

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GABRIEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Middleton

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105808

Headteacher: Mrs J Abbott

Reporting inspector: Mr I Hocking  
1272

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2002

Inspection number: 197733

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Aspinall Street  
Middleton  
Manchester

Postcode: M24 2BE

Telephone number: 0161 626 1684

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Ian Cook

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1272	Ian Hocking	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? How well are children taught?
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6642	Peter Hill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Science Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	English History Geography Religious education Music	The school's results and children's achievements. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Gabriel's is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School in Middleton, on the southern outskirts of Rochdale. Most of its pupils come from the local catchment area, which consists of a mixture of privately owned and rented property. The present school building was completed in 1974 but has since been extended and a Nursery was erected in 2001. It is an open-plan school which now has eight classes, with 207 pupils on roll. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the first language and none of the pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Most have attended nursery or playgroup prior to their admission to the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception spans the ability range but there is a higher than average number of pupils whose language and social skills are below the expected level for their age.

The governors and staff aim to provide quality education inside a warm and caring community which develops the whole child within a framework based on Christian values.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is very effective in meeting its declared aim of providing a quality education within a very caring and Christian ethos. As a result of good leadership and good teaching, pupils make good progress through each key stage and achieve well in relation to their starting point when they began school. Pupils' attainment matches the national standards in the vast majority of subjects, but standards attained by 11-year-olds are not high enough in science and in information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- It is very successful in meeting its stated aims.
- Pupils achieve well during their time in the school.
- It enables a greater than average number of pupils to gain the higher levels in national tests in mathematics and writing.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.
- Teaching is good and promotes good learning for all pupils.
- Very good relationships amongst pupils and their positive attitudes to work result in good behaviour in almost all lessons.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' care and welfare.
- It makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a good partnership with parents.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment in ICT.
- The school's policy for guiding its provision for pupils with special educational needs is outdated and does not meet legal requirements.
- The performance of boys in English and mathematics is not as good as that of girls.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1997, the school has made good improvement. The key issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Additionally, good improvements have been made in teaching, resource provision, provision for the care of pupils, provision of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, provision for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in aspects of management. The recent introduction of nursery provision and developments in ICT provision, also represent significant improvement. The need to improve the policy for special educational needs remains an important issue for the school.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	D	C
mathematics	B	B	B	A
science	C	C	E	E

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

The above table shows that the school's results in English are below the national average but match those of similar schools. Mathematics results are above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. Furthermore, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in these tests is also above average. In science tests in 2001, the results were well below average and need to be improved. Over the last few years, standards have been generally above the national average in English and mathematics but science results dipped in 2001. Over the last three years, girls' performance has been significantly better than that of boys. Pupils' attainment in ICT is below the expected standard.

The 2001 test results for 7-year-olds are above the national average in writing and mathematics and well above the average of similar schools. Furthermore, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in these tests is also above average. In reading, standards are below the national average but above those of similar schools. Standards in science are well above average. Pupils aged 7 attain good standards in art, physical education and design and technology. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their starting point when they began school in Reception.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils like school and have positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: the vast majority of pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. A small number of older pupils, mainly boys, behave less well than they should for their age.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils show very good respect for the values and feelings of others. They respond well when given responsibility.



Attendance	Above average nationally.
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In the vast majority of lessons, pupils' very good relationships, positive attitudes, and respect for others contribute to a good atmosphere for learning. Their above average attendance is also a contributor to good learning. However, a significant minority of pupils frequently arrive late in the morning, which interrupts the orderly start to the day and disadvantages pupils' learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least good in well over half the lessons seen. Good quality teaching results in good learning, particularly in English, mathematics and religious education. Teachers' very good lesson planning underpins their successful teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and ensures that the needs of all pupils are well met. Presently, insufficient use is made of computers.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	School provides a satisfactory curriculum and has good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: individual education plans are well matched to pupils' specific needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: well-planned acts of collective worship and religious education make a particularly good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Provision for pupils' social and cultural development is also good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: the school takes very good care of the personal welfare of pupils. Monitoring of academic performance is satisfactory.

Parents express positive views of the school and there is a good partnership between school and parents. Parents are encouraged to become involved in school life and many do so, giving valuable help to the school. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are very good, as are procedures for child protection and for ensuring health and safety.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives clear educational direction. She works hard and, by personal example, sets the tone for a caring, Christian ethos. The senior management team is playing a significant role in developing school self-evaluation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully involved in, and committed to, the work of the school and to its future development.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has effective systems for checking on its work and for identifying areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of available funds to finance the school's identified priorities.

Overall the school has adequate staff and accommodation. Resources for learning are good for English, mathematics, science, religious education and art and for children's learning in the Nursery and Reception. The school has considerably developed resources and provision for ICT. However, pupils still need more access to ICT and especially computers. The school's policy for special educational needs is outdated and does not meet the statutory requirements and the National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not fully met. These are important issues for the school's management to address.

The school takes appropriate measures to ensure that the principles of best value are applied when making spending decisions.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<p>At least 90 per cent of parents' responses to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection agree with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My child likes school and is making good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his/her best.</li> <li>• The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work pupils are set to do at home.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. The amount of work pupils are set to do at home is judged to be appropriate and contributes well to pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1 Over the last few years, the standards attained by pupils in the national tests for 11-year-olds in English, mathematics and science have matched, or been above, the average, in comparison with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, the results have been above and well above average. The exception was in 2001 when the results in English and science dropped below the national average, which was a result of that cohort having a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, in terms of learning and behavioural problems. Results in mathematics have been consistently high, as a result of the structured approach that the school takes in this subject. The indications are that pupils in the current Year 6 class will meet the national average in English, will exceed it in mathematics and will be just below in science. The boys do not perform as well as the girls in all three subjects and the school is currently exploring strategies to find out why, and to improve their performance.

2 The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds were below average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics, in comparison with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the results were above average in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science indicate that pupils' performance was high in national terms and in comparison with similar schools. Standards for 7-year-olds in writing and mathematics have improved over the last few years and were above the national average, and well above in comparison with similar schools in 2001. Standards in reading have declined in the same period because of the extra emphasis given to developing pupils' writing skills. The school has now allocated more time to teaching reading to improve pupils' skills. The indications are that the current Year 2 will achieve average standards in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. When taking into account that many pupils enter the Reception class with below average language skills, this represents good progress and achievement throughout the school. The significant factors in this good achievement are the extra time given to the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics since the last inspection, the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the good quality teaching that pupils receive in most classes.

3 When they begin school in the Reception class, children's attainment spans the full ability range but there is a higher than average number whose language and social skills are below those expected for their age. However, as a result of good quality teaching they make good progress and the vast majority reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of their Reception year.

4 The speaking and listening skills of most pupils aged 5 to 11 are satisfactory, with the introductions and plenary sessions being used well in most lessons to consolidate these skills. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take part in structured class discussions and role-play activities, to further develop their communication skills.

