

INSPECTION REPORT

FLIXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Flixton, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106318

Headteacher: Mrs J A Astles

Reporting inspector: Mr J P Latham
1817

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th July 2001

Inspection number: 194593

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Delamere Road Flixton Manchester
Postcode:	M41 5QL
Telephone number:	0161 748 5141
Fax number:	0161 912 3848
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Christie
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1817	P Latham	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
7914	D Blanchflower	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
5072	F Cheetham	Team inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language Equality of opportunity	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
1848	M McEvoy	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
4046	D Smith	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	
5157	D Straughan	Team inspector	Art and design Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Wirral Local Education Authority
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
Merseyside CH41 4FD

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Flixton Junior School, an average size junior school, has 280 pupils on roll, with 147 boys and 133 girls. There is a gender imbalance at present towards boys and this is reflected in most year groups but particularly in Year 4 where there are nearly twice as many boys than girls. The number of pupils on roll has remained relatively stable since the last inspection. Pupil mobility is low compared with national data available. The school serves an area of predominately private housing in Trafford, Greater Manchester.

The vast majority of pupils entering the school come from Flixton Infant School, which shares the same campus. The attainment of pupils on entry from this school since 1997 has fluctuated but overall has been broadly in line with national averages, rising to above average in 2000.

The school has under four per cent of its pupils eligible for free school meals, below the national average, but the majority of pupils come from homes which, in terms of economic advantage, are not significantly different from national norms.

Fifty-eight pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is average for the size of school. Most of these pupils have mild learning difficulties; a very small percentage has more specific learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and two others are awaiting assessment. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has improved since the last inspection. It provides a high quality education for its pupils. This is largely because of the vision of the headteacher to raise standards and meet targets set by governors and to ensure that pupils are taught well. All staff are fully committed and work very hard to raise standards and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to be well motivated, interested in their work and keen to achieve. Pupils show an excellent attitude to their learning. Their behaviour, at all times and particularly in lessons, is of a very high standard. The school is very successful in its aim to promote the personal development of its pupils. Overall the school is an effective school and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good quality teaching which means that pupils learn effectively;
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent;
- The behaviour of pupils, particularly in lessons is excellent, enabling them to make an excellent contribution to their learning;
- Pupils' personal development is excellent, reflecting the quality of care and attention and respect between pupils and their teacher;
- The excellent relationships within the school, and commitment amongst all staff is reflected in the way pupils are respected and valued;
- A range of learning activities that are interesting and engage pupils in practical experiences.

What could be improved

- Management procedures to ensure that good practice is more systematically applied;
- Overall curriculum planning for subjects other than English, mathematics and science which assures agreed content across year groups;
- The involvement of parents in their understanding of what the school is offering their children;
- The role of the governors in determining the direction the school takes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in March 1997. Standards in English and science have remained consistently above national averages and in mathematics were above the national average in 2000. There has been a steady improvement in all three subjects since 1997, apart from in English in 2000 where standards dropped slightly. The overall quality of teaching has improved with significantly more lessons reaching the higher grades. Standards have improved in information and communication technology (ICT) and are now average. The school has allocated more resources to computers and other equipment. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress has improved and there is now a closer match of tasks in lessons meeting the needs of all pupils. Curriculum provision and standards have also improved in design and technology, geography and history. Music is not as good as reported in the last inspection report due to lack of challenge and progression in learning. Satisfactory progress has been made in curriculum planning to assure continuity and progress, greatly assisted by the National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy and national guidance in other subjects. However, in history, geography, music and art decisions still need to be taken at school level on how national schemes of work can be adapted to the needs of pupils' learning at the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	B	D
Mathematics	B	C	B	C
Science	A	B	A	B

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

Results over the past three years have been mainly above the national average. In 2000 when compared with similar schools results are broadly average in mathematics, above average in science and below average in English. Work seen in the present Year 6 indicates that the school is now back on course in English and standards are now higher than those in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the national standard Level 4 is well above the national average in all three subjects and in 2000 significantly more pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science than in the previous year. Work seen in Year 6 indicates that standards are still above the national average with pupils continuing to show good achievements in science and mathematics and very good achievement in English. Trends over time show a steady improvement. The governors of the school set challenging yet realistic statutory targets. The 2000 results show that these targets were exceeded in mathematics with a shortfall of just two per cent in English. The current group of pupils in Year 6 is on course to exceed the targets set in both English and mathematics. Other work seen in classes throughout the school show standards to be good in design and technology, geography, history and physical education and satisfactory in information and communication technology, art and religious education. Due to good teaching pupils achieve well in all subjects and very well in geography, history and physical education. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in art. Work seen in music was mainly below average due to a lack of progression in skills taught.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the challenge this brings to them. They show high levels of interest in their work and contribute enthusiastically in class.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. There are excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour and this has a strong impact on pupils' progress. Pupils are courteous at all times. Behaviour at lunchtimes is also excellent with pupils keen to adhere to the school's code of conduct. Instances of bullying are rare and are quickly dealt with. There was one exclusion for a fixed period in the year prior to the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils take immense pride in their work and support one another in their learning. They take responsibility seriously and contribute ideas for development and fundraising. Relationships between pupils and all members of the school community are excellent.
Attendance	Very Good. Rates of attendance are well above the national average with very few unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
63 lessons seen	n/a	n/a	Good

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

The overall standard of teaching is good and it is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievements. Teaching is meeting the needs of the vast majority of pupils. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Although three of the 63 lessons observed were unsatisfactory, compared with the last inspection there are now more lessons reaching the higher grades. There are now nearly seven out of ten lessons good or very good, compared with about 50 per cent in the last inspection, with 14 per cent judged to be excellent – over double that of last time.

The quality of the teaching in the literacy hours and during the numeracy sessions is of a generally high standard. During the inspection, in literacy, all but one lesson was either very good or excellent. Teachers manage their time well, using whole class and group work to encourage pupils to read aloud with accuracy and expression. In numeracy, the majority of the lessons were either good or very good. Teachers develop very effective mental and oral work providing opportunities for pupils to explore a range of mental strategies to work out their answers. Most lessons are managed well; delivered with pace and excellent use is made of pupils' own contributions. Teachers' subject knowledge is good especially in literacy and numeracy where training has clearly been effective.

In English and mathematics, pupils are placed either in sets or in groups according to their ability. This works well, particularly when the group is joined by a teaching assistant. In a minority of lessons in other subjects, work is not always tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. It is in these same lessons when teacher instruction to the whole class lasts for too long, resulting in some lower attaining pupils losing concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum, which is enriched by a number of stimulating experiences. Subjects meet statutory requirements but units of work on control and use of sensors in ICT are not taught. There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities available. In subjects other than English and mathematics planning what pupils will learn is not always clear enough.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Arrangements for monitoring pupils with special educational needs are good. Records kept are thorough, but provision in the classroom, although good overall, is not consistent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Much of the day-to-day practice reflects the aims of the school; pupils have a strong sense of social responsibility and staff provide very good role models. The promotion of citizenship and valuing of others is very good and a strength. Much is done to broaden the curriculum so that pupils have a very good understanding of their own culture and an awareness of the faiths and cultures of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures are in place for child protection and health and safety matters. Results of tests and assessments are accurately used to prepare school targets but this process is less well developed for establishing learning targets for individuals.

Links with parents are insufficiently developed. Although information sent home is now good and is improving, many parents say they would value further partnership arrangements. In particular, whilst there are three occasions a year for parents to formally visit the school, the focus of the mid-year visit does not provide sufficient opportunity to find out how their child is progressing. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour amongst pupils are excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management provide good and effective leadership. They ensure that lessons are prepared well and that teaching is monitored. The aims of the school are reflected in the day-to-day actions of the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are proud of their school and provide good moral support. However they are not sufficiently involved in determining the direction the school takes, in creating policy or in closely monitoring developments or decisions. Financial monitoring is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A good feature: more recent work, now assisted by the deputy headteacher, shows careful monitoring of academic performance. The headteacher is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Target setting data shows predictions of end of key stage performance to be accurate.
The strategic use of resources	Links between development planning and spending decisions are satisfactory. Priorities are relevant to the aims of the school. Best value principles are understood by governors and particularly by the school bursar. They are applied in practice.

The skills of the teaching and support staff meet the demands of the curriculum. Resource provision is good and accommodation facilities have improved since the building of the new hall. This resource, although underused during out of school hours, releases the former hall to provide a very good resource centre and ICT suite. Effective use is made of the resource base by pupils, particularly to support investigation but use for library research is under developed. The Chairman of the Governing Body has a good understanding of how the future role of governors should develop.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school sent out 280 questionnaire and 175 were returned giving a return rate of 62.5 per cent. The meeting of parents was attended by 18 parents.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children like school. ▪ Behaviour is good. ▪ The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ The teaching is good. ▪ The school helps pupils become mature and responsible. ▪ Their children make good progress. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The way the school informs them about how their child is getting on. ▪ The way the school works closely with them. ▪ The interesting range of activities outside lessons. ▪ The amount of homework given to pupils.

