

INSPECTION REPORT

**THORNHAM ST. JAMES CE PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Royton

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105692

Headteacher: Mrs C Light

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read
21199

Dates of inspection: June 11 – 12 2001

Inspection number: 196592

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castleton Road Royton Oldham
Postcode:	OL2 6XT
Telephone number:	0161 6331578
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd. Philip Barratt
Date of previous inspection:	17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thornham St James CE Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area of Royton, between the large towns of Oldham and Rochdale. There are 228 pupils on roll, making it an average-sized primary school. A recent reduction in admission numbers will lead to an overall decrease in roll numbers in future years. At present, the school is very popular and well oversubscribed. Strong links with the two churches in the area are maintained and most pupils attend Sunday School. The open-plan design is spacious, with facilities for an Early Years area, six classes, a hall, computer suite and a library. There are quiet reading and study areas in all classes and plenty of space for practical activities. Very good facilities are provided for physical education, outside study and play. The extensive grounds include a mature nature reserve, large fields and hard surfaces. The school serves an area of mixed housing that includes large detached, semi-detached, terraced and council-owned properties. Socio-economic circumstances vary widely between households. Just over 5 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals and this is below the national average. Some families are of ethnic origin, but no pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational need is below the national average at 12 per cent and no pupils have a formal statement. Attainment on entry varies from pupil to pupil. In mathematical understanding, language skills and personal and social development it is around the average mark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where standards of attainment are well above average for pupils aged seven. For pupils aged eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science are so high that they place the school in the top 5 per cent in the country. This is due to the very high quality of teaching, pupils' very good attitudes to learning, and the extremely high expectations set by the headteacher. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven are well above the national average, putting the school in the top 5 per cent in the country. For pupils aged seven, attainment is also well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make very good use of their skills in information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. Some pupils achieve very high standards in music.
- Teaching is of a high standard and, in more than half the lessons seen, it was very good or excellent.
- The school makes very good use of information gathered about pupils' learning to set challenging lessons in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils have very good standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes to work, and there are excellent relationships throughout school
- The broad curriculum provides a very good range of learning opportunities for the entire age range, including a modern foreign language.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and well supported through very good provision for their moral, social and cultural education.
- The school provides a high standard of care for its pupils.
- The headteacher provides an excellent quality of leadership in driving the curriculum and evaluating school performance. The governors provide good leadership and management for all the school's work.

What could be improved

- Providing varied opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to record their work in different ways.

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 very good progress in tackling the issues from the last inspection, in March 1997. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology at age eleven is fully in line with expectations in all aspects of the Programme of Study. Computer programs for monitoring events are very effectively used to support learning in science. Pupils who have special educational needs have good support in the classroom and make the progress expected of them. Systems for the identification of need, the monitoring of learning and for producing Individual Education Plans are good and fully in line with the recommended Code of Practice. Issues relating to the curriculum for design and technology and physical education have been addressed. The hall space is used efficiently for physical education and all pupils have regular opportunities to work on the large apparatus to develop skills in gymnastics.

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*	A*	A
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*

Key

In the top 5 per cent in the country A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Children make good progress in the reception class and many are achieving above what is expected when they enter Year 1, especially in English and mathematics.

Results for seven-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests of 2000 show that all pupils gained the expected Level 2 or above in reading, with 46 per cent achieving the higher Level 3. This is well above the national average. In writing, results are well above average. All but one pupil gained the expected Level 2 or above, with 23 per cent achieving the higher grade. In mathematics, attainment is well above average with 51 per cent achieving the higher Level 3 and in science the school is in the top 5 per cent again with 43 per cent of pupils achieving Level 3. When compared with similar schools, results are also well above average. Trends over time show attainment at the school in reading is improving at a similar rate to the national average. For writing and mathematics, the trend towards improving standards at the school is much better than the national picture, with a sharp increase in writing over the last year. There is very little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Within the expected Level 2 grade there are 3 standards, identified by the descriptors of letters a, b and c. The school has been successful in improving the number of pupils who attain the better 2b and 2a grades and of those who reach the Level 3. This means that pupils have a very good start to their studies in the junior classes. Work seen during the inspection indicates that similar, high standards are being achieved in reading and mathematics but that skills in writing are variable.

