

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BRIGID'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beswick, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105523

Headteacher: Mr F Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock
25344

Dates of inspection: 21st May – 25th May 2001

Inspection number: 196990

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grey Mare Lane Beswick Manchester
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father T Hopkins
Date of previous inspection:	12 th January 1997

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25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	English Design and technology Geography History	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements
11368	Mrs S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	
21858	Rev J Pryor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Brigid's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and is about the same size as most other primary schools nationally. It has just been awarded 'Beacon' status for sustained excellence. There are 217 pupils on roll, 96 boys and 119 girls, and this is about the same as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The total number is made up with 42 children who attend the nursery on a full-time basis. There are seven single age classes, three in the infant and four in the junior section, plus the nursery. Almost all pupils come from Beswick and Openshaw, areas close to the centre of Manchester, which have been ravaged by urban and industrial decay. There are high levels of unemployment and the school has to work hard to compensate for the many social problems which exist. The school plays a leading role in the East Manchester Education Action Zone, an organisation set up to facilitate an improvement in standards for local schools and the community.

The attainment of most children when they start in the nursery is well below that expected nationally. When they enter the reception class in September it is still well below average, particularly in linguistic skills. There are no pupils from homes where English is an additional language. At present, 58 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The school has 28 per cent of pupils on its register for pupils with special educational needs, which is above average and 0.5 per cent with a statement of special educational needs, which is below the national average. The mobility of pupils appears to be a significant factor for the school, as last year 26 pupils were admitted and 29 left during term time. This is virtually a quarter of all pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an exceptionally good school at the heart of the community where everyone is made to feel special. As a result, pupils and staff make a major contribution to the quality of life found there and the many strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. The high quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, in partnership with the parish priest, are the key factors in the school's success. In spite of high levels of pupil mobility and an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily, keeping pace with the national trend. By the time pupils are eleven, they are above average in all three subjects. The quality of teaching is very good and effectively meets the needs of all pupils. In the nursery, which is staffed by three trained nursery nurses, teaching is satisfactory overall. All pupils show a very good attitude to learning and behave very well in lessons. Most are working at or near to their capacity. When all these factors are considered, along with the average levels of funding, the school is providing very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership and management is the driving force of the school.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning for all pupils, not least those with special educational needs, enables all to make very good progress and achieve above average standards in most subjects by the time they are eleven.
- The very good level of care makes all pupils feel important.
- The close attention paid to relationships within school, which are very good, results in very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour.
- The excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully raises pupils' self-esteem, enabling all to do the best they can.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities further improves the very good quality of learning opportunities.
- The contribution which the whole community makes to pupils learning, is excellent.

What could be improved

- The quality of education provided by the nursery.
- The library.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was previously inspected in January 1997, two key issues were identified for improvement and both have been thoroughly addressed. There are now up-to-date policy statements and detailed programmes of work for each National Curriculum subject, giving teachers clear guidance for their lesson planning. This has helped to raise standards in design and technology, from below average previously, to average now. Statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology are met in full, and as a direct result standards in the infant and junior classes are above average where before they were below. The school has also successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies over the past two years and this is having a marked impact on standards. The level of improvement, taking into account the standards achieved, and the much better quality of teaching, has been good. The school is well on course to meet the targets set for English and mathematics in 2001. Furthermore, the school has the skilled leadership and hard working staff, who function so well as a team, to maintain the current trend of improvement. All can be justifiably optimistic about the continuing success of 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	C	D	D	A
Mathematics	D	C	D	A
Science	D	C	D	A

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

The determination shown by the headteacher and governors to raise standards is helping to ensure that they improve steadily, keeping pace with improvements nationally. They are ably supported by a hard working staff, who demonstrate an equally strong determination to do the best they can for all pupils. Pupils' achievements in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, shown above, have largely been maintained in spite of the many difficulties faced by the school in this area of the city. When the results in 2000 are compared to similar schools, that is to say those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are well above the average. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time pupils are eleven, overall standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average for all schools. An analysis of pupils' completed work confirms that all pupils are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment, and there is no difference between the attainment of girls and boys. With about one-quarter of pupils in the current year group on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs, the school is doing well to maintain its overall standards. Targets for English and mathematics are carefully and realistically based on a detailed assessment of pupils' potential and most achieve them, with many exceeding them. Pupils with all types of special educational needs make very good

progress due to the careful planning by their teachers and the very good support they receive from classroom assistants. Standards in information and communication technology are above average and this is attributable to the attention given to the subject since the previous inspection. Attainment for eleven-year-olds in geography, history and physical education is also above average. In art, music and design and technology, standards are average.

By the time most children are six, virtually all achieve the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the age of seven, they achieve average standards in all National Curriculum subjects, except science and art which are below average, and information and communication technology which is above.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All pupils show very good levels of concentration, are determined to succeed and prepared to work hard to do so. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and this contributes to the sheer pace of lessons. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectation of their behaviour. There have been no exclusions, and no racist or sexist behaviour is reported, and none seen.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The close links with the church, governors, parents and the wider community create a nurturing and family atmosphere, where all things and all people are treated with respect and equally valued.
Attendance	Below average. The transient nature of the school population and holiday taken during term time are largely responsible. The level of unauthorised absence is about average and pupils are invariably punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
58 lessons seen overall	Good, overall.	Very good.	Very good.

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

Previously, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good, with good, very good or excellent teaching in almost half of the lessons seen. Nine per cent was judged to be unsatisfactory and 13 per cent was found to be very good. The quality of teaching in the school has improved a great deal since then, and is very good overall. The same high standard of teaching was found in the infant and junior classes. However, in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception class it was good overall. The quality of teaching seen in this inspection was satisfactory or better in every lesson. It was very good or excellent in 45 per cent of lessons, with most of these being in the junior section of the school. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in 81 per cent of lessons, which shows a marked increase in the proportion of high quality lessons since the previous inspection. In the reception class, where all the lessons seen were either good or very good, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be very good. In the nursery, the quality of teaching seen was wholly satisfactory.

Excellent leadership by the headteacher and a very strong commitment by all staff to give pupils the best possible education they can, results in most aspects of teaching being of a high standard. Strong features, common to all teachers, which contribute to the effectiveness of teaching, are detailed lesson planning, high expectations of pupils, discipline and the use of resources to make learning interesting for pupils. In addition, classroom support assistants make a valuable contribution and the sheer pace of lessons keeps all pupils on their toes and fully focused. Teaching is also very good for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. This aspect was recognised as a strength in the recent award of 'Beacon' status for the school. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school. As a direct result, pupils' productivity and pace of working is excellent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum for all its pupils and this includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength. Statutory requirements are met. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the nationally agreed areas. However, there are deficiencies in the daily implementation of the planned activities in the nursery. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. This aspect is a strength of the school. All pupils are fully included in lessons and supported very well. Individual education plans clearly identify areas for improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent overall. This provision is at the heart of the school, and its effectiveness ensures that the school's aims and values are reflected in all aspects of its daily life. True to its mission statement, the school's outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development permeates all its work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The hallmark of the school is the very high level of care provided by all staff, where everyone is made to feel special. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. The assessment of pupils' work is very good and teachers use the information well to guide their future planning.

There are very effective links with parents and all are kept fully informed about their children's progress with termly meetings and well-written annual reports. Most parents hold the school in high esteem. Some would like more specific curriculum information so that they can help with, for example, mathematics homework and the school's preferred handwriting style.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher's leadership has gone from strength to strength. Senior management is successfully building a high performing staff. All share an excellent commitment to improvement.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Excellent. The contribution of the chair of the governing body is exceptional. Business is conducted efficiently, drawing on much local expertise. All statutory requirements are met.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Standards are closely scrutinised and swift action takes place to bring about identified improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school's finances are in expert hands. The best value is sought in all expenditure. Specific grants are spent appropriately.

Staffing levels are good. The accommodation is very good overall, with plenty of space both indoors and outdoors to teach the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. The cleanliness throughout the school is a credit to the cleaning staff. Resource levels are satisfactory. However, the library is badly placed for pupils to use effectively and the quantity of books is below average. Their quality is disappointing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school. • They make good progress. • Teaching is good. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • Pupils are helped to become more mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and quality of homework. • Behaviour. • The approachability of the school. • The school working more closely with parents.

Inspectors are in full agreement with the positive views expressed by the 33 per cent of parents who returned their questionnaires. However, inspectors strongly disagree with the small number of parents' views about homework and behaviour. The teachers make excellent use of homework to support learning, and pupils' behaviour is very good. Links with parents were also judged to be very good. It is difficult to see what more the school, in close co-operation with the church, could do to make it easier for the small group of parents who find it difficult to visit school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of abilities. However, levels of attainment on entry are generally well below average for most. They quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning positively. During their time in the Foundation Stage, which covers their time in the nursery and reception class, they make very good progress overall, and are well placed to meet, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1.
2. The quality of education the school provides for the children in the nursery is satisfactory overall, with the three nursery nurses responsible for the day-to-day teaching. They show a high level of care for all children. However, some teaching and learning opportunities are not fully grasped, and as a result the rate of progress for children is not as rapid as elsewhere in the school. Many children arrive with poor linguistic skills. This places them at a disadvantage, affecting their performance in most areas of learning. However, during their time in the nursery, they make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in social development and in creative activities.
3. Attainment on entry to the reception class remains well below average overall. Curriculum planning for children in this class is detailed and in line with requirements of the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching in this class is very good. As a result, the progress of most children in language and literacy, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and in their personal, social and emotional development is very good. For example, children listen well to all adults, they respond to instructions and sit and listen attentively to stories. They answer questions politely, do not call out and listen to other children's answers in literacy sessions. In their physical development, children's progress is also very good as they have good opportunities to use large play apparatus and wheeled toys outdoors. By the end of the Foundation Stage, virtually all children achieve the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, speaking skills still remain as a weakness for many.
4. Inspection findings show that attainment for seven-year-olds in English and mathematics is average and in science, it is below average. This is the same as in the previous inspection in January 1997 for English and mathematics. However, standards in science appear to have got worse, as they were average in 1997. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in all three subjects with some measure of success. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching, has had a good effect. However, comparisons between different year groups are not realistic, as some have a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The overall trend shows that the school is keeping pace with improving trends nationally but variations do occur in pupils' performance in different subjects.
5. Results in the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds, in comparison with all schools, show standards in reading were average, in mathematics they were above average and below average in writing. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the extent of pupils' achievements can be

appreciated more as their performance was well above the average found in similar schools in reading and mathematics and above in writing. The results for last years Year 2 pupils in science, based on teacher assessments, show 81 per cent achieving the expected Level 2 or above which is well below the national average, and none achieving at the higher Level 3, which is again well below average. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be below average.

6. The results since 1997 show that girls did slightly better than boys in reading and writing, but about the same in mathematics. This is reflected nationally. The trend since 1996 shows results fluctuated dramatically up and down in writing and mathematics, most likely due to the high mobility of pupils and number of pupils with special educational needs. However, in reading there has been a steady improvement. Under the circumstances, this is a credit to the school and reflects the emphasis placed on reading and parents' help at home. In the school's own analysis, comparing the predicted National Curriculum level using data from the assessments on entry to the school, pupils mostly do better than expected. The good start all children have in the Foundation Stage and very good quality of teaching they experience throughout the infant section of the school are mainly responsible for how well pupils achieve in relation to their prior attainment.
7. In English, work seen during the inspection shows that, by the time pupils are seven, the standards that they attain are average in reading and writing but below average in speaking and listening. It is the speaking aspect which is still weak for a significant proportion of pupils. Overall, standards in English are average. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. Consequently, most pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills but many do not gain sufficiently from their very low starting point. Reading is taught well, allowing pupils to develop their technical skills well. They have good strategies, for example, to try to read unfamiliar words. As a result most read with understanding. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read is most certainly helping to improve standards. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to write in most subjects and teachers are focusing effectively on spelling and sentence structures in an attempt to raise standards. In the literacy sessions pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities such as re-telling stories and writing letters or poems. However, few pupils use a joined style of handwriting.
8. In mathematics, attainment is average with pupils achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. They work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten very quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives and tens accurately, and have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. In Year 2, for example, pupils examine the properties of materials and observe tadpoles. However, there are weaknesses in the recording of results or observations, and the overall standard of presentation of pupils' completed work is below average.
9. Pupils generally attain standards, which are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. This represents a good level of achievement from the low starting point for most. Pupils' attainment is above expectations in information and communication technology, mainly because of the high quality of imaginative teaching, the good level of resources and use teachers make of computers in their lessons. Their achievements in this subject are very good, considering their previous lack of knowledge. The work with pupils is also well supported through after-school clubs for

both pupils and parents. Although standards in art are below average, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Their observational skills are weak and many have uncertain control of pencils or paintbrushes. As a result, much of their finished work lacks the quality of typical seven-year-olds. However, they use a wide range of materials and gain important skills from their experiences.