5 The standards in reading are average, with most pupils, by the age of 7, being able to use a wide range of strategies effectively to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics. They can also confidently retell a story and give reasons as to whether or not they liked the book it came from. Pupils in Year 6 talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and make reference to text when explaining their views. Some of the library areas and classrooms do not provide sufficiently stimulating environments for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading. There are also insufficient

opportunities for pupils to effectively develop their library and individual research skills. To further develop pupils' reading skills, the school is targeting an improvement in their ability to read with sustained concentration.

6 The quality of writing from pupils aged 5 to 7 is good and they use an interesting range of vocabulary as well as showing an awareness of the reader in their writing. Most pupils can write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with capital letters and full stops. By the time they are 11, pupils show an appropriate ability to identify the difference between biographical and autobiographical writing and how to change from active to passive tense. Punctuation, including speech marks and commas, is used accurately. The standards of handwriting and presentation are good, reflecting the pride pupils take in their work.

7 Pupils use their literacy skills effectively to support their work in other subjects, such as in mathematics when they read questions and then discuss strategies for finding solutions. Pupils label diagrams in science, and record their ideas in a variety of written formats in religious education, geography and history.

8 By the age of 11, pupils have acquired good skills of mental manipulation of number. Pupils can apply their skills with the four rules of number, for example, when multiplying a three-digit number by a two-digit number and when solving problems. Pupils have a good understanding of decimals and percentages; for example, they can rapidly mentally calculate 25 per cent of £8 and can accurately write numbers of six digits in length. In shape and space work, pupils can use formulae to calculate the area of rectangles and triangles. In data handling, pupils know about the various averages of mean, median and mode.

9 Pupils' have good levels of competence to recall multiplication table facts, and when they mentally manipulate numbers. They use appropriate mathematical vocabulary, for example, when answering questions or explaining their strategies. Written computations are accurately completed and neatly presented. A feature of the National Numeracy Strategy requiring greater emphasis by teachers is pupils' acquisition of mathematical vocabulary. The school needs to explore ways to help pupils learn and remember the extensive vocabulary recommended within the strategy. This would support the drive to improve pupils' ability to solve word problems.

10 Pupils are able to use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in design and technology when measuring, in geography when using grid references, and when using spreadsheets and control technology.

11 In science, there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to show their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning when carrying out investigations, which hinders their progress in being able to carry out a fair test independently of the teacher. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory, as pupils do not have enough time on computers to develop their skills and, as a result, are not reaching the standards of attainment expected for their age. In religious education most pupils, by the age of 11, meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, showing familiarity with the life of Jesus and being able to give examples of how Christian belief has changed someone's life. In most other subjects, pupils achieve the standards expected for their age by the time they are 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, in relation to their prior attainment, and achieve well as a result of the well-structured support that they receive. The more able pupils are also well supported and given challenging work that enables them to achieve to their full potential.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12 Pupil's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all good; their relationships with each other and adults are very good. These positive features help to create an atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning; this contributes to the progress pupils make. Since the last full inspection, standards in all of these areas have been maintained.

13 Pupils take an interest in and gain enjoyment from their lessons. They listen to their teachers and because of this they are clear about what they are to do next. They enjoy using equipment such as the musical instruments. Most are keen to answer questions; for example, during a geography lesson, they were keen to answer the questions to find out more about the physical features of the European Union. Most sustain concentration during their lessons and show a high level of interest in what they are doing. This is particularly so when teaching is very good and activities are challenging and very well matched to pupils' abilities.

14 In classrooms, and when moving around the school building, the vast majority of pupils behave well. The majority of pupils try hard to live up to the school's behaviour expectations. For example, they walk quietly into assembly and line up sensibly before lunch. The overwhelming majority of pupils are polite and friendly and interested in what visitors have to say to them. In other areas of the school, for example, the dining hall at lunchtime, or outside in the playground, behaviour is also good. Pupils play and socialise well together and older pupils often support those younger than themselves during play activities. Because pupils have good behaviour and attitudes this contributes to the standards they achieve.

15 Very occasionally a small number of pupils become restless and drift off task, their behaviour distracts others and they lose interest in their work. This is because lessons and activities do not gain their full interest and attention. Very occasionally these instances of inappropriate behaviour interrupt the flow of the lesson and slow down the rate of learning. In the main, teachers manage these situations well, for example pupils observed receiving a "yellow card" earlier in the day are encouraged by their teacher to behave and during a second observation show no hint of inappropriate behaviour. However, there are several instances where the "red and yellow" card system is overused and has little impact on the behaviour of a very small number of pupils.

16 There were four exclusions during the year prior to the inspection: these are attributed to two pupils and one pupil has since left the school. Effective systems are in place to deal with such incidents and the school only excludes when all other avenues of support have been tried.

17 Relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are overall very good. They are based on mutual trust and respect. Pupils know that all teachers who work in the school are approachable and this gives them the confidence to seek help when they need it. Records show that instances of bullying are rare and pupils confirm this. Parents and pupils express confidence that if any incidents did occur, they would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds and different cultural heritages. They are skilfully encouraged to develop acceptance and tolerance of each other. Because of this, racial harmony exists throughout the school and pupils play and socialise together without any problem. In lessons, pupils show respect for others' values and opinions. They answer questions confidently, even if the answer is wrong, because they know they will not be laughed at. Often they applaud spontaneously to celebrate their peer's achievements.

18 Pupils respond well to the opportunities for them to take progressively more responsibility as they move up the school. From the youngest classroom monitors to the older playground helpers, they all take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils work well in small groups and pairs; they share equipment and handle resources with care. They are learning to collaborate well; for example during

an ICT lesson they support each other whilst researching information for their geography topic. Most can usually work independently of the teacher during group activities.

19 Pupils say they enjoy attending school. Attendance is above the national average whilst unauthorised absence is broadly in line with national figures. Most pupils are absent because they are ill but there are a few families who take their children out of school for family holiday during term time; the school has good arrangements to monitor this. There are, however, a significant minority of pupils who frequently arrive late in the morning. This interrupts the orderly start to the school day; it also puts them at a disadvantage because they miss the introduction to their lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In 34 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory, in 45 per cent of lessons teaching is good, in 15 per cent it is very good and in 4 per cent it is excellent. This represents an impressive amount of good and very good teaching and results in good quality learning for all pupils. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in just 2 per cent of lessons.

21 Teaching for the pupils in the Nursery and Reception (Foundation Stage) is good overall and often very good. The school has very recently introduced Nursery provision into the Foundation Stage. Even at this early stage (i.e. two terms later) it is clear that young children are receiving a good preparation for the Reception class. Teaching in both classes is very well prepared, making good use of human and material resources. Particular strengths were observed in the teaching of: communication, language and literacy, creative development, physical development and for developing pupils' personal social and emotional skills. Regular, on going assessment of pupils' learning enables staff to maintain accurate records of pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding, from which appropriate work is planned. Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms provide a secure, stimulating and very caring environment that engages pupils' curiosity and motivates them to learn. As a result, pupils quickly make good progress in their learning. Very good relationships between the staff and pupils contribute to very effective and quietly achieved class control. Strong teamwork between teachers and the nursery nurses contributes to the good provision that exists in the recently developed Foundation Stage.