Results for eleven-year-olds show the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science to be well above the average. The number of pupils gaining the advanced Level 5 in English is 67 per cent, in mathematics it is 61 per cent and in science it is an extremely high 82 per cent. These results put the school in the top 5 per cent in the country for all three subjects. Trends over time show attainment at a consistently high standard. Pupils at the school have achieved standards that are well above average and have remained in the top 5 per cent in the country over the last three years. Attainment at Thornham St James far exceeded the statutory targets set in English and mathematics in 2000. When compared with similar schools, attainment is well above average. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the high standards are being maintained.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. They are well-motivated, maintain very good levels of concentration and work extremely hard on all their tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The standard of behaviour is very high in lessons and on the playground. Pupils show respect and consideration for the feelings of others and are always willing to share resources and ideas with their friends.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and contribute to the secure, orderly atmosphere in school. Some pupils take responsibility for jobs in the classroom and around school. This contributes to their developing maturity.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average and pupils arrive on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	An equal amount of good and very good teaching	Mainly good with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching	Mainly very good or excellent teaching.

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and has a direct impact on pupils' learning and the high standards achieved. In detail, in 43 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good, in a further 43 per cent it was very good and in 14 per cent it was excellent. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The teacher in the Foundation Stage provides a wide range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of the children. They develop good skills in independent learning and many confidently begin work from the National Curriculum programmes of study before moving into the next class. In Years 1 and 2 most of the teaching seen was good, in 20 per cent of lessons it was very good and in a further 20 per cent it was excellent. Classroom organisation and management are effective and efficient. This ensures that all lessons start promptly and that pupils have very good access to any resources they may need. In Years 3 to 6, 43 per cent of teaching was good, another 43 per cent was very good and 14 per cent was excellent. Teachers have good questioning skills and match the work carefully to build on pupils' prior attainment. A commendable feature of teaching for the older junior pupils is the challenging pace of lessons and the development of mental agility. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good throughout school and leads to very high levels of progress, especially in Years 5 and 6. However, at present, there are few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to choose how to record their work, with many lessons based around worksheets or workbooks. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are higher attainers are well catered for with additional support or extension activities. This ensures that work is carefully matched to prior attainment and that pupils make sustained progress through the challenging activities set for them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad range of interesting learning opportunities with a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum includes lessons in French and there are opportunities for pupils to have specialist music tuition if they so wish.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. They have individual programmes of learning that are regularly reviewed and new targets set. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils at the school for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social, moral and cultural development is very good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They show consideration and courtesy and are extremely well-mannered. Pupils take great care with their work and are proud of their school. Spiritual development is well promoted through collective worship and religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Established policies and day-to-day practice maintain pupils' health, safety and welfare very effectively. Rigorous assessment of pupils' academic progress leads to the setting of challenging targets and ensures that lessons build successfully on prior learning. Positive strategies and a strong school ethos support the very high standards of behaviour and attitudes demonstrated by the pupils.

A good range of extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum and extend opportunities for social development. Visits to places of interest, residential holidays and visiting speakers or specialists all serve to enrich teaching and learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides active, focused leadership and is instrumental in maintaining the excellent standards of attainment. She is committed to providing clear, educational direction for the school and is highly regarded by governors and parents. The deputy headteacher ably assists in the management of the school and is equally dedicated to its stated aims and values. Curriculum co-ordinators monitor provision and attainment in their subjects very effectively and are constantly seeking ways to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and are very supportive of the school. They have a sound overview of the school's strengths and a clear idea of future developments. The efficient organisation of the sub-committees ensures that governors have a strong role in shaping the direction of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers and co-ordinators carefully analyse test data to check pupil progress and attainment. The headteacher maintains an excellent overall view of performance. The governors have effective systems in place to evaluate the success of school development planning.

The strategic use of resources	Resource management is excellent. The school's budget is very carefully targeted to support the priorities for development. The principles of best value are applied when ordering and governors evaluate expenditure in terms of improved provision, teaching and learning.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school • Their children make good progress • Behaviour is good • The teaching is good • The school expects pupils to work hard and to achieve their best • The school is well led and managed • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible • The provision for, and achievement in, music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working more closely with parents • The range of activities outside lessons • More information telling them how their children are getting on

The inspection team fully agree with the parents' positive views of the school. The first seven bullet points in the 'what pleases parents most' section had over 90 per cent agreement. The provision of activities outside of lessons is judged as generally good. Recently, the programme has been disrupted due to building work on the premises but should be back to normal by the start of the autumn term. Written information for parents is good in providing them with updates about school life, what their children are learning and about forthcoming events. Parents are offered additional appointments following parents' evenings, should they wish to discuss issues further. Just over one third of parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school does not work closely with them. Procedures for dealing with complaints, queries and suggestions are established and the school is committed to dealing with issues quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned. The headteacher is available on the playground every morning to speak with parents and appointments to see class teachers are made as promptly as possible, out of teaching time. Access to the building is fully in line with the governors' security policy. There are opportunities for parents to raise issues at the annual governors' meeting or through contact with the parent governors.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven are well above the national average, putting the school in the top 5 per cent in the country. For pupils aged seven, attainment is also well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make very good use of their skills in information and communications technology to support their learning in other subjects. Some pupils achieve very high standards in music.