10. The good progress pupils make after starting Year 1, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of how well they are taught and their excellent attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics, for example, is good but in science it is satisfactory. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire believe that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the very good quality of teaching is having on pupils' attainment. All school staff are deeply committed to improving standards and are succeeding in spite of the many difficulties they face in this area of the city.
11. Pupils continue to achieve well in the junior classes. The very good relationships pupils share with staff and the consistently good and very good quality of teaching in lessons are the key factors. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6 class, attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. Standards in all three subjects have improved in line with the national trend and are similar to those found in the previous inspection. It is unrealistic to compare the results with those achieved when these pupils were in Year 2 because of the number of pupils who have arrived or left each year since then. Taking into account the mobility of pupils and the high proportion with special educational needs in the class, the standards attained show the effectiveness of the school and the high calibre of the teachers in the junior classes.
12. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils in 2000 showed that attainment was below average in English, mathematics and science. However, when these results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they show how successful the school has been. Pupils' performance in all three subjects is well above average. The headteacher and staff analyse all results very carefully and quickly identify weaknesses, which are then acted upon. Along with this good strategy and the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, it is having a positive effect on standards for all pupils.
13. Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments appears erratic over the past four years with results ranging from below to well above the national average in each subject. However in 2000 the effects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and much improved quality of teaching have been instrumental in raising standards. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for the current Year 6 pupils are above the national average for English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, standards of attainment are above those normally seen in geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education. In art, design and technology and music, standards are average. For design and technology and information and communication technology in particular, it represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection findings when pupils' attainment was below average. The design element now forms an important part of pupils' work in design and technology and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to use the many computers. All show confidence, often working independently of their teacher to research information from the Internet. Overall the school is very effective, as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

14. The very good quality of teaching is an important factor in the progress most pupils make. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards in English and mathematics throughout. Well chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in style, structure and content improve pupils' reading skills and widens their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this also contributes effectively to the above average attainment and good progress pupils make in reading. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teachers and the skilled classroom support assistants. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills, with parents playing a key role by showing interest and listening to reading most nights. Pupils read confidently and write fluently in a wide range of styles or contexts. In mathematics, they can work out sums with fractions and decimals, successfully recognising the relationships of, for example, 0.75 and $\frac{3}{4}$, and using this information in working out complex sums.
15. In science, pupils have many opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently. By the age of eleven, they know how to devise a fair test and record their results carefully, often using a computer to help them. The science co-ordinator manages the subject very well, giving much advice and support to all teachers. All teachers show confidence when teaching science and are guided effectively by the good programme of work. Boys and girls both enjoy the practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. However, boys tend to out-perform girls in science in the national tests. No specific reasons for this have been identified by the school in their analysis of results or by the inspection team.
16. Pupils with all types of special educational needs achieve well. They make similar progress to others in their class due to the careful planning by class teachers, and the effective support of the classroom assistants. The school sets challenging targets for them and most are well on course to meet them. In most classes, those with recognised behavioural difficulties achieve particularly well due to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and very good level of class control and discipline.
17. The school does not at present identify or make special provision for any gifted or talented pupils. The school relies on the very good quality of teaching to afford all pupils with every chance to reach their full potential. However, arrangements are well in place to further improve this, beginning in September 2001, by planning additional work in lessons for pupils of exceptional ability or with special talents in any particular subjects. All pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. As a result, pupils feel valued and this in turn encourages them to do their best in everything. It is just one of the reasons why the school is so successful, with pupils achieving so well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and a strength of the school. They make a significant contribution to the above average standards that pupils achieve in most subjects by the time they are ready to leave the school.
19. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy coming to school, confirming parents' views. As they progress through school their attitude to learning improves. In the nursery and reception class, which makes up the new Foundation Stage, they learn to listen to their teachers and to work co-operatively together in groups. By the time they are seven they are approaching their work with more enthusiasm and respond well to the structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons.

By eleven, they have very good levels of concentration, are determined to succeed and prepared to work hard to do so. These very good attitudes are a result of the very good relationships that exist between all staff and pupils and the high expectations that have been maintained since the previous inspection.

20. The overall behaviour of pupils in lessons, around the school and in the playground, is very good. They respond well to the school's high expectation of their behaviour and quickly learn what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. When any inappropriate behaviour occurs the staff are quick to respond and apply sanctions in line with the behaviour policy. Pupils move around the school sensibly and purposefully holding doors open for each other and adults. Playtimes are active with pupils making full use of the spacious grounds and sharing the equipment provided for them. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour, was observed during inspection and there have been no exclusions. The very effective contribution by the conscientious and caring team of lunch-time organisers, who enjoy very good relationships with pupils, is largely responsible for this.
21. Pupils' personal development is very good. The strong relationships, throughout the school, are supported and encouraged through activities such as the buddy system, when Year 6 pupils are paired with pupils entering Year 3. They take the responsibility of being a friend and guide to the younger pupil very seriously and are good role models to them. The very close links with the church, governors, parents and the wider community create a nurturing and family atmosphere, where all things and all people are treated with respect and equally valued. During their time in school pupils develop an awareness of the purpose and value of education and become increasingly confident in showing initiative and contributing to school and community life. A good example of this was seen during inspection when Year 4 pupils re-enacted the Ascension, in church during weekly Mass, in front of the whole school, their parents and the congregation. The school was also responsible for a colourful ceramic tile mural that adorns the outside wall of the local library.
22. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It has increased since the previous inspection, however it has not kept pace with the national trend and remains below the national average. The reason for absence is the transient nature of the school population and holiday taken during term time. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average and is usually due to family problems. Pupils are punctual, registration is quick and efficient and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. In the previous inspection in January 1997, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good with almost half of all the lessons observed being good, very good or excellent. Of the lessons seen, 13 per cent were very good or better and nine per cent were found to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the school has improved a great deal since then, and is now very good. Staff have developed detailed teaching programmes for all subjects, and worked hard to overcome the weaknesses identified in information and communication technology in the infant department, and design and technology in the juniors. As a result, teaching was found to be of a very high standard generally and in these subjects in particular, raising standards in both. A strong team spirit is evident amongst staff. The features, common to all teachers, which are contributing most to the effectiveness of teaching, are the sheer pace of lessons, careful lesson planning, high expectations of pupils, class discipline and the use of resources to make learning interesting for pupils. In addition, the excellent use of homework further enhances the quality of learning. There is a very strong determination by all staff to raise standards.

24. During this inspection, the overall quality of teaching was of the same high standard in the infant and junior classes. The proportion of good or better teaching, for example, was virtually the same in each section of the school. Overall, the quality of teaching seen in this inspection was satisfactory or better in every lesson. It was very good or excellent in 45 per cent. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in 81 per cent of lessons, which shows a remarkable increase in the proportion of high quality lessons since the previous inspection. In the junior classes, three-quarters of all the lessons seen were very good or excellent. This is a remarkable achievement, brought about by the teachers' enthusiasm and very good knowledge coupled with their excellent class control and excellent use of support staff and resources. Most had the knack of making learning exciting and fun, keeping pupils fully motivated and extremely busy. The result of this was that a copious amount of pupils' completed work was available to the inspection team for their scrutiny. However, the quality of teaching was not up to the same high standards in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception class together. All the lessons seen in the nursery, taught by three specially trained nursery nurses, were satisfactory, whereas in the reception class, all the lessons seen were either good or very good. Overall, in this new key stage, the quality of teaching was judged to be good. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school.
25. Most aspects of teaching in the infant and junior classes are very good. For example, all teachers lesson planning is detailed, with clear learning objectives and effective links made between subjects. In Year 6, for example, a geography lesson involved pupils using computers to write holiday brochures. Skills from English lessons as well as design and technology were put into practice. Expectations of pupils are generally high and pupils respond by behaving extremely well and working conscientiously to produce neat work. Pupils of all abilities are given suitably challenging tasks and strict time targets to complete them. A strong feature of most other lessons is the effective way teachers use support staff and resources. The very good attitude pupils in general have towards their work means that they can be trusted to work diligently. Praise is used well throughout to motivate or raise pupils' self-esteem. This was evident in the supportive comments attached to pupils' marked work.
26. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions is very good throughout the school. All teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions effectively when teaching other subjects. In an English lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils' literacy skills were developed expertly as they converted a Viking story into a play script. Very good links were made with their historical knowledge about Vikings. Pupils are frequently provided with the opportunity to use computer skills as part of their work in all subjects and this invariably involves literacy or numeracy skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils write poems about tadpoles in science, Year 4 record temperatures when checking the insulation properties of materials and Year 5 pupils produce graphs showing daily temperatures for their geography topic about the weather. The scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that pupils use computers extensively to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons.
27. The consistently high quality of teaching accounts for the good level of achievement for most pupils. In English, teaching is very good and as a result virtually all achieve the targets set for them and many exceed them by the time they are ready to leave the school. In mathematics, science, geography, history and physical education, pupils achieve better than average standards by the time they are eleven years of age as a direct result of the very good quality of teaching. In information and communication technology in particular, pupils' well above average achievements reflect the vastly improved teaching which is good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. The quality of teaching in the two music lessons seen in the junior section of the school was very good, but insufficient evidence was available to

- make a reliable overall judgement. This was also the case for art, as no specific art lesson was seen during the inspection period.
28. All teachers work hard to establish a very good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Teachers have developed excellent strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. In Year 1, for example, the teacher often whispers instructions to the children, gaining their attention immediately and in Year 5, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks set. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and usually behave very well. All have a very good attitude towards their learning. This results in a productive working environment in all classes.
 29. Teachers use assessment well to guide their planning and this helps them to plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities. All pupils work is marked thoroughly but few teachers add helpful comments to give pupils' guidance on how to further improve their work. There were no gifted pupils identified to the inspection team. However, teachers know their pupils very well and there is a strong commitment to meet the needs of all pupils so that they can achieve their full potential. They succeed as virtually all pupils meet, or exceed, the targets set for them. Lessons invariably build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with a wide range of resources readily available for pupils. This maintains pupils' interest and encourages them to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use when working independently in groups. In a Year 4 history lesson about working children in Victorian times, the teacher provided interesting documents and pictures to help pupils appreciate the conditions in mines, factories or up chimneys. Pupils respond positively to all their lessons, sustaining very good levels of concentration. As a direct result, very effective learning occurs in virtually all lessons.
 30. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, which comprises the nursery and reception class, is good overall. At present, the teaching in the nursery is shared by three qualified nursery nurses, under the overall direction provided by the early years co-ordinator, who teaches in the reception class. Planning the curriculum is a team effort, but the nursery nurses are responsible for implementing it. The quality of education the school provides for the children in the nursery overall is satisfactory, with staff showing a high level of care for all children. However, due to a lack of expertise, some teaching and learning opportunities are not fully grasped in the day-to-day planning. For example, too many items of equipment are made available to children and it is not possible to closely supervise them all in order to enhance children's learning experiences. As a result, the overall quality of teaching in the nursery is not up to the high standards found elsewhere in the school.
 31. In the reception class, the overall quality of teaching is very good. Where the teaching is better so is the rate of the children's achievement. Planning of children's work is good and meets the new requirements of the Foundation Stage. The day-to-day planning of work in the nursery, while it remains satisfactory and serves the children adequately, lacks the sharper educational approach to the children's play activities that the new developments in this stage of education require. The school has recognised this need and has already appointed a teacher to supplement the staffing in order to bring the quality of teaching in the nursery up to the very good standards found in the rest of the school. Support for children with special educational needs is good in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage enabling them to make good progress.
 32. A strength of the teaching is the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Staff use expert advice and good assessment information to ensure that individual learning plans identify precise and achievable targets in

relation to literacy, numeracy and social behaviour. Teachers take full account of these individual targets in their lesson plans. They work closely with support staff to ensure that the best possible use is made of their time and talents. As a result, these pupils consistently receive the help they need to make very good progress in relation to their personal targets. Individual progress is continuously monitored by teachers and learning support staff, and further action planned accordingly. Alongside these provisions, trained specialists work with small groups in Years 3 and 4 to give additional support in literacy to lower attaining pupils. Also booster sessions which focus on English and mathematics give pupils in Year 6 the extra push they need to achieve the best they can in National Curriculum tests. Teaching in these contexts is never less than good. It is characterised by clear targets, well-planned activities, and firm but sensitive, caring and buoyant relationships.