22 In Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art, physical education and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in geography, music and ICT. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) is good in English, mathematics and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in science, ICT, geography, physical education and music.

23 Though teaching of ICT is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject needs to be improved, for which further training is scheduled. Once completed, teachers should be in a position to provide greater opportunities for pupils to use computers and to maximise the potential of ICT to assist learning in other subjects.

24 During the inspection week no history or design and technology lessons were observed; therefore, it is not possible for secure judgements to be made about the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.

25 The very good and excellent teaching was seen in Reception, Year 2 and Year 3 classes. Amongst many strengths in such lessons, the most notable and productive aspects are the teachers' enthusiasm, high expectations and excellent relationships with pupils. These features of teaching promoted very good behaviour and high levels of motivation from the pupils, resulting in very good learning. By contrast, where teaching is less successful, lessons are punctuated by frequent

interventions by the teacher in order to maintain good behaviour. On such occasions, especially with older pupils, the teacher's recourse to the use of a "yellow card" system is not as successful. The oldest pupils in school are not given sufficient opportunity to assume responsibility and some unequal treatment of boys and girls was seen, in terms of the way their behaviour was managed.

26 In the best practice, for example in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, teachers take care to make clear to pupils the intended learning outcomes of the lesson. These objectives are usually revisited during the summary phase of the lesson to reiterate the key learning points made earlier and to enable pupils to become more self-aware of their learning.

The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which, together with very good planning, results in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy being taught very well. In the teaching of mathematics, teachers give appropriate emphasis to developing pupils' mental skills and strategies, and to helping them solve problems expressed in words. There is a need, however, to place greater emphasis on pupils' learning and retention of mathematical words.

27 Teachers' own evaluations of their lessons, allied to good systems of assessing and recording pupil progress in English and mathematics, are used effectively to plan future work. This means that teachers set work at levels that are appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment and therefore enables them to build on what they already can do, know and understand. Assessment procedures have been improved since the previous inspection, but further work is required in order to make full use of assessment information to set specific targets for individual pupils to help them improve their work. The school recognises the need to extend record keeping to cover all subjects and is currently trialling appropriate systems.

28 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and provided for in lessons. Class teachers write the targets in the pupils' individual education plans and the targets are well matched to meet the pupils' needs and areas for development. Whole-class teaching is well structured to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils; for example in most lessons all pupils cover the same topic but groups of pupils with differing levels of attainment are provided with materials which are matched to their needs.

29 There are regular occasions when pupils with special educational needs are taught in small groups or receive individual support. In these situations they are well taught. Teachers and support staff are very well organised, material is well prepared and is clearly matched to pupils' individual needs and adults have very good relationships with the pupils; this results in pupils making good progress.

30 Homework is set appropriately and in line with the school policy and supplements well the work done in school.

31 Teaching and learning are better now than as seen at the last inspection when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This has been halved and the amount of very good and excellent teaching has increased significantly from four per cent to 19 per cent. Most of the teaching staff have changed since the previous inspection so direct comparisons are invalid. Nevertheless, the school has improved its planning systems and staff training has also been given high priority, as recognised by the school's Investors in People award. These factors are impacting on the quality of teaching.

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

32 The curriculum provided for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and they experience a wide range of stimulating and relevant activities, which leads to them making good academic and personal progress in the areas of learning expected for this age range. A stimulating learning environment has been created for these children in the Foundation Stage of Learning, which prepares them well for the demands of the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1. The curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 11 is broad but lacks appropriate balance, as the statutory requirements for the teaching of ICT are not met. The provision for this subject is unsatisfactory, as pupils do not have enough time on computers to develop their skills and, as a result, are not reaching the standards of attainment expected for their age. Since the last inspection, the school has revised its curriculum timing and timetabling so that its delivery is less complicated. This is exemplified by the way that more time has been allocated to teaching basic skills in English and mathematics and is reflected in improved standards of attainment in these subjects, especially for pupils by the end of Year 2. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has also been an important factor in these improved standards. The demands of the Manchester Diocesan syllabus for religious education are met in full. The school has successfully met the key issue of the previous inspection of improving planning procedures so that there is better progression in pupils' learning. These procedures incorporate the national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. The school strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, and is currently exploring a variety of strategies to raise the standards of attainment of boys in English, mathematics and science. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with the individual education plans containing appropriate and manageable targets that teachers use well in their planning.

33 There is appropriate provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and they have opportunities to relate to others, in a variety of situations. Social development is supported by a range of visits, including summer residential stays for pupils in Years 5 and 6, during which they learn a variety of social skills, such as working together and caring for others. There are opportunities, in and out of classrooms, for them to take responsibility, which effectively support their personal development. An example of this is the way that older pupils can look after younger ones at lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils are also encouraged to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, as well as taking turns to share equipment fairly. A School Council has been recently formed, with elected representatives from each class, which will meet to put forward pupils' views as to how school life could be improved. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have weekly 'Circletime' activities, in which they sit in a circle with their teacher to talk about their feelings and issues, such as understanding the effect of their actions on others. These sessions are now being extended to involve older pupils. The pupils are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful, but are dangerous when misused. There is good use of visits of the Life Health Education Bus to support pupils' learning about these issues. With the help of the school nurse, the school provides for sex education, in a sensitive and supportive manner that emphasises the importance of caring relationships.

34 Pupils have opportunities to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities and go on a range of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further learning experiences. They can join the choir, modelling, football, netball, rounders and Bible clubs. Children in the Reception class have been to a garden centre and the local post office, while pupils in Years 1 and 2 have visited Blackpool Zoo. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 go on a canal walk and visit Middleton town centre to support their work in history and geography. The school arranges for a variety of visitors to come to school, including artists and drama groups, to work with pupils to develop their skills across a range of areas.

35 There are good links with the community, especially with the local church, which make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The vicar regularly comes into school to lead assemblies and



work with pupils to help develop their understanding of Christian faith and to support their spiritual development. The pupils also visit the church to take part in services at such times as Easter and Christmas. Representatives from the police come in to give ‘Stranger Danger’ talks, and the local fire brigade visits to give advice on fire safety. Links with professional football clubs result in coaches coming into school to effectively develop the pupils’ football skills. There are strong links with Middleton Technical School, which successfully prepares pupils in Year 6 for when they transfer to it.

36 Good provision is made for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect has improved since the time of the previous inspection. These good arrangements help all pupils to develop positive attitudes, a sense of responsibility and contribute to raising their self-esteem and confidence. Parents, who speak highly of this aspect of the school’s work, confirm these findings. They say the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

37 Daily collective worship (assemblies) makes a particularly good contribution to pupils’ spiritual and moral development. Assemblies are well planned and delivered and provide pupils with good opportunities to consider moral issues. However, pupils do not have opportunities to reflect on how the themes of assemblies might apply to their own lives. Music is used well to set an appropriate tone as pupils enter but is not always used when they leave. Spirituality is also effectively promoted through religious education lessons. Here pupils learn to understand and respect other faiths. Elements of music and science lessons also effectively contribute to this area, such as when the youngest children were searching for mini beasts in the school grounds. There was much excitement as children found slugs and beetles and looked at them in detail for the first time. However, subjects could make a greater contribution to pupils’ spiritual development. The school also places emphasis on developing pupils’ awareness of self-worth, for example the way pupils’ writing is valued. It is often attractively displayed on walls.