The inspection findings broadly support the views of the large sample of parents who responded to the questionnaire. Parents have astutely identified the strengths of the school. The school acknowledges that more could be done to build upon existing good links with parents, particularly in keeping them well informed on their children's progress and educational developments in general. Arrangements for homework are already under review to bring about improvements in consistency. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for the size of school and staff to support them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2000 end of Key Stage 2 national tests for eleven year olds show that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was above the national average and well above the average in science. When compared with similar schools, results in English were below average for that group of schools, close to the average in mathematics and above the average in science.
2. Trends over time show that since 1996 standards in English and science have always exceeded the average for all schools. This is also true in mathematics in all years except in 1999 when they were average.
3. Although there is little significant difference between the relative performance of boys and girls in the school, overall, girls are performing better than boys. Trends over the past three years show that girls have performed better than boys in English reflecting the national picture. In mathematics, girls have also been doing slightly better than the boys whereas the picture nationally shows that it is the boys whose performance is slightly better. In science, girls have been outperforming boys, whereas national results show similar levels of performance.
4. The school has undertaken a detailed analysis of results based on test data emerging from both statutory and non-statutory tests and is using this information to predict future performance successfully. As a result of this analysis, the school has begun to set pupils by ability in mathematics in Years 5 and in mathematics and English in Years 5 and 6 and at the same time create smaller groups for teaching purposes. As a result of these measures, inspection evidence using work seen in the current Year 6 confirms that standards remain above average and are likely to be slightly higher than the school was predicting when targets were set for this year group two years ago. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in 2000 is close to the national average in English, above the national average in mathematics and well above in science.
5. The governors of the school set challenging yet realistic statutory targets. The 2000 results show that these targets were exceeded in mathematics with a shortfall of just two per cent in English. The current group of pupils in Year 6 are on course to exceed the targets set in both English and mathematics which reflects the school's determination to raise standards even further.
6. In most other subjects pupils show good achievements from when they entered the school at the age of seven. The standard of work seen is above average in design and technology, geography, history and physical education and with pupils making good progress over time. In information and communication technology (ICT), art and religious education, standards are in line with those normally expected of pupils by the age of eleven with satisfactory progress being made in art and good progress in ICT and religious education. Standards in music are below average and pupils make insufficient progress in this subject.
7. The good quality of teaching is an important factor in the good progress made by most pupils. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies with lessons following the recommended structure that provides a balance of whole class teaching and pupils' independent work. This has undoubtedly helped to raise standards. Teachers have a good understanding of what to teach and how to teach. They give warm encouragement to pupils and allow sufficient time for discussion and explanations. Sessions are invariably focused upon one or two specific teaching objectives which are shared with pupils at the beginning of every lesson to make sure they are clear about what they are expected to learn. In English, teachers use a rich and wide vocabulary to promote pupils' interest in new words. They have high expectations and encourage pupils to express their ideas accurately. In mathematics, mental and oral starters run with pace and challenge. Pupils work well independently and are encouraged to do so through the appropriate use of tasks. The last few minutes of each lesson are used effectively to assess how pupils have progressed and this is recorded on planning sheets. When demanding concepts are taught, teachers reassure pupils in order to maintain confidence and bring about successful learning outcomes. Recorded work shows consistent development on previous work. Books are kept neat and tidy and work is regularly marked. Comments made by teachers are often helpful and constructive in that they help pupils to see how their work might be improved.

8. In science standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science is very good and many are developing good skills of scientific enquiry. They are able to make judgements from data they collect. Pupils themselves make an excellent contribution to lessons. Lessons are pitched at just the right level to make suitable demand on pupils.
9. At the time of the last inspection standards in information and communication technology were unsatisfactory. The school has made considerable effort to address the weaknesses, particularly the lack of computers. Standards are now in line with those expected nationally and progress is satisfactory. Although the school has improved its computer-pupil ratio to 20:1, nationally the picture has also improved and the school is still trailing behind the national average of 12.6:1. The teaching of basic ICT skills is good and there are good examples emerging of ICT being used to support other areas of the curriculum; the pupils use spreadsheets and databases and in Year 6 they are developing the skills of producing multi-media presentations.
10. Pupils make good progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Pupils' progress in music is unsatisfactory.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly good progress especially where lower attaining groups are supported by teaching assistants. In many lessons observed, especially in literacy, numeracy, science and physical education, teachers set specific tasks for the lower attaining pupils but there are some lessons where the tasks set are not always appropriate. The school is able to identify gifted and talented pupils and in most lessons there are high expectations made of these pupils. The school has not yet determined levels of extra challenging provision to extend this group of pupils even further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The last inspection found that this was a strong aspect of the school and this remains so. The pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, personal development and

relationships with everyone in the school are excellent. Pupils are trustworthy, polite and courteous. They greet visitors cordially and are proud of their school and take great care of it. Pupils show respect for the building and the equipment it contains.

13. Children like their school. They are happy and keen to come in the mornings and this is reflected by their very good attendance. They move around calmly and purposefully and are pleased to talk to visitors, offer their help and point out examples of their work in displays. The pupils enjoy the rich variety and challenge which the school provides. They show high levels of interest and contribute enthusiastically in lessons by drawing on a range of experiences. A noteworthy and unusual experience provided through design and technology is in the cookery lessons. These give excellent opportunities for small groups of pupils to experience preparing and presenting food to a very high standard and reinforces the importance of healthy eating. Pupils invite guests to share what has been prepared, for example an afternoon tea, where the children act as hosts to parents, grandparents and friends.
14. Pupils' behaviour is excellent at all times. This has a strong impact on pupils' progress. Parents and all staff fully support the very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. The staff on duty at lunchtime positively reinforce the school's code of conduct. In all lessons pupils work constructively in groups and productively on their own. They are comfortable and confident with staff and other adults, and pupils with special educational needs are confident in all aspects of school life.
15. Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning throughout the school and concentrate well in lessons and are motivated learners. They work with good effort for prolonged periods and show immense pride in the work they produce. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent and serve to stimulate and encourage pupils to work with confidence and enjoyment.
16. The provision for personal and social education and citizenship is very good. Pupils of all ages willingly take responsibility in the classroom and around the school. Provision enables pupils to develop confidence and responsibility and make the most of their abilities. For example, they collect and deliver registers and clear tables at lunchtimes. The responsibilities given to the children serve to promote their personal development and instil a sense of community and citizenship. Pupils listen to what others have to say, respect their views and respond in a lively and positive way. This was powerfully demonstrated when Year 5 debated the pros and cons of fox hunting.
17. The school council, that existed at the time of the previous inspection, continues to afford the pupils involved with a good opportunity to take responsibility and play an active role as a member of the school community. Currently membership is by teacher selection but the school is looking at pupil nominations which will be a positive improvement to the council structure. Meetings of the school council clearly illustrate that the pupils involved are aware of other people's views and concerns. Those involved demonstrate a good understanding of the complexities of reaching informed and meaningful decisions. Year 6 pupils, who form the core of the school council acknowledge the opportunities for getting involved in daily routines as well as bringing forward ideas for development and fundraising. This group assumes responsibilities for caring for the younger and more vulnerable children in the playground. They attend meetings, canvass opinion and organise fundraising events such as the 'Wrong Trouser Day' in support of Manchester Children's Hospital.

18. Instances of bullying are rare in the school and pupils are well aware of the action they should take should it occur. Equally the school experiences few instances of sexism or racism. The school had one exclusion during the previous academic year.
19. The school attendance levels are above the national average and are slightly improved over attendance levels at the time of the last inspection. Both authorised and unauthorised absence is below the national average. Most pupils are punctual in arriving at school and sessions get off to a brisk start. A small number of pupils arrive late. The procedure of having pupils on duty to record other pupils arriving late should be reviewed as it takes away some school time, including some assembly time for those pupils involved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. In the last inspection, 94 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better with half of all lessons good or very good. Six per cent of lessons were found to be excellent with a similar proportion deemed unsatisfactory.
21. The quality of teaching overall has improved since the last inspection. In particular, while a similar percentage of lessons were satisfactory or better (95 per cent) there are now nearly 70 per cent of lessons good or very good with 14 per cent judged to be excellent. The overall standard of teaching is good and it is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievements.
22. The very effective day-to-day planning by teachers and their high expectations of pupils are key features. Planning sheets require teachers to evaluate their lessons and this information is then taken into account in subsequent lessons. This contrasts with the last inspection when the assessment of pupils was found to be unsatisfactory.
23. Lessons are usually very interesting and most teachers use the very lively responses from the pupils to good effect, always building on and valuing contributions. A significant contribution to the effective teaching in most lessons is the behaviour and confidence of all pupils and the purposeful contribution they make. Invariably pupils listen attentively to the teacher and show genuine interest in tasks presented to them. There are excellent pupil-teacher relationships in most classes. Teachers' subject knowledge is good especially in literacy and numeracy where training has clearly been effective.
24. In the majority of lessons, work is suitably matched to the abilities of pupils, a further improvement on the last inspection where this was found not to be the case in many lessons. However, there is still the occasional lesson, when work is not always tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. In some lessons, other than English and mathematics, when teacher instruction to the whole class lasts far too long, some lower attaining pupils lose concentration and this affects the progress they make.
25. Overall the quality of the teaching in the literacy hours is very good and in numeracy good overall. In literacy, teachers use their time well, introducing pupils to a variety of interesting and different forms of text. In Years 3 and 4 the focus is on developing pupils' skills in reading and writing in particular, including helping pupils to recognise how language can be used for different purposes. Throughout the school, teachers use drama well to enhance appreciation of language. Whole class and group lessons encourage pupils to read aloud with accuracy and expression. Pupils are

encouraged to talk about the books they read and through skilful questions from the teacher, they develop critical awareness of the way text and poems are written. In literacy, apart from one lesson, which was satisfactory, all other lessons were either very good or excellent. In numeracy, the majority of the lessons were either good or very good beginning with very effective mental and oral work, usually at pace and providing opportunities for pupils to develop a good variety of mental strategies to work out their answers. All pupils enjoy the challenge of this part of the lesson. Group activities provide an opportunity for pupils to develop in more depth new concepts or investigations. Some lessons benefit from additional support at this point in the lesson, usually through a teaching assistant working with a lower attaining group of pupils. Even when concepts introduced are really challenging, pupils seldom give up. Frequently in these circumstances the persistence of the teacher enables the pupils to achieve.