33. A small number of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. At the meeting for parents, some said pupils were given too much homework, and others felt that the tasks set were not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Inspection findings most definitely do not support these parents' views. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers make excellent use of homework as part of their very strong commitment to raise standards and the amount and quality effectively supports pupils' learning.

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

34. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum for all its pupils. The weakness in information and communication technology, identified in the previous inspection report, has been overcome and turned into a strength. While some subjects, such as mathematics, English, information and communication technology and physical education are stronger than others; there are no areas of weakness in the school's provision. All the subjects included in the National Curriculum are taught with an appropriate allocation of time. The pupils with special educational needs are particularly well catered for. The school has done well in continuing to provide a full programme for all the subjects in the National Curriculum at the same time as adopting the national programmes for English and mathematics. Another strength of the school is the very good variety and number of club and out-of-school activities provided throughout the week. The school has introduced the new nationally devised Foundation Stage for pupils under six years of age. The relative weaknesses in the day-to-day teaching in the nursery, shown up by this development, has been noted by the school and is to be tackled by the newly appointed nursery teacher who begins work in September 2001.
35. Each subject is supported by an up-to-date policy. The programmes of what is to be taught in each subject throughout the school are clear. They are regularly reviewed, as investigations of how well the pupils have performed indicate things that could be taught even better. The governing body has an effective curriculum committee which is involved in the approval of any changes to the curriculum. Its members are frequent visitors and familiar with how the school works. Members of the committee were also involved in the special training when changes to English and mathematics were introduced. The governors also fully supported the school in its successful application to become a 'Beacon' school with the provision for mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs as its strengths.
36. The planning of work in the school maintains a good balance between the need for a framework for the whole school, and the encouragement of individual teachers to use

their talents. The whole-year and half-termly planning maintains a clear structure while the individual shorter term plans allow for personal flair.

37. The management of individual subjects by co-ordinators is well done. They ensure that suggestions for improvements are shared among all the teachers efficiently. The headteacher and senior management team make sure that a good balance between all the subjects in the curriculum is maintained for all pupils. The curriculum provided for the pupils with special educational needs is much better than the national Code of Practice requires, and it is particularly well managed.
38. English and mathematics are very well provided for, and the teachers make sure that the quality of English and mathematics used in other subjects remains good. As well as the subjects in the National Curriculum the school provides personal, social and health education, and appropriate sex education, in co-operation with the school nurse. A noteworthy feature of this is the training the older pupils receive in lifesaving techniques from the local hospital.
39. Extra-curricular provision is very good, with ample opportunities for pupils of all ages to take part in a wide range of activities. There is, for example, an opportunity for pupils to learn French during the lunch hour, practise skills in information and communication technology or join the art, sewing or reading clubs. They also join parents after school to further develop their skills in using computers. Extra music is provided through the steel pan band, and guitar and recorder clubs. Plenty of opportunities exist to take part in sporting activities with football training, netball coaching as well as dance sessions and cross-country. All teachers are involved in providing the wide range of activities and pupils attend each session once they have enrolled. On a hot sunny lunch-time, for example, all 30 places were filled in the French session.
40. The arrangements for the large number of pupils who have special educational needs are very good, as was the case when the school was last inspected. The register of special needs is accurate, and very detailed records are carefully maintained for all identified pupils. Arrangements comply fully with the official Code of Practice, and identified pupils have very good individual learning plans. The school makes rigorous use of available assessment information and of expert help from the local service for inclusive learning to ensure that individual targets for learning and behaviour are always accurate and up-to-date. Teachers pay careful attention to pupils' needs in lessons, and modify the planned curriculum to take account of the agreed targets. In addition, teachers make very effective use of the considerable and varied skills of learning support teachers and classroom assistants to provide the help that pupils individually need and ensure their inclusion in all activities. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages all these provisions with great care and efficiency to ensure that all pupils on the register have good and equal opportunity to benefit consistently from high quality support that precisely matches their needs.
41. The school is important to the local community, especially to the church, and it is well supported. The support of the East Manchester Education Action Zone has been helpful in raising standards by providing extra resources and sharing good ideas. Other agencies, such as the Manchester Settlement, local football and other sports clubs and the parents and other local people support the school with funds and equipment. Examples of this help are the football strip for the school's successful teams, and the restful garden created in the centre of the school. Relationships with other schools are excellent. The school plays an important supporting role in the group of Catholic primary schools in the neighbourhood, sharing much of the teaching expertise and management skills. It works hard to make the transfer to

secondary school effective. The school co-operates with the local library, which provides a place and support for pupils to do their homework. The school works hard with and for the local community for the benefit of the pupils in the school.

42. The school makes outstanding provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This provision is at the heart of the school, and its effectiveness ensures that the school's aims and values are reflected in all aspects of its daily life. Exceptional consistency of vision and dedicated teamwork throughout the school maintain this level of quality. As a result, the school provides a secure and optimistic environment that counters the fragmented society around it, fosters self-discipline, nurtures a sense of non-material well-being, and raises children's self-esteem and aspiration by valuing their individuality and developing their special talents. The school has more than maintained the quality and effectiveness of its work in this area since the previous inspection, when this provision was judged to be 'very good and a strength of the school'.
43. True to its mission statement, the school's outstanding provision for spiritual development is founded on the teaching of the Gospels, and the qualities of belief, faith, trust and care which permeate its work. The spirituality is expressed in the simple words of the school prayer written by the pupils, and in other familiar prayers that are shared reflectively to start and close each session. Assemblies are uplifting occasions to which all staff contribute actively to develop themes and stories that link well with pupils' lives. The weekly Mass in the parish church creates a loving, family atmosphere where all are involved in reading, responding, thinking and reflecting on their own faith and their responsibilities to others. This programme of prayer and worship is fundamental to building the life standard that the school so strongly upholds. It is extended in various ways, for example, through joint assemblies and ecumenical carol concerts with the nearby Church of England school. Planned walks in the Medlock Valley or trips further afield to places such as Castleton in the High Peak reflect the school's effort to bring an appreciation of beauty into the lives of its pupils. Vibrant teaching often prompts an imaginative appreciation of things studied, such as the amazing design and achievement of the Viking longboat in history, or the vast scale and diversity of the solar system in science.
44. The excellent provision for pupils' moral development is inseparable from the strong spiritual values and ideals that all staff actively but implicitly reinforce by the example they set. The school's admirable behaviour policy has been developed through regular consultation and agreement between the governors, the classroom staff, the lunch-time staff and, most particularly, the pupils. For example, the provisions for countering aggressive behaviour are based on pupils' views about the strategies that work best. The school's successful buddy system obliges older pupils to fulfil in their behaviour the high moral expectations placed on them. Each Friday assembly celebrates personal achievement, in moral not less than other fields, in the context of religious themes. The practice of giving pupils' responsibility for agreeing and upholding a code of conduct for their own class reinforces their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' strong appreciation of the school's calm, purposeful and ordered life also reinforces their recognition of the importance of the clear moral code that underpins it.
45. Expanding work in personal and social education and in links with communities locally and further afield strongly supports the school's very good provision for pupils' social development. The sense of moral purpose fostered by the school also encourages very good social attitudes and relationships. Pupils are encouraged to help each other in many contexts, both within and outside lessons. The buddy system promotes practical caring skills and attitudes. Participation in concerts and productions, such as Macbeth and The Medicine Man, fosters an awareness of the

importance of the dedicated individual contribution to a collective effort. Very good extra-curricular opportunities for activities such as football, netball, dance and performing in a steel pan band develop understandings of fair play and the skills of teamwork. Children are also involved in fund-raising for charitable efforts such as St. Joseph's Penny. In many ways, therefore, the school strongly promotes a sense of social responsibility.

46. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development are also very good. A range of imaginative developments bring cultural enrichment into pupils' experience of school. For example, work related to the Manchester Trail effectively develops pupils' awareness of local history and their own rich heritage. The school plans for diversity of experience, and pupils visit the High Peak and Manchester United training ground; they enjoy the visits of various artists and performers, and take part in the school's very successful summer university, funded by the Education Action Zone. Academic studies give shape to this learning, placing it, for instance, in the context of British history and geography. At the same time, a multi-faith element in religious education develops understandings of the similarities and differences between Christianity and other world faiths. An assembly for younger pupils introduced the Buddhist festival of Wesak and very effectively used the idea of a kindness tree to link this festival with the children's own lives in a practical way. There are strong and enduring links with schools in Zambia and Kenya, and annual participation in the Manchester Arts Festival and the Manchester showcase involves pupils not only in performing, but also in observing performances that reflect a wide range of cultures. This is picked up well in work in music and art, where, for example, pupils have emulated the styles of aboriginal paintings. The school site adjoins the sports city that is being built for the 2002 Commonwealth Games. This gives a powerful extra incentive to the school's strong efforts to promote awareness of non-Western cultures. Recently, for example, children in the nursery have celebrated Chinese New Year with a banquet; children in reception have created a model African village, and pupils in Year 3 have, in the course of their studies, celebrated Indian festivals as well as the Jewish Passover.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The hallmark of the school is the very high level of care provided by all staff, where everyone is made to feel special. The value placed on individuals, children and adults, allows everyone to contribute to the quality of the school.
48. The health, safety and general welfare of pupils is a main priority within school. Four members of staff are qualified in first aid and the school nurse visits for half a day every week. The headteacher has responsibility for child protection issues and all staff follow procedures. The chair of governors is in school virtually every day and routinely checks health and safety aspects, formally monitoring each half term. Risk assessment is carried out for the building and for pupil visits. All procedures are followed thoroughly and methodically. The school is a safe and secure environment.
49. The school has improved procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance since the previous inspection and these are now excellent. Attendance is monitored daily by the extremely conscientious part-time attendance officer. Contact with parents on the first day of absence and visits by the home school liaison officer, funded by the Education Action Zone, supports parents at home. There is good liaison with the education welfare service. This has resulted in an increase in attendance in each of the last two years. Pupils value highly the certificates they receive for good attendance. The school is committed in raising attendance still further and will need continuing support from all parents to achieve its aims. All staff consistently and

effectively promote good behaviour at every opportunity. Any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly. Praise, stickers and certificates are used appropriately to motivate pupils to always do their best. They make a positive contribution in raising self-esteem and achievement.

50. The school has very good systems for assessing and recording the academic progress and attainment of its pupils. In English and mathematics, excellent systems provide balanced and comprehensive information about what pupils know, understand and can do. These systems begin in the nursery and become more rigorous in the reception class. Thereafter, a broad and balanced range of optional and statutory tests, and regular formal and informal assessments, provides high quality information. This is recorded carefully to produce a full and accurate picture of the achievement of each individual and group across the school. Systems of similar quality but narrower range are used in science. In other subjects, however, not enough is done each term to maintain a record of each pupil's progress against the specific targets of the National Curriculum. Assessments are usually carried out at the end of each year.
51. Overall, the school makes good use of the assessment information it gathers. In English, mathematics and science, all teachers use the full range of available information to arrange teaching groups, plan work at the correct level for different groups, and set targets to guide pupils towards achieving higher standards. The school uses analyses of test results well to monitor and raise achievements, and to identify pupils who, for whatever reason, are not making expected progress. Particularly good uses of assessment inform the school's highly effective provisions for pupils who have special educational needs. Concerns are identified as early as possible and followed up rigorously. Very good teamwork within the school and with the local learning support service ensures that each individual learning plan is of excellent quality. Rigorous assessment processes lead to precise and achievable learning targets that are shared with pupils, regularly reviewed and carefully rewritten in the light of progress. Assessment information guides teachers' day-to-day planning for these pupils and ensures that all who work with them are consistently well informed and used. As a result, pupils with special needs receive extremely effective educational support and guidance throughout the school.
52. Although its assessment work correctly prioritises English, mathematics and science, and pupils with special educational needs, the school acknowledges that efforts need to be broadened to encompass other subjects. Assessment information could also be better used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum for other subjects and to ensure that the highest attaining pupils are more consistently challenged.
53. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development are good. Information gained from the school's testing programme is used effectively to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and for booster groups (additional literacy and numeracy support). Teachers know all pupils very well and the records they keep allow them to give good support and guidance to pupils to help them raise their achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Parents hold very positive views of the school. The majority of parents who expressed a view, prior to and during inspection, are very happy with school and confident that their children are getting a good education provided by dedicated staff who help them to achieve their best and become mature. Inspection findings confirm parents' positive views.

55. A minority of parents have concerns about behaviour, homework, approaching the school and working closely with them. The school has a strong commitment to work with parents for the benefit of the pupils and welcomes parents into school at any time. All parents spoken to during inspection confirmed this. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good; the use of homework is excellent. It gives parents the opportunity to share in raising achievement and be actively involved in their child's learning. Not all pupils are capable of behaving well at all times. Parents do not need to worry though, as staff very effectively manage and support these children in accordance with the behaviour policy and there is no disruption to the learning of others.
56. The school effectively promotes very good links with parents by providing them with a range of very good quality information. Monthly newsletters and the use of homework diaries helps parents know what is happening at school and gives them the opportunity for daily contact with class teachers. Very good written reports on pupil progress are provided annually and help parents to know their child's strengths and weaknesses. Parents have two formal consultations about progress each year, but say teachers get in touch with them throughout the year if pupils are having difficulties. The home/school agreement was introduced after consultation with parents. Parents are offered opportunities to learn about aspects of the curriculum such as the literacy hour and are aware of the school's policy on homework. Parents do not have a great deal of information about the curriculum and would appreciate more specific detail on how work is done at school. This would enable them to give better support at home and work in partnership with teachers in raising pupil achievement even further.
57. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. Parents occasionally help within classrooms giving good and effective support. Some also regularly attend the computer clubs with their children. Teachers value the good support parents give pupils with daily homework. Parents are invited to join pupils at weekly Mass and assembly where they can celebrate the achievements of their children. The parent and teacher association successfully organises social events for parents and pupils, such as the welcoming disco for new arrivals. The main fund raising event of the year is the summer fayre, which enabled parents to donate a computer to school and to subsidise pupil visits, such as a Year 6 residential trip and a visit to Euro Disney.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The standard of leadership and management has strengthened further since the previous inspection when it was reported to be very good. It is difficult to find any areas, which could be improved upon. It is now excellent overall, and this has a major impact on the daily life of the school, inspiring all to give 100 per cent effort in all they do. The headteacher, in partnership with the parish priest, is the driving force, creating a centre of excellence recognised by the award of 'Beacon' status for the school. He is enthusiastically optimistic about the future for the school and for this area of Manchester, which is benefiting from a massive urban regeneration project. He has a very clear vision of what he wants to achieve for the benefit of the pupils and community. Staff and governors share his commitment to improve and work hard with him to fulfil the school's mission statement. The aims and values in this are strongly reflected in all aspects of school life such as pupils' very good attitudes to their work and their very good behaviour.
59. The effective delegation of responsibility to senior staff is a strong feature. The senior management team is very experienced and provides an effective forum in which the school's current successes can be evaluated and its future planned. The deputy headteacher for example, carries out his responsibilities very efficiently and

effectively. Individual staff who co-ordinate the development of subjects within the curriculum and the special educational needs co-ordinator take their responsibilities seriously, giving much support to one another. The newly formed Foundation Stage for nursery and reception aged children is managed very well by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. Non-teaching staff feel part of the school team and value the guidance and support they receive from teachers. The quality of their work adds to the success of pupils' learning experiences.

60. The governing body carries out its statutory duties exceptionally well and works extremely hard to support the school. The contribution of the chair of governors, who knows every child in school, was recognised as a significant factor in the school's success in the previous report and this is still the case today. His dedication, commitment and boundless energy is an inspiration for all who come into contact with him. Through his daily visits and meetings with the headteacher, he has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors are chosen wisely for their expertise in different areas and all approach their duties conscientiously. All are proud to be associated with the school. Minutes of the governing body's meetings indicate that meetings are well attended and business is conducted efficiently. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice are met in full.
61. The very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are a strength of the school, giving staff opportunities to spread good practice and to support colleagues in any area of insecurity. The school's procedures for assessing teachers' performance is a model of good practice. The headteacher is constantly striving for excellence and has a regular programme for looking at pupils' books to evaluate the standards being achieved. There is also a very good programme for monitoring and evaluating basic teaching skills in classrooms, giving co-ordinators and the senior management team a clear overview of actual standards of teaching in all subjects. When the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were introduced, for example, careful monitoring enabled areas of difficulty to be quickly identified and put right.
62. In the previous inspection, two key issues were identified. Statutory requirements were not being met in information and communication technology and as a result standards were below average and detailed programmes of work did not exist for some subjects. These areas of weakness have been given much attention and the level of improvement has been good. Teachers now benefit from clear guidance on what to teach each year in up-to-date programmes of work. Standards in information and communication technology are now above average throughout the school as resources and staff expertise have been improved. Very good use is made of computers in virtually all lessons.
63. The school administrator runs the school office very efficiently. All her duties and responsibilities are carried out cheerfully and calmly, and this helps to give a positive first impression of the school to visitors. Very good use is made of new technology in the office, with an electronic mail facility for parents which is used daily, and computer programs for managing the finances and registration. Government grants are used effectively and correctly. The special educational needs co-ordinator is meticulous in making sure that funds are applied to the best effect. Overall financial control is excellent. The school budget is in line with the average for most Manchester schools. However, the entrepreneurial flair shown by the headteacher adds significantly to the amount available for each pupil. Bids to fund specific initiatives, which would enhance the quality of provision, are constantly being sought from organisations such as the East Manchester Education Action Zone. When local authority finance officers conducted an audit of the school's financial management

six months ago, only a few minor items for improvement could be found. These have been put in place. The school buys its resources and services at the most competitive prices and pays careful attention to quality. Taking into account the expenditure per pupil, the quality of leadership and management, the standards achieved, the very good quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes, the school is providing very good value for money.

64. The school is well staffed and arrangements for assessing the performance of teachers have been introduced sensitively and are securely in place. The procedures for the induction of new teachers into school are excellent and training opportunities, identified through regular professional development, are always readily available for all staff. The school has established strong links with local universities and is used extensively to train new teachers. During this academic year, for example, 18 trainee teachers will work in the school for varying lengths of time. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
65. The building and grounds are spacious. The site supervisor takes an obvious pride in her work and keeps the school meticulously clean. She is supported well by two equally conscientious cleaners. Classrooms and corridors contain many interesting and colourful displays of pupils' work, adding interest for pupils and showing that their work is valued. Children in the reception class have easy access to the nursery's very good outdoor play area to develop their physical and social skills.
66. The range and quality of teaching resources is satisfactory overall, and are used most effectively throughout the school. Resources are particularly good for English, history, geography, music, and physical education and for children with special educational needs. Resources for information and communication technology are also good. The school has successfully increased the number of computers to a satisfactory level and has a very good supply of programs. Very good use is made of these, including the new interactive whiteboards in the impressive technology room. There is a very good range of reading books available in classrooms but the library is sparsely stocked. In its present location in a dark corner of a corridor, it is not conducive for pupils to use effectively.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Under the present leadership and with the current team of talented and deeply committed staff, this outstanding school has a bright future. Few weaknesses exist and those identified by the inspection team are already known to the school. For example, a new teacher for the nursery has just been appointed to begin work in September 2001 and the English co-ordinator has plans to purchase more reference books, bar code every one in the library and use a computer to monitor lending. In order to raise standards further, the key issues for the school are to:

- improve the quality of teaching in the nursery.
(paragraphs 2, 24, 30, 34, 67-77)
- improve the library and its use as a centre for teaching and learning.
(paragraphs 66, 83, 92)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	41	36	19	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)	42	175
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	127

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	59

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	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (68)	81 (92)	88 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (88)	88 (96)	81 (92)
	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	7	10	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	7	7	6
	Total	13	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (70)	82 (78)	76 (74)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (73)	82 (78)	82 (70)
	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	7
Black – other	9
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	139
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	427,212
Total expenditure	423,407
Expenditure per pupil	2,107
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,742
Balance carried forward to next year	23,547

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	217
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	20	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	72	21	3	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	21	8	3	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	28	7	7	1
The teaching is good.	76	21	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	32	6	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	15	14	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	59	27	8	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	21	0	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	23	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	18	7	1	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. The full-time nursery available for children from three years of age provides a caring and supportive foundation for their education. The parents welcome this and almost all the available places are filled. The good quality relationship between all staff and parents throughout the Foundation Stage, which includes the reception class, helps to sustain the progress the children make at the start of their education.
68. At present, the teaching in the nursery is shared by three qualified nursery nurses, under the overall direction provided by the early years co-ordinator, who teaches in the reception class. Planning the curriculum is a team effort, but the nursery nurses are responsible for implementing it. The quality of education the school provides for the children in the nursery is satisfactory overall, with staff showing a high level of care for all children. However, some teaching and learning opportunities are not fully grasped in the day-to-day planning. For example, too much equipment is made available to children and they use some of it unsupervised for a very short time before moving on to something else. As a result, the overall quality of teaching in the nursery is not up to the high standards found elsewhere in the school. The children arrive with much lower than average skills in speaking and listening as well as in the other areas of learning offered by the school. During their time in the nursery they make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in social development and in creative activities.
69. The quality of education provided in the reception year is very good and as a result, the children make very good progress in all six areas of learning. Most are ready to move onto the more formal education of the National Curriculum by the time they move into Year 1, having achieved the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, achievements in English, especially in speaking and listening are still below average though much improved as a result of the good teaching the children have received.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. The generally good quality of teaching in this area helps children to settle well into school routines, and as a result they make good progress in these aspects of their development throughout the Foundation Stage. Children feel secure with the regular pattern of the day. They play together with an increasing ability to share playthings and other resources as a result of the attention paid to this aspect of growing up by the staff. As the children move into reception, the very good quality of teaching develops their ability to co-operate successfully in imaginative play as well as in listening to each other's ideas in more formal parts of lessons. The staff do well in helping the children to find acceptable ways of saying what they need, how they feel and for calming arguments so that harmony between children in the class is generally maintained or quickly restored. During lunch-times the pupils are carefully taught table manners by the support staff and the provision of toys at playtime also helps them to learn how to get on with each other. The older children learn how to clear up their classrooms when activities are finished and to keep the tables where they work tidy. The involvement of the children under five in regular prayer and worship helps to maintain a sense of family and security in this part of the school.

Communication, language and literacy

71. During their time in the nursery the children learn to handle books and make a start on reading. Their progress is satisfactory as they learn to recognise letters and simple words and begin to write their names. They begin to learn how to make conversation as they play in the home corner and share in games as well as more formally when the staff talk with them. Many of the children arrive knowing and correctly using fewer words than is usual and progress is generally slower at this early stage. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, opportunities are missed to promote language as children often spend little time on some activities. By the time they move into the reception class, where they are challenged more to speak clearly and in phrases or sentences rather than in single words, progress is more rapid. The skilful teaching in this class makes sure that opportunities to develop the children's language skills are seized and built on. The older children make up and tell imaginative stories to go with the pictures in their storybooks as they learn to read. Others make up and act out plays such as the 'Three Little Pigs', based on the story they had read together, using masks to encourage their imaginations and to reduce their shyness in talking out loud in front of other people. By the end of the reception year, though the standards in reading are lower than average, they have made good progress. Standards and progress in writing are similar. For example, most of the children accurately write down short lists of words with the same sounds that they have discovered in a story.

Mathematical development

72. Pupils enter the nursery less familiar with numbers, size and shapes than is generally expected. The staff encourage them to discover numbers and shapes around them by talking to them about the toys they are playing with, or providing them with number matching games. They encourage them to use the proper names for shapes and to understand and use different words for the size of things, successfully extending this aspect of understanding of mathematics. For example, most of them recognise a rectangle, and many can draw an accurate outline of the shape.
73. Many of the children in the nursery take a pride in recognising numbers and use this knowledge in their games. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Most of the older children in reception, as a result of the very good teaching they receive, can use numbers up to ten, putting them in order, adding to them and subtracting from them confidently and accurately. They use mathematical ideas in their games and in sorting out, for example, how many pieces of equipment is needed on a group table. Teachers also use songs and rhymes such as 'Ten Green Bottles' to help them to remember and handle numbers well. On those occasions when play with water and sand is well planned it helps the children to understand mathematical ideas such as 'more than' and 'less than', and to experiment with the size of things increasing their understanding well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. The children's imaginative play and the talk about it that they have with the staff contribute to what they know about activities such as shopping. Through sand and water play they come to know about the qualities of these materials. They match objects, such as toy cars, to find out about patterns. Discussions about birthdays and other regular events help them to learn about the ideas of past and future. All these activities contribute satisfactorily to the growing development of the children's understanding of the world about them as they grow through the nursery. Teaching of this aspect is satisfactory overall in the nursery. Children's progress speeds up as they enter the reception class as a direct result of the very good teaching, so that by

the end of that year they are in a good position to be introduced to the more organised learning of the National Curriculum. The children participate in school worship and in special festival masses. Through this they meet with adults from the church community as well as learning more about their own beliefs. The lack of sufficient experience with computers and other similar apparatus mentioned in the previous report has been largely overcome. Pupils in the nursery have access to machines including tape players and computers, which are used in their learning. When they reach reception more consistent training in the use of computers with a range of educational programs is provided. The standards they achieve in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage are generally what are expected of pupils aged five. This is attributable to the very good quality of teaching in the reception class and the wide variety of activities, which forms part of the daily programme.

Physical development

75. The nursery provides a good range of outdoor equipment for climbing on, crawling across and jumping from. The children enjoy using this equipment and in doing so they develop a satisfactory range of physical skills. They ride and push large wheeled toys to develop skills of balance and guiding toys that steer where they want them to go. They run and jump and make satisfactory progress in controlling their movements so that they learn to run around energetically without bumping into each other. They learn to use the large equipment properly and safely, especially when the staff arrange the use of the equipment to avoid the over-crowding that comes from the children's eagerness to play on the apparatus. When the children join the reception class they are very ready for more close direction of what they do so that they can learn new skills and practise them successfully. This makes sure that they make good progress in developing physical skills and meet the expected targets of the Early Learning Goals by the time they are five years old. Throughout the Foundation Stage the pupils improve their skills of cutting out using scissors carefully. They learn to mould shapes in play-dough and other soft materials with increasing control. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Staff make full use of available resources, leading to lessons that are motivating and enjoyable.

Creative development

76. Throughout the time the children spend in the nursery and reception classes their imaginations are increasingly fed with new ideas and experiences. The quality of teaching in this area is generally good in the nursery and helps children to make good progress. They are given opportunities to pretend to be all sorts of people in the shop, office or home corner, which they use with increasing imagination. They play with models and toys creating their own plots for stories derived from the books they have read to them. As they grow older the quality and range of their imaginary activities increases as do their skills in communicating the ideas they develop. This reflects the very good teaching they receive in the reception class. By the end of the reception year the standards of creative work which they achieve are in general what would be expected of pupils aged five, though the differences in achievement between the children who do well and those who do less well are great. They sing a range of songs, listen to music and stories and look at pictures. These experiences then come out in the pictures they paint and the stories they tell. In this way they explore the world about them, develop their language and explore new ideas.
77. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. In the reception class where the teaching is very good overall, it increases the rate of the children's progress. The overall planning of the work for these younger children is good and

meets the new requirements of the Foundation Stage. The day-to-day planning of work in the nursery, while it remains satisfactory and serves the children adequately, lacks the sharper educational approach to the children's play activities that the new developments in this stage of education require. The school has recognised this need and has already appointed a teacher to supplement the staffing. The school's intention is to bring the quality of teaching in the nursery up to the very good standards found elsewhere in the school.

ENGLISH

78. Standards in English are broadly typical for seven-year-olds and above average by the time pupils are eleven. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection and this represents a major achievement as the school has had to contend with a significant mobility of pupils during the year affecting each class, the well below average skills shown by children on entry to the reception class and the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in most year groups. Pupils' linguistic skills are particularly poor on entry to the nursery and the school has identified this as an area for improvement. The very good quality of teaching by a skilled team of teachers and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy have been the key factors in helping all pupils to meet their full potential and achieve the standards they do.
79. When pupils start in Year 1, after having spent two years following the Foundation Stage curriculum in the nursery and reception class, their speaking skills are still below those expected for their age. The literacy hour is well used to improve and extend listening and speaking skills. Pupils in Year 2 make especially good progress as they are encouraged to talk about their work at the end of each session. Skilful questioning techniques, employed by the teacher also encourages pupils to explain their answers more fully when the first reaction is to answer briefly. Clear learning objectives for each session, high expectations, very good class management and effective support provided by the classroom assistants enables pupils to develop skills well across all areas of English in the infant classes. As a result, their level of achievement is good in comparison with their prior attainment.
80. In the national tests for seven-year-olds last year, standards in reading were in line with the average for all schools. Over one-third of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 (35 per cent compared to 28 per cent nationally). When their performance was compared to that of pupils in similar schools, it was well above average. In writing, standards were below the national average with no pupils achieving at the higher Level 3. However, when compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was above average. Boys and girls did equally as well as one another. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are maintaining a steady rate of progress and equaling the standards achieved last year.
81. The very good quality of teaching is consistently maintained through all the junior classes and is wholly responsible for helping all pupils in this section of the school to do well in relation to their prior attainment, raising standards further in all aspects of English. Last year's national test results for eleven-year-olds were below the national average, mainly because relatively few pupils achieved at the higher Level 5, (12 per cent as opposed to 29 per cent nationally). However, pupils achieved well above average scores to those in similar schools. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make the best progress. This is because of the very good support they receive from the teaching staff, as well as from their fellow pupils. The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of these lower attaining pupils than usual. However, more pupils than last year have reached an above-average standard. There are significantly more girls than boys, but there is no appreciable difference

between them in the standards that they achieve. Test results overall have risen over the past four years at a similar rate to the national trend. Inspection findings reflect this improving picture for English.

82. Standards of speaking are below average for seven-year-olds, with many lacking the confidence to answer questions using more than a single word or short phrase in spite of some skilled questioning from their teachers. Pupils listen well to stories and most are able to follow instruction about their work. All are keen to contribute to discussions. Pupils in Year 1, for example, had plenty of ideas to share when predicting the ending for a story. As pupils get older and gain in confidence, standards improve. By the time pupils are eleven, their speaking and listening skills are above average and this is due to the many and varied experiences that teachers provide for their pupils in the junior classes. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils readily volunteer to come out to the front and, placing a hand on their partner's shoulder, explain why they were upset, using facts from the story of Zlata and Admir, two boys caught up in the war in Bosnia. This extended their language skills, as well as enabling them to gain new insights into the effects of war. The same class showed empathy with the feelings of the people of Manchester, following the first air-raids during the Second World War and discussing the impact on Christmas and the effect on people's morale. Regular experiences of addressing the class give pupils increased confidence when speaking to an audience. The previous inspection report noted pupils' active role in church during the weekly Mass as a means of improving pupils' confidence and competence in speaking. The participation of 15 pupils in the service during this inspection shows the good practice is continuing.
83. Standards in reading are average for seven-year-olds and above average for pupils who are eleven. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. A strong contributory factor for this is the close liaison that exists between school and the many parents who hear their children read on a regular basis. Texts read in the literacy lessons are skillfully exploited to extend the pupils' range of techniques to tackle unknown words. For example, they sound out individual letters, break words into syllables or look for clues in the sentences to work out what they say. As a result, many develop an interest in reading and gain much pleasure from books. Year 3 pupils' enthusiasm on their visit to Beswick library exemplified this perfectly. Most pupils have definite views on favourite authors and enjoy reading aloud, using good expression and voices for different characters. Reading books are invariably well matched to each pupils' ability. The local library is very well used on a regular basis by many pupils from the school. Older pupils are well taught how to quickly find information from a book using the index and contents pages. This helps them to carry out research in different subjects. However, there appears to be few reference books for them to use in the school library and many of those available are getting dated.
84. Standards of writing for seven-year-olds are similar to those seen in most schools. They are above average by the time pupils are aged eleven. The very good quality of teaching for all pupils and the added support pupils with special educational needs receive means that pupils achieve well considering their prior attainment. Well-planned targets are set for every class. They include the use of increasingly more complex sentences, improving levels of punctuation and the development of children's vocabularies. The very good teaching in the infant classes lays the foundations for good standards in writing later. Most seven-year-olds produce work, which is correctly punctuated. In the Year 2 class, for example, all recognise and use full stops, commas and question marks. The majority knew about speech marks but not all use them correctly at this stage. Skills in recognising and using nouns, verbs and adjectives are very well taught throughout the school, often using computer programs that are carefully linked to the literacy hour's daily objectives. In all classes there is a very good supply of dictionaries and thesauri to improve spellings and word

selections. This helps to improve the quality of pupils' written work. By the age of eleven, most pupils are able to produce written work in a range of different styles which include imaginative stories, play scripts, and poetry to above average standards. Year 5 pupils, for example, enjoyed writing a suspense story entitled 'The day the inspection went wrong!'

85. Handwriting standards are satisfactory overall. The school's policy statement gives good guidance to teachers and parents, but with so many pupils arriving from other schools, it is difficult to bring all into line with the school's style. In addition, some teachers have lower expectations of handwriting standards than others and as a result, standards are variable, though consistently legible. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils form their letters correctly. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher was able to bring about an immediate improvement in some pupils' handwriting by insisting on higher standards!
86. The overall quality of teaching in English, taking into account all aspects such as planning, homework and discipline, is very good throughout the school. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen and all lessons in the infant classes were good. In the junior classes, the quality of teaching was very good or excellent in five of the seven lessons seen and good in the other two. In the one example of excellent teaching in English, clear learning objectives, high expectations coupled with a dynamic approach and an entertaining double act with the supporting teacher, ensured pupils gave 100 per cent attention as they tried to read a Viking story expressively before turning it into a play script.
87. All teachers plan very thoroughly. Particularly effective is the rapid pace in the introductory sessions to lessons and the use of resources, including support staff. Pupils respond to the many challenges set for them and the sheer pace successfully holds their interest and helps to make learning exciting as they rise to the challenges. Well directed questioning leads to high standards of discussion involving all the pupils. For example, children in Year 4 combine ideas to produce a child's story using familiar puppet characters. Teaching skills of a high order are demonstrated, as pupils are enthusiastically encouraged to re-draft their written work on computers. Such high expectations encourage the pupils to express their ideas accurately. In all lessons, pupils are given a clear understanding of what it is that they are expected to learn through clearly identified lesson objectives. At the end of sessions, teachers discuss with pupils the extent to which these objectives have been realised and analyse exactly what has, and has not, been learned.
88. Excellent class management skills are a feature of the vast majority of lessons in the junior classes, resulting in all pupils being motivated to do their best and concentrating very well on the tasks set for them. The calm orderly working atmosphere enables teachers to target one specific group to teach, whilst other groups work independently on individual or paired assignments. Pupils' work is well displayed, both to celebrate achievement and to help raise levels of understanding. For example, Year 4 pupils write imaginative poems about fireworks and Year 1 pupils annotate pictures of animals in order to learn the correct scientific terminology.
89. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is very good for infants and excellent for juniors. In virtually all the lessons seen, pupils were set interesting tasks, well matched to their capabilities. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that homework is set at least three times a week and all carefully complete it. Juniors receive progressively more to do as they get older. Teachers mark all homework thoroughly. The effective use of homework helps to increase pupils' rate of progress in reading and writing. Parents support the school very well, listening to pupils read at home regularly.

90. Excellent assessment procedures are in place to identify and record pupils' progress in writing, spelling and grammar. A detailed analysis of the annual national tests each year identifies areas in need of improvement and the wealth of information effectively guides the school when setting targets for the future. Samples of pupils' work are graded accurately to determine levels of the written work. Assessment is well used to adapt planning in the light of experience and to improve specific skills, identified as weak, for individual pupils. Although the quality of marking is very good, comments usually praise or give added encouragement. There were few examples of helpful comments on how pupils could further improve their work.
91. Pupils with special educational needs have good individual education plans with clear targets and areas for development. Their work is well focused, with most receiving additional help both in classrooms and in withdrawn groups. Appropriate work is set to enable them to make good progress at both key stages. Equal opportunities are given to these, as to all pupils. For example, they are invariably expected to contribute to discussions, their group work is often featured in reviews at the end of lessons and they also have the same regular opportunities to extend their literacy skills through work on computers.
92. The management of English is very good. The headteacher and co-ordinator have clearly identified the areas for development and have instigated changes that are starting to raise standards. These are firmly based on a detailed analysis of pupils' achievements each term. The co-ordinator and headteacher regularly and thoroughly evaluate teachers' planning and the quality of teaching so areas for improvement are quickly identified. Much has been spent to improve the level of resources for teachers to use in their lessons and these are very good, with, for example, a plentiful supply of reading books and dictionaries available to pupils in class libraries. However, the central library, which has been moved into the corner of a corridor in order to accommodate a computer area, is not up to the modern-day standards expected. In its present location, it is not conducive for pupils to use to support their learning. Few were seen to be using it during the inspection period. The new shelves look sparsely stocked and contain many books dating back to the 1970s. A review of this facility is necessary so that pupils can develop their enjoyment of books in general and their research skills in particular with access to a good range of books. Year 3 pupils, for example, thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the attractive and well-stocked Beswick library. Resources produced by teachers themselves to support pupils' learning in lessons are often imaginative and hold pupils' interest. For example, Year 5 pupils worked hard to re-write a passage from a diary written by Zlata during the war in Bosnia so that it read exactly opposite to the original. There is a very strong commitment from all staff to improve the quality of both the teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

93. The school was fully justified in making mathematics one of the strong features in its successful bid to become a 'Beacon School'. Progress in the subject throughout the school is very good. Pupils arrive in the nursery with levels of understanding of number which are below what is expected of pupils of that age and well below in other areas of mathematics. In the national tests and assessments in 2000 for seven-year-olds, standards in number work, in understanding shapes and measures as well as in using mathematics were close to the national average for pupils achieving the expected Level 2. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 was above the national average. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, a higher than average percentage of the pupils achieved the expected standard of Level 4 but the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was below

average. In both age groups these results were well above the average achieved in similar schools.

94. The quality of learning improves steadily as the pupils move from class to class and is very marked among the older pupils. The standards in mathematics commended in the previous inspection report have been well maintained.
95. The school carefully analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests and assessments (SATs) along with other voluntary tests. This provides clear information of how and where further progress can be made, and the staff make good use of it. The school ensures that the pupils receive the mathematics curriculum through the National Numeracy Strategy. This has led to the good and very good teaching and to the high standards that have been achieved. All the pupils benefit from the good provision for mathematics in the school. This is especially the case for those pupils with special educational needs for whom the provision is very good and who, as a result, make very good progress and achieve standards often not noticeably far short of the rest of the pupils. Boys and girls do equally well in mathematics.
96. Pupils in the early years achieve well and most are ready to begin the formal mathematics of the National Curriculum by the time they are five. By the time they are seven, they develop their understanding of numbers well. They work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten very quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives and tens accurately and understand about halving and doubling. They have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles, circles and rectangles and some understanding of the simpler three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and spheres. They record the results of mathematical problems carefully and sort and classify different objects well. Pupils successfully use the mathematics they learn in numeracy sessions in other lessons such as science or design and technology. Good use of information and communication technology is made for teaching mathematics. This supports the good quality of learning in the subject. Because the work planned for each class takes careful note of the variations in pupils' levels of attainment all the pupils make good progress and none are left behind.
97. The levels of achievement of the older pupils, those in the junior classes, are good and by the time they are eleven, most have a good knowledge of numbers. They can work out sums with fractions and decimals, successfully recognising the relationships of, for example, 0.75 and $\frac{3}{4}$ and use this information in working out complex sums. In undertaking work on directions and bearings they measure angles to the nearest degree and work out the degrees of turn from one compass point to another. They work out problems in frequency and probability and understand various forms of symmetry to a level beyond that expected of the average pupils of their age. This high level of expectation is true for each of the classes in the school, but particularly so for the older pupils.
98. The quality of teaching is very good. A significant feature of the work in mathematics among the older pupils is the fast pace at which both teaching and learning are conducted. The teachers encourage the pupils to work fast and accurately, and as a result the quantity and quality of learning is increased. The pupils enjoy mathematics and they are excited by it. Because they are anxious to succeed they persevere with the work and concentrate hard throughout most lessons. The quality of learning in mathematics throughout the school is very good, encouraged by the mostly very good, and never less than good, teaching of the subject. The teaching of mathematics has been improved by the professional way in which the teachers adopted the National Numeracy Strategy. This was introduced effectively

throughout the school with good training opportunities provided. The already high level of competence of the staff, both teachers and support staff, has been enhanced by this training and has resulted in the improving standards of attainment in the subject. The very good use made of support staff, especially in the support of pupils with special needs, is a feature of the high quality of teaching of this subject in the school. The resources provided for the subject support the curriculum effectively.

99. Teachers make excellent use of homework and this has a very good effect on the quality of work produced and the very good attitude towards their studies that the pupils show. It helps them to take a real pride in their work, and enables parents to become involved more closely in their children's education.
100. The management of mathematics is very good and this has a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve. The standards are improved further by the sense of purpose and teamwork that influences all the teaching and learning in the school. All staff show a very strong commitment to continue to improve all aspects of mathematics.

SCIENCE

101. The results of teacher assessments in 2000 show that the performance of seven-year-old pupils was well below the national average, though in line with the average for similar schools. No pupil reached the higher than expected level, but overall achievement from a low starting point was satisfactory. The overall achievement of pupils now in Year 2 is no better as standards remain below average. However, this has been achieved in spite of the increased number of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in the previous inspection were reported to be in line with national expectations but the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs accounts for the difference. Standards attained by eleven-year-olds have improved by marginally more than the national trend since the previous inspection, and pupils achieve well. Annual test results since 1996 show a marked improvement in the performance of boys, from below the national average to well above. Girls results have not improved at the same rate and remain below average. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level or above was below the national average for all schools, which reflects the large number of pupils with special educational needs. However, to offset this, over a third of the pupils achieved the higher than expected level, which meant that the overall performance was well above the average for schools in similar contexts. This represents good achievement in relation to the attainment of these pupils four years earlier, and is the result of very effective teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Current standards in Year 6 are above average, with some pupils with special needs falling short of the expected level, but a good proportion of all pupils exceeding it.
102. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 reflects a good balance of practical experience in the four branches of the science curriculum. Teachers insist that enquiries must be carried out in stages so that clear predictions are tested fairly. Pupils in Year 2 learn to observe and note change, for example, by keeping a tadpole diary, by studying the colours of light, and by examining how pushing and pulling affect the speed and direction of movement. By investigating the properties of common materials, they find out why, for instance, glass is ideal for windows whilst plastic is better suited to lunch boxes. However, their basic enquiry skills are insecure and there are many weaknesses even in the way the more able pupils record their results. Work and progress improve steadily in the junior years, with a marked acceleration in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in Year 4 respond well to a good range of opportunities to look and think scientifically about things that are part of their everyday lives, such as the different treads on bicycle tyres. Their recorded work shows good progress in the

drawing of accurate and labelled diagrams and the use of correct scientific layout and language for writing up their experiments. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils show very good knowledge and understanding as they use their good literacy skills to produce excellent accounts of their learning. For example, lucid and accurate accounts of pollination, fertilisation and germination, illustrated by fine diagrams, reveal a full grasp of terms such as stigma, stamen, ovule and sepal and a well-developed knowledge of the life processes of a flower. Pupils with special educational needs lack such skills in accurate presentation, but their work shows well-sustained interest and effort and equally good progress relative to the demands of the tasks given to them.

103. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. On the evidence of the eight lessons observed, it is good in Years 1 and 2, satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, and very good in Years 5 and 6.
104. Several strengths are shared by all teachers. Not only do they question well, they also listen well, valuing and using each response. They manage their classes very effectively on the basis of mutual trust and respect and a high quality of working relationships achieved over time. As a result, pupils feel secure and confident, and show an eagerness to participate, please and contribute their thoughts. There is also a quality of optimism and generosity of spirit in most lessons, an enthusiasm to engage pupils in interesting ideas and focused activity, and to sweep them along by energy of practical demonstration and purposeful discussion. Teachers' planning is very good and they structure their lessons to ensure that pupils experience a well-modelled scientific process. They are careful to make each stage of this process clear, to check and reinforce the learning of each point before proceeding, and to insist on the use of correct scientific terms. The special strengths of the very good lessons are their pace, verve and challenge, the exceptional clarity of instruction, explanation and questioning, and the sure-footed conduct of imaginative strategies which make difficult concepts accessible. For example, to enable pupils in Year 5 to understand the complex movements and positions of the planets in relation to the sun, the teacher used his pupils as planets moving in their orbits in outdoor space. The practical, physical activity made vast concepts immediate and comprehensible. As a result, the pupils could name the planets in order from the sun, and explain, clearly and accurately, the length and variation of orbits in radius and time. Pace and challenge were relentless, and higher attainers were obliged to come to terms with the concept of an orbiting moon around a rotating earth. Whilst there are no pervasive weaknesses, some lessons are less successful because teachers try to do too much in the available time so that pupils become uncertain about what they should do at any one time, or about what they can achieve. Sometimes teachers neglect to reinforce a key skill such as that of how to make a prediction in a particular context, or they miss opportunities to challenge the higher attaining pupils to move on to the next stage, for example, by thinking about how a change of state for certain materials such as ice could be reversed.
105. The programme of improvement for science is good, and effective training and guidance have ensured that teachers' expertise and strategies are secure. In most respects, assessment procedures are well established and well used to guide planning and ensure progress. However, comments written on pupils' work seldom provide useful feedback on how a pupil has improved or should go on to improve further. The attention given to pupils' investigative skills is not consistent enough. Assessments do not always note the development of these skills, and pupils' workbooks indicate that the enquiry element is marginal in some areas of science. Also, pupils have too few opportunities to select apparatus or design their own enquiries. This sometimes limits the progress made by high attaining pupils, not least in homework tasks. Leadership and management of the subject is very good.

The co-ordinator is highly competent, and has a shrewd critical view of the state of the subject. Some planned improvements have been delayed by necessary attention to his responsibilities for information and communication technology; a subject which, ironically, does not yet make enough impact on work in science lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

106. No art lessons were timetabled during the actual period of inspection, although some art activities were observed in other subjects. Evidence for what follows is taken from pupils' work on display and in sketchbooks, from examination of planning, and from discussion with staff and pupils.
107. Standards are below the level expected of seven-year-olds but broadly typical of those expected by age eleven. From the well below average attainment on entry to the reception class, pupils make satisfactory progress through to Year 2 when most are seven, and better progress thereafter so that their achievement is good by the time they leave the school.
108. By the end of Year 2, pupils experience a range of two-dimensional materials such as pencil, charcoal, crayon and paint, and of techniques such as rubbing and wax resist. However, only a few pupils learn to use these media effectively, for example, to experiment with pencil lines to produce patterns of contrasting character. The work of average and lower attaining pupils is limited by weak observational skills and their uncertain control of pencils or paintbrushes. Their observational sketches of musical instruments are below the standard expected for their age. However, when pupils work together to produce a large collage, they have a better experience of success. For instance, they used rubbings of objects such as shells within a collage which combined texture, colour and pattern well to create striking images of the characters from a well-liked story, 'The Minpins'.
109. By the end of Year 6, all pupils, which includes those with special educational needs, have made good progress in their control and effective use of an extending range of materials and techniques. They achieve standards higher than those reported by the previous inspection. For example, their accurately detailed pencil portraits based on part-images of themselves mostly show careful and faithful observation and well-managed pencil work, involving some skilful use of smudging and hatching techniques to convey an impression of depth. These pupils have also created striking images of creatures such as fish and lizards in well-observed imitation of the techniques of Australian Aboriginal painting. Such uses of non-Western art are a good development in the subject.
110. Although it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching, some things are clear. Firstly, the use teachers make of the recently introduced sketchbooks is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. The initiative is potentially very valuable, but very few examples were seen of pupils learning to use sketchbooks effectively to try out different ideas, evaluate, select and refine them, adding annotations to record their thoughts on how to improve their work. Good strategies of this kind can transform pupils' understanding of art as a rigorous learning process. Secondly, whilst pupils frequently practise art skills to support learning in subjects such as history or geography, such tasks usually lack any focused opportunity to extend understandings and techniques in art. However, the work of pupils in Year 3 reflected better practice. For example, they had studied and developed correct techniques in tie dying to support their study of India, and used an ambitious range of media and techniques to create a striking sequence of pictures to depict the story of Moses.
111. Satisfactory management has strengthened the work of the subject since the last inspection. A good scheme of work has been developed and introduced by shrewd adaptations of national guidance materials to suit the school's aims. Resources have

been extended to match the increased range of media and famous artists covered by this scheme. Good links with the Manchester Arts Festival and the City Art Gallery Advisory Group have benefited teachers and pupils in various ways, for example, in introducing African-based art themes and developing an art approach based on literacy. Monitoring and assessment procedures are currently unsatisfactory as there is no agreed system in place for tracking pupils' progress through the school, and checking that the new scheme achieves its aim by raising standards. However, teachers assess individual pupils' attainment at the end of each term and the co-ordinator has started discussions on the best method to adopt throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. Previously, it was reported that they were below national expectations for both age groups, showing that the school has significantly improved standards. Evidence is limited as only three lessons were observed during the week of inspection. However, a scrutiny of work, photographs and displays of pupils' models, show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, progressively develop their understanding and skills, from Year 1 through to Year 6. Pupils' level of achievement throughout the school is satisfactory.
113. In the previous report, many areas for improvement were identified and these resulted in unsatisfactory progress being made. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in the junior classes because planning lacked detail and insufficient emphasis was placed on designing before making models or evaluating the finished product. There was no programme of work to guide teachers, assessment of pupils' work was not routinely undertaken and although resources were satisfactory, they were not well used. Much needed to be done to improve the subject and raise standards. Teachers' planning, lesson observations and the displays of completed work show that all areas have successfully been corrected. Teachers are guided well by a detailed policy statement and annual programme of work for each year group and as a result, designing and making techniques are developed well. This was exemplified by the design sheets produced in Year 4, for example, where pupils designed a chair and holiday poster for a Greek island, in Year 2 where they designed a section of Joseph's Technicolor Dreamcoat and in Year 1 with different hairstyles designed. Pupils completed the teacher-produced design sheets conscientiously and evaluated their finished work, listing possible improvements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and the practical nature of the subject means that they achieve similar standards to other pupils.
114. Overall, taking into account teachers' planning, which is very good, and the quality of pupils' finished work, the quality of teaching and learning is now very good. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, with lessons being well planned and organised with appropriate challenges for the pupils. Year 2, for example, design and make dragons with moving joints, and Year 6 make three-dimensional spiders and create a model of the African queen Aissa Kili's island as they imagined it to be 400 years ago. Year 3 pupils are motivated very well by their teacher's flair for the subject. The high standards they achieve when designing and making are exemplified in their pop up pictures of Jesus and John the Baptist, Russian dolls, mothers' day baskets and their glazed clay amulets. Good links are effectively made with other subjects. In Year 6 for example, pupils design distinctive patterns for their Viking shields so that they can recognise friend or foe clearly in battle, linking with their history topic on the Vikings. The quality of the displays and finished models throughout the school indicate a high level of enjoyment and

application on the part of the pupils in response to the interesting tasks set by class teachers.

115. The management of the subject is satisfactory, overall. The programme of work is firmly based on the latest National Curriculum guidelines and is effectively developing pupils' designing, evaluating and making skills. The headteacher and co-ordinator monitor the quality of planning, teaching and pupils' completed work each term. The accommodation is spacious allowing pupils plenty of room to work in safety. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including tools, construction kits and materials for modelling and these are now used effectively to support pupils' learning. Very good use is made of computers throughout the school to promote pupils' designing skills. In Year 6, for example, pupils skilfully combine scanned pictures and text when creating 'wanted' posters. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection largely because of the very strong commitment by all staff to improve standards. Their collective efforts are proving to be successful.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Timetabling arrangements by the school and the inspection team meant that only two lessons in the junior department were seen. However, a scrutiny of pupils' completed work and displays around the school show that standards of attainment in geography are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven, but above those expected by the time pupils are eleven. This is the same as reported in the previous inspection. Teachers show a high level of subject expertise, plan work very effectively and make good links with other subjects, such as art, English and design and technology. The use of computers has improved a great deal as pupils now use them extensively to help them with their work in the subject. As a result of this, and further improvements to the annual programmes of work, giving teachers clear guidance on what to teach, pupils' level of achievement is good throughout the school.
117. By the time pupils are seven, they are familiar with the main features of their own area, drawing maps of their route home and studying aerial photographs of their school grounds. They know the countries of the United Kingdom, compass directions and why it rains. All show good gains in their geographical knowledge, considering their level of attainment on entry to the school.
118. Pupils' interest in the subject is maintained throughout the junior section of the school because of the very good quality of teaching. In Year 3, for example, a lively discussion between pupils and their teacher showed how much they knew about an area in the south of India called K V Kuppam. They covered topics such as the weather, religion, industry, shops and homes. All demonstrated good mapping skills as they found features of the area such as railway tracks or a place name and tried to explain the differences between this area and Manchester. They are fascinated to learn, for example, that trains made in nearby Gorton are still in use in India. In Year 5, pupils were well motivated to use an atlas to identify the continents of the world and all worked conscientiously to research facts about a city on two different continents. The added support during the lesson for lower achieving pupils provided by a teacher from the East Manchester Education Action Zone was particularly effective in enabling them to complete the challenging task. By the time pupils are eleven, they use maps confidently, know about scale and recognise symbols used to show different features. They have studied landscape features in northern England, areas of rainforest throughout the world and places such as Jamaica, India and the Galapagos Islands. Pupils' achievements in geography in this section of the school are good, largely because of the quality of teaching and level of support provided for pupils with special educational needs.

119. Pupils work very productively in geography, producing much written work. All work together well in groups, often without the direct supervision of their teachers, who are helping other pupils. Pupils make very good use of computers, maps and aerial photographs in their studies and good links are established with other subjects. For example, they use different web sites on the Internet to gather information about various holiday destinations and use skills taught in English to write persuasively about them in order to encourage people to go there. Attractive displays of work around the school contribute to the standards achieved. These include work in Year 1 on pupils' route home and one on India in the main hall. Examples of pupils' attempts at tie-dying cloth reinforce links between geography and art and design.
120. The standard of teaching overall is very good with an example of this seen in a Year 3 lesson. An enthusiasm for the subject, interesting resources and the ability to link the subject knowledge to pupils' own experiences were the main strengths. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that all have a very good knowledge of the subject and match activities closely to pupils' individual capabilities. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged often researching information on their own either at home or in lessons, using reference books or computers. Skilled questioning challenges pupils constantly as in the discussion in Year 3 and carefully prepared worksheets keep pupils interested and motivated. All teachers plan their lessons very well, with clear objectives identified and good links made with other subjects. Year 6 pupils, for example, use advanced computer skills to design an information page on a holiday resort, incorporating text and scanned photographs, and Year 5 pupils locate the Galapagos Islands on a map and show a good knowledge of pollution and conservation when discussing the effects of an oil spillage. As a result of the very effective teaching, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate very well to finish the tasks set for them and in the junior classes in particular, produce copious amounts of written work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from working as part of a group as they have the support of other pupils and their teacher.
121. Management of the subject is satisfactory, overall. Following recommendations in the previous inspection report, the programmes of work for geography were reviewed and have been further updated to take account of the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines. They give teachers a clear framework for their lesson planning. Pupils' progress is assessed at the end of each year and plans are well advanced to further improve the information about pupils' achievements by monitoring their performance on a termly basis against the specified learning objectives. Teachers' planning is checked termly by the headteacher and co-ordinator and samples of pupils' work are collected for analysis each year. This gives an indication about the quality of teaching. However, a regular programme to monitor the effectiveness of teaching as it happens in the classroom has not yet been organised. Resources are good and the school effectively uses visits to contrasting areas such as the moors and their own wild area in the grounds to enhance the curriculum further. As with all subjects in school, there is a very strong commitment shown by all staff to raise standards.

HISTORY

122. Standards in history are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and above those normally expected for eleven-year-olds. This is the same picture as that found in the previous inspection. However, improvements have been made to answer criticisms in the previous report over the policy, which has been reviewed, recording coverage of the programmes of study and the use made of different sources of evidence. The quality of teaching has improved markedly and is now very good. Strengths are; the use of support staff to help pupils understand their work and

complete worksheets; the use of artefacts and a wide range of resources including computers and the excellent level of control and discipline in lessons. Pupils of all ages show a very good attitude towards history, work hard in lessons and produce a large amount of work. As a result, the level of achievement in relation to their prior attainment for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.

123. Pupils in Year 1, for example, can identify changes in family life when they compare Victorian times with today. They appreciate, for example, the difficulties faced by the Victorians when washing clothes without the help of running water or washing machines. All readily identify the oldest cars, aeroplanes, toys and other forms of transport such as buses. By the time they are seven, they show a good understanding of what it was like for children who worked as chimney sweeps, in factories or down mines. Most successfully sequence the important events in Queen Victoria's reign and enjoy drawing pictures of events in their own lives before putting them in chronological order.
124. In the junior classes, the quality of teaching in virtually all lessons seen was very good and as a result, pupils' level of interest is high and their productivity and pace of working is excellent. Year 3 pupils, for example were keen to express their opinion in the debate about whether it was the Celts or Romans who were the barbarians, showing a good factual knowledge about both. In Year 4, a wide range of historical evidence from old photographs, books, newspaper reports and the Internet, coupled with the class teachers' very good subject knowledge and obvious enthusiasm for the subject, enabled pupils to study in depth the working conditions in Victorian times. Year 5 pupils were also provided with interesting first-hand evidence about the air raids on Manchester on December 23rd 1940 during World War Two and were able to demonstrate a sound factual knowledge of events such as the Blitz in that period of history. The sheer pace of the lesson and exceptionally good support provided by the part-time teacher, who was helping lower achieving pupils, meant that all learnt much in the lesson. In Year 6, pupils concentrated well when using maps to find Viking place names and researched information from a CD-Rom about Vikings' homeland, their voyages, boats and weapons.
125. Pupils of all ages are provided with a good quality and range of learning experiences. By the time they are eleven, they have also studied Greek and Roman cultures, the Anglo-Saxon and Tudor periods in history. Good links are made with other subjects such as geography, religious education, mathematics and English. Sequencing events by dates involves a knowledge of four figure numbers, for example, and using maps links well with geography. Computer skills are used extensively as pupils research information about important buildings in ancient Greek times and record their findings.
126. The quality of teaching is very good and this has a direct impact on the quality of learning for pupils, which is also very good. The pace of lessons, use of support staff and resources and control of pupils are major strengths and largely responsible for pupils' good progress. All teachers demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding and teach the basic skills required in history very well. This was particularly noticeable in Years 4, 5 and 6 during the inspection. All lessons are planned very carefully with clear learning objectives identified and show teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly but not all teachers include comments on how they could further improve their work. Homework is used extensively to support pupils' learning and this has a big effect on maintaining pupils' interest and improving the quality of their work in history.
127. Management of history is satisfactory, overall. Following the previous inspection, a detailed action plan was prepared to correct identified weaknesses and this has

successfully brought about improvement in those areas. For example, the school's policy for history has been reviewed and precise programmes of work now guide all teachers in their annual planning. An assessment of work covered is undertaken at the end of each year but procedures to assess the level of attainment for every pupil have just been introduced. Resources are good and the curriculum is enhanced by many trips to places of historical interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. All the weaknesses in this subject identified in the previous inspection report have been overcome very well to the extent that this subject is now a strength of the school. The pupils arrive in the school with a much lower than expected familiarity with computers and consequently a much lower than expected level of attainment in skills and understanding.
129. By the time they are five years of age they are ready for the more formal study of the subject in the National Curriculum. By the time they are seven they are attaining levels in each of the areas of information and communication technology that are higher than those expected for pupils of that age, showing a very good level of achievement from their low starting point. When they leave school at the age of eleven they successfully undertake work in information and communication technology that is higher than that expected. This very good progress throughout the school is the result of a wise use of extra funding provided through agencies such as the East Manchester Education Action Zone, extensive training of staff and the resulting high quality and imaginative teaching.
130. The work with pupils is well supported through after-school clubs for both pupils and parents. The staff also provide pupils with appropriate homework for them to use in the homework club in the local library which has computer provision to support it. Information and communication technology has become a recognised tool for learning throughout the school, particularly through the acquisition and use of an 'interactive white-board' used in the special computer room. Plans are advanced to buy more of these to be placed in classrooms to support not only the teaching of this subject but also, more importantly, to develop the teaching of other subjects through information and communication technology.
131. Extensive use is made throughout the school of word-processing programs to improve the quality of the presentation of pupils' written work, for writing stories and poems and accounts of events. Desktop publishing programs are used to design book covers, greeting cards and posters. Pupils throughout the school change the fonts in their printing, experiment with interesting layouts of information sheets and think out how best to convey the information they are handling with increasing ease. Pupils use compact disks and protected access Internet to discover information to support other studies such as geography and history, and use E-mail to send and receive messages, currently to a limited extent, but the school has plans for extension. The strong motivation and excitement that the computer suite and its extended facilities has given rise to among both pupils and staff has led to the subject being seen as increasingly important in the life of the school.
132. All the teaching of information and communication technology that was seen, both in class and in the extra-curricular clubs, was good and some of it was excellent. Teachers have developed, and are continuing to develop, very good levels of understanding of the subject, and of how to teach it. This has a direct impact on the pupils' skills and understanding of the subject. The very effective way in which teachers encourage the pupils to work at a good pace, wasting no time and making the best use they can of opportunities to use the equipment improves both the

quantity and quality of learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good quality help from both teachers and support staff and make very good progress in their learning as a result. An important feature of the very good quality teaching in the subject is the very good use made of the special computer room for short intensive lessons during periods of time, for example after Mass, which could otherwise be frittered away.

133. Information and communication technology is a subject in which the pupils are developing an involvement in their own learning, not least because of the inclusion of the subject in club and after-school activities. It is a popular subject which the pupils enjoy and which gives them good opportunities to experience success. It plays a significant role in the development of their self-esteem.
134. The subject is very well led and enthusiastically managed. This high level of personal involvement and enthusiasm has had a good impact on the levels of teaching and learning. The very good levels of support that the school has been able to attract from outside agencies, who see what good use is made of the funds provided, has enable the developments in the subject to move rapidly forward. There are good systems in place to monitor pupils' progress and their achievements each term in the subject. Future plans are imaginative and involve, for example, the computer management of the library as well as the development of interactive white boards in more classrooms to improve not only the quality of teaching in this subject, but in subjects across the curriculum.

MUSIC

135. Very few lessons could be observed during the period of inspection. However, this evidence, together with that gained from hymn practice, assemblies, extra-curricular activity and discussion, shows that the school has maintained the position reported by the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected at the ages of seven and eleven, and pupils achieve well from below average attainment on entry.
136. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen attentively to music and sing satisfactorily. Most can follow a pulse and reproduce it by clapping or by using a percussion instrument. They benefit significantly by inclusion in the school's weekly hymn practice, where they respond with pleasure to songs with a strong rhythm and a simple melodic form. Pupils at this stage also benefit from the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. The lunch-time recorder club is well attended and provides very good tuition for beginners in theory and performance.
137. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to sing. In addition to opportunities in lessons and weekly hymn practice, singing has an important role in the school's programme of worship. Older pupils sing in unison, with enjoyment and a mainly confident control of dynamics, rhythm and tempo. Usually they sing with satisfactory pitch, breath-control and phrasing, although these sometimes break down in trickier or less familiar passages. Although much of the singing in assemblies is enthusiastic it tends to lack expression. Pupils in the seven to eleven age group have other opportunities to develop musical skills and perform. Some learn the guitar by attending the after-school guitar club; others who wish to play steel pan instruments benefit from good weekly tuition from a visiting teacher. These pupils, however, have not yet achieved confidence and proficiency with their instruments to perform well. Many pupils also sing in the choir at carol concerts and other public performances, for example, in the annual showcase at the Royal Northern College of Music.

138. In the two class lessons it was possible to observe, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. In both lessons, pupils benefited from the teaching of accomplished musicians whose expertise provided enough pace, example and challenge to expand pupils' skills and creative abilities. This level of quality is not consistently maintained across the school, though all staff develop sound basic knowledge and skills. In the co-ordinator's class, Year 4, all pupils had very good opportunities to apply and reinforce their theoretical understanding of pitch, dynamics, pulse, rhythm and texture. Working in groups, they chose and used different instruments to improvise short pieces that evoked moods such as anger, sadness, storm or gentleness. The lesson's very good structure, pace, variety and resources made learning practical, exciting, satisfying and very effective. However, pupils lacked opportunity to record and evaluate their pieces to make their uncertain knowledge of musical elements more secure. In two short singing lessons, pupils in Year 5 made very good progress as a result of the excellent teamwork of their class teacher and the parish deacon, and the latter's great enthusiasm and creative flair. This drew pupils powerfully into active roles which involved them in shaping and polishing a sung and acted performance of the deacon's original setting of the Lord's Prayer to music. The process was dynamic and moving; it captured pupils' imaginations and inspired some really good singing. Both lessons showed what can be achieved by ambitious, practical specialist teaching.
139. Because music has been overshadowed by a series of national and local priorities, not enough improvement has been possible since the previous inspection. However, the co-ordinator's good leadership has established a sound basis from which to move forward. A clear and sensitive adaptation of national guidance materials gives a more structured approach and good support for teachers' planning and teaching. He has also developed, but not yet introduced, a good system for recording pupils' progress in music from one year to the next. With these in place, the subject can commit itself more effectively to raising standards. Resources are good, although the selection of instruments does not cover a full cultural range.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. The good standard of physical education throughout the school commented upon in the previous inspection report has been maintained. By the time pupils are seven, the standards of attainment they achieve are in line with those expected and by the age of eleven, they are higher than those normally expected. All pupils achieve well in games, gymnastics and dance, as well as, for the older pupils, athletics. Swimming is currently provided in Years 3 and 4 and most of the pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave school. A notable feature of the school's provision for physical education is the good range of varied activities, sports and games provided in lunch-time and after-school clubs. The school has considerable success in local leagues and competitions. Pupils from the school regularly figure in local junior clubs for football or netball. These opportunities play an important part in the development of the pupil's self-esteem and to the school's excellent ethos.
141. Pupils throughout the school develop ball skills in catching, throwing, striking, kicking and dribbling which demonstrate higher than expected levels of control. They also develop tackling and marking skills in the major games that enable them to play with a good degree of tactical understanding. They have a good sporting approach to team games and are supportive of one another's efforts.
142. In dance, pupils of all ages have a good understanding of musical rhythm and of how to translate that into movement. They recognise how different types of music suggest different types of movement. As they grow older they link sequences of movements together, working as individuals or in groups, with increasing skill and

effect. They make accurate observations about the quality of movement that they see and work enthusiastically to improve their own.

143. The higher than expected standards attained by the pupils are in part the result of the importance that is given to physical activities in the life of the school. Pupils join in the clubs enthusiastically and receive extra support from the staff to enable them to succeed. Local junior clubs take an interest in how well the pupils do and provide practical support such as the provision of the strip for teams.
144. The overall quality of teaching is very good. All the teaching observed was either good or very good and the high quality of instruction and training leads to the high standards that are achieved. The teachers have a good understanding of the subject and of how pupils learn and develop their skills. The planning of physical education is well managed and allows for a steady development of skills as the pupils move from class to class. Teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of the pupils and are very sensitive in encouraging those whose skills need more developing to improve. This sensitivity to people's feelings is caught by the pupils who are supportive of one another and who have good attitudes towards the subject. The enthusiastic teaching encourages the pupils to be enthusiastic about improving their skills and understanding. The work of the teachers in football is supplemented by training sessions offered by a major Manchester team. This opportunity adds glamour to games lessons, and also allows the teachers to concentrate their efforts on pupils who can benefit from closer attention such as team members or pupils with special needs. They know about the importance of fitness and of how and why they should warm up before and cool down after vigorous physical activity. The quality of teaching is well maintained by in-service training. This is particularly effective as it includes support staff as well as the teachers. The lunch-time support staff are also about to receive community 'Tops' training during the summer term. This is designed to improve the quality of lunch-time play and develop the physical skills of the pupils further.
145. The management of the subject is very good. The policy for the subject is informative and kept up to date, as is the scheme of work which the school follows. The grounds are generous in size and furnished with an all weather area to supplement the grass. The resources provided are good and well cared for. The all round provision for physical education is very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. This subject was covered by a separate inspection.