38 Pupils’ good moral development is positively fostered through the school’s approach to promoting good behaviour. All staff provide positive role models. The school’s arrangements demonstrate care for all, supported well by the reward system and the policy of praise that values pupils’ effort in school and their achievements at home. Further opportunities for moral development are planned within the curriculum, such as in history when pupils consider the harshness of life for the poor during Victorian times. The emphasis on promoting racial harmony and acceptance of others’ values and beliefs is unobtrusive, but effective. Discussions with pupils indicate they are well aware of these issues. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of those less fortunate than themselves and raise significant amounts of money for charitable organisations such as “Shelter”, “Barnardos” and “Middleton Drop in Centre for the Homeless”.

39 There are also good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. They are effectively encouraged to develop the skills of collaboration and co-operation during lessons such as physical education. All pupils, whatever their social background or cultural heritage, are fully integrated into the life of the school. They are given a range of duties, which contribute to the daily life of the school. Extra-curricular activities and class visits to places of interest also help to develop pupils’ social skills and confidence.

40 Arrangements for pupils’ cultural development are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about local and world cultures, preparing them to live in a multicultural society. Teachers ensure that pupils appreciate their own local heritage and culture, for example, through geography and history where they study their immediate locality or areas such as Saddleworth. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to study other cultures, for example Chembokilli in India, or the ancient Greeks during history. Visitors such as musicians and artists also enrich this aspect of pupils’ curricular provision.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41 This is a very caring school that takes very good care of the welfare and medical needs of all the pupils. These findings are in line with those of the previous inspection. Teachers know well the pupils in their care, and provide a level of day-to-day care that is very good. The secretarial staff, lunchtime supervisors and classroom support assistants all play a significant and effective part in this aspect of the school's work. Because of this, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and will readily ask for help should they need it. Parents confirm they are happy with the support and care their children receive.

42 Child protection procedures are very good and clearly understood by all staff. However, the present written policy does not reflect the current very good practice. Health and safety arrangements are very good. The school gives high priority to this area and regular health and safety inspections and risk assessments are undertaken and monitored. The governing body plays an appropriate part in this aspect. The school has very good systems relating to pupils' medical and welfare needs, including first aid arrangements. Several pupils at some point require specific medical attention; this is dealt with discreetly and with sensitivity. The very good induction programme for children entering the Nursery or Reception class ensures they soon settle into the routine of school life. The transfer arrangements to secondary school are also very good and this means that pupils are confident about their move to their next stage of education.

43 Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are good, having recently been reviewed and revised. The school, however, has not yet monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of these new systems to ensure they are consistently applied in all classes and that they effectively meet the needs of all the pupils in the school. Systems to eliminate any form of harassment such as racism or bullying are good. This is shown by pupils' awareness of issues such as racism; they demonstrate their knowledge by using analogies such as "you shouldn't judge a book by its cover" when referring to people of differing cultural heritage.

44 Arrangements to monitor and promote regular attendance are good. The school receives good support from the education welfare service, which is involved when appropriate. The school is very aware of those pupils whose attendance gives rise for concern.

45 Arrangements to monitor and promote pupils' personal development are very good. Teachers keep detailed records about pupils and share information with each other at the end of the year. This ensures the new class teacher has specific knowledge about the pupils that they are about to teach and ensures that a picture of each individual pupil is built up as they progress through the school. Parents also contribute to this growing picture of their children because they are encouraged to contribute their comments to this aspect during parents' evenings. As they progress through the school, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem, as a result of the high level of day-to-day care provided by teachers and the range of opportunities that is offered to pupils. Examples of such practice include group work in lessons, responsibilities for individuals and educational and residential visits. There are also clear plans to further develop this area evidenced by the fact that the school has recently introduced a School Council and circle time for the younger pupils.

46 There are secure systems for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make in English and mathematics, an improvement since the last inspection. However, in other subjects they are not as extensive, showing mainly coverage of the National Curriculum rather than the progress made by individual pupils. The school monitors pupils' academic development in a satisfactory way and is beginning to make use of the information gained, to improve

curricular planning. It is also beginning to use its analysis of end of key stage tests to set targets for improvement in English and mathematics, but this is in its infancy and, therefore, has not yet had a significant effect on the standards that pupils attain. An identified area for improvement is the further development of assessment, pupil tracking and monitoring to link with target setting, so that teachers are clearer about what the pupils need to do next to improve. Assessment information for pupils with special educational needs is used well to plan future work. Systems are in place for the assessment of pupils when they start school and the information from these assessments is also used well to plan subsequent learning experiences.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

47 The school has established a good partnership with parents. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. This view is confirmed by parents' views of the school, expressed through the questionnaires and the meeting before the inspection. They like the school and what it provides for their children and feel that teachers are approachable if they need to discuss any concerns.

48 Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. A small number help in class-based activities and they provide support in other ways, for example, helping with school trips or planting daffodil bulbs to celebrate the Queen's golden jubilee. Such help is valued by the school. The parents and teacher association is very active and raises money that is used to purchase additional resources such as computers and sports kits.

49 Every Thursday morning, parents of pupils aged from 5 to 7 have the opportunity to work for 20 minutes alongside their children in the classroom. Numbers vary from week to week but this opportunity provides parents with the chance to become involved in their children's education. The annual open day also gives parents the opportunity to experience "hands on" activities linked to the curriculum. The school has clear plans to further develop this recent initiative to give a broader view of the subjects taught. Although the school has consulted with parents, these have been on an informal basis. Views have been sought, via open forum meetings, on topics such as the re-launch of the parents and teachers association and Friday Assemblies. As a result of suggestions made, practice has been altered; for example seating arrangements at the assemblies have been changed to enable parents to see and hear more clearly. Despite this good practice the school does not formally and regularly seek the views of all parents.

50 A good range of information is provided for parents. General day-to-day information is virtually always provided in sufficient time for any events that are to take place. Regular newsletters give useful information both about the school and individual classes. Regular curriculum information is provided each term as well as a list of key dates. The homework arrangements are published in the School Prospectus and prominently displayed on walls. In addition, parents' evenings are held where parents can discuss their children's progress with class teachers, but there are also informal opportunities to do this at the end of the school day. Parents, who appreciate the information provided for them, confirm this practice. Annual reports giving detail of children's progress in the Foundation Stage are very good. Comments are very focused and provide a clear picture of what children know and can do. Other reports are satisfactory. In the subjects of English, mathematics and science, a clear indication is given about what pupils can do, but in other subjects, comments are variable and often focus on the work previously covered and pupils' attitude to the subject. The school has identified this as an area for improvement.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51 Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and promotes high educational standards. She is very hardworking and by personal example sets the tone of a very caring and Christian ethos. She has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has the respect and confidence of pupils, colleagues, governors and parents. As a result of this leadership the school is very successful in meeting its stated aims.

52 The support provided by the senior management team contributes both to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and to its long-term development. Aspects of leadership and management have been improved since the last inspection, especially the work of the senior management team in determining the areas of work and actions needed for improving the school. The key issues identified in the last inspection have been fully and efficiently addressed. Effective leadership by the co-ordinators of English and mathematics has been instrumental to the successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Most of the teachers have only quite recently taken on new responsibilities for managing subjects of the curriculum and therefore there has not been sufficient time for their work to impact significantly on standards.

53 The governing body is effective in fulfilling its duties and almost all of its statutory responsibilities. It is led by a highly committed chair of governors whose involvement extends well beyond the duties associated with the role. There is an appropriate structure of committees, such as General Purposes, Finance etc., that meet regularly, and through minutes of meetings keep each other fully informed of their work. Individual governors have taken on liaison responsibilities for numeracy, literacy, Foundation Stage, and special educational needs. They fulfil these responsibilities with interest and commitment and provide valuable support for the management in these key areas of work. The governors might now consider extending this practice to include other subject areas. They are also kept well informed by the headteacher. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

54 The school has good procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching and for improving standards. In particular, the teaching of literacy and numeracy has been suitably monitored and this has led to the school substantially improving its teaching in these subjects. The introduction of performance management has also been effective in helping management to check the school's work. Very recently, the school has begun to make use of its analysis of assessment data to target specific areas of teaching to bring about improved standards, for example, improving pupils' ability to solve word problems in mathematics. However, the school needs to introduce effective measures for monitoring the relative performance of boys and girls and to redress the imbalance that exists in terms of girls' significantly better performance.

55 The school's strategic use of its available resources is good. Governors target money towards those areas identified for improvement within the School Improvement Plan, which is of good quality. The School Improvement Plan clearly identifies areas for improvement, personnel responsible and the resource implications of time and costs. Staff's views are rightly sought when deciding the school's priorities for improvement. Governors are fully involved in reviewing the draft School Improvement Plan and, where deemed necessary, in suggesting alterations. Good financial planning ensures that decisions taken in setting the budgets are appropriately taken in relation to the educational priorities, for example, in providing funding towards Nursery provision, ICT hardware, and training for staff. The school budget is closely monitored and the governors' Finance Committee is fully and regularly appraised of the financial position. The most recent audit reported judged the quality of the school's accountancy procedures to reflect "best practice".

56 Teaching and support staff work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure that appropriate work is planned for pupils. The funding for pupils with special educational

needs is used wisely to meet their needs and a high level of support staffing is maintained to enable the pupils to receive a good level of individualised help that enables them to learn and achieve well as they progress through the school. However, the school is not fulfilling the statutory requirements to review its practice annually and to ensure that the special educational needs policy reflects current legislation.

57 Staffing levels are satisfactory and all staff are suitably deployed to promote pupils' learning. There is a good balance of experience amongst the staff, and their teamwork is fundamental to the school's positive ethos for learning. The school is fully committed to the continuing professional development of staff, as evidenced by its Investors in People award. This is reflected in the close links between training of staff and school improvement. Support staff and nursery nurses contribute significantly to the learning and progress made by all pupils, especially for those with special educational needs. Internal communications are good and ensure that staff are fully informed. All meetings are minuted, thus keeping all informed about decisions taken.

58 The staff handbook ensures that all those who are new to the school, including supply teachers, have ready access to details of day-to-day routines and procedures. The school secretaries carry out their duties most efficiently and effectively, making good use of computer software, and provide invaluable support for the leadership of the school.

59 Resources are at least satisfactory in all areas of provision apart from ICT where the ratio of pupils to computers is not as favourable as the national average. Resources for the Foundation Stage and for English, mathematics, science, art and religious education are good. Resources are bought by applying the principles of best value. The staff make effective and efficient use of the human and material resources, apart from ICT equipment which is presently under-used and for which additional training is to be provided.

60 Attractive and relevant wall displays promote and reinforce learning. The building is kept clean by the school caretaker, and is treated carefully by the pupils.

61 When taking into account the above average income it receives, the good teaching provided, and the good achievement of pupils, the school is providing good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62 In order further to improve standards the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- raise standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, in science and in ICT by ensuring that National Curriculum requirements for ICT are fully met, and by providing greater opportunities for pupils to use ICT; (paragraphs 23, 98, 121 and 123)
- review annually the school's practice with regard to pupils with special educational needs and ensure that the special educational needs policy reflects current legislation; (paragraph 56)
- introduce effective measures for monitoring the relative performance of boys and girls and redress the imbalance that currently exists. (paragraph 54 and 100)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	21	16	1	0	0
Percentage	4	15	45	34	2	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	185
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		49

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	12

#### **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	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.7

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	10	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	16
	Girls	10	10	9
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (86)	86 (79)	89 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	16	18
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	22	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (90)	93 (86)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	11	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	15	16
	Girls	8	7	7
	Total	19	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (66)	73 (72)	77 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (69)	62 (72)	62 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	26.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	12
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	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.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	395224
Total expenditure	375427
Expenditure per pupil	1986
Balance brought forward from previous year	2751
Balance carried forward to next year	22548

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	207
Number of questionnaires returned	116

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	35	4	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	48	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	34	14	8	2
The teaching is good.	60	32	6	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	34	11	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	23	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	30	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	38	13	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	61	30	5	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	31	8	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	37	13	2	8

## **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**

63 Children aged under five, in the Foundation Stage, are prepared well for entry into Year 1. The school provides a secure, caring and stimulating environment and a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the required Early Learning Goals, thus providing a smooth transition to the National Curriculum in Year 1.

64 When they begin school in Reception, pupils' attainment spans the ability range but there is a higher than average number of pupils whose language and social skills are below the expected level for their age. However, as a result of good teaching, children made good progress and the vast majority attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of their Reception year; this represents good achievement.

65 Children reaching the end of Reception year make very good progress in **communication, language and literacy development**. As a result of very good teaching and the strong emphasis that is given to this aspect of learning, the vast majority achieve the expected levels by the time they begin Year 1. Reception children can read and select the appropriate words to complete a sentence, for example, when developing a sequence of sentences about breakfast time. Higher attainers know that sentences end with a full stop.

66 Most children can copy their name under the teacher's writing and a few higher attainers are able to write short sentences. Low attainers are reliant upon the teacher doing the writing on their behalf. Most can accurately form letters but a minority tend to reverse letters such as 'p'.

67 Adults in Nursery and Reception take every opportunity, including snack times and play, to encourage good quality dialogue between children and themselves, for example, when the Nursery teacher talked to the children as they were making a small story book. Children's speaking and listening skills are progressing well.

68 Children develop a familiarity with and love of books. Most children have developed sufficient confidence to express their thoughts orally; for example, when sharing the story of the 'Tortoise and the Hare', they can identify the main characters and recall the main events and higher attainers are able to make sensible predictions about what will happen next in the story.