1. When children enter school, they have differing levels of prior learning and experiences but, overall, their attainment is broadly average. They make very good progress during their year in the Foundation Stage or reception class as it better known, and many are working from the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in English and mathematics before they move into Year 1. For example, children discuss a story they have read together, showing good understanding of the plot. Most identify words that rhyme and many write simple sentences unaided. By the end of the Foundation Year, most children count objects accurately in a set up to ten, reading and writing the numerals successfully. They identify two-dimensional shapes and use correct terminology when comparing the weight or length of objects. They learn about science in a practical way; for example, describing the features of different toys. In one sorting activity observed, children described the properties of various materials. They explained that the toy car is made of metal to make it strong and the cuddly toy is covered in soft material, whilst the inside is 'spongy' so that you can squeeze it.
2. Pupils' achievement in reading is very good by the end of Year 2. Skills, such as the recognition and articulation of letter sounds, are well-developed and help pupils to tackle unfamiliar text. Pupils recognise a very wide range of words on sight and some are beginning to use the clues within the plot to decipher new text. They recognise the features of both fiction and non-fiction texts and know how to use the contents and index sections to find information. All take books home regularly and are very well supported by parents. Year 2 pupils practise writing in logically sequenced sentences. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when spelling words. Some have advanced skills as they identify the root word and add a prefix or suffix to spell accurately. By the time pupils are seven, their writing is well-structured. Capital letters and full stops are used consistently to demarcate sentences. Many pupils are also using speech and question marks correctly. Writing shows a range of fiction and non-fiction work, although this is fairly limited for the average and higher achievers. Pupils recount the life cycle of a frog or write a series of instructions, paying good attention to the purpose and organisation of their work but a lot of recording is done on worksheets or to a set format. This restricts opportunities for more independent recording. Handwriting is well-formed and legible.
3. Attainment in mathematics is well above average. By age seven, pupils have a good understanding of number and mental computation is good. They add three numbers, double or halve amounts and make reasonable estimates of answers to mathematical problems. They understand the concept of multiplication and recall facts from the 2, 5, and 10 times tables at random. Working at advanced levels, pupils use pen and paper methods to work with numbers in the hundreds. Most are confident when solving problems that involve halves and quarters. They apply their mathematical skills well when dealing with problems related to money. Most readily identify geometrical shapes such as cylinder, cube and cone, and know their properties. There are few opportunities for pupils to record in different ways, however, with much of it done in workbooks.
4. Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry develop well. By the end of Year 2 they observe closely, make suggestions on how to find solutions to problems and begin to develop theories to explain what they see. In one science lesson, pupils collaborated very effectively to discover how they could make a ball of Plasticine float. They explored several possibilities, such as reducing its mass and altering its shape. After persevering for some time, and discarding different theories, they finally tried making a 'boat shape' and were thrilled with their success. Pupils aged seven have a very good awareness of the life cycles of plants and animals. They investigate change as they work with ice, realising that some changes can be reversed.
5. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make very good gains in their learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils read fluently and show very good levels of comprehension. They recall in

detail what they have read and skills of prediction, inference and deduction are exceptionally well-developed. Pupils state their preferences for favourite works, justifying their views. They extend their reading experiences across a wide range of genre, both fiction and non-fiction. They understand classification systems and locate information when they need it. Pupils enjoy investigating the imagery in poetry and appraise the use of simile and metaphor in a mature way. By the age of eleven, their writing is lively, thoughtful and sophisticated. They use different styles, often modelling their writing on the work of significant authors or poets. In one lesson, Year 6 pupils wrote poems about grandma and grandad, using some techniques they have discovered in their reading. Some exceptionally high standards were achieved, creating strong images and emotions through their work. In their fiction writing, pupils have a secure grasp of punctuation and grammar, using subordinate clauses effectively to add detail and engage the reader. They show a good awareness of audience in their choice of vocabulary. Non-fiction writing skills are used effectively to enhance learning in other subject areas. For example, pupils write recounts of the life of Florence Nightingale and produce detailed instructional texts in science. Most pupils spell accurately, using a good knowledge of words and their origins. Handwriting is generally of a high standard, with some pupils developing their own style.