26. Teachers use the skills that they have acquired through literacy and numeracy lessons effectively in the teaching of other subjects. For example, clear objectives are established for the vast majority of lessons and these are communicated to pupils. Explanations are clear and teachers make good use of a wide range of resources and other artefacts to support learning. Some examples of excellent enquiry based work were observed during history and some of the better geography lessons. This type of work helps pupils grasp new areas of learning well and this is reflected in the way they are able to talk confidently about new ideas. In all lessons, teachers encourage pupils to use appropriate technical vocabulary, especially in science where correct scientific terms are stressed. In these lessons pupils learn new words and specialised terms at a rapid rate and use them in the answers they give and in their recorded work.
27. Teaching in science is very good overall with some excellent practice observed. In other subjects such as ICT, design and technology, geography, history and art teaching is good overall and very good in physical education. Teaching in music is satisfactory overall. One of the key features of the teaching seen was the very good relations that teachers enjoy with pupils. Pupils co-operate well at all times. The pace of lessons is invariably good and the content motivating. Teachers make very good use of questions frequently matched to the ability of the pupils to answer them. In ICT and music, some of the teaching is unsatisfactory mainly due to insufficient demands made on pupils and teachers' own expertise in these areas.
28. Teachers demonstrate an awareness of the needs of all pupils, showing sensitive support to pupils with special educational needs. For instance, in Year 6 science lessons, pupils are paired with a partner who is more confident in recording. Teachers use ICT to help pupils record their writing. In most lessons, particularly literacy and numeracy, tasks are differentiated to provide varying degrees of challenge. However, this provision is not formalised and more precise arrangements would help where classroom strategies are less well defined. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are not always well met and consequently they do not make as much progress as they should. The school does not sufficiently identify the considerable strengths of some pupils, for example in ICT or identify talented pupils in such areas as music. The school recognises the need to develop the gifts and talents of pupils and has begun to consider the practical issues involved.
29. Marking, judged to be inconsistent at the time of the last inspection is now a strength of the teaching. The school's marking policy is clear and very precise. Marking is now very constructive in most classes with helpful comments made by the teachers

in most subjects. Most of the homework set during the inspection period was appropriate, although not uniformly consistent. In response to concerns expressed by parents the school's policy on homework is about to be reviewed to take into account these inconsistencies. Where homework is planned well it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

30. Whilst lesson planning is thorough and content in line with national strategies and guidance, insufficient attention has been given to how information arising from end of year testing in literacy and numeracy could be analysed and used to set more precise targets for individual or groups of pupils. The school has so far been reluctant to share this type of information about individual pupils with their parents so that they too can play a part in helping their children to succeed even further. Although parents value the contribution of teachers they feel they are insufficiently informed about how their child is progressing. Very little has been done to inform parents of the type of teaching that is now expected, particularly in literacy and numeracy and the effects of this on their children.

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

31. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing weaknesses in curriculum planning identified in the previous inspection. The current provision ensures that well targeted learning objectives are specified in teachers' short term planning and that there is sufficient guidance for teachers to plan in the medium term. Monitoring arrangements to assure this have been introduced. There are still weaknesses in the long term planning arrangements in some subjects.
32. The curriculum provided by the school is broad and interesting and is enriched by a good range of learning opportunities and other stimulating experiences for pupils. It complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum except for information and communication technology where the school is not delivering units on sensing and control despite planning to do so. In religious education, the school does not fully comply with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
33. There are clear arrangements for the identification of pupils' special needs and where this requires liaison with the Local Education authority (LEA), arrangements are good, well understood and operate effectively in practice. Support for pupils having statements of special need and those requiring specialist help is well organised. There is good communication between the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the class teacher and staff from the LEA Support Services. This ensures clarity about the work that is undertaken with individuals. The SEN register and other formal procedures comply with the requirements. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are well focused on pupils' needs. The involvement of parents in this process is generally good. The special educational needs (SEN) policy, written in 1996, is in urgent need of revision but the school is awaiting the outcome of national developments in this area before doing so.
34. Lessons stimulate the minds of pupils of all ages and abilities apart from some lessons where more could be offered to the gifted and talented pupils. The National Curriculum provision is currently enriched by a number of initiatives such as specialist expertise in food technology, ICT developments and the Garden Project. Each of these provide good opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to their lives. For example, the imaginative appointment of a

part-time member of staff has enabled pupils to become involved in the creation and maintenance of a web-site for the school and in the creation of a garden to provide opportunities for exploration, discovery and creativity. During this academic year the school has also timetabled specialist provision in dance. The school further enriches the statutory curriculum through the use of visits and visitors. The Year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Man provides a good experience for pupils which contributes to their social development, and is built on by the school in ICT, science and other subjects including geography. In Year 4, the pupils have recently been involved with good work with a theatre company in their production of Henry V. There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular opportunities provided by the school in such areas as sports, French and music, all of which further enrich pupils' experience.

35. The school has very effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy and has given due priority to this element of learning. The National Numeracy Strategy has been equally successfully implemented and is now well established in the school. These measures have greatly improved the quality of teaching and have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics.
36. The curriculum is socially inclusive and ensures good levels of equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school has considered the balance between subjects and has left some flexibility for teachers to decide on priorities. Overall, however, too little time is devoted to music and this has adversely affected progression in skills needed to raise standards in this area.
37. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school has a good programme that includes sex education, hygiene, drug awareness and healthy eating. Due attention is made in practical lessons to matters of health and safety. During the extremely hot week of the inspection, staff constantly reinforced the dangers of over exposure to the sun and the need to consume plenty of fresh water so that children could be in no doubt of the hazards of too much unexpected heat.
38. There are weaknesses in aspects of curriculum planning. Curriculum provision outside literacy and numeracy is currently based on units of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Subject priorities have been established in a three-year plan but the arrangements for turning those priorities into action within the allocated timescales are not robust. In history, geography, religious education, music and art too little emphasis is placed on ensuring that there is a clear long term plan in each of these subjects to help ensure progression of knowledge, skills and understanding. The school's medium term planning is based on QCA schemes of work, but choices available to year groups in schools have not been formally established. Short term planning is good and clearly identifies objectives for lessons as well as evaluations made of immediately preceding work.
39. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Provision for pupils' moral and cultural development are both very good. The social education of children is excellent. The ethos of the school and the curriculum that is provided strongly develops in pupils a sense of right and wrong and encourages them to ensure fairness in their dealings with others.
40. The school complies with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. The themes chosen have clear spiritual and moral dimension and the prayers and music chosen are supportive of this. Time is given for pupils to discuss moral and spiritual issues affecting them in 'Circle Time' where reflection on awe and wonder is

encouraged as it is in other areas of the curriculum such as literacy. Issues such as hurt and rejection, work and co-operating with others are dealt with by teachers sensitively. Food technology provides a much valued opportunity for pupils to develop their social skills in an enjoyable and valuable event for pupils and parents. Pupils' levels of co-operation in science practical work and physical education are of a very high order. The Isle of Man visit, a long-standing arrangement, is a valued social as well as educational event. Pupils in Year 5, designing and making books for pupils from a local special school, show a good example of their consideration of the needs of others. The provision for citizenship is good. The school strives to enrich pupils understanding of citizenship through activities such as the school's council which encourages pupils to exercise responsibility for decisions which they have contributed towards. Pupils are given responsibilities throughout the school, which are invariably taken seriously and exercised with pride. The cultural development of pupils through work in art, music, dance, the French club, and the successful theatre group involvement in Year 4, is well founded.

41. The school has constructive relationships with partner institutions particularly the neighbouring infant school. Information provided for parents on the curriculum that children follow is very limited and this is a concern expressed by parents who feel they could support their children more in the learning process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The ethos of the school is warm and caring. The school succeeds in its aim of providing a safe haven for all pupils. The sensitive and caring way that the school looks after its pupils has a positive effect upon their learning.
43. Very good child protection procedures are in place with the headteacher being the designated person, supported by another member of the senior management team. There are sound procedures for reporting accidents and health hazards. The school maintains accurate records of pupil welfare, including medical records.
44. The school has effective health and safety procedures. Regular checks are made on the safety of buildings, grounds and equipment. There are formal records of fire equipment inspections and the testing of fire alarms. The teachers and support staff promote hygiene effectively as part of the curriculum and there is good attention to health, safety and hygiene matters throughout the school.
45. The school provides effective support and advice for all pupils, informed by the monitoring of their academic progress. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall and very good in English and mathematics where information is recorded particularly well. The school has an increasing amount of data, which it uses effectively to track the end of year progress of all pupils. Teachers are then able to form a consensus about levels of attainment, which informs how pupils are grouped. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. The use made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is very good in English but no better than satisfactory in mathematics and science. For example, an analysis based on test performance in mathematics is not sufficiently refined to be used to identify more precisely targets for individual pupils. In other areas of the curriculum arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are mainly satisfactory although improvements are needed in ICT, design and technology, music and history. However, teachers know pupils' academic strengths and weaknesses very well and use day-to-day assessment of progress in their

teaching effectively. Procedures for maintaining individual education plans for pupils with special educational need are good.

46. Teachers pay due attention to pupils' educational needs and appropriate support is provided for the below average children. The support provided to pupils with special needs is good, with some very good examples seen in a Year 6 science lesson. Good use is made of ICT to support SEN pupils having writing difficulties. Teachers and support staff know the children and their families well and are sensitive to their needs. Teachers are aware of higher attaining pupils in a class, but formal systems to identify and monitor provision of these pupils specifically are not fully established.
47. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Non-teaching staff are fully involved in these procedures and play an active role. The lunchtime supervisors take great pride in their work and are very effective in managing lunchtime behaviour. They also award prizes for the best-behaved table at lunchtimes. Teachers use praise well and children respond accordingly. Assemblies are well used to reinforce good behaviour and to instil social values. Parents agree that the school merit system is very effective. Pupils' personal development is effectively monitored as a result of teachers' own knowledge of individual pupils and appropriate action is taken where needed.
48. Where it is available, the help and advice given in the classroom by support staff is very good and has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils including those with special educational needs. All staff have the skills required to provide effective support. They have a good awareness of the personal as well as academic needs of the pupils. The good relationships they have with the pupils provide a positive context for encouragement and guidance. The school has been particularly successful in ensuring that all non-teaching staff in the school feel valued and play an active role in the children's education.
49. Administrative procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality are very good. Attendance registers are completed promptly and the school meets statutory requirements for keeping attendance records. Attendance statistics are currently manually produced but the school indicates that it is currently considering using information technology to monitor attendance. Although the school discourages parents from taking children on holiday during term time a significant minority of parents still choose not to follow this advice leading to a loss of teaching time for those pupils effected.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their children liked the school, were making good progress and that behaviour was good. They also indicated that the school had high expectations for the children to work hard and achieve their best. Equally, they felt the school helped the children to become mature and responsible citizens. Inspectors agree with these positive views. The questionnaire also highlighted that a significant number of parents had concerns about how well the school keeps parents informed and the provision of homework. These concerns were also expressed at the meeting of parents. The inspection revealed that the school has held very few training sessions or provided any information to make parents aware of developments in the National Curriculum or the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy or to explain how parents could

assist their children at home. The school has recently recognised that the procedures for homework has shortcomings and intends to address this issue.

51. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not meet statutory requirements with a number of omissions in each document. The annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are generally informative, but on occasions lack specific information on what is needed to bring about improvements. There have also been instances when reports for certain year groups have not been circulated until after the Summer Term parents' evening is held.
52. The parents' group within the school has been very effective in raising large amounts of funding for additional resources including equipping the food technology room. However, the school does not provide a broader forum for parents to enable them to gain a better understanding about the work of the school or how they may impact positively towards a closer working relationship with the school.
53. A small number of parents assist in classrooms and make a very meaningful contribution to the life of the school. A small number of parents have given freely of their time to assist with the garden project. Parents and governors accompany the children on the weekly visit to the swimming baths and on the annual school visit to the Isle of Man.
54. The school circulates regular and good quality letters containing information on aspects of school life. A termly newsletter for parents the 'Flixton Flier' is very well presented and informative. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities, including various sporting activities, music, judo and a French Club.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher had been in post for some 18 months at the time of the inspection. She has a clear vision for the school, which is articulated through the school's mission statement emphasising the value of everyone in the school and this vision is clearly reflected in everyday school life. The headteacher's vision manifests itself through an expectation of high quality teaching, effective learning experiences for pupils and the promotion of high standards. Lessons are regularly monitored to ensure that teachers provide a learning environment, which is challenging and motivating. Individual teachers evaluate the impact of their lessons on learning and this is a strong feature of the school. Where lessons fall short of this ideal, effective action is always taken by the headteacher. Relationships between both staff and pupils are of the highest order.
56. The headteacher's vision is also to secure good provision for personal, social and health education. Implicit in the day-to-day activities is an expectation that all pupils are valued and confident in what they do. The aims of the school are likewise evident in the daily lives and experiences of pupils. These are further reinforced through the school's implementation of activities to promote pupils' understanding of citizenship. The commitment amongst all staff has a very positive impact on the smooth way that the school is run, creating a calm learning environment where instances of poor behaviour amongst pupils are rare.
57. The headteacher provides good leadership and is ably supported by a new deputy and two other experienced senior staff. There is a shared understanding amongst

these post holders of the future direction of the school, particularly the pursuit of high standards. For example, the work being undertaken by the deputy to heighten the profile of data on pupil performance is beginning to have a very positive effect on target setting.

58. The governing body is ably led by a very good Chairman, very committed to the school and who has a good understanding of the way the future role of governors should develop. A good committee structure is in place, including an effective curriculum committee and members meet to discuss the detail of developmental issues. The minutes of the main governing body are not always sufficiently detailed and so the recording of the main items of discussion at committees is sometimes lost. Recruitment and retention of governors has not been easy in recent years. There is a solid core of governors who play a very good supportive role in many aspects of school life; including accompanying the school on extended environmental visits, to the swimming baths and lending their support in lessons. However, corporate roles and responsibilities are less well developed in terms of shaping the future direction of the school. For example, the monitoring of progress on key issues identified in the previous inspection report has not been sufficiently rigorous resulting in progress which overall is just satisfactory. The school development plan is unsatisfactory in that it does not include the longer-term strategic vision for the school. For example, although outline costings exist for the enhancement of the internal fabric and modernised accommodation and facilities, these plans would be better incorporated into the main body of the school plan itself. However, more recent decisions to buy in an additional part-time teacher to support Year 6, a further part-time member of staff to provide opportunities for all pupils to experience food technology, and the extended provision of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs have all been carefully considered. The effects of these decisions are currently being evaluated to assess their impact on improvements.
59. The governors manage and monitor the budget well and are ably supported by a very effective bursar/administrative assistant. Systems for financial control are very good and very good use is made of the new technology and software recently installed into the new and attractive school administration office to assure stock control and monitor orders. Records show how spending is kept under review and that specific grant such as Standards Fund is used for its designated purpose. There is a growing awareness of the principles of 'Best Value' exemplified by the decision to change the contractor for grounds maintenance. The school is very clear about the value of the services it receives from the Local Education Authority and governors have agreed to retain the services in a number of key areas such as curriculum support and advice, personnel services and payroll. The site manager, who is also a school governor, successfully manages contract work on site, securing both quality and good value for the school.
60. The SEN governor is well briefed on the issues facing the school and is regularly involved in discussions with the co-ordinator to oversee developments. The role of the co-ordinator is clearly defined and is carried out very effectively. Management time is allocated to this area and there is provision for classroom assistants in Years 3 and 4. This decision has a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils with special educational needs. The information provided in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus does not fulfil requirements on SEN matters.

61. The very good practice seen in many lessons is not always securely underpinned by policy and procedures. The school has a very good staff handbook describing clearly the routines of general practice such as the marking of registers and dealing with sick children. However, other management procedures such as those underpinning curriculum planning, the use of assessment data to set targets for particular groups of pupils or agreed detailed arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs are less well documented. This results in some inconsistencies in provision between classes. Some of these procedures are currently being developed and governors will need to establish a key role in keeping such documents under regular review. Arrangements for individual subject co-ordinators to check standards in their subjects are variable ranging from very good in design and technology to unsatisfactory in music.
62. Accommodation is satisfactory and the release of the former hall to provide for additional resource based learning has been an improvement since the last inspection. The establishment of a computer suite, library areas and display add significantly to the character of this former hall of Victorian design. Some classrooms do not offer modern facilities such as working surfaces or storage for art and craft materials normally associated with the learning environment for this age range. Learning resources are generally good and well managed by co-ordinators. The new hall, not currently linked to the main building is not used sufficiently during out of school hours either by pupils or the wider community.
63. Teaching staff are suitably qualified and recent training has been effective. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' development, particularly those with special educational needs. The site manager and cleaning staff work hard to maintain very good standards in cleanliness, safety and repair, despite the poor condition of external fabric and internal decoration of parts of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should include the following key issues in their post-inspection action plan in order to raise standards further:

strengthen management procedures to ensure good practice is more systematically applied by:

- establishing clearer processes to ensure that assessment data is translated into specific learning targets for individual and specific groups of pupils;
- establishing policies which describe existing good practice, for example, in teaching, assessment and recording;
- ensuring that all policies are regularly reviewed and communicated to all parties, including staff, governors and parents where appropriate;
- review the role of curriculum co-ordinators and their impact on monitoring standards.

(Paragraphs – 29, 33, 45, 61, 79, 93, 100, 102, 110, 116, 124, 131, 132, 137, 144, 149)

revise overall curriculum planning to assure agreed content across year groups in order that:

- curriculum monitoring in music is more rigorous to improve standards;
- provision in ICT, history, geography, art and music reflects more closely the new requirements of the National Curriculum 2000;
- religious education fully complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus;

- decisions are made about options and choices from national schemes of work (QCA) to reflect the priorities of the school in order that medium term planning can be refined.

(Paragraphs – 31, 32, 38, 107, 110, 117)

enhance the involvement of parents and their understanding of what the school is offering their children to ensure that:

- they become more fully informed about the progress of their children;
- they are given more opportunities to be familiar with the demands of the National Curriculum and its assessment;
- they are given more opportunities to be familiar with the new approaches to teaching and learning required in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

(Paragraphs – 30, 41, 50, 51, 52)

improve the strategic role of the governors to determine the direction the school takes by:

- ensuring the school development plan contains a longer term strategic vision for the school, including the enhancement of the internal fabric of the school and the modernisation of facilities;
- ensuring that information on standards achieved is reported regularly;
- ensuring that action plans contained within the school development plan are systematically monitored.

(Paragraphs – 58)

Although not identified as a separate key issue, in preparing their action plan, governors should also pay attention to:

- the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, ensuring that it meets statutory requirements;
- the provision of extra challenging work for pupils who are gifted and talented;
- improving pupils' achievements in music;
- arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in ICT, music and the humanities.

(Paragraphs – 11, 28, 34, 51, 60, 61, 92, 107, 124, 133-138)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14%	33%	35%	13%	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	280
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	29	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	27
	Girls	29	28	29
	Total	52	51	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (94)	89 (76)	98 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	26
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	52	52	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (82)	91 (79)	98 (90)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	269
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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	1	
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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	31.1

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	435,618
Total expenditure	433,432
Expenditure per pupil	1,548
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,961
Balance carried forward to next year	2186

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	34	53	7	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	52	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	43	26	6	2
The teaching is good.	34	54	5	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	41	28	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	40	15	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	39	5	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	20	45	28	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	39	48	5	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	50	6	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	41	23	9	5

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

ENGLISH

64. Results in the national tests for 2000 show that overall standards in English are above the national average when compared with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was well above the national average and those reaching the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. Between 1997 and 1999, overall standards show steady improvement but in 2000 they dropped. Work seen in the present Year 6 indicates that the school is now back on course and that standards are now higher than those in similar schools and well above the standard expected nationally. Achievements since pupils entered the school at the age of seven have been very good overall. There is little significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls; trends over the past three years show that girls have performed better than boys in English reflecting the national picture. The results overall reflect the judgement made in the last inspection report.
65. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in reading, writing, listening and speaking. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils make very good progress in reading, writing, and spelling and excellent progress in handwriting and listening and speaking. Progress for those pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good.
66. Statutory targets set by governors in English have been challenging. The 2000 results show that there was a shortfall of just two per cent. The current group of pupils in Year 6 is on course to exceed the targets for this year.
67. Standards in speaking and listening are very good. Most pupils are effective communicators, who speak with accuracy and relevance. Pupils with learning difficulties are confident enough to make good contributions during discussion opportunities in lesson time. All pupils learn to use unusual vocabulary, as seen in Year 3 where they recognise humour in language, with the higher attainers keen to experiment in lessons, which emphasise 'play on words'. Throughout the school most pupils express themselves very well during class debate and within small group discussions and interactions as in Year 4 where pupils were heard discussing the experience of a visiting drama group and in Year 5 where pupils took part in a compelling class debate on the subject of fox hunting. Pupils listen carefully to one another's points of view and confidently tailor their answers to counteract alternative arguments. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers so they are clear about what they are expected to learn. When working in pairs and small groups pupils share ideas, which help them improve their punctuation and vocabulary.
68. Standards in reading are very good. The majority of pupils from Year 3 read with improving fluency accuracy and expression. Most demonstrate a good grasp of letter sounds and use a full range of reading cues when reading from the enlarged texts and from their personal reading books. By Year 6, pupils have developed a critical appreciation of a wide range of authors and genre. They talk with discernment about different authors and poets. Year 5 pupils express a clear love of poetry and lyrical language. Pupils of all ages acknowledge that the new books acquired by the school had further stimulated their interest in reading and brought to their attention a wider

range of authors. The higher attaining pupils are also influenced by their teacher's own collection of children's literature and try to borrow similar books from the local library or buy their own copies. Pupils are able to locate significant ideas in their reading, for example when talking about crime stories. Others pupils, for example in Year 4 highlighted the persuasive elements in the poem that prompted the reader to have sympathy for the fox in John Mansfield's 'Reynard the Fox'. Pupils who find reading difficult rehearse key words and phrases in small support groups and make good progress in extending their knowledge of phonics.

69. Pupils put into use their very good reading skills to access and retrieve information from non-fiction books and other sources. For example pupils in Year 5 demonstrated good skills when investigating the life cycle of a plant and Year 6 pupils who scanned the Internet with skill for information to help with revision. The reading skills of most pupils are very well developed which enables them to cope with most texts. Pupils with special educational need cope very well in lessons with the differentiated materials available and the additional support offered to them.
70. Writing is well above average, signifying very good levels of achievement for the majority of pupils. In Year 3 there were many good examples including shape poems, alliteration, dialogue, story and personal reading journals. Writing produced by children throughout the school is varied, interesting and often exciting, as exemplified in the expressive poetry in Year 5, the letters in the character style of Falstaff to Henry V in Year 4 and the crime stories produced by pupils in Year 6.
71. Older children are encouraged to become more reflective about their writing. For example, in Year 6 they are taught to structure and encouraged to re-structure their stories. In doing this, pupils of all abilities extend their powers of imagination and learn to express increasingly complex, abstract and logical relationships. Most pupils in all classes used punctuation confidently. In Year 3 they punctuate sentences with capital letters, full stops and commas, with some attempting question marks. Pupils are able to sequence sentences coherently in their texts. Short play-scripts produced by a group of pupils in Year 4, ably demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of how character and setting are created. By the end of the key stage most pupils' writing demonstrates their ability to organise their work into paragraphs. They also linked ideas within sentences by combining and sequencing clauses.
72. As children progress through the school they are able to adapt their writing to different purposes so that their writing becomes more precise, varied and engaging. For example, writing an advertisement to persuade new parents to choose Flixton school, and in poetry, imagining and exploring feelings. Many pupils demonstrate their abilities to select from a wider range of connecting words and phrases, and they use verbs and pronouns to create cohesive chronological and non-chronological texts. For example, pupils in the lower ability Year 6 group, through the choice of words and by modifying nouns and verbs, are able to add focus, variety and interest to their descriptions in stories.
73. Standards in handwriting are excellent and skills are very well developed. Pupils throughout the school and in all subjects demonstrate outstanding abilities to present their written work in a fluent, accurate and polished way. Spelling is very good and is systematically taught in the literacy hour and through homework and is regularly assessed.

74. Teaching overall is very good and occasionally excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in English. Most teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and their lessons show progression in what pupils are expected to learn. They have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. There is a clear link between pupils' previous knowledge and the starting point for learning in each lesson. Particularly good features in many writing lessons is the encouragement given to pupils and the sustained time available to discuss and explain why one decision might be preferable to another. Shared writing sessions invariably focus upon one or two specific teaching objectives to develop either text or sentences. Below average pupils in Year 6 are given effective support focusing their attention on developing the quality of their opening sentences in their stories – an approach that gives them confidence and allows them to successfully achieve. In Year 4, teaching is both challenging and inspiring particularly in drama activities linked to studies in history. This combination is used successfully to give pupils a colourful and authentic background to their letter writing. The success of this excellent teaching is evident in the quality of phrases used by these pupils. The completed letters demonstrate impressive achievement.
75. At the beginning of every lesson teachers make sure that pupils are clear what they are expected to learn. They frequently return to the objectives of the lesson resulting in consistently good and sometimes very good progress for all pupils. Teachers help pupils make very good connections across other subjects, for example, in history pupils' research is effectively translated into their own words with good use of subject specific vocabulary. In the Year 5 study of the Greeks pupils' notebooks reveal examples of well-structured accounts, note taking, and explicit report writing.
76. Teachers use rich and wide vocabulary to promote pupils' interest in new words. They insist that proper terms for language are used and they encourage pupils to select descriptive words accurately and imaginatively as in Year 4 pupils' letters expressing sadness and loneliness, using words such as 'dejected' and 'miserable'. Such high expectations encourage the pupils to express their ideas accurately developing an enthusiasm for language.
77. Shared writing sessions are used effectively and contribute significantly to the very good progress made by pupils. Independent writing flowed readily from the whole class work and pupils are supported at different levels according to their needs. Teachers manage their classes well and make good use of their time enabling pupils to gain success in writing. Teachers find opportunities to monitor and support pupils effectively. Support staff are used very well to help small groups, offering specific support to individuals. Lessons and homework over a number of sessions are planned and integrated effectively.
78. Marking of children's work is a particularly strong feature of teaching that leads to effective assessment of children's progress. Teachers assess their pupils' responses to lessons and any misconceptions are included as part of their teaching in subsequent lessons. Recording of progress in reading is inconsistent, with each teacher devising their own systems. This makes it difficult for the school to track pupils' progress from class to class or to effectively evaluate pupils' response to the range of reading material available.
79. Over the last year there have been changes in responsibility for literacy. There is currently no designated co-ordinator for English. At present the deputy head has taken a leading role in plugging the gap and provides good leadership. An effective

action plan has been produced focusing on raising standards in English, particularly in writing. The headteacher and senior staff should now address the need for a clearly defined role for an English/literacy co-ordinator who will contribute effectively to developing the subject further. Library development has come to a halt and there is no evidence of effective use of the central library to promote higher levels of literacy either by individual pupils or through timetabled visits by classes.

MATHEMATICS

80. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds shows that overall, standards are above average compared with schools nationally and close to the average for similar schools.
81. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in 2000 was well above the national average with an above average number of pupils attaining the higher levels. Overall results in mathematics over the past five years have never been lower than the national average with significant improvements made in 2000. Although there is little significant difference between the relative performance of boys and girls, trends over the past three years show that girls have also been doing slightly better than the boys whereas the picture nationally shows that it is the boys whose performance is slightly better. The school is aware of this trend and the inspection evidence does not indicate any significant factors, which would account for this.
82. The attainment of pupils on entry into Year 3, mainly from Flixton Infant School has tended to be broadly in line with national averages with improvements in 2000 compared with the intake in 1999. During the inspection, observation in lessons and analysis of work of current pupils on roll confirms that the majority of pupils are meeting the national standard and that overall attainment is above average by the end of the key stage.
83. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils make good progress in their learning and they acquire a good understanding of the number system involving very large numbers. Pupil's attitudes towards their work are excellent and they are highly motivated. They are able to manipulate numbers mentally and explain precisely how they arrive at their answers. The majority of pupils use pencil and paper methods well to record and explain calculations in all four rules of number including decimals. Recorded work in pupils' books over the past two terms is very good. It shows progression across the full range of the programmes of study in mathematics, including investigations to solve problems and the use of data. Content is in line with that recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy.
84. In Year 3, the majority of pupils make good progress and show good understanding of the number system. For example, most pupils add three digit numbers together correctly, and in oral work add confidently in tens showing good mental agility. Explanations are good, particularly in one lesson where pupils were introduced to vertical addition. Above average pupils thrived on the challenge present. Later in the lesson pupils worked in threes on a particular investigation with good team spirit. The teacher approached the lesson with reassurances to the pupils in order to guarantee success in learning. Good use is made of individual mini white-boards to enable independent calculations to take place. Overall teaching provision in this year group is not sufficiently consistent to assure progress for the below average pupils.
85. Good progress is maintained in Year 4 for the majority of pupils. Most pupils gain a good understanding, through the use of Carroll and Venn diagrams, of how to group

and classify numbers and shapes against a set of criteria. For example, pupils are confident with multiples, odds and evens and the properties of certain plane shapes. Pupils know the differences between Carroll and Venn diagrams and can use with understanding mathematical terminology such as 'intersection' or 'universal set'. In oral work pupils are extremely confident in responding to quick fire questions from the teacher involving times-tables, doubling and halving and tasks requiring a knowledge of number to arrive at target numbers. Above average pupils thrive on the challenge of these activities but provision for the below average is less stimulating with some low level and less challenging tasks, including cutting and colouring shapes, being prepared for them.

86. By Year 5 pupils' recorded work shows good progress is being maintained with good development on previous work, including work on rounding numbers up to 100. Estimating is good and pupils measure angles with accuracy, using a protractor. Pupils' knowledge of angles and the properties of shapes is very good. Teachers work methodically and effectively to ensure that all pupils are successful in their learning. By this stage the school has a good picture of how the majority of pupils are likely to perform in end of key stage assessments. Setting arrangements in this year group enable pupils from each of the ability ranges to make good progress.
87. By the end of the key stage in Year 6 the majority of pupils are very good at manipulating pairs of numbers with sums of up to 1000, they multiply and divide by 1000 accurately demonstrating good knowledge of the decimal system. These mathematical skills enable pupils to attain a good grasp of the metric system, including estimating accurately the capacity of an irregular shaped container and reading calibrated scales. Average attaining pupils are also able to apply this knowledge, with the skilful use of the calculator into converting amounts from imperial to metric measures and vice-versa. Above average pupils in Year 6 are confident and enthusiastic about the challenge of investigation in mathematics. They draw on their existing knowledge and understanding to construct equations for their peers to solve investigation-type activities involving a range of mathematical concepts including numbers from the Fibonacci sequence, the angle properties of shapes and square numbers to name just a few. As in Year 5, setting arrangements enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress due to the way activities are graded within a similar area of work in mathematics.
88. Overall the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. Throughout the school, teachers are good at evaluating their lessons and building on this assessment in further sessions. The teachers' planning sheets allow for these comments. Lesson planning is clear and teachers' knowledge of mathematics is good. Homework is set on a regular basis and is generally satisfactory, although there are some inconsistencies between classes in the school. The emerging whole-school data based on non-statutory test materials is very good but is not sufficiently used to determine specific targets for individual or groups of pupils.
89. Class books are kept neat and tidy and work is regularly marked. Comments made by teachers are often helpful and constructive, helping pupils to see how their work might be improved or what else they need to know.
90. Most teachers are familiar and confident in their application of the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson is well established and is very effective. Mental and oral work at the start of lessons runs with pace and is challenging. Together with high expectations made of most pupils, the acquisition of basic skills

by pupils is now very good. Pupils work well independently and are encouraged to do so through the appropriate use of tasks. The last few minutes of sessions are used effectively to assess how pupils have progressed and this is recorded on planning sheets. Imaginative use is made of resources including the overhead projector. A significant contribution to the success of most lessons is the excellent behaviour of pupils, their confidence and their purposeful contribution. Invariably they listen attentively to the teacher and show genuine interest in tasks presented to them. Excellent pupil-teacher relationships exist in most classes.

91. The use of information and communication technology to develop mathematical knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. Examples of pupils using spreadsheets and databases can be observed but this is still a developing area in the work of the school. Pupils also put their mathematics knowledge and skills to reasonable effect in other subjects notably science where pupils are encouraged to measure and record carefully to support experiments. In design and technology opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their numeracy skills when making products and artefacts.
92. Provision for meeting the varying abilities of pupils is addressed through setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 and through group work in Years 3 and 4. Where lower attaining groups are supported with teaching assistants, their needs are well met. There are, however, instances in some lessons where the tasks set are not so appropriate. The application of systems established through the good work of the special needs co-ordinator and the provision in some lessons are not universally sound. In a similar way whilst the school is happy to identify gifted and high attaining pupils and in most lessons there are high expectations made of these pupils, the school has not yet determined levels of extra challenging provision to extend this small group of pupils even further.
93. The school has satisfactory levels of resources to support mathematics teaching. Leadership in mathematics through the work of the co-ordinator is satisfactory. He is conscientious in meeting his set duties in the school but these do not extend to the monitoring of standards beyond his own year group. Instead good arrangements for monitoring for both teaching and learning currently lie with the senior management who also provide good general direction for the subject.
94. The last inspection report said that standards were higher than those found nationally. The school has maintained this standard over time with the majority of pupils making good overall progress during their four years at the school. The previous report also said that not enough time was given to investigative mathematics or to the use of information technology to support learning. The school has made satisfactory progress in both of these areas.

SCIENCE

95. Good improvements have been made in science since the previous inspection. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen steadily. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level rose from 90 per cent in 1999 to 98 per cent in 2000 and performance was well above the national average and above the average of similar schools. The performance of the school at the higher levels was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection but in 2000 just over half of all pupils achieved this standard. The school now performs well above similar

schools at the higher levels. In science, girls have been outperforming boys, whereas national results show similar levels of performance.

96. Standards of work seen in the lessons observed were very good. The large majority of pupils attain the standards expected nationally and there is a significant minority who attain at a higher level. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have made good progress during their time at the school.
97. Pupil's knowledge and understanding of science is very good and many pupils of all ages and abilities have an impressive recall of the work they have undertaken. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 pupils give clear explanations on work they are doing, for example, the organs of the body and their functions. They know the names of parts of plants and give examples of micro-organisms and know that some are helpful. They describe the properties of liquids, solids and gases and understand such processes as evaporation. Pupils' understanding of the physical processes such as sound, electricity and magnetism is good. In Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of the similarities and differences between creatures and can use this knowledge to classify them by their characteristics. Some above average pupils are beginning to understand the importance of such a technique to scientists. Pupils in Year 5, in their work on plants are able to research and synthesise information from the sources provided and make careful observations of developing plants. The majority of the pupils studying electrical circuits in Year 4 are able to approach their practical tasks very methodically. They co-operate well with one another, share tasks, make relevant observations and record decisions in a sensible manner.
98. Pupils develop good skills of scientific enquiry. They talk with some confidence of the need for fair testing when considering a scientific question. Their vocabulary reflects appropriate scientific terms. They understand that when undertaking a test it is important to make careful observations and that sometimes repeated measurements are required. They are able to make judgements from the data they collect which is sensible and relate this to their scientific knowledge.
99. A significant factor in these high standards is the contribution that pupils make to lessons. Their intellectual effort is excellent. Motivation, interest and levels of enthusiasm for science are all high. Pupil's concentration and their capacity to work sensibly with each other are excellent. Levels of independence of pupils of all abilities are very good. Pupils apply themselves to the work they are given with confidence and maturity. They share ideas and resources and help one another where this is appropriate.
100. The teaching of science is very good and this helps pupils to attain good standards. Teachers' scientific knowledge is good, and lessons are carefully planned, well resourced and have clear purposes which the children understand. Expectations are often high. The management of pupils and the standards of behaviour in lessons are very good. The methods that teachers choose are well suited to the task, and the pace of lessons is good ensuring that pupils make the maximum progress in the time available. Generally lessons are pitched at an appropriate level often reflecting progress made in the previous lesson, but they are not sufficiently informed by assessments made against National Curriculum objectives.
101. The management of science is good and the co-ordinator has done much to ensure that an effective programme of work is available for teachers to follow.

102. The curriculum that the school provides is currently in draft form being based largely on units of work provided by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA). In order to raise standards further the school needs to quickly review its policy and scheme of work and define what further steps it will take to tailor this curriculum to pupil needs. The arrangements for assessing pupils progress against the National Curriculum criteria as pupils move up through the school needs to be improved so that the work that teachers plan can be better informed by pupils' strengths and weakness.

ART AND DESIGN

103. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils meet the standards expected of them for this age. This standard has been consistently maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are confidently able to talk about line, colour and texture in the paintings of Lowry and Monet, for example. The well displayed pupils' work in the Year 6 classrooms and the hall show that the children apply these concepts to their work in an impressive manner. Achievements over time are satisfactory.
104. Throughout the school, pupils progressively acquire an understanding and application of the basic elements of art and design. This is a good learning process. Children quickly find how to use the correct type of pencil and paints to apply shade in still and plant life compositions, and together with some impressive work on portraits, pupils of all ages demonstrate good levels of observation. However, this learning process towards completed work is not supported by the regular use of sketch books across the age range resulting in pupils having insufficient opportunity to develop their ideas and drawing techniques.
105. The quality of work of some of the work in art can be seen supporting other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils draw and paint historical portraits to bring history themes on the Tudors to life. Much of the display, emerging from the recent extended visit to the Isle of Man, is enriched with colourful drawing and paintings of scenes observed. Sketches of chairs support a design project completed earlier in the term.
106. Teaching overall is good and in some lessons it is very good. Explanations are clearly and carefully offered. Lessons are tightly structured and managed and a good pace is usually set. There is good class control at all times. Lesson objectives are clearly stressed at the start of lessons and time is found at the end of lessons to review these objectives by pupils appraising both their own work and that of others. This particularly successful group activity not only encourages an articulate method of appraisal, but also offers a respect for each other's work and a realisation that there are always different outcomes to the one activity. This exercise also provides the teachers with an initial assessment of how the activity has succeeded. Teaching is at its best when continuous prompts are provided and brief drawing times are given for a focused response to a particular setting, for example, a gardening topic using various implements and plants.
107. The school's planning for the subject is not yet sufficiently clear as to how the teacher's own ideas and expertise are integrated into published schemes. The newly introduced national levels of attainment are not being considered when planning learning outcomes and pupils' subsequent attainment. This planning does not

sufficiently identify the needs of the below average pupils and the artistically most gifted and talented, resulting in some under-achievement for these pupils.

108. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always very good. Creative thought is applied and the levels of concentration and involvement with tasks are also very good. Enjoyment is clearly evident.
109. The small classrooms are restrictive for large three-dimensional work but a good range of experiences continues to be offered since the last inspection, including ceramics.
110. The subject is well managed. However, the school policy for art and design education needs to be re-written to match the issues of the new National Curriculum. The planning for the subject, both long and medium term, needs to coherently incorporate the school's ideas with the National Curriculum requirements in a progressive development of skills. Sketchbooks need to support this planning by regularly being used from the first weeks of Year 3 to the last weeks of Year 6.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Good progress has been made in design and technology since the last inspection. The school now ensures that pupils have sufficient opportunities within their work to engage in the design process, a previously identified weakness. Pupils in all year groups have a sound basic knowledge of the work they are undertaking.
112. Overall, the standard of work that pupils achieve is above average and improving. Standards in designing and making by the end of Year 3 are often good. The commitment the school has made to provide experiences in food technology to pupils in all year groups results in work of a very high standard. The progress made by the majority of pupils, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, as they move up through the school, is good. By the time they reach Year 6 even more could be expected of pupils especially in their ability to communicate ideas better. For example, the drawings of too many pupils do not sufficiently reflect the progress seen in earlier years in the school.
113. In Year 3, in their work on carrier bags, many pupils are able to produce well-made products supported by good sketches to illustrate their intentions. They understand how studying existing products can help when designing new ones, and appreciate the need for testing products to ensure they fulfil their intended purpose. In Year 5, pupils making books for a local special school had a good insight into the importance of understanding the needs of those who will use the end product. Pupils engaged in preparing a tea party for parents understand the need for food to be prepared in hygienic conditions, and the importance of appearance and presentation. The quality of the food prepared is of a very high standard. In their roundabout project in Year 6, pupils show an understanding of electrical components and their responses to the tasks show ingenuity.
114. The quality of teaching overall is good and has a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve. Lessons are well planned and the programme of work is interesting and engages pupils. The work is generally planned at an appropriate level, but as formal arrangements to assess pupils are not in place, they do not always build sufficiently upon pupils' previous achievements. The materials and resources that pupils use are of good quality. Teachers' relationships with pupils and

the standards of behaviour in lessons are of a very high standard and this allows work to proceed at a brisk pace so that maximum use is made of the time available. Teachers generally have sufficient knowledge to teach the subject. The management of classes when practical work is being undertaken, does not always sufficiently reflect the nature of the planned activities. Consideration is given to health and safety matters, but this could be improved.

115. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are excellent. Interesting teaching enables pupils of all abilities to bring a commitment, an enthusiasm and a willingness to engage in their work and this is a significant factor in the standards they achieve. Levels of co-operation within groups are of a very high standard. Pupils handle resources with care, concentrate well on the tasks they are given and persevere. Pupils standards of behaviour whilst engaged in practical work are of the highest order.
116. Leadership in design and technology is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a determination to bring about further improvements. Measures are now needed to improve the assessment arrangements and to agree expected standards in each year group.

HUMANITIES (GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY)

117. The last time the school was inspected standards in geography and history were average and sometimes good. Standards have now improved and are above average in both subjects. At the last inspection it was reported that in both history and geography insufficient progress was made in knowledge, understanding and use of some of the key elements because planning was not specific enough. The school has sought to address these weaknesses in planning for the systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding by trying out the QCA schemes of work. This has resulted in the introduction of some interesting teaching and learning strategies that have helped to raise standards. There is, however, still no overall plan which identifies systematic development in neither geography nor history. Both areas of the curriculum are due for overall review in April 2002.
118. In geography, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good knowledge of their local area and of a contrasting locality of the Isle of Man. Through their work in a variety of contexts, pupils are able to identify similarities and differences. They can compare lifestyles and features of their own locality with places further afield, such as Kenya, and they are able to recognise how geographical processes and features influence human activity and lifestyles. They use a good range of geographical vocabulary with precision and understanding. They develop a high level of skill in carrying out geographical enquiry, applying questioning skills and analytical techniques. Pupils are effective in using a range of resources such as maps, photographs, plans, atlases, diagrams, graphs, books, brochures and occasionally ICT to find and present geographical information.
119. Pupils make very good progress over time in geography and have very good attitudes to learning. They show keen interest in the topics they study and present their work to a high standard. Year 5 pupils provide very articulate explanations of what they have found out about physical and human aspects of Kenyan geography and compare these with Britain and their own experience. They bring a range of relevant photographs, research information from the Internet and other materials from home and use these well in their geographical enquiry. There are many

examples of good quality extended writing as seen, for example, in pupils' written accounts of their initial perceptions of Kenya or letters to the Spanish Tourist Board requesting information. Year 6 pupils have prepared a guidebook for Year 5 pupils based on their fieldwork in the Isle of Man. Year 6 pupils make very perceptive and articulate presentations on similarities and differences between life on the Isle of Man and that around Flixton. Pupils' achievements are enhanced by their willingness to succeed. They are able to think analytically about the sources they explore in their enquiries. Their enthusiasm and commitment to learning, is demonstrated on several occasions when they were keen to carry on working at playtime.

120. In history, by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have good knowledge and understanding of a range of historical studies. Through their work in a variety of contexts pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past, of key dates, periods and events in British history, and of the lifestyles and episodes in the history of the Ancient Greeks. They use a wide range of sources of evidence to find out about the past. Pupils understand some of the different ways in which historical events and people have been represented and interpreted, for example in their evaluation against a range of evidence of representations of the Vikings, and their reports on interpretations of the Peterloo massacre. Year 4 pupils analyse inventories to lead them to make inferences on people's lifestyles in Tudor times. Year 5 pupils use a rich range of sources to investigate the purpose, benefits and activities of the Ancient Greek Olympics and make pertinent comparisons with the modern event. Many produce high quality extended writing on topics they investigate. One Year 5 investigation team produced a good description of the range of sporting events in the ancient Olympics, including the pentathlon and went on to note that today we have a number of 'athlon' events, triathlon, duathlon, and that this links back to the Ancient Greeks. Year 3 pupils demonstrate skills in evaluating a range of evidence, including some from a video on Yorvik and The Vikings site from BBC Online, and have produced a class newspaper with features on a range of aspects of Viking life. Year 5 pupils produced some good quality extended writing on Victorian Britain and Year 6 pupils have completed a rich study of life in Britain since the 1930s. Most pupils use a very good range of appropriate historical vocabulary with precision and understanding. Pupils of all abilities find and analyse historical information and communicate their findings often at a level above that which is expected for their age. The above average pupils develop a high level of skill in carrying out historical enquiry. They applying questioning and analytical skills and can organise and communicate their findings to a very good standard.
121. Pupils make good progress in their historical studies and attitudes to learning are very good indeed. They are keenly interested in their enquiry tasks, and present their findings clearly and imaginatively. They take considerable pride in their work, apply themselves with interest and enthusiasm, and build on their earlier work in the subject so that pupils of all abilities are learning to their full capabilities.
122. The overall quality of teaching in both geography and history is good and occasionally very good or better especially in history. No lesson is less than satisfactory. Lessons are very well planned and a wide range of historical and geographical sources is used to promote learning and enquiry. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and set interesting and challenging enquiry tasks. They deploy good subject knowledge with enthusiasm, and the pupils respond very well. Objectives are always clearly identified and shared with pupils at the start of lessons. Towards the end of lessons teachers recap what has been learned and

teachers engage pupils in class presentations and in an evaluation of their success against the objectives. For example, in history Year 5 discussed an enquiry into the Ancient Olympic games whilst in geography, again in Year 5, pupils ran an enquiry making contrasts and comparisons in the human and physical features of Kenya and Britain. Teachers have good subject knowledge especially in geography; they enthuse and motivate pupils through skilful questioning and provide a clear focus on what pupils need to be taught and extend pupils' use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Tasks are usually appropriately set to meet the differing abilities of pupils, to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum and enjoy success in their work. Occasionally tasks set in history for the below average pupils are insufficiently challenging. Marking of pupils' work provides positive reinforcement for pupils but does not always indicate what they should do to improve, although oral feedback is often very good in this respect. There are no clear assessment arrangements, which would provide teachers with the information to report objectively to parents on individual pupil's progress. There is insufficient clear information on progress in geography and history in the examples of reports seen.

123. Teachers use units from the QCA schemes of work to good effect to provide a range of interesting approaches that promote learning. They use units adapted to suit the resources held by the school, to good effect to promote learning. Tasks are appropriately selected, particularly in geography, to ensure that pupils of all abilities have access to the curriculum and enjoy success in their work.
124. Leadership in both geography and history is just satisfactory, as these subjects have not been given due emphasis as a result of the recent absence of the co-ordinator from her duties. A review is not scheduled to take place until April 2002. Consequently the development of these curriculum areas is currently restricted to trying out selected units of the QCA scheme of work. There is no clear overview of pupil progression in history or geography, nor is there a precise match to the revised National Curriculum. Despite this some good teaching and learning is taking place, especially where tasks are appropriately selected by teachers, particularly in geography, to ensure that pupils of all abilities have access to the curriculum and enjoy success in their work. The co-ordinator recognises the need to implement monitoring procedures already established for other subjects as soon as practicable. To further improve provision in both geography and history the school should develop long term whole school planning with a closer match to the National Curriculum, together with improved assessment arrangements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Good progress has been made in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection but there is still more to be done. The school has undertaken detailed work to address weaknesses identified in resourcing and in the curriculum it provides in order to raise the standards that pupils achieve above the unsatisfactory levels previously reported.
126. The standards that pupils achieve in most aspects of ICT are now in line with those expected nationally. The curriculum that is provided is planned to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The planning and timetabling of ICT ensures that pupils receive regular experiences of ICT in their work. The school has only very recently purchased resources to enable it to teach pupils how ICT can be used to control objects and sense changes in the environment and consequently it has not yet delivered this aspect of work in lessons and the standards that pupils

achieve in this area fall below that expected. The school has improved its ICT resources but the current pupil to computer ratio of approximately 20:1 is still below the national average, which has risen steadily since the last inspection, and is now 12.6 to 1.

127. Even the youngest pupils approach their ICT work with confidence and familiarity. The arrangements for accessing programs and loading and saving work on the school systems are well understood. Pupils in Year 4 understand the concept of e-mail and older pupils are able to understand the benefits and problems of communicating using such a technology. Pupils can generate organise and present work using a variety of approaches. Pupils in Year 5 have used ICT to help them present their poetry in an interesting and exciting way. Pupils in Year 6 are developing the ability to build multimedia presentations. Pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. However, progress is sometimes limited because the strengths and needs of individual pupils are not always identified and this particularly applies to those with a talent in this area.
128. The quality of teaching has a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve. Teaching is variable but good overall. In the better lessons, tasks are well integrated into other aspects of schoolwork so that pupils understand the context and purpose of their activities. The Year 6 visit to the Isle of Man and the Vikings work in the lower school are both good examples of this. Teachers' knowledge of ICT is sufficient to deliver the units of work. Overall, the sequence of work provided by the school is progressive, and lessons have clear purposes, which the pupils understand. The teaching of basic ICT skills is good and teachers sensitively cater for the special needs of pupils. Classroom assistants and adult helpers are often a valuable support to the pupils in lessons. The current resources do not allow teachers to easily demonstrate teaching points and this leads to wasted time and an inability of some pupils to fully grasp what is being said. The number of computers available is not always sufficient to enable pupils to gain ready access. Lack of clarity in the task and insufficient challenge for some pupils are a feature of weaker teaching. The use of ICT in other subjects is well established. For example pupils are familiar with the use of the Internet to undertake research in history; in physical education pupils use the digital camera to record their movements and in geography the work in Kenya has been greatly enhanced with the use of video material. ICT also supports the composition and presentation of work in English and the humanities and the school makes effective use of spreadsheets and databases to support learning in mathematics and science.
129. Pupil's attitudes to their ICT work are a very important factor in their success. They acquire knowledge and skills quickly. They are interested, motivated and industrious and this helps lessons proceed with some pace. The levels of co-operation and behaviour are often very high despite sometimes cramped working conditions. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate a very high level of independence in their work.
130. The school has devoted resources to the development of a web-site, which at the time of the inspection was not publicly available. This has the potential to be a very useful asset to the teachers, and to the parents and the community. It will also provide a useful tool for pupils to improve their understanding and demonstrate their skills.

131. The school has taken steps to ensure that consideration is given to pupils' moral welfare through providing Internet access, which is filtered to remove inappropriate material, and in making pupils aware of the protocols of e-mail. Consequently pupils are aware of some of the potential hazards that electronic communications can have. The school policy in ICT is in urgent need of revision and any such review should include statements of these arrangements and details how this is communicated to parents.
132. To raise standards further the school's ICT policy and development plan should be quickly updated to address current priorities. Such a plan should include the financial implications of staffing and resources, including the proposals for the expenditure provided through the National Grid for Learning (NGFL). The plan should also include arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress against National Curriculum criteria. The co-ordinator has given consideration to these matters. Training for staff provided by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which has been pending for some time, should be rigorously pursued.

MUSIC

133. Overall, the level of attainment of pupils falls below that required for this age range and therefore is unsatisfactory. However, there are pockets of very good practice. In Year 3, pupils compose simple, yet effective melodies to lines of poems using a five note pentatonic scale, but the practical skills associated with these musical elements and concepts are not sufficiently developed in later years. This lack of progression is compounded by older pupils not receiving regular music lessons. Overall progress of pupils in music as they move through the school is therefore unsatisfactory.
134. Most pupils of all ages can keep a steady beat, identify the sounds of instruments and, in Year 6, recognise the musical form of a pop melody. However, the musical skills learnt through being a choir member, or learning the guitar in school or music making elsewhere, are not sufficiently recognised and developed. This lack of challenge has resulted in a decline of standards and a decline in the progression of learning since the last inspection. The school choir impressively continues to maintain its high standard of singing and the pupils receiving guitar tuition are equally maintaining good standards. Singing makes a valuable contribution to assemblies but its quality in class music lessons is less impressive, being often unenthusiastic in style, yet tuneful.
135. Insufficient attention is given to correct musical technique, for example, beaters used on percussion instruments and voice production, despite a good and respectful attitude from the pupils towards the subject, its teachers and its equipment. The choir members respond very enthusiastically to the positive experience of successful performances at school and other locations with other schools. The school's parents are very supportive of these initiatives.
136. The quality of class teaching overall is satisfactory but the teaching associated with the choir and the guitar lessons is good because high standards are expected. Class teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching is at its best when clear objectives are set and shared with pupils, including an evaluation at the end of lessons. These lessons are well prepared and present pupils with unusual challenges, as in Year 3, for example, when carefully focused learning allow pupils to enjoy and appreciate their compositions. Teaching is less than satisfactory when a slow repetitive pace is set, musical concepts are not reinforced and there is little

attention to performing standards in class. The quality of teaching also suffers when teachers are uncomfortable and unfamiliar with musical terminology and skills, resulting in pupils being insufficiently challenged.

137. The management of music is just satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides good example, particularly in extra-curricular time, and promotes good standards in singing through the very well trained school choir who take pride in their achievements. However, the planning for the subject does not fully reflect the demands of the National Curriculum. Assessment in music has not been developed and the needs of the more musically gifted and talented pupils need to be identified and exploited. Teachers' planning does not always focus on levels of outcome matched to the levels indicated nationally. A curriculum overview is now needed with closer monitoring by the suitably musically experienced subject co-ordinator. Some specialist teaching could achieve this. Time allocation to music is not enough and lessons should be arranged on a more frequent basis.
138. Resources for the subject are adequate. Whilst guitar teaching is good there is scope for the school to expand its teaching of instrumental work with pupils from specialist teachers. Public performing opportunities are provided for pupils but more could be offered to the lower age ranges and to those pupils who are currently developing musical skills away from school. The school does not currently have an orchestra or school band to provide opportunities for these pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. Standards in physical education are above average with most pupils meeting the expected level by the end of Year 6 in gymnastics, games and swimming. Dance was not seen during the period of inspection, however, scrutiny of the curriculum plans for the previous term reveal a good and interesting programme of activities supported by an external dance specialist employed by the school. Standards are now much the same as they were at the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. Since the last inspection the school has built a gymnasium that is well equipped with wall frames and other apparatus for climbing sliding, swinging and balancing and this is very well used during lessons.
140. Overall teaching is good with some outstanding examples in games teaching. The main reasons for good teaching are clear planning, good subject knowledge confidence and expertise, which in turn demonstrates high expectations from pupils. Pupils make very good progress overall in all aspects of the programme because teaching is focussed on developing skills, knowledge and understanding. In gymnastics pupils perform a range of balances, jumps, rolls and sequences, many with good precision and control. Teachers set out apparatus in interesting and challenging ways, which encourage pupils to carefully consider their pathways when devising a sequence of movements. When teachers use opportunities for demonstration to help pupils revise and refine their movements, progress is very good. Occasionally pupils' lack of control when rolling and jumping is not given enough attention by the teacher.
141. By Year 6, pupils achieve very well in games and in swimming because they are taught skills and techniques systematically. This was illustrated in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher's clear planning, confident subject knowledge and good organisation of resources were highly influential in the pace of the lesson and learning outcomes. Very good progress in pupils' abilities to strike and field in

rounders was due to skilful assessment of performance and clear individual feedback. Swimming is taught by qualified staff employed at the swimming pool. Accompanying teaching staff from the school, following LEA guidance, act in loco-parentis and play little or no role in the tuition process.

142. All pupils concentrated well in all aspects of physical education. Their behaviour is generally excellent and co-operative work in small groups and teams is outstanding. Teamwork and independence is a particularly strong feature in Year 6 games lessons with groups of pupils able to organise themselves quickly and effectively into teams. They enjoyed collaborating and competing together with each team communicating their tactics well.
143. The effects of the generous time allocation and the whole school commitment to sporting activity are rewarded by the high standards achieved and the interest shown in the extra-curricular sporting activities throughout the year.
144. Teachers are currently using the QCA scheme of work which provide support and direction for their lessons. Currently there is no co-ordinator for physical education due to illness. This absence of direction should be dealt with in order for the school to define its plans for future development and ensure coherent progression in children's learning and appropriate support for teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. During the last inspection little religious education was taught and it was not possible for inspectors at the time to make any firm judgements about standards. During the current inspection it was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection, standards achieved in those lessons were good and discussions with teachers and pupils and scrutiny of their work indicate that pupils' overall attainment in religious education is at least average for their age. The delay in the production of the Trafford Agreed Syllabus for religious education led the school to adopt the schemes of work produced by the QCA, which they are currently using on a trial basis, in conjunction with planning for implementation of the Trafford syllabus. This has resulted in the introduction of some stimulating teaching and learning strategies that have helped to raise standards. There is, however, no overall plan that identifies systematic progression in learning. The religious education curriculum is due for overall review in April 2002.
146. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' standards in religious education are average. Year 6 pupils' books contain very limited written work although pupils have produced some extended writing of good quality on Islam, sacred texts and Christian values. This reflects the fact that in the past religious education had a lower profile in the school than is currently the case so that there remain some gaps in their knowledge and understanding in the context of the requirements of the Trafford Agreed Syllabus. In the two lessons seen attainment was above average and learning was very good. Year 4 pupils demonstrate very good recall of earlier learning about Hinduism. Their answers to questions on the significance and symbolism of artefacts are thoughtful and perceptive. The depth of response varies according to the ability of the pupils. Year 5 pupils understand and can explain the significance of symbols of faith to aid Buddhists in their worship and develop an awareness of the value of meditation within the Buddhist religion. Work seen in books and discussions with pupils demonstrate good progress over the key stage with some extended writing on topics including the importance of the Bible, Lent, forgiveness, Easter, the Last

Supper, the Resurrection, and Christmas, together with some research into local religions.

147. Through their work in a variety of contexts pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding about Christianity and the other major religions represented in Britain. They learn from religion about the significance of belief and worship to the believer and the impact this has on people's lifestyles and values. Pupils show keen interest in the topics studied, they show respect for religious artefacts and respond to teachers' questions with perception. They show particular interest when the material they are studying is drawn from the local area, as when they were shown photographs taken by a Hindu parent of a shrine in the local area. The pupils take pride in their work and enjoy the variety of approaches the teachers have encouraged them to use. They respond well to the teachers' expectations to concentrate on what they have been asked to do, work hard in lessons and learn as much as they can.
148. The quality of teaching was very good in the two lessons seen. Lessons are very well planned and objectives are clearly identified and shared with the pupils. A stimulating range of artefacts and other resources, including video and photographs are used to help the pupils to learn about religion and to develop the use of appropriate religious vocabulary. The teachers' use of relevant resources, such as fresh flowers and the burning of incense helps pupils explore their significance, assisted by clear explanation and probing questions. These activities make a strong contribution to developing understanding and also to pupils' spiritual development. Some principles from religious education are also developed during 'Circle Time'. Religious education also makes a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of cultures represented in Britain. Teachers' medium term planning shows evidence of the use of a variety of interesting methods to enthuse the pupils. For example, Year 4 had taken part in role-play of the characters in the stable at Bethlehem and had been interviewed about their response to the events. Teachers evaluate the pupils' response in their medium term plans, and marking in books is positive, although it does not always give pupils sufficient indication of what they might do to improve their work. Teachers make effective links with literacy and examples of extended writing demonstrate a good standard of literacy skills.
149. The whole school long term planning framework shows a different distribution of themes to that in the religious education policy. It is not clear, therefore, whether the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met overall nor whether the programme of study has coherence, continuity and progression. Nevertheless, the new co-ordinator is making a difference and the use of the QCA schemes of work in conjunction with the local syllabus is improving provision in religious education and leading to higher standards of attainment.
150. Leadership and co-ordination is good and is improving as more attention is given to monitoring the effectiveness of the schemes of work being used. This is an ongoing process of development and is most strongly established in Year 3. The co-ordinator now monitors what is taught effectively, through scrutiny of work and interviews with pupils in which their perceptions of this curriculum area are explored. Ideas contributed by pupils are integrated into lesson planning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. The criteria used for the evaluation of teachers' marking and assessment provides a clear focus on the extent to which marking informs pupils' learning. This is good practice which, when fully established, will support the improvement of the objectivity of reporting to parents on the progress made by their

child in religious education. Examples of reports seen whilst they commented on what pupils had experienced in assemblies made no comment on individual progress in the subject.