69 As a result of good teaching, children are making good progress in **mathematical development** and the vast majority are on course to meet expectations. Nursery children begin to count to five and can place, in size order, items such as the chairs belonging to the 'Three Bears'. They learn the names of simple two-dimensional shapes, such as triangle and circle, and many children are able to recognise squares, triangles, circles and rectangles. Some good teaching in the Reception class promoted children's counting skills within the context of song and rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns'. Children responded with high levels of enjoyment and involvement. Most children in Reception have secure skills in counting to 20 from both visual and aural stimulus. Many can rapidly calculate some of the number bonds to ten. Higher attainers are able to calculate six plus four, four plus three etc.; lower attainers can "add" items in a practical context such as when combining up to five biscuits on two plates.

70 Children are making good progress and almost all are in line to attain expected levels in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. During the initial phase of the morning and afternoon sessions, the Nursery teacher takes the opportunity to develop children's general knowledge, alongside language, mathematics and personal and social skills. Nursery children are thus learning the names of the days of the week and the names of animals such as hamster, rabbit, mouse etc.

71 In Reception, children are learn about the necessary conditions for the growth of seeds. In learning facts about mini-beasts, they discover that spiders have eight legs. Higher attainers can recognise butterflies, slugs and beetles.

72 In the context of religious education, children recall that Jesus died on a cross. They are introduced to some of the important symbols used within Christian worship; several are able to draw upon their experience of attending Church. Some are able to relate their own memories of being christened.

73 Very good teaching enables children to make very good progress in **physical development**, especially in the skills of gross motor control. Children are in line to meet the expected level in this aspect of learning. They make good progress in Nursery in developing their manipulative skills, as seen in their control of pencils and scissors. Children in Reception, working in pairs, show above average skill in sending and receiving a ball. They listen well, follow instructions promptly, and behave safely within physical education lessons. In outdoor play, children are confident and skilful in controlling toy vehicles.

74 Good progress is made within the **creative and aesthetic area of learning**. Children are given many opportunities to develop these skills to the expected level, especially within painting and drawing activities. Nursery children have drawn self-portraits and painted spring flowers, showing a good level of skill development.

75 Reception children show above the expected level of skill when singing. As a result of excellent teaching, seen in one music lesson, children show well-timed actions, confident singing and complete pleasure. Children are able to express their ideas, for example, when enacting roles in the 'flower shop'.

76 Children make very good progress and virtually all are on line to meet the expected levels in their **personal social and emotional development**. Teaching is very good; children are encouraged to communicate and work harmoniously with others, in a variety of contexts. They are encouraged directly and through the very good role models of staff to show good manners. Relationships amongst the children and between children and the adults are at least very good. In play, even the youngest children in Reception co-operate well with their peers, for example, whilst waiting for their turn in a game of dominoes. They follow instructions and readily comply with class routines. Almost all in Reception are able to dress and undress independently for physical activity. When working alone, or in large groups, they behave very well and sustain concentration. They respond well to responsibility such as tidying up promptly and willingly. Children carefully use school resources such as books and materials. During acts of prayer at the end of sessions and in whole-school assemblies, children are reverent and participate appropriately.

77 The good quality teaching that the children receive encourages them to develop academically, spiritually, personally and socially. The quality of teaching is at least good in all lessons and in almost half of all lessons it is very good or excellent. Teaching is purposeful and has clear learning outcomes. Lessons are thoroughly well planned. Well-planned organisation of the class enables the teachers to maximise the skills of nursery nurses and promotes children's independence, for example, enabling

other children to work independently and productively without the need for frequent adult intervention. Thorough initial assessments are made both in Nursery and in Reception and the information gained is frequently updated. The effective collaborative working of the teachers and nursery nurses ensures a consistent approach to the teaching and welfare of the children.

78 Learning resources are of very good quality, especially those purchased recently for the new Nursery classroom. They are very well organised and readily accessible to children. Classrooms are also particularly well organised and are enhanced by good quality displays.

79 Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has attended appropriate courses and sets a very good example in her own teaching. Management has ensured that the importance of the Foundation Stage is duly recognised in terms of high quality resourcing. The expertise, enthusiasm and teamwork of the staff contribute to the smooth running of the Nursery and Reception classes. At the last inspection, provision for children aged under five was judged to have some areas for improvement, which have now been successfully addressed. The school now needs to produce a revised policy and scheme of work to underpin the continued good practice in the Foundation Stage.

## **ENGLISH**

80 Over the last few years, the standards attained by pupils in the national tests for 11-year olds have matched or been above average, in comparison with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, the results have been above and well above average. The exception was in 2001 when the results dropped below the national average, which was a result of that cohort having a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in terms of learning and behavioural problems. The indications are that the majority of pupils in the current Year 6 class will do better and attain standards that match the national average. The boys do not perform as well as the girls and the school is currently exploring strategies to find out why and to increase their performance. Standards for 7-year olds in writing have improved over the last few years and were above the national average, and well above in comparison with similar schools in 2001. Furthermore, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels (National Curriculum Level 3) in writing is above the national average. Conversely, standards in reading show a decline over the same period and were below the national average, but still above average for similar schools in 2001. The school explains that this was a result of the extra emphasis given to raising standards in writing, which had a detrimental effect on those attained in reading. This issue has been successfully addressed by providing more time for guided reading sessions and the indications are that pupils in the current Year 2 class will attain average standards in reading and above average standards in writing. When taking into account that many pupils enter the Reception class with below average language skills this represents good progress and achievement throughout the school. The significant factors in this good achievement are the extra time given to the teaching of basic skills since the last inspection, the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the good quality teaching that pupils receive in most classes.

81 The quality of teaching is good with lessons planned thoroughly so that there is a good balance of activities, which are challenging for pupils of all abilities, to maintain their interest and ensure that they have a high work rate. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge that enables them to ask pertinent questions to explore what pupils know and to develop their understanding of the idea being taught. There was also effective use of the introductions to lessons to develop pupils' speaking skills, which are satisfactory throughout the school, by letting them discuss and explain their ideas. The plenary sessions are also used well in most classes to enable pupils to consolidate these skills by allowing them to talk about what they have learned in lessons. As a relatively high number of pupils start school with below average language skills, this shows they are making good progress in this

aspect of their learning. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take part in structured class discussions and role-play activities to further develop their communication skills. The listening skills of most pupils are satisfactory, which helps them to give relevant answers to the teachers' questions and to gain an appropriate understanding of the work that they are to do.

82 The standards in reading are average, with most pupils aged 5 to 7 being able to read accurately and confidently from texts appropriate for their age. The teachers use the shared and guided reading sessions effectively to develop pupils' reading skills, as was exemplified in a Year 2 lesson on learning how books written by the same author can be different. In this high quality lesson, the teacher's challenging questions and stimulating activities enabled the pupils to gain a good understanding of the importance of characters, setting and theme in stories and how they can vary in different books. Because of the support of the classroom assistant during the group activities, they also made good progress in their ability to scan a text to find 'ir', 'er' and 'ur' spelling patterns. By the time that they are seven, most pupils are able to use a wide range of strategies effectively to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics. They can also confidently retell a story and give reasons as to whether or not they liked the book it came from. Pupils who are aged 7 to 11 also have average reading skills, and can recount stories and express preferences in reading matter. They are taught how settings influence characters and events in stories, and how expressive language can affect mood. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5 considering opposing views in letters on foxhunting, pupils gained a secure understanding of the difference between fact and fiction and could evaluate an argument appropriately. Pupils in Year 6 talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and make reference to text when explaining their views. The shared reading sessions are interactive with an appropriate balance of contributions from pupils and teacher, as was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 when they were taught how to use clues to identify the setting of a text. Some of the library areas and classrooms do not provide sufficiently stimulating environments for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to effectively develop their library and individual research skills. To further develop pupils' reading skills, the school is targeting an improvement in pupils' ability to read with sustained concentration.

83 The quality of writing from pupils aged 5 to 7 is good and they use an interesting range of vocabulary as well as showing an awareness of the reader in their writing. Most pupils can write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with capital letters and full stops. They are successfully encouraged to use descriptive words to make their writing more exciting, as was evident in a Year 2 pupil's story about a penguin, where she had written 'Night fell and Dudley was all alone. Just then he heard the sound of icicles drip, drop dripping'. Pupils aged 7 to 11 are able to write across a range of genres and show satisfactory skills in doing so. In a Year 4 lesson on using the book 'Cheat' to identify how characters deal with difficult situations, the pupils were able to write what course of action 'Danny' should take to solve his problem. In so doing, they made their writing interesting by adding detail to characters and setting. Pupils in Year 6 showed effective skills in their writing of a modern version of the story of Oliver Twist. By the time they are 11, pupils show an appropriate ability to identify the difference between biographical and autobiographical writing and how to change from active to passive tense. Punctuation, including speech marks and commas, is used accurately. The standards of handwriting and presentation are good, reflecting the pride that most pupils take in their work. There is recognition of the need to monitor standards in spelling by ensuring that approaches are consistently and effectively applied. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, with constructive and encouraging comments, and is now beginning to inform them how to improve their writing. There is some use made of ICT by pupils to word-process their stories and poems, but the school acknowledges that this is an area for further development. The teachers effectively use the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs in writing, enabling them to make good progress towards the targets that have been set for them.



84 Most of the pupils have positive attitudes to their work, are well behaved and show interest in their activities. They concentrate well and have a good work rate. Pupils have opportunities to use their literacy skills to support their work in other subjects, such as in mathematics, when they read questions and then discuss strategies for finding solutions. Pupils label diagrams in science, and record their ideas in a variety of written formats in religious education, geography and history.

85 The leadership of the subject is good, with the co-ordinator having a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, and how to set about improving provision. The long and medium-term planning for English follows the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and is effective in supporting progression of pupils' learning through the school. Since the last inspection, more time has been allocated to the teaching of basic skills, which has had a positive effect on the pupils' standards of attainment. There are secure systems for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make, an improvement since the last inspection. The school is beginning to use its analysis of end of key stage tests to set targets for improvement, but this is in its infancy and therefore has not yet had a significant effect on the standards that pupils attain. An identified area for improvement is the further development of assessment, pupil tracking and monitoring to link with target setting, so that teachers are clearer about what the pupils need to do next to improve. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books in classrooms and shared areas for pupils to develop an enjoyment of reading. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86 The school's 2001 test results for 11-year-olds are above average when compared to all schools nationally and well above average when compared to schools of a similar nature. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (National Curriculum Level 5) is also well above average when compared nationally. Girls significantly out-perform boys in national tests, an issue that the school needs to address. Over the last four years, the school's results have consistently been above the national average. Evidence from the work of the present Year 6 pupils paints a similar picture of above average standards. This represents good achievement because relative to their attainment when they were aged seven.

87 The school's 2001 test results for 7-year-olds are above average when compared to all schools nationally and well above average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (National Curriculum Level 3) is also well above the national average. Scrutiny of work from Year 2 pupils, and their work in lessons, confirm above average standards. This represents very good achievement from the below average standards of these pupils when they began school in Reception.

88 Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching. The school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has addressed weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, for example, in standards of numeracy attained by 7-year-olds.

89 Teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 1, resulting in pupils making good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Appropriate emphasis is given to pupils' acquisition and recall of basic number facts and to the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and "sharing equally". Pupils have a secure knowledge of the ordinality of numbers; for example, they can write the number after 222 and the number before 900.

90 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have successfully learned to mentally manipulate numbers to at least 20. Pupils are able to explore number, for example when finding numbers halfway between

81 and 89 and when solving number puzzles. They can add coins of different values to find the total amount in a purse. They know elementary properties of plane shapes and can identify three-dimensional shapes, such as sphere, cuboid, cone, pyramid etc., from a pictorial representation. Within work on measures, almost all pupils can recognise and record analogue time involving quarter to and past the hour.

91 Overall, teaching is also good in Key Stage 2. However, the quality of teaching in this key stage varies from satisfactory to very good. Teaching was seen at its best in a Year 3 lesson involving pupils in adding amounts of money and in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were adding numbers together. In these lessons the teaching proceeds at a brisk pace, challenge is appropriately high and relationships are excellent, resulting in unobtrusive but very effective control of the class. A further notable feature of both lessons was the way the teachers listened very carefully to pupils' responses. This practice boosted confidence and gave pupils the opportunity to articulate their thinking and thus deepen their understanding.

92 In all lessons throughout the school, teachers' lesson planning is very thorough. In the best practice, for example, as seen in Year 2, the pupils are informed about what they are intended to learn, thus increasing their self-knowledge of learning. Teachers give clear explanations and use skilful questioning techniques. The frequent practice of requiring pupils to demonstrate their working, in front of the class, promotes good learning and builds confidence. This results in pupils answering questions confidently in front of their peers without fear of failure or rebuke and they respect each other's feelings when errors are made. Pupils co-operate fully with adults and show interest and concentration in their work. Pupil behaviour is almost invariably good and where relationships with the teacher are strong, it is very good.

93 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired good skills of mental manipulation of number. Pupils can apply their skills with the four rules of number, for example, when multiplying a three-digit number by a two-digit number and when solving problems. Pupils have a good understanding of decimals and percentages; for example, they can rapidly mentally calculate 25 per cent of £8 and can accurately write numbers of six digits in length. In shape and space work, pupils can use formulae to calculate the area of rectangles and triangles. In data handling, pupils know about the various averages of mean, median and mode.

94 Pupils of all levels of prior attainment are well provided for. Accurate and thorough marking, together with regular assessments, provides teachers with the requisite information upon which future work is planned according to need. The needs of those pupils who have special educational needs are well met because the individual education plans address their specific needs.

95 The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful, especially in the way teachers carefully structure their lessons. Most lessons begin with a brisk and appropriate mental warm-up, a particularly good example being that seen in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher's use of a timer served to inject pace and urgency to pupils' learning. During the main part of lessons, pupils are usually successfully introduced to new knowledge and skills and teachers make good use of the plenary part of lessons to reiterate learning. Pupils have good levels of recall of multiplication table facts, and are competent when they mentally manipulate numbers. Written computations are accurately completed and neatly presented. A feature of the National Numeracy Strategy requiring greater emphasis by teachers is pupils' acquisition of mathematical vocabulary. The school needs to explore strategies to help pupils learn and remember the extensive vocabulary recommended within the National Numeracy Strategy. This would support the drive to improve pupils' ability to solve word problems.

96 Pupils are able to use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in design and technology when measuring, in geography when using grid references, and in ICT when using spreadsheets and control technology. In lessons that involve pupils working collaboratively, this contributes significantly to pupils' social development as well as reinforcing mathematical learning. Teachers promote pupils' clear understanding of text by reading it with them beforehand as was observed in a Year 4 lesson on word problems. Similarly, the emphasis placed upon pupils giving oral explanations contributes to the development of their speaking and listening skills.

97 Effective subject leadership and teachers' commitment have contributed to the improvements in the subject since the last inspection. Analysis of test data has been informative for colleagues in terms of identifying pupils' areas of relative weakness, such as solving word problems. Good quality resources contribute to pupils' learning. At present, there are some good examples of use of ICT to support mathematics but the school now needs to make greater use of ICT equipment to support learning in mathematics, an issue identified at the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

98 Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001 were well below average when compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The school was disappointed with these results and feels that a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the year group adversely affected the overall level of attainment. However, the levels attained in science in 2001 were far lower than the levels attained by the same pupils in mathematics. The work seen in pupils' folders and during lessons indicates that standards are clearly improving and that, although they are still below average, they are better than those of last year.

99 In lessons, the level of attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 is average overall and for a significant number above average. For example, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were studying living things and examining a range of fruits and seeds, pupils clearly used knowledge from a previous lesson to describe what conditions plants need to grow. They were able to identify a large number of fruits, including avocado pears and kiwi fruit as well as apples and bananas, and examined the cut fruits very carefully through hand lenses, making good and accurate observations.

100 By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils have developed at least average skills in observation, recording and predicting. This, together with the development of pupils' scientific language, has been a focus area for teaching across the school in order to raise standards. As a result, pupils in this lesson were asking pertinent questions and were using focused investigation to develop their understanding. The concentration, and as a result the level of understanding gained in this lesson by a small but significant number of boys, was well below average. There was a marked difference between boys' and girls' attainment in this lesson with, overall, girls' attainment being higher than boys.

101 Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In both key stages the findings of the school's audit of its science provision are being applied. For example, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scheme of work forms a secure foundation for lesson planning and there is a good emphasis on the use of scientific terminology. Lessons are well planned and often very well resourced for practical and investigative work. In most classes, teachers have a good knowledge of the topics they are teaching and present the information to pupils in a clearly structured way, outlining what they are to learn and what is expected. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where each part of the lesson built on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. The teacher made very good use of an exciting range of resources, a 'Big Book' to reinforce scientific language and the names of fruits. She skilfully deployed a range of teaching strategies, such as

practical activities, talking to the class, and question and answer sessions. Good, and often very good, relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are a significant feature of lessons and, where they are of this high standard, they make a big contribution to pupils' learning.

102 Pupils' learning closely follows the pattern of teaching with good and sometimes very good learning in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory learning in Key Stage 2. Variable levels of concentration and application, mainly of boys at the end of Key Stage 2, had an adverse effect on learning in the lessons observed. Similarly pupils' attitudes and behaviour follow the same pattern. They are good and often very good in Key Stage 1 and are satisfactory in Key Stage 2 although here again a small, but significant, number of boys exhibit some reluctance and are slow to respond to direction and to teaching.

103 The co-ordination of science is good. A thorough audit of provision has been carried out and aspects of teaching and learning have improved as a result. The co-ordinator reviews pupils' work and sees all teachers' lesson plans for science. In this way she has a clear view of the coverage of the National Curriculum, of the type of work being undertaken and of the standards of pupils' work. Based on this monitoring and evaluation the co-ordinator clearly expects the standards attained to be higher in the coming National Curriculum tests than in last year's Key Stage 2 tests. Inspection evidence supports this. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and each pupil has a folder of examples of work which teachers have compared with the levels expected for pupils' age.

104 Resources for science teaching are good and support an increased level of practical and investigative work. In a few rooms, accommodation is a little cramped for investigation activities. However, due regard for safe working practice ensures pupils' safety. The use of ICT is very limited in science and the school is aware of the need to increase the range and amount of use in order to continue to fulfil the requirements of the science National Curriculum. The school is also aware of the need to continue to improve standards in science so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, they are in line with pupils' standards in other core subjects.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105 During the inspection week it was possible to observe only a limited amount of art lessons at Key Stage 2 and so it was not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching and learning in this key stage. However, from the range of work on display and in folders and from discussions with staff it is evident that standards of pupils' artwork are at least average in Key Stage 2 and they are above average by the end of Key Stage 1. Art has a prominent place in pupils' learning and there is a good range of pupils' work on display in all areas of the school.

106 A good example of teaching and the school's approach to art was seen in a Year 2 lesson. In this lesson the teacher made very good use of ICT and links with the Internet as well as with some excellent and high quality artefacts in the form of quilts. The lesson was very well planned and each part, the research using the Internet link and looking at the shape and pattern in the quilts, related together very well to develop pupils' understanding and knowledge. This lesson, besides being well planned using the QCA scheme of work as a basis, made very good links with design and technology textiles, a feature of much of the artwork throughout the school. Teaching ensures that all pupils have equal access to art and all share in group and project work. Individual support, for example in the use of ICT and when pupils are developing their individual response to stimulus, is good and often very good, ensuring that their needs are met and that they are in a secure position to make gains in skills, knowledge and understanding.

107 The quality of work of pupils in both key stages is good with great care being taken in its production. For example, a set of clay tiles made by pupils in Year 2 showed that pupils have a good level of manipulative skills and are able to accurately incise patterns and cut out and apply clay overlay shapes to the tiles; colour was carefully and accurately applied and some pupils had used imaginative combinations of colours. From the care taken, pupils obviously enjoyed making their tiles and concentrated hard. The stimulus for the tiles project was a visit to St. Gabriel's Church with pupils taking their inspiration from the artwork and shapes in the church. A large banner, made by pupils working under the direction of a visiting artist, showed the same level of care, concentration and pride and again there were strong links with the church. Such links, besides providing inspiration for artwork, make a very good contribution to pupils' sense of awe and wonder and to their spiritual and cultural development.

108 The management and co-ordination of art, by the headteacher, are effective and there have been good improvements since the last inspection. The school has undergone an art review and adopted the QCA scheme of work. Art has been a focused area in the school's development plan. A new art policy has been written. The combination of all these factors has provided teachers with good and valuable support and direction and has ensured that the National Curriculum requirements are met. The co-ordinator oversees all teachers' planning and reviews pupils' work and in this way she monitors and evaluates coverage of the National Curriculum and the standard of pupils' work.

109 The school has made a good level of improvement since the last inspection: planning has been considerably strengthened; sketchbooks have been introduced; resources have been improved; there are strong links with other aspects of the curriculum and links with other subjects, for example with ICT, design and technology, especially textiles and with drama; and, resources and the range of media have been extended and improved.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110 During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about teaching and pupils' learning. However, the school provided sufficient evidence for secure judgements to be made about standards of pupils' work.

111 Standards attained by Year 6 pupils match those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 have undertaken an investigation of slippers, beginