding of shape and space are lower.
13. Standards in science are below average at both key stages. At both seven and 11, too few pupils attain the expected level and few attain beyond it. In most cases, the work has been covered and appropriate knowledge gained, but the underlying concepts are not well developed.
14. There has been a recent rise in standards in information technology associated with the purchase of new equipment and the establishment of the computer room. However, there has not yet been time for standards to rise to the expected level across the school, and there is still a variation from class to class.

15. Most parents are pleased with the progress made and the standards attained, but few were aware of the low standards in national tests in 1999.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils like school and have good attitudes to their work. They are interested in their lessons, listen well and are keen to answer questions. They settle to tasks well and work hard. Sometimes the attitudes of the pupils in the Year 1 class are less than good. Although they are interested they do not always keep their interest or demonstrate such a strong commitment to work.
17. Behaviour in the school is good, and pupils always do as they are told, by their teacher. They want to behave well so that even when they have been sitting for some time, their behaviour and attitude to work remain good. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors. They mostly play well together in the playground although sometimes some games get out of hand, especially those which involve kicking. Sometimes the behaviour of the pupils in Year 1 is unsatisfactory and verges on rudeness. Exclusions are used appropriately and only very rarely.
18. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are confident to talk to adults, and are friendly and open. They have a good sense of ownership and move around the school in a relaxed but orderly way. They like opportunities to help and enjoy, for example, the responsibility of running the tuck shop. They proudly display their monitor badges and are keen to tell visitors about their responsibilities. Some older pupils volunteered to be hall monitors at lunchtime, and they sensibly escort younger children to the playground. Pupils are able to reflect calmly on their behaviour and how it impacts on others.
19. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils show respect for their teachers and a willingness to please. Teachers and staff manage pupils well by valuing and respecting them and provide good role models for pupils. A particular feature of this is the sensitivity pupils show to others, regardless of their ability. For example, pupils listen and value what others have to say and even though this might be entirely inappropriate it is not ridiculed or dismissed. This sensitivity and attitude comes directly from the very good example set by teachers and other staff. Older pupils are caring and rescue younger children if they see them in difficulties. A nice example of the relationships in the school was observed at playtime when an older child willingly helped a reception child who was struggling with a 'Cat's Cradle' game - an almost impossible task! Pupils enjoy the play equipment provided at lunchtimes and share it well.
20. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection.

Attendance

21. Attendance rates at the school are in line with other schools nationally and are satisfactory. Pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching is good overall in the reception class, and satisfactory overall in the rest of the school. Teaching is much stronger at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, and the very best teaching is in Year 5. In the school as a whole, over 35 per cent of the teaching is good or better, and seven per cent is very good. Five per cent of the teaching is unsatisfactory; all of this is at Key Stage 1. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, with a significant reduction in unsatisfactory teaching, but also a slight reduction in the amount of good and very good teaching.
23. The good quality of the teaching in the reception class makes a significant contribution to how well children learn and their subsequent level of attainment. It is characterised by the secure knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of the agreed outcomes expected nationally for children under five. Good use is made of open questions in whole-class sessions or as children work so that children are encouraged to share their ideas and pertinent questions are posed for specific respondents to extend thinking or clarify understanding. The teacher uses assessment information well to set appropriately high expectations, and most children rise to them.
24. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, but is seldom better than that, and is unsatisfactory in over 15 per cent of lessons. Teaching was satisfactory overall in all subjects seen. Insufficient teaching of information technology, history, geography, art and music was seen for a judgement to be made. In most lessons, the work set is appropriate to the pupils, and lessons are planned well. The range of methods used engages the pupils' interest effectively and gives them the appropriate experiences to progress; for instance, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson focusing on multiplication, there was a purposeful and varied range of activities that was reviewed well in the final, whole-class session. Where lessons are unsuccessful, they lack clarity of focus and do not build on what the pupils already know. For instance, a Year 1 science lesson on materials left pupils confused about the object and the material of which it was made, when this was the main point of the lesson. In an English lesson, the group reading book used was far too difficult for the pupils and so did not assist progress. In some cases, classes are not well managed, and the behaviour of a small number of pupils becomes a problem.
25. At Key Stage 2, almost half of the teaching is good or better and almost a tenth is very good. The very good teaching is in Year 5. Teaching is good in design and technology and in physical education, and satisfactory in all other subjects. Insufficient lessons in history and art were seen for an overall judgement to be made. Lessons are well prepared and teachers manage their large classes well. Teaching methods and resources are used effectively to promote learning. Learning objectives are often clear and are shared with the pupils. Where the teaching is very good, there is a high level of challenge and a clear focus on what pupils need to be taught in order to progress. For instance, in a very good Year 5 history lesson, there was a clear focus on the changes in towns during the Victorian period which is the expectation of Level 4, and on the reasons for these changes which addresses the higher level. Materials were well prepared to illustrate these changes and very good links made to the story of a family to illustrate the effect of changes on actual people. This was well focused, challenging teaching that promoted high standards of attainment.
26. Teachers are effective within the range of teaching strategies they use, and deploy these well to cope with some very large classes, especially in Year 4. The range of

strategies has been extended by the successful adoption of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, but lessons tend to be very teacher-directed, and there is still little use made of activities, that would promote more thought and independence in the pupils such as short discussions in pairs and small groups, before feeding back suggestions to the whole class. There are few occasions on which pupils are required to co-operate and reach a consensus in open-ended situations. Activities are often planned to fill long time-slots with few short-burst activities. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are too few lessons that really enthuse the pupils and grab their interest.

27. The school has been successfully developing its assessment procedures and now needs to use these to target teaching more precisely. Teachers need to use the assessment information they already have to target the teaching and learning of individuals and groups of pupils. This targeting needs to be related more precisely to the demands and expectations of the National Curriculum so that lessons are always appropriately challenging, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally appropriate by the class teachers and often good by the part-time teacher. Good consideration is given to the needs of these pupils and the special educational needs co-ordinator gives good quality advice and support. She has ensured that procedures are thorough and that the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. Pupils beyond Stage 1 have appropriate individual education plans, but the targets on some of these are not sufficiently precise to allow progress to be tracked effectively. In some cases the targets are actually the steps to be taken.
29. The teaching of girls is not overtly different from that of boys, but the standards of attainment of girls have been low over at least the last three years. There are examples of minor and unnecessary distinctions being made, such as naming groups after boys rather than girls, and of placing boys first on lists. These would not affect attainment in themselves, but may be indicators of underlying assumptions, expectations and attitudes. These need to be rigorously reviewed and confronted where necessary and the progress of girls monitored closely to ensure that sufficiently high levels are attained.
30. The quality of learning is generally satisfactory across the school. Reception class children settle quickly to school and work well. In the rest of the school, pupils work with interest and concentration. They apply themselves well and most take a pride in their work. Independence in learning is less well developed and the prevailing teaching style gives too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work and work out their own solutions to problems. For instance, in science lessons most experiments are set by the teacher on step-by-step worksheets, rather than pupils developing their own methods.
31. Teachers work hard and provide a high standard of care for their pupils. They do well to cope with such large classes.

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

Curricular opportunities

32. The curriculum is broadly based but the school does not always ensure an appropriate balance between subjects as the time allocated to mathematics is very high and impinges on time available for other subjects. The school has made efforts to improve provision for information technology since the last inspection. A new computer suite has been established, and extensive training opportunities in information and communication technology have been provided for staff. At present these initiatives are too recent to have impacted on standards.
33. The curriculum provides satisfactorily for pupils' physical, emotional and intellectual development. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is sound. Sex education is developed through curriculum areas such as science, and the governors have an agreed, written policy. Statutory requirements such as drugs awareness are met.
34. The school complies with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans identify targets for learning, but some of these targets are not sufficiently specific.
35. Since the previous inspection, schemes of work have been reviewed, and this process of review is still proceeding in order to ensure a closer match the new curriculum orders that will be effective from September this year. Strategies established for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective and developing. Sound long-term planning frameworks are in place and staff produce effective individual medium-term plans. Co-ordinators give valuable input to these plans and this has ensured that planning has improved since the last inspection. Short-term planning is completed by individual teachers, and whilst overall provision is sound, the needs of those with potential for higher attainment are not consistently met.
36. Many parents felt that the range of extra-curricular activities offered is too limited. During the inspection week, there was a limited range of extra-curricular activities which enhanced the quality of education for those pupils who take part. During the year, activities include cross country running, health and fitness club, football coaching from Wigan Athletic FC and the school choir. These activities are attended by a satisfactory number of pupils, mainly from Key Stage 2.
37. The community makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors to the school include Bolton Deaf Society, the RNIB, representatives of local churches, road safety officers, members of the police and fire services and the Curator of Salford Mining Museum. The caretaker, a former miner, talks to groups of pupils, as do senior citizens in the community. Pupils visit local places of interest such as Astley Mining Museum and Wigan Pier and older pupils participate in residential visits. Links with local secondary schools are developing with a recent innovation being the establishment of a 'summer school' for Year 6 pupils who are starting secondary school in September.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The quality of collective worship is sound and provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to celebrate their own beliefs and to look at the beliefs of others. The fish tank in the entrance provides a good opportunity for pupils to marvel at the natural world but generally

opportunities for awe and wonder, particularly for younger pupils, are not well developed.

39. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Classroom rules are explicit and are discussed with pupils. Behaviour in the school is good but if pupils do misbehave in the playground they are provided with effective opportunities to reflect on what it is they have done wrong.
40. Provision for social development through the daily life of the school is good. Teachers provide very good role models in their relationships with pupils. Older pupils have good opportunities to help with the day-to-day running of the school as monitors, and younger children help in their classes as class monitors. Playground games very effectively encourage pupils to share and to co-operate with each other. The bi-annual residential visit for older children gives pupils an effective experience of living and working with others in a less formal setting. Pupils are helped and encouraged to think of others; for example, when older pupils wanted to do a charity collection the school was keen to support them. Within lessons opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work together are limited.
41. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school places great emphasis on local culture and this aspect is explored well with for example, visits to mining and mill museums and talks by an ex-miner. This is enhanced by opportunities for traditional playground games. Opportunities for wider cultural experience through visits to museums and places of interest, and to see and listen to performances are satisfactory. Opportunities to look at and value other cultures have improved since the last inspection but remain limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Assessment and academic monitoring

42. Effective procedures are in place for assessing the attainment of children entering the reception class and prior to entry into Year 1. Information from parents, baseline assessment and ongoing assessment of learning, appropriately related to the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes, provide valuable information that is systematically recorded and used well to inform planning and set individual targets. Satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure that statutory requirements for assessment are met at the end of both key stages. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to monitor reading progress throughout the school and has instituted a suitably wide programme of standardised and criteria-referenced tests to track progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Samples of pupils' best work in core subjects are assessed and these are included in Records of Achievement so that pupils and parents are able to appreciate the progress made over time. These samples are now assessed in relation to National Curriculum level descriptors. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. However these samples do not identify what needs to be done to improve. As yet, there are insufficient examples of moderated work that clearly demonstrate the agreed levels of attainment. This limits the support for teachers in making precise formal assessment of attainment in all the elements of each subject. The school has recognised this and has included the development of portfolios of such examples in literacy and numeracy in the current development plan.

43. At Key Stage 1 and 2, the analysis and use of assessment information is underdeveloped and, to date, this has had a negative impact on the quality of curriculum planning at all levels. The school has identified in its development plan the need to develop procedures and improve the use of assessment information. A useful start has been made in analysing statutory test results over time to set overall targets for the following year and to make projections about possible levels of attainment for individual pupils. However, the initiatives are at such an early stage of development that they have yet to make a positive impact on curriculum planning so that teachers can identify and share with pupils what they need to do to make best progress, and plan lessons that suitably challenge all pupils consistently. The information from teachers' observations and from literacy and numeracy tests is used appropriately to identify pupils who have learning problems and to place them suitably on the special educational needs register. Teachers prepare individual education plans for these pupils but the targets set are not always sufficiently precise to ensure that pupil, parents and teacher can easily recognise progress in short measurable steps.

Support and guidance

44. The school gives pupils good personal support and guidance. Teachers know pupils well, are aware of their personal circumstances and are sensitive to their needs. Class sizes are large but because teachers are committed and know the pupils well they are able to monitor their personal development effectively. Monitoring of attendance is rigorous, and although the school does little to promote attendance, rates are about the national average.
45. There are generally effective health and safety procedures but arrangements for child protection are not fully in place. The designated person for child protection has been responsible for a relatively short period of time and has had the minimum of training. Members of staff have not had training and some are unclear about who the designated person is. The mid-day supervisory staff are responsible for a different class each day of the week and this makes it potentially more difficult to spot indicators, such as a change in behaviour.
46. Midday supervisory staff offer a good level of care and concern. They manage behaviour incidents particularly well, by being calm, talking to pupils quietly and giving them time to reflect of what they have done. The recent improvements to the playground have enhanced provision greatly and there is a good range of toys and equipment. However, the 90 minutes lunchbreak allocated to Key Stage 1 children is too long.
47. The school's behaviour policy is effective, but it is the very good relationships that teachers have with pupils that makes a significant contribution to the good behaviour in the school.
48. Whilst the school demonstrates a good level of care and concern for pupils, the toilet doors are too low to give pupils adequate privacy. The school is aware of this and it hopes in the near future to refurbish the toilets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school provides good pastoral support for pupils and involves parents well if there are concerns. However, the school could do more to involve parents with its work and life. There are a number of areas where a significant proportion of parents would like to see improvements: the consistency of homework, being kept well informed of their child's progress, the school working more closely with parents and the school providing an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The school needs to improve its provision in these areas.
50. The involvement of parents in the life of the school is limited, and the school has done little to involve them in its work. This means that although parents want to support the school and, for example, give good support for the annual fund-raising fair and are keen to help with visits, only a very few help in classrooms.
51. The school is proud of its open door policy but opportunities for parents to talk to class teachers and to see what is happening in the classrooms are minimal. This is because parents do not bring their children into school or collect them from school at the end of the day, but wait outside the school grounds. Although parents are invited to attend school services held in the church, they are not invited to class assemblies where they would find out about the work their child had been doing.
52. Information about the curriculum to enable parents to support learning at home is very limited. Although the reception class teacher gives parents information about what will be taught this practice has not been adopted throughout the school.
53. Most parents listen to their child read at home. However, the potential value of this is not fully realised because the reading diaries are designed for parents use only, and do not enable parents and teachers to have a dialogue.
54. The governors have opted to have only one parent governor and there is no parent fund-raising organisation, so opportunities for the school to find out the views of parents are restricted.
55. Written information on annual reports about children's progress is satisfactory. However, formal opportunities through parent-teacher consultations to discuss children's progress within the class are minimal, and the timings are awkward for parents who work. As a result parents have limited information and are not kept well informed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and senior staff

56. The headteacher administers the school effectively and provides a good example for the caring approach of the school towards its pupils. There is a positive ethos in the school where pupils are valued by their teachers and as a result want to do well. The school's aims are met in terms of providing a caring community, but there is no explicit aim about high standards of attainment.
57. The headteacher and the senior management team have recently started a more extensive evaluation of the school's performance and have carried out analyses of the school's scores in national tests. This evaluation has not been sufficiently rigorous in the past, and has not involved the whole staff in a full appreciation of the

implications of test scores. Issues such as the relatively poor performance of girls have not been identified. As a result, it has not been possible for the school to develop policies that will enable it to respond to issues and to improve areas of its performance. There has been insufficient direct management of teaching and learning by senior staff, and teachers have been left to develop their own approaches in many areas.

58. The headteacher and the senior management team need to set a clearer educational direction both by the development of policies and the issuing of guidance in response to performance, and by the more direct intervention in teaching and learning. A more rigorous programme of monitoring and support would enable the good practice within the school to be spread and a clearer whole-school educational direction to be developed. Many teachers have taught their present year group for many years and would benefit from the opportunity to rethink their approach in the context of a different year group and from more direct guidance from the headteacher and senior management team.
59. The role of subject co-ordinators has been extended since the last inspection and they manage their subjects effectively. Mathematics and information technology are managed particularly well.

The governors

60. The governing body exercises an appropriate general overview of the school and has ensured that the building has been preserved and maintained. The governors now need to be more detailed in their monitoring of the school's standards and more rigorous in their analysis. Not all governors were aware of the relatively poor scores in the 1999 national tests, and without this sort of information they are unable to hold the school properly to account for its standards. The same rigour needs to be applied to the oversight of the budget so that expenditure can be linked to educational outcomes. In particular, the governors need to look at the large class sizes in a school in which the per capita income is at the national average.

Monitoring, evaluation and targets

61. It has already been suggested that this is an area where improvements are needed and where the roles of both the senior management team and governors need strengthening. The evaluation would be assisted by clarifying and sharpening the targets in the school's development plan. At the moment, the development plan is insufficiently detailed to give clear guidance to staff or to use as an evaluative tool. For instance the section on information technology sets an objective to establish a computer suite, allocates £2000/3000 for this and sets the impact to be improved information and communication technology facilities resulting in greater involvement of children and development of information and communication technology skills. The impact needs to be sufficiently specific to subsequently establish value for money. In this case the £2-3000 is nowhere near the cost of the 11 computer systems, and does not take account of the impact of removing computers from the classrooms.

Strategic use of resources and best value for money

62. Generally effective use is made of resources across the school. Financial planning is sound and all spending is accounted for appropriately. The budget is scrutinised

by the governors and the best value principles of challenge, consultation and competition are applied. Specific grants, including those for special educational needs, are used appropriately. Despite this attention to detail, the class sizes remain much larger than average despite the fact that the school receives close to the national average income per pupil.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

63. Class sizes are much larger than average, with the Year 4 class having 37 pupils at the time of the inspection. However, the overall adult to pupil ratio is favourable because there is a part-time teacher and a relatively high number of classroom support staff. There is also a high number of clerical staff for a school of this size. The school building is spacious and the grounds fairly extensive. Teaching and learning resources are generally adequate across the school except in three areas: the quality and range of resources for children under five needs to be improved and they need access to an outdoor play area; the number of computers in the new computer suite is inadequate for the large size of the classes (with only 11 systems and classes up to 37 pupils, there are not even enough for three pupils to use each computer at one time); the quality and range of books in the library and the poor literary and physical quality of reading scheme books significantly restricts learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise standards, particularly in the core subjects and information technology, the school needs to ensure that:

(1) The role of the senior management team is strengthened so that:

- the performance of the school is rigorously analysed;
- issues such as the performance of girls are given full consideration;
- policies are developed in response to the analysis;
- teaching and learning are closely monitored;
- clear guidance and direction are given to teachers. (para 58)

(2) The standards attained by girls need to be improved by:

- reviewing the school's policy for equal opportunities;
- rigorously reconsidering attitudes and expectations of all staff and pupils;
- monitoring the relative performance of girls at all levels. (para 10)

(3) The school's approach to assessment continues to be developed so that:

- the information gained can be used to target the teaching and learning of individual pupils;

- teachers become more familiar with the demands of the expected levels;
- lessons are always appropriately challenging for all pupils. (para 27)

(4) The level of resources is improved so that:

- there is an appropriate amount of good quality literature and reference works;
- there are adequate resources of good quality for children under five, particularly an outdoor activity area accessible from the classroom. (para 63)

(5) The partnership with parents is strengthened by:

- giving more opportunities for informal and formal contact with teachers;
- involving parents more directly in pupils' work at home and in school;
- encouraging more parents to join the governing body;
- considering ways in which parents' views can be sought. (para 49)

The school may also wish to consider the following minor areas for improvement in its action plan:

- the consistency of homework; (para 49)
- the range of extra-curricular activities; (para 36)
- the attitudes and behaviour of Year 1 pupils; (para 16)
- the consistency of targets. (para 2)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	30	58	5	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)	n/a	220
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
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	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	10	9	9
	Total	21	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	71	71
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	71	82
	National	82	86	87

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	16	10	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	10	16
	Girls	7	5	4
	Total	19	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73	58	77
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	18	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69	73	81
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	181
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	31.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	392,354
Total expenditure	390,589
Expenditure per pupil	1,784
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,069
Balance carried forward to next year	6,834

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	26	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	58	7	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	42	30	1	0
The teaching is good.	36	58	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	53	22	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	22	56	18	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	37	45	4	3	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	27	30	12	14

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

65. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five years old. Not all children have had nursery or playgroup experience prior to entry. Baseline assessment and teacher-observation records indicate that, on entry, children demonstrate the full range of stages of development but, overall, attainment across the nationally recommended areas of learning is not significantly different from what is expected of children of this age. At the time of the inspection, eight of the children in the reception class were still under five. All children make at least satisfactory progress and a significant minority make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, most children have made a successful transition to the work of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs are promptly identified and given sensitive support that enables them to participate in all aspects of the work.

Personal and social development

66. By the age of five, children have a well-established range of personal and social skills and they cope very well with the routines of school life. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that most children can enter full-time education with a good measure of confidence. The school wisely places a high priority on the development of this area so that by five most children have an appropriate understanding of social conventions and relate well not only with each other and the adults who work with them but also to unfamiliar adults visiting their room. Children work and play well together. Children enjoy activities in mathematics, music, and physical education that involve taking turns. However, few can develop a role-play scenario that requires some negotiation to develop particular roles such as the shop-keeper or the customer in the farm shop. Children confidently seek help when needed and because adults consistently respond positively to their needs, value their ideas and are sensitive to their expressions of feelings they have a growing awareness of their own worth and that of others. This consistency of approach ensures that by the time most children reach statutory school age they have a well-established understanding of right and wrong and an increasing understanding of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. The appropriately high expectations of adults and well-planned, purposeful activities enable children to settle to either self-chosen or teacher-directed activities and to sustain concentration for relatively long periods. Children readily take responsibility. This was well illustrated by the competence with which children access and handle equipment in the classroom and particularly by the remarkably high level of responsibility demonstrated when setting out equipment for physical activities.

Language and literacy

67. By the age of five, most children's skills are in line with agreed age-related expectations, and a significant minority achieve beyond. Within the literacy sessions observed the quality of learning of most children was judged to be good. Most children listen attentively to stories and rhymes and are eager to join in as familiar phrases occur. Support for the development of speaking and listening skills permeates all aspects of the work in reception. As the bank of words that they understand and can use increases, children talk confidently about their ideas and

feelings to adults who work with them and to each other. This was well illustrated in a class numeracy session when pupils were making estimates before using arbitrary measures of capacity and then comparing outcomes and estimates. By the age of five most children know how books are organised and with appropriate support, talk about the pictures and interpret from them, the contents. They understand that print carries meaning, and almost all children eagerly join in reading with the teacher in a class session. Most children are beginning to recognise an increasing number of letter shapes and their associated sounds along with some frequently occurring words. They identify their work by writing their name and make sound progress in recording their ideas through pictures, symbols, letter-like shapes and copied words. Higher attaining children use their phonic knowledge and some commonly used words to write independently when recording personal events.

Mathematics

68. Overall, by the age of five, most children's attainment in mathematics is at least in line with age related expectations with a small minority achieving beyond. In the numeracy sessions observed, most children's learning was judged to be satisfactory. Children enjoy counting activities when, for example counting to and beyond 20 and when starting from a given number counting on to ten and then to 15 and counting back. Children show great delight in achieving this and, in turn, this pleasure supports their learning. Most pupils count objects to ten and many recognise the associated numerals. Most children sort and match objects for common properties. They recognise and can create their own repeating patterns, for instance when recording musical compositions. Most children can recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and can choose the coins used to purchase items up to the value of ten pence. In practical situations, children are establishing an understanding of addition and higher attaining children are beginning to understand and calculate using subtraction within ten. Clearly most children have a good grasp of arbitrary units of measure and have established an understanding of comparative measures such as heavy/light, more and less.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. By the age of five, most children have made sound progress in their understanding of the world. Through a suitable range of activities children develop an appropriate awareness that changes have taken place over time. They recognise how they have changed since babyhood, and understand their position in the sequence of generations within a family. They make and keep simple records of the changes observed in the weather and those observed in the environment on autumn or spring walks. Children recognise the differences in materials when, for instance, creating pieces of collage work. They observe the changes in consistency achieved by mixing ingredients and the irreversible state created by heating the mixture when making biscuits. Children use small-world toys and construction equipment to illustrate what they understand about the world. By five, most children confidently use equipment such as tape recorders and the directional keys, enter and delete keys on a computer keyboard to operate a computer program.

Physical development

70. Overall children make good progress in physical development but this is particularly good in skills associated with gymnastics activities. Their development of manipulative skills is generally in line with age-related expectations through regular

experience with handling pencils, scissors and managing small construction equipment. This was illustrated well by children creating faces using a paper plate and collage material. Children demonstrated above average development of awareness of space and the position of themselves and others in it, during a session in the hall. They are able to access and set out equipment such as mats, benches and boxes with appropriate support from an adult and with a level of personal responsibility that is well above expectations for pupils of this age. In traversing the arranged equipment children demonstrate very good control, awareness of a range of strategies for travelling and a remarkable understanding of how to do so safely. However, opportunities to engage in physical activity are restricted to allocated blocks of time in the hall because there is no ready access to a secure outside play area or appropriate equipment where children can engage in imaginative and vigorous activity.

Creative development

71. Children have an appropriate range of opportunities to develop their creativity. By the age of five, attainment is broadly in line with expectations for children of this age except for the development of imaginative role play where a significant number of children need the support of an adult to develop and sustain the activity. Children develop increasing control when, for instance, using paint, crayon and collage materials to create self-portraits, pictures of giants and observational drawings of flowers. The children sing nursery rhymes and songs enthusiastically and, with support, sustain appropriate pitch and articulation. They have a suitable range of opportunities to use non-tuned instruments and can interpret a simple score using arbitrary symbols denoting when specific instruments are to be played and, in turn, can develop a score for others to play.

Quality of education provided

72. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and in one in seven of the lessons observed teaching was judged to be very good. This quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to how well children learn and their subsequent level of attainment. It is characterised by the secure knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of the agreed outcomes expected nationally for children under five. This is well illustrated by the quality of planning that clearly identifies learning objectives and provides a balance of opportunities for children to develop skills and understanding through a structured range of both teacher-directed and self-chosen, practical and purposeful activities. Good use is made of open questions in whole-class sessions or as children work so that children are encouraged to share their ideas and pertinent questions are posed for specific respondents to extend thinking or clarify understanding. The teacher uses assessment information well to set appropriately high expectations, and most children rise to them.
73. A suitable policy is in place to ensure the provision of a broad and suitably balanced curriculum. Schemes of work covering all the required areas of learning support the systematic development of skills and understanding and the successful transition to the work of the National Curriculum at the time best suited to each child. Effective procedures are in place for the assessment of attainment on entry and to track progress as children move towards statutory school age. The information from formal and informal assessment activities is used well to inform planning at all levels.

74. Overall, resources and accommodation for these children are unsatisfactory. The room is too small to accommodate over 30 children, the required equipment and to fully support a practical approach to learning. Many of the resources and furnishings are now well worn and in need of replacement and/or updating. There is no designated secure outdoor area which is easily accessible and equipped to provide suitably regular opportunities for vigorous and imaginative activity.

ENGLISH

75. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school but few attain beyond age-related expectations in either reading or writing. This is broadly similar to the standards prevailing at the time of the last inspection.
76. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in reading and writing in 1999 were well below the national average. It is likely to be significant that within the particular Year 2 class one pupil in three had some degree of learning difficulty and that proportion is reflected in the percentage of the group not achieving the expected Level 2 in reading and writing. The results of the 1999 national tests taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that the standard of attainment in English was below average when compared with all schools and well below when compared with schools of a similar context. Again there was a significant minority of pupils in the class identified as having some degree of learning difficulty but the percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 4 or above was not significantly different from the national average. However the proportion of pupils attaining beyond Level 4 was, in fact, below the average.
77. Standards have risen this year and are now in line with the national average, but still likely to be below the average for similar schools. This is because although the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2 for seven year olds and Level 4 for 11 year olds) is broadly average, comparatively fewer pupils attain the higher level at the end of each key stage.
78. Overall, speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of both key stages. Most Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively to stories and instructions and respond appropriately. This is well illustrated when, after whole-class sessions, pupils disperse to their groups and most know what they must do and can start tasks promptly. When speaking, many show an awareness of the need to hold the attention of the listener. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, most maintain good listening habits and continue to acquire an ever-increasing vocabulary. They respond to open questioning with increasing fluency and detail. By the end of the key stage, most pupils show a sound understanding of the basic conventions associated with standard English and are aware of when it is appropriate to use them. In discussions they often offer considered opinions and are more ready to listen to the ideas of others, raise questions and develop their own thinking further. The good development of speaking and listening skills owes much to the value teachers consistently place on pupils' oral contributions in lessons and to the emphasis all teachers place on extending pupils' working vocabulary.
79. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is average, but the proportion of pupils attaining beyond age-related expectations is small. Most pupils have an appropriate range of phonic knowledge and strategies for tackling

unfamiliar words. They recognise punctuation conventions and many use them to support fluency and understanding. Pupils talk about the characters and the plot and anticipate what might come next in the story. Progress results from systematic, direct teaching of phonic knowledge and reading strategies, and the opportunities teachers make to talk with pupils about what they have read together. By contrast, although most pupils know about fiction and non-fiction, alphabetical order and where to find the content and index in a book their practical experience of using a library and reference books is significantly underdeveloped. This has a negative impact on the breadth of reading experience of most pupils.

80. At Key Stage 2, opportunities to discuss reading with the teacher in guided reading groups provides good support for the development of fluency and understanding when tackling fiction and non-fiction texts. For example, Year 3 pupils compare the features of two accounts of the same incident and identify the use made of the first person in a personal letter and the use of the third person in a news report of the same incident. Year 5 pupils confidently offer opinions as to the possible characteristics of various writers from the mood, tone and style of a series of letters. By the end of the key stage, most pupils effectively read a range of texts. They show an understanding of themes and the nature of characters in fiction and can explain their preferences. They know about the organisation of a library and basic information retrieval strategies but this aspect remains underdeveloped. Too often opportunities for personal research in areas across the curriculum are overlooked. The National Literacy Strategy is used well, and teachers are concerned to ensure that pupils practise learned skills by reading every day to parents or for themselves. However the quality of many of the books currently being used is both unattractive and unsuitable to encourage interest in paired or independent reading and to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils.
81. Attainment in writing at the end of both key stages is broadly in line with national averages. Most pupils make generally satisfactory progress as they move through the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils confidently write for a suitable range of purposes and use appropriate structures when writing poetry, making a personal diary entry, recording instructions or telling a story. Pupils confidently use their phonic knowledge when spelling and turn to dictionaries for help, although many find it difficult to remember common irregular words. They clearly know about basic punctuation and grammar rules through regular practice activities. Higher attaining pupils use speech marks effectively and demonstrate an awareness of how words can be used to add interest for the reader. Handwriting skills are systematically taught but the introduction of a joined script is unnecessarily delayed for those pupils in Year 2 who have successfully developed print script.
82. Throughout Key Stage 2, grammar and punctuation conventions continue to be taught systematically and pupils extend their range of formal and informal writing. For instance younger pupils in the key stage prepare a set of rules for a game and write a letter of explanation. Older pupils develop an increasing awareness of how established writers use words and varied sentence structure to hold the reader's attention, so that such phrases and sentences as, "He blew three notes, very soft notes", or "I was filled with inexplicable fear..." appear in their imaginative work. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils are using paragraphs appropriately and can use sustained dialogue to good effect in stories. Throughout the school, the systematic development of spelling, grammar and punctuation through direct teaching has a positive impact on the progress of all pupils.

83. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards targets set in individual education plans. The progress owes much to the prompt identification of difficulties, the appropriate use of the literacy strategy advice and specific programmes to support the development of phonic skills.
84. Pupils' attitudes to English are good throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate considerable respect for their teachers, listen attentively and are eager to be involved in whole-class activities. They settle to group and individual tasks responsibly and sustain attention for an appropriate time. Their consistently good behaviour and attitude make a major contribution to the quality of learning.
85. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, but there is some unsatisfactory teaching at the beginning of the key stage. At Key Stage 2 teaching is never less than satisfactory with a quarter good or better. This quality of teaching makes a major contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Where teaching is best, planning identifies exactly what the pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson and this is shared with the pupils so that they too have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The activities planned are purposeful, build on pupils' prior experience and are devised to appropriately challenge all pupils. Appropriate links are consistently made between reading, writing and speaking and opportunities are taken to consolidate prior learning. Questioning is used well to assess progress and subsequently to extend pupils' thinking. These lessons have good pace so that pupils maintain interest and sustain active learning. Weaknesses occur where teachers are not clear about what pupils need to know, understand and be able to do to make best progress. Consequently activities and resources are inappropriately challenging. All teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening skills in other areas of the curriculum, but opportunities for pupils to develop independent research skills and to extend their writing experience are too often overlooked.
86. The subject is managed effectively. The curriculum co-ordinator has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and specific funding has been used well to support its implementation. Already the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve the opportunities for pupils to engage in purposeful extended writing activities. Suitable procedures are in place to assess pupils' attainment and track progress but insufficient use is made of the information generated to inform planning at all levels. Resources are well organised but the quality of many of the literature and reference books is unsatisfactory and insufficient use is made of the library to support learning.

MATHEMATICS

87. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are broadly average, but few pupils attain the higher levels. Standards are broadly in line with those found at the time of the last inspection.
88. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were well below the national average, and well below the average of similar schools. The performance of girls was slightly worse than boys, which is against the national trend. The 1999 scores continued a four year trend of below average standards.
89. Standards have improved this year, mainly because of the more focused approach of the National Numeracy Strategy, and a broadly average proportion of pupils

attain the expected Level 2. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level (Level 3) is still below average. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils understand place value of tens and units, odd and even numbers and simple fractions. They add and take away to 100 and multiply by two, five and ten. Higher attaining pupils understand numbers to 1000. Most pupils understand how money is used and can make simple calculations, using a range of coins up to £1. Pupils identify features of two and three-dimensional shapes. They measure using a range of standard units, including centimetres, metres and litres, and more able pupils estimate with a good degree of accuracy. Pupils confidently use analogue and digital time and higher attaining pupils tell the time to five minute intervals, and perform addition and subtraction operations with time.

90. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 were below the national average and well below the average of similar schools. Girls did worse than boys which is contrary to the national trend. The scores continue a trend of generally below average scores over the last three years. Standards are higher this year, again as a result of the more focused national approach, but too few pupils attain the higher level (Level 5).
91. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils understand and use prime numbers and negative numbers, and are able to complete number sequences. Pupils perform four operations with decimal fractions, and many pupils can interchange fractions, decimals and percentages. They work with a range of metric measures and understand area and perimeter. They measure angles accurately and identify features of two and three-dimensional shapes. They produce bar charts to represent information gathered, and the more able can interpret these graphs. However, the use and range of data handling is limited.
92. At both key stages, attainment in number and shape is better than in other areas of mathematics. There has been an improvement in pupils' skills in the investigational aspects of the subject that was a key issue from the previous inspection. The school's effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has already had a positive effect on pupils' computational and mental calculation skills. However, skills in data handling and using information technology in mathematics are underdeveloped.
93. Work in mathematics supports other subjects well. Whole-class work in mental mathematics helps develop pupils' listening skills and targeted questioning develops many situations where pupils have to respond verbally. Pupils record observations in science, they measure and record in design and technology. Making and reading maps in geography effectively develops pupils' understanding of co-ordinates.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with one third of lessons good, and one unsatisfactory at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Where the teaching is good, lessons have clear learning objectives, and are well organised. For instance, in one lesson with Year 6 pupils the introductory whole-class mental session was purposeful and challenging with pupils responding well to questions about prime numbers, square numbers and square roots of numbers. Those few pupils not volunteering answers were challenged by the teacher, and invariably demonstrated that they knew the solutions to the questions posed. Confidence and enthusiasm from the teacher spread to the pupils and by the plenary session, the vast majority of pupils were able to demonstrate how their learning had moved on. Teaching methods are varied, especially at Key Stage 2, where teachers provide an

appropriate balance between pupil activity and direct teaching. The National Numeracy Strategy is being effectively implemented, and the lively mental mathematics sections are a good feature of many lessons, much enjoyed by staff and pupils alike.

95. Emphasis on daily mental practice, strengthened by the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, is enabling pupils to rehearse and build on their numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs are soundly supported. Work presented to them is well matched to their abilities and previous experience, and support from teachers and learning support assistants is consistently sound. However, there is not always sufficient challenge to the higher attaining pupils.
96. There is effective monitoring of pupils' progress over time through the use of assessment tasks and a range of standardised tests. There is a portfolio containing samples of work, but these are not judged against National Curriculum standards to guide teachers towards a clear view of expected levels at different ages. Consequently, in some year groups, pupils with potential for higher attainment are occasionally given work which is insufficiently targeted to their needs.

SCIENCE

97. **Standards in science are below the national average at both key stages. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection, but an improvement since last year.**
98. There is no national test for seven year olds in science, but the teachers' own assessments indicate that standards were below average in 1999. There has been some improvement, particularly in the materials aspect, but the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) remains slightly below average, whilst very few attain the higher level (Level 3). Since the last inspection, standards declined sharply and are now rising again, but have not reached the national average. Compared to schools of similar background, standards are below average.
99. By the time they are seven years old, most pupils know about a range of physical phenomena such as electricity and sound and are able to compare effects such as brightness or the production of sound. Few have moved to the higher level (Level 3) in making generalisations from their observations. Most are able to describe and sort materials by everyday criteria, but again, few use their knowledge and understanding to explain how materials affect the suitability of objects. In fact, many still confuse the object and the material from which it is made. In a Year 2 lesson on parts of plants, most pupils were able to point to similarities and differences between the daffodils and pansies before them, but few were able to make any generalisations from their knowledge of how plants grow.
100. In national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, standards were well below the national average, and well below the average of similar schools.
101. By the age of 11 there is still an above average number of pupils who have not attained the expected level (Level 4) and far too few pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5). In studying life processes, most pupils are able to identify parts of living things such as petals and roots of plants, but too many are still uncertain about the function of parts such as stamen and stigma. In studying forces, most pupils are able to explain how an electrical circuit may be switched on or off, but a significant number are still uncertain of the effect of changes to the circuit and do not fully

recognise circuit diagrams. Too few were able to generalise their knowledge of circuits and so predict the effect of changes they had not been taught.

102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1. Lessons are well prepared and pupils are involved in an appropriate range of activities. For instance, Year 2 pupils were involved in good first-hand learning experiences and given helpful samples to look at parts of a plant. The daffodil and pansy samples made it easy to talk about similarities and differences. In the unsatisfactory lesson at Key Stage 1 explanations were unclear and the structure of the lesson did not take pupils through the steps necessary to ensure their understanding.
103. The school has addressed the key issue raised by the last inspection report and is now giving appropriate attention to the investigative aspect of the subject. This could be further improved if pupils were given more independence in these investigations. Many of the investigations are planned and set by the teacher and do not involve pupils in selecting methods and ways of recording results. More opportunities to discuss the outcomes of investigations in pairs and small groups, as well as with the class, would help pupils to relate their conclusions to their previously gained scientific knowledge.
104. The school has recently adopted as its scheme of work the national programme of units devised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. In moving to the new scheme, the school has not always ensured that the new units are taught at the appropriate level. More precise use of the assessment information available to the school and a more detailed knowledge of the level requirements of the National Curriculum would enable teaching to be targeted more precisely, and lessons to contain the appropriate amount of challenge.

ART

105. Insufficient art lessons were observed during the inspection to make overall judgements on teaching in both key stages. Other judgements are based on an examination of work displayed throughout the school, documentation, and discussion with staff.
106. **Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress and by the end of each key stage attainment is broadly in line with what might be expected of pupils of these ages. A similar judgement was made at the time of the previous inspection.**
107. Year 1 pupils build on the skills learned in the reception class and work effectively with a wide range of collage materials to create garden designs and imaginary planets and develop puppets to present their own stories to other children. By the end of the key stage, pupils have had an appropriate range of experiences and demonstrate increasing control in using both equipment and media. For example oil pastels are used well to record close observations of spring flowers and to create a portrait. Drawing skills are developed when making sketches of interesting buildings in the locality and designing posters. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and by the end of the key stage have an appropriate understanding of how colours, shades and tones of paint can be achieved and used to good effect. This was well illustrated in work developed in Year 5 after discussing the work of Klee and observed in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were expressing

their own ideas using some of Monet's techniques. Throughout the key stage pupils are introduced to the work of significant artists and crafts people and given opportunity to explore techniques associated with tie-dyeing, batik, marbling and clay work.

108. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes to art were good. They enjoy the tasks and take care with their work and are thoughtful. Behaviour is good because they are interested. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make appropriate progress.
109. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. Clear subject-specific objectives were set, preparation was meticulous, visual-aids were thoughtfully chosen and used effectively. Pupils were given time to contemplate and their responses were valued. Good use was made of opportunities to directly teach techniques and to intervene as pupils worked in order to support skill development. Very good use is made of opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills.
110. The subject is effectively managed. An art policy is in place and a framework has been developed to show when specific elements are to be taught. To support teachers' medium-term planning the co-ordinator has provided guidance on the development of skills. However, where elements in the framework are insufficiently detailed there is inconsistency in the interpretation, which, on occasions, results in the planning of repeated or inappropriately challenging experiences. The school has recently identified an organisational problem that is affecting the time allocation for art in Key Stage 2. As yet the possible adverse effect on progress is not significant but an appropriate resolution to the difficulty needs to be expedited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. **Overall the quality of work at both key stages is about that which is expected, and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection.**
112. As they progress through school, pupils experience a range of focused practical tasks, and activities that effectively develop the design and make process, and they have the opportunity to work with an appropriate variety of materials. They use construction kits effectively. Pupils learn to manipulate simple tools and draw up designs using words and pictures. For example, Year 1 pupils drew up a design and make a packet to hold seeds, with a smaller packet inside, made of foil, to keep the seeds fresh.
113. At Key Stage 2, pupils build appropriately on their skills. They construct a model with a moving part, using a variety of materials including card, wheels, cams and string. In the project on 'Biscuits', Year 5 pupils draw up recipes, make their biscuits and evaluate the effectiveness of the making, the finished product and the added ingredients that may improve their product. They design and make gift bags to hold the biscuits. Extensive testing reveals the weight bearing capabilities of these bags and helps pupils understand the links between design, materials and intended purpose. Pupils design and make three-dimensional models that stand unsupported, and show evidence of appropriate, strong joints. They design and construct models that have moving parts operated by levers. By the end of the key stage, many pupils show sound understanding of cutting and joining skills and are

able to produce designs that show in some detail the materials to be used, the joining techniques, the dimensions and the finished product. They are able to look critically at their own and other designs and suggest ways of improving them. However, there was little evidence of pupils having the chance to examine, take apart and evaluate commercial products.

114. Design and technology makes a sound contribution to other areas of the curriculum. Contributions to pupils' literacy occur through discussion and recording. Pupils extend their vocabulary when using terms such as 'evaluation', 'structure' and 'design'. Numeracy skills are well employed during the many occasions when accurate measuring is required, such as when making three-dimensional shapes.
115. In the small number of lessons seen, teaching was always at least satisfactory and in two lessons was good. Learning objectives were clear and precise and lessons revealed a sound balance of direct teaching and pupil activity. In one lesson with the oldest pupils the teacher intervened during the activity to stress that when problems occur, as they will, they are there to be solved, not used as an excuse to give up. This was two minutes of very telling, effective direct teaching, well received by the pupils.
116. Teachers use the scheme of work to plan appropriate activities. Good use of exemplar guidelines enables the school to provide interesting tasks. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to planned activities, and, together with other adults, generate enthusiasm for the subject. They are particularly supportive of those who lack confidence in their own abilities. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject. Advice and guidance are provided and planning is regularly reviewed, but there is little evidence of assessments of pupils' standards being used to guide developments in the planned provision of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

117. Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those usually found. Satisfactory progress is made throughout the school. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection.
118. During Key Stage 1, pupils widen their understanding of the local area. They study the characteristic features of their immediate locality through walks from school. They look at the school environment and devise simple plans to show how they would like the playground to look. Older pupils in the key stage consider Atherton and locate their own house, the variety of buildings around them, and their uses. They are able to use symbols to represent these on a map. They look closely at 'My Home', and respond appropriately to such questions as "What are the walls made of?", "How many floors does it have?" and "What type of house is it?".
119. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn to communicate findings more effectively, and are beginning to be able to compare and contrast other localities with their own. Pupils compare a countryside scene with Atherton, using such terms as 'view', 'landscape', 'peak' and 'village'. They look at types of shops and respond to issues such as "Is it better to have big shops like Tesco, or lots of little shops?" trying to offer reasons for and against. They learn about other countries and different environments through a study of a South American rain forest. They learn how giant trees support a variety of life at the 'emergent' layer, the 'canopy' and the 'shrub' layer. They begin to appreciate features of places and aspects of life that are very different from their

own. Pupils compare and contrast the villages of Coniston, in the Lake District, and Howe Bridge where they live. This work is underpinned by visits. By the end of the key stage pupils show a good understanding of various aspects of rivers, settlements and the environment. Genuine interest in the subject from adults, alongside carefully selected areas of study designed to develop skills, and lots of appropriate support, helps pupils make sound progress.

120. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They enjoy talking about the localities and different countries they have studied, and the opportunities they have to find out more. Pupils use resources purposefully and demonstrate good levels of co-operation.
121. The quality of teaching observed was always satisfactory, and in two lessons was good. Pupils are well managed and teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships. Generally lessons are soundly prepared, but on occasions too little is demanded, especially from more able pupils. In the better quality lessons pupils are successfully motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm, pace is brisk and expectations are high.
122. The subject is managed satisfactorily and resources available are sufficient to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Pupils at both key stages enjoy the numerous practical activities and 'field trips' organised as part of the curriculum. These include visits to Coniston, Salford and Astley Mining Museums, Wigan Pier and Styal Mill.

HISTORY

123. It was not possible to see any history lessons at Key Stage 1 during the inspection, and only two were seen at Key Stage 2, and so no overall judgements can be made.
124. Pupils in Year 3 had developed an appropriate knowledge of the Vikings that they were studying. They knew about the invasions and the areas where Vikings had settled. They were able to use maps to identify former Viking settlements from place names and knew that these related to the Viking's language. Some were able to discuss the reasons why the Vikings had settled in Britain and the changes this had brought about.
125. Year 5 pupils had attained high standards in their studies of the Victorian period in Britain. These high standards result from the high quality of the teaching and the clear focus on the required levels of attainment. Pupils had a good knowledge of the period and were able to talk about the changes that had taken place in Britain during Queen Victoria's reign. In particular they were able to talk about the changes brought about by industrialisation and the effect this has on the growth of towns and movements in the rural population. Many were able to discuss the reasons for these changes. This resulted from the very good quality teaching than used good materials to make clear the changes and the reasons. This work focused very clearly on the requirements of the higher levels of the National Curriculum and presented very good challenge to the pupils. Alongside these facts and analyses, the teacher used a story of a Victorian family going through these changes and this allowed the pupils to empathise with real people and to deepen their understanding. This was very good teaching of history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

126. **There has been a recent rise in standards of attainment, but they are still below average at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection.**
127. The school has recently created a computer suite and has started more direct teaching of information technology. As a result, standards have risen, but the suite has not been in use long enough yet to have brought standards up to the expected level. If improvements continue at the present rate, standards should be in line by the time present Year 4 pupils leave Year 6.
128. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to start up the computers and locate the appropriate programs. They can access and save their work, and are able to use computer-based simulations to make simple predictions about the consequences of decisions. For example Year 4 and 6 pupils used a map based geography program effectively. Skills with the keyboard and mouse are still developing for most pupils, apart from those who use computers at home. Too few pupils have yet reached the expected stage of interrogating and amending databases or using spreadsheets, and very few have been involved in using information technology to control events in a predetermined manner or to sense and display data. Standards vary across the school with standards in Year 4 being relatively high. This is partly as a result of being taught by the information technology co-ordinator.
129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching from both the co-ordinator and some of the support staff. The direct teaching of classes and groups is clear and most teachers now have sufficient knowledge and expertise to guide pupils effectively. In the best teaching there is a good level of challenge, together with time for pupils to find out for themselves what programs can do, and to develop skills on the keyboard and mouse.
130. The new computer suite has increased the amount of direct teaching and so has contributed to the rising standards. However, there are not enough computers in it for the large size of some of the classes. This means that at least three pupils are often sharing one computer and this severely restricts the learning that can take place. There are not enough computers for even one to three for the largest classes. In some cases, classes are split to get round this problem, but this often means that those left in the classroom under the supervision of support staff are involved in low level tasks. There was some good teaching when a group was taken to the computer suite by a member of the support staff. However, there are problems of access in this arrangement with some pupils having to wait over a week for the follow-up lesson. These are difficult circumstances in which to develop confidence and familiarity with computers. The computer suite will not function effectively until there is at least one computer for every two pupils in the class.
131. The co-ordinator has worked hard to set up the suite and to ensure that there is appropriate software and that staff have become familiar with its use. She has devised an appropriate programme based on the national units of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school needs to ensure that the benefits of the suite compared to having computers in classrooms are closely monitored and reviewed, especially whilst there are so few computers in the suite.

MUSIC

132. Lessons were only observed in Key Stage 2. Overall, the evidence from these, a whole key stage singing session and an assembly indicates that progress is broadly satisfactory and attainment of pupils is not significantly different from what might be expected of pupils of this age. This represents improvement since the previous inspection.
133. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 are competent at playing non-tuned instruments and do so with enthusiasm. They are familiar with such terms as 'duration' and 'dynamics' and can interpret agreed arbitrary symbols to play, practice, refine and perform musical patterns. They follow a conductor effectively and assume the role themselves with a clear sense of responsibility. Pupils in Year 5 listen attentively to recorded music. Most pupils recognise the sounds of major instruments with a good measure of accuracy. They are aware of the range of sounds produced by a synthesiser. Pupils identify and use technical terms confidently. They demonstrate sensitivity and imagination in interpreting what they hear and articulate their ideas clearly. By the end of the key stage pupils clearly enjoy singing. They have good pitch and tone and articulate the words effectively. They respond well to a conductor to achieve effects by altering the dynamics or tempo and older pupils sustain part singing well.
134. Pupils enjoy music. Their attitude to the work and each other make a significant contribution to the quality of their learning. Pupils listen to teachers, are sensible when handling equipment and instruments and are eager to be involved in group music making. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are enabled to make suitable progress.
135. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory. Teachers plan clear, subject specific learning objectives. A good balance of instruction, explanation and use of both open and specific questioning is used to move learning on. Teachers provide time for pupils to reflect on what they hear and to practise and refine skills and ideas so that their responses are thoughtful.
136. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. Since the previous inspection advice and support have been used well to improve the provision. A suitable framework is in place to ensure a balance of aspects is achieved and the local authority scheme of work is used to support planning for the development of skills and experiences. Very good use is made of the peripatetic service to provide opportunity for pupils to learn a range of instruments. This supports the progress made by individual pupils. The involvement in parish and local musical events enriches the life and work of the school. Overall resources are satisfactory and used well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education programme. Evidence is drawn from the school's planning, discussions and from observations of lessons in dance, games and swimming.
138. At the end of both key stages pupils' attainments are broadly what would be expected of pupils of that age, in those aspects observed of the physical education curriculum. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last inspection.
139. At Key Stage 1 pupils are able to improve their performance through practice, and many are developing improved levels of control and mobility. Pupils make

satisfactory progress in games during Key Stage 1 and in the lesson observed, pupils demonstrated appropriate skills in throwing, catching and controlling a ball with their feet. In dance pupils begin to demonstrate a sense of rhythm when moving to music, attempting to use linking movements to make a more continuous sequence.

140. At Key Stage 2 pupils develop their skills and build well on previous learning. Many pupils pay increasing attention to the quality of their movements, developing control alongside increased levels of agility and extension. Pupils made especially good progress in one very good dance lesson, where by the end of the lesson, many were demonstrating poise, style and 'uniqueness' in their interpretation of the music and their revelations of characters. The school supports an effective swimming programme in Years 4 and 5, and, by the end of the key stage, almost all pupils are able to swim the required distances. Many exceed these distances and also become proficient in water safety techniques.
141. Pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment and attitudes are very positive. Pupils change into appropriate clothing and many take an obvious pride in their performance. They are willing to share ideas and work hard to practise their skills. When given the opportunity pupils are able to evaluate their own and others' performance.
142. Of the lessons seen, all the teaching was at least satisfactory, and on one occasion was very good. This lesson, a dance lesson, was characterised by clear planning, a sense of purpose made clear at the outset, good interaction with the pupils, valuing their responses, and much celebrating of good practice. Pupils performed to their utmost without a trace of self-consciousness, which was lovely to watch.
143. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and the physical education programme fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although no outdoor games lesson was observed, team games such as football, netball, rounders and skittleball are developed through house competitions, and Wigan Athletic Football Club undertake skills coaching sessions for all pupils. An outdoor pursuits programme helps to enhance physical education provision. The school's facilities are good with a hall, outdoor hard-surfaced areas and the school field. Resources are satisfactory overall.