6. Mathematical skills develop well throughout Years 3 to 6 and, by age eleven, pupils have a very good understanding of number, including decimals, fractions and percentages. Their mental skills in dealing with numerical problems are very good. They solve complex calculations that involve all four rules of number. Many pupils add and subtract by splitting numbers, and this greatly increases the speed at which they calculate. Pupils know the importance of checking the accuracy of their answers by rounding off and estimating. Pupils apply their understanding of shape and space effectively. Year 5 pupils measure and calculate accurately the size of angles using visual estimation and careful use of the protractor. Data handling skills are very good. Pupils collect and tabulate their own data and display patterns and relationships through graphs and pictorial diagrams. They often use computer programs to support this work and are confident in handling databases and spreadsheets.
7. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are well-placed to attain advanced levels in science. They experience a wide range of practical and investigative activities, recording their findings in a variety of ways, including tables, diagrams, charts and graphs. They carry out fair tests and investigations. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils experimented with electrical circuits. They predicted what would happen if they added another device to the circuit and then arrived at a hypothesis to explain the results. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils investigated the use of friction in everyday life by examining what types of footwear would be best to wear on an icy day. The majority knew and understood that scientific ideas are based on evidence. They decided intelligently to test different materials by seeing how much force is needed to move them along a tabletop. Pupils throughout the key stage make relevant observations, measure accurately and use equipment appropriately and safely.
8. Skills in information and communication technology are very well-consolidated and used to support learning in all subjects. Pupils often present their writing using word processing programs to alter font, create colour and make an impact on the reader. They produce posters and use graphics programs effectively to illustrate their work. Year 2 pupils create life cycle diagrams to record their studies in science. They develop a winter picture on the computer to explore the use of colour in art. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use the Internet to find information about their history topic on the Romans. To supplement work in geography, they produce a pie chart showing the world's longest rivers. Pupils use sensing equipment in science as they measure and record the time taken for different fats to melt. They investigate electrical circuits by working on computer simulations and solving the problems they encounter. In order to consolidate their study of French, pupils make posters about 'Me', practising vocabulary related to parts of the body. Older pupils use more sophisticated skills to produce Easter cards, demonstrating their confidence in using design and graphics programs. They produce a newspaper sheet using desktop publishing applications and paying good attention to style and layout. Pupils throughout school practise their skills of control and command by programming the floor robot. Younger pupils test a short series of instructions whilst those in Year 5 use it to extend their work on angles and measures by entering more precise commands.
9. Some pupils take advantage of additional music tuition to enhance their talents. For this group, attainment is very high. Pupils, who are as young as six, play an instrument, reading conventional notation and maintaining pulse. Those in Years 3 to 6 perform pieces of music on the violin, with a good awareness of how the different parts fit together to form an overall

effect. They evaluate their own playing and show determined perseverance when improving and polishing their performance. Pupils in the choir sing tunefully, performing from memory. Some are sufficiently confident to take a solo part and achieve a very high standard. All have opportunities to take part in the school's performances, which are highly regarded. Music has a high profile at the school and parents identify this subject as a strength in the curriculum.

Teaching is of a high standard and, in more than half the lessons seen, it was very good or excellent.

10. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school and this has a direct impact on pupils' learning and the high standards achieved. A secure, industrious atmosphere pervades the school and this encourages very good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Parents returned questionnaires show that 95 per cent agree that teaching is good. In a further 98 per cent of replies parents say that the school expects their children to work hard. The same sentiments were strongly repeated at the parents meeting.
11. Teachers have a good understanding of the most effective ways to teach literacy and numeracy and are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills in these areas. Lessons are well planned and structured; there is a very good pace to learning and high expectations. Teachers knowledge of information and communications technology has been greatly extended through a consolidated training programme and there have been good improvements in this area since the last inspection.
12. Across the whole school, including the reception class, teachers make clear to pupils what is to be learnt, giving a clear focus to the lesson. They often conclude lessons with a focused session to assess learning, to tackle any misconceptions and to congratulate pupils on their successes. These are very effective strategies in creating a purpose for pupils learning and ensuring continued motivation. Lesson preparation is very good. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available, pupils books and other consumables are always to hand and classroom routines are well established. The result is that the maximum amount of time is used for learning and this makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. In the Foundation Stage, pupils are constantly encouraged to use their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding in all their work. In Years 3 to 6 skills in literacy and, to some extent, numeracy are often used to extend learning in other subject areas. In Years 1 and 2 there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their competence in writing and mathematics. In these two classes, work is often recorded on worksheets or workbooks and this restricts pupils from choosing a preferred style. Pupils' work is always marked conscientiously and often includes encouraging comments and praise where good standards are achieved or a sustained effort is made. Some teachers write very useful comments to point out ways to improve. This good practice could usefully be extended to all classes.
13. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or who may be experiencing learning difficulty is good throughout the school and enables them to make good gains in learning. The requirements of Individual Education Plans are built into daily activities and designated staff provide support to meet individual and group needs, especially in English, mathematics and science. This ensures that all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school community and that they develop good levels of self-confidence.
14. In the Foundation Stage, half of the teaching is very good and other half is good. The teacher and learning support assistant work closely together to plan an interesting range of experiences. Children of differing abilities and prior experiences are very well catered for through an established assessment process that directly informs the setting of future tasks. There is an appropriate balance between adult-directed and child-selected activity. For this age group, independence in learning is good. For example, as a small group of children worked at the sand tray, they made up an exciting story about the castle they were building. They involved all members of the group, allocating individuals to particular characters and achieved very good standards of imagination and story planning. Adults pay great attention to establishing routines and to developing confidence and independence in the children. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning.
15. In Year 1 and 2 lessons seen, 20 per cent of teaching was excellent, 20 per cent was very good and 60 per cent was good. Classroom organisation and management in these classes is effective and efficient. This ensures that all lessons start promptly and that pupils have very good access to any resources they may need. Work is planned to cater for pupils who have differing levels of prior attainment so that higher achievers are challenged and pupils with

special educational needs are very well supported, either by adult intervention or through tasks that are designed especially to help them meet their learning targets. There is a suitable emphasis on teaching the basic skills, including phonics, and this underpins some good achievement in spelling. Resources are generally used very well, but the computers in this phase are not as extensively employed to extend learning in other subjects as they are for older pupils.

16. In Years 3 to 6, directed and differentiated questioning is well used to involve all pupils. Oral contributions are valued and handled sensitively. Very good use is made of exposition and demonstration. A commendable feature of teaching for the older pupils is the challenging pace of lessons and the development of mental agility. For example, in one numeracy lesson, pupils were introduced to new work on angles. During the session they learnt the words 'acute' and 'obtuse', they used a protractor for the first time to measure and draw and began to estimate the degree of angles. As an extension activity for one group, the teacher asked pupils to program the floor robot to move and turn in a specific way. Excellent progress was thus achieved. Teachers planning and scrutiny of pupils books show good emphasis on the extension and enhancement of writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils recount experiments in science or events in history. They write instructions and use explanatory texts when writing about geographical phenomena. On occasions, teachers set open-ended tasks that allow pupils to ask their own questions or to engage in research.
17. Teachers make very good use of the school grounds and local environment, especially in the teaching of science, geography, history and physical education. Homework is very well used to consolidate and apply learning. The employment of a specialist teacher for music is highly effective and leads to some excellent attainment.

The school makes very good use of information gathered about pupils' learning to set challenging lessons in English, mathematics and science.

18. The school has very good procedures and arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment and uses the information effectively to plan future lessons. The rigorous target-setting process has a direct, positive effect on the high standards seen at the school and ensures that the higher achievers are fully challenged. End-of-year tests in English and mathematics are used to track individual progress throughout the school. The results are thoroughly analysed to discover exactly what each pupil knows and what needs to be taught next. The information is then translated into individual learning targets for pupils and these are shared with parents. Teachers also feed the information into lesson planning to ensure that all pupils are well catered for, especially where they have special educational needs or are higher achievers. Patterns of attainment are scrutinised by the co-ordinators who look for possible areas requiring further development. For science, pupils achievements are assessed at the end of each unit of work. All the information then informs curriculum planning in the subject. Results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged seven and eleven are also fully analysed. The results are used to identify trends in learning, evaluate the school's provision and inform future planning for the curriculum. Analysis by gender, ethnic and social grouping is routinely undertaken to make sure that there is no bias in provision or significant trends in attainment. The success of the approach is seen through some talented pupils' work in music, art and physical education.

Pupils have very good standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes to work and there are excellent relationships throughout school

19. The pupils attitudes and behaviour are very good and contribute greatly to the positive learning environment that exists and the excellent progress made. This is a major strength of the school. During lessons pupils are well-motivated, work hard and respond very positively to encouragement. They behave in an exemplary fashion, sharing resources, listening to one another thoughtfully and offering constructive suggestions. Pupils follow instructions carefully, set to work quickly and usually meet set deadlines. They tidy away willingly after lessons and are very sensible when engaged in practical tasks. Pupils are at ease expressing their feelings to the class teacher and in front of their friends, especially in literacy lessons where they frequently offer thought-provoking contributions. They show a healthy respect for the beliefs and feelings of others and, almost instinctively, offer help and support where it is needed. Parents commend the school highly for its success in developing very positive attitudes amongst pupils. In returned questionnaires, 96 per cent of parents agree that behaviour is good. At the meeting, parents told how their children's enthusiasm for learning extends beyond the school day, with many pupils keen to complete their homework assignments on time and to a good standard.

20. The schools aims and values are clearly reflected in the pupils behaviour in the classroom and around the school. Relationships amongst members of the school community, regardless of ethnic or social background, are excellent. They are founded on a combination of mutual respect and trust. The result is a harmonious community. All staff know their charges very well and celebrate the strengths of each individual. Pupils respond positively to the strong ethos in school, demonstrating a healthy respect for the rules that exist.

The broad curriculum provides a very good range of learning opportunities for the entire age range, including a modern foreign language.

21. The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum that gives all pupils access to a wide range of learning experiences. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, personal, health and social education and a modern foreign language. Issues relating to coverage of some subjects in the last report have all been fully addressed and very good improvements have been made. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established. The success of the curriculum is seen in the high standards achieved. In replies to the parents' questionnaire, 94 per cent agreed that 'my child likes school', and this is a further indicator of the quality of learning experiences.
22. Teachers closely follow the schemes of work in their planning to ensure that pupils cover all the Programmes of Study and make consistent progress. There are clear learning objectives and these are often communicated to pupils at the beginning of lessons, especially in classes for older pupils. This provides a clear purpose and motivation for learning and is a major factor in the high level of attainment.
23. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils under six years of age in the reception class are good. The curriculum for these young children is based on the nationally recognised early learning goals and, for most, extends into the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in English and mathematics. Children have opportunities for creative work through a wide range of practical activities, such as making glove puppets, painting, or 'composing' music. Their imagination is engaged as they share books in the cosy reading corner, or make up stories as they steer their cars around the road mat. Physical skills are developed successfully through dedicated lessons and during the two afternoons each week when they have access to a wider range of activities in the hall. On these occasions, children use small apparatus, such as bats and balls, and ride their wheeled toys 'to the shop'. There is a particularly strong emphasis on developing skills in literacy and mathematics. Staff and adult helpers constantly engage children in conversation, extending vocabulary and confidence. There are planned, teacher-directed activities for literacy and mathematics that move learning forward, together with opportunities for children to practise their new skills in the writing area, by counting in a game or through construction activities.
24. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is often made more interesting by introducing practical and meaningful activity. For example, in Year 1, pupils have been learning about toys in their history work. The interactive display allows them to investigate artefacts at first hand. As part of the work on geography in Year 4, pupils have made a 'mini rainforest' in a tank that they can study. In Year 6, pupils are invited to take a 'maths challenge' as a relevant way to practise their problem-solving skills. Information and communication technology is carefully planned into lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6. Meaningful tasks are set that allow pupils to consolidate their computer skills and learning across the whole curriculum. Word processing work is extended through making posters, producing newspapers and presenting writing in a more interesting way through using different fonts or colour, especially in Years 3 to 6. Art and design work is extended through graphics programs. Pupils find information to supplement their studies from CD-ROMs and the Internet. Programs that include the organisation, analysis and presentation of data are widely used. For example, lower junior pupils conducted a survey of house types in the area. They entered the information into a database, interrogated it and produced different graphs to illustrate their findings.
25. There are very good facilities within school to support private study, with a very well-stocked library, a good range of classroom reference books and the new computer suite, which is due to be opened at the beginning of the autumn term. Investigative and research tasks are set for homework on occasions and pupils have opportunities for personal research and private study, especially in Years 5 and 6. In Year 6, for example, pupils are presented with challenges in mathematics that often lead into extended investigations. They are encouraged to initiate studies in topics such as 'Tudor Times' or 'Food and Farming', using the skills that they have learnt across the curriculum.

26. As an addition to the statutory subjects, the school offers French lessons to its pupils, who enjoy them very much. Learning of the language is based on familiar themes, such as colours, parts of the body or telling the time. The emphasis is on oral work but older pupils also complete some relevant written assignments and achieve good standards. In the lessons, pupils articulate what they want to say and practise real situations, such as asking the time. The learning includes an element of fun as pupils help each other with difficult pronunciations or points of grammar. They gain early skills in speaking, listening and writing that provide a very good basis for their work at secondary school.
27. Health education starts in the reception class and is largely planned for within the science curriculum throughout school. The good links that the school has developed with parents, the church and the community contribute effectively to pupils' personal and social education, and learning experiences. Close links with the church bring many advantages. The vicar comes into school regularly to lead worship and talk to pupils. His musical talents enhance and extend the curriculum and encourage pupils to participate in performances. A dedicated parent helper spends a considerable part of each week in school, and offers particular strengths in practical science work and design and technology. Other parent helpers provide very good support for pupils' learning, and further opportunities for purposeful interaction. The science curriculum is enhanced through pupils' studies in the established wildlife area that has been expertly planned and maintained to provide experiences throughout the year. Experts in various fields, such as the local history society, the Oldham Theatre Workshop and an Asian music group, also provide enriched opportunities for learning. Physical education is enhanced through the involvement of outside personnel. The 'Football in the Community' project has resulted in skilled professionals from Oldham Athletic and Manchester United clubs sharing their expertise and enthusiasm with the pupils. In summer months, a member of the local cricket club provides coaching and organises games. Visits are undertaken to extend experiences across the curriculum, both in the local and wider communities. These include Egyptology studies at a local museum and concerts at Bridgewater Hall.
28. The range of extra-curricular clubs offered to junior pupils is good under normal circumstances. The programme has been disrupted lately because of the extensive building work but is scheduled to restart in September. All activities are accessible to both girls and boys and a good number of pupils usually take part.

Pupils' personal development is of a high standard and is supported effectively through very good provision for their moral, social and cultural education.

29. The Christian ethos of the school provides very good moral guidance for the pupils, and provision in this area is very good. Within the well-ordered school community, everyone is respected and there is a strong sense of personal worth and high self-esteem. There is a positive approach to good behaviour and an emphasis on courtesy and consideration. Staff work together to enable pupils to develop a clear sense of right and wrong through the minimal list of school rules. They actively promote a sense of responsibility, fair play and honesty in their pupils.
30. The provision for social development is very good. Social awareness is actively fostered both in lessons, during playtime and at lunch-time. All adults act as good role models in developing a sense of identity and belonging. There is a strong emphasis on building and maintaining excellent relationships throughout school at every level. Pupils are encouraged to show sensitivity for the needs of others and are always willing to offer help. Opportunities to share resources, work collaboratively and to take account of the views and opinions of others are provided from the earliest stage. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is enhanced through invited speakers and visits within the local area. They learn the important virtues of citizenship through their lessons and by working for charitable organisations. They follow the example set by their teachers and are always polite and helpful. The different social and ethnic groups within school work and play together enthusiastically. The annual residential holiday to a youth hostel provides an excellent opportunity for the older pupils to extend their social relationships through living and working together, away from home and school.
31. Pupils' cultural awareness is supported by the study of the customs and traditions of the locality. In Year 6, pupils learn about life in the Second World War and have artefacts and pictures on display from the local historical society. Visits to museums and places of interest, together with performances from theatre groups, help to develop an understanding of national culture. Through curriculum studies, pupils have opportunities to appreciate the work of famous artists, such as Monet and Picasso. They listen to a variety of music from around the world and have opportunities to play some unusual instruments from different countries. In history and geography, they learn about past

civilisations and how societies differ. Pupils are introduced to the richness that exists in the diversity of cultures by the study of world faiths in religious education. Interesting displays bring the study of other cultures to life and the interactive ones invite pupils to explore artefacts for themselves. A very good selection of books provides information about different cultures around the world and includes traditional tales from other countries. Non-fiction books include illustrations of, and references to, the wide diversity of people from different cultures and faiths that make up our society. Pupils' cultural development is further enhanced through their modern foreign language lessons where they learn about European traditions and the French way of life.

32. The school's commitment to personal education is recognised and appreciated by parents. In returned questionnaires, 94 per cent agreed that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

The school provides a high standard of care for its pupils.

33. At all times, teachers and non-teaching staff are very watchful and responsive to individual needs. There is good provision for first aid, with trained personnel and facilities in each class area. The supervision of pupils around the school is very good. Lunch-time supervisors provide a high standard of care. They know the pupils very well and carry out their duties diligently. They place themselves in strategic positions so that they keep a watchful eye, especially in the playground and field. There are very good procedures and day-to-day routines to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. The governors have detailed policies in place that are closely followed to ensure that pupils have a safe, secure environment in which to learn and play. In her role as child protection officer, the headteacher ensures that all staff are well trained and aware of their responsibilities. The staff handbook clearly states what is expected of each adult in the organisation and operation of the school. The headteacher is watchful and actively checks the buildings and grounds on a daily basis to ensure that the highest standards of safety are secured. Any issues are tackled immediately. Stringent risk assessments are undertaken and a careful approach was seen recently when the headteacher and governors decided to postpone extra-curricular sporting clubs because of building work on the new computer suite. School rules that are formulated on the basis of safety are rigorously adhered to. The systems and procedures in place firmly underpin the orderly atmosphere in school.

The headteacher constantly drives the school forward, providing an excellent quality of leadership in driving the curriculum and evaluating school performance. The governors provide good leadership and management for all the school's work.

34. The headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership, setting extremely high expectations of staff and pupils. This is a major strength of the school that underpins its success. She is instrumental in maintaining the excellent standards of attainment that, for several years, have put the school in the top 5 per cent in the country. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. They are extremely successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy excellent relationships, and show respect for their peers and adults. All staff and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims, which include an emphasis on personal, as well as academic, development. An analysis of the large number of returns from the parents questionnaires show that 96 per cent are satisfied that the school is well led and managed.
35. The standard of management from headteacher, staff and governors working together is very good. Delegation of responsibilities to key staff is effective and efficient. The subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science constantly monitor teaching and learning in their subjects to ensure that the excellent standards are maintained. They are pro-active in their approach, quickly recognising problems before they become issues and taking direct action. They maintain an excellent range of high quality resources for learning and provide expert support in planning for their colleagues. The management of information and communication technology is very good. An enthusiastic co-ordinator has produced school-wide plans that show possible links with other subject areas and are full of practical ideas. They form a very useful resource for teachers. She has a clear vision for the future development of the subject as the computer suite nears completion.
36. School development planning is thorough and very clearly focused. All spending decisions are based on the school's identified priorities and exceptionally careful budgeting means that funds go a long way. The School Support Group is very active and successful in its fund-raising to provide additional money for resources such as additional computers, apparatus for structured play and help towards school trips. Business sponsorship is sought where possible and one of the computers in the new suite is provided from this source. The 'carry forward' figure of £22,000 is largely allocated to hardware and software for the new computer suite.

37. The governing body, with its valuable range of expertise, is committed to ensuring the highest quality education for all pupils and works closely with the staff to achieve the school's aims. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and work hard to discharge their responsibilities. The proceedings of the governing body are conducted efficiently and committees include teaching personnel to provide a professional input. There is a very positive and productive relationship between the governing body and the school. Co-ordinators of the different subject areas are welcomed at governors' meetings when they present action plans and progress reports. Governors have great confidence in the headteacher but expect her to be accountable. Parent governors act as helpers and one spends a substantial amount of time in classes. Some governors come into school to experience teaching and learning. Links are forged between individual governors and nominated subject co-ordinators so that they can gain an in-depth understanding of the particular subject area. Governors are currently developing files to support this work and some show an outstanding commitment of time, research and interaction with staff. Overall, the governing body has a thorough working knowledge of the school which directly informs its decision-making.
38. The extensive accommodation and grounds provide a spacious, bright and varied environment for learning. There are plentiful areas for displays of work that are well used to celebrate pupils' achievements and to create focal points for discussion and appreciation. Great care has been taken in planning the building and the resourcing of the new computer suite to make sure that it meets all the pupils' requirements. Standards of maintenance and cleanliness are very high. The headteacher and staff take great care to provide a child-friendly environment, with resources at the correct level, stimulating displays and inviting reading areas.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Providing varied opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to record their work in different ways.

39. Teachers' planning is thorough and successful in achieving very high standards of pupil attainment.
40. However, in Years 1 and 2, a lot of pupils' work is recorded on worksheets or in commercial workbooks. These tasks are sometimes narrow and do not allow pupils to develop independence in working. There are few times when pupils are free to choose their preferred method, such as writing in different genres, making their own 'number sentence', or through diagrams and charts. This restricts opportunities for them to extend their organisational, writing and mathematical skills and gain more independence in the learning process. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils were given printed sentences and asked to put the words in the right order, rather than having the freedom to write down their own, original thoughts. In mathematics, workbook recording does not allow pupils to develop their own pen and paper methods. When learning about phonics, pupils often have worksheets to fill in rather than exploring for themselves a range of words that contain the particular letter sound.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to record their work in different ways by:

- reducing the use of worksheets and workbooks and allowing more opportunity for them to explore the use of different genres in writing and various ways to communicate their findings in mathematics (*paragraphs 2, 12*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

21

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14	43	43	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		228
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	96
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	18	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	17	16	16
	Total	35	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	17	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	31	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (97)	94 (100)	97 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	31	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (89)	91 (91)	97 (94)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.5
Average class size	32.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	410,296
Total expenditure	388,296
Expenditure per pupil	1,703
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,000
Balance carried forward to next year	22,000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	116

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	3	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	31	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	9	3	1
The teaching is good.	54	41	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	42	19	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	40	9	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	32	28	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	39	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	1	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	29	22	9	8

Other issues raised by parents

Parents praised the provision for, and attainment in, music at the school. They appreciate the high standards that the school achieves and the strong ethos that supports pupils' social and moral development. Many were pleased with the new computer suite and felt that good investment was made in providing quality resources for the pupils. Some would like more parents' evenings or more time at the existing ones to discuss their children's progress, and this could usefully be explored. A significant percentage felt that there is lack of consultation in relation to changes in school policy and that complaints and suggestions are not always dealt with. The inspection team found that procedures and policies for consultation and dealing with issues raised by parents are in place and evidence shows them to be working effectively. Governors may well wish to pursue the issues expressed and review public relations with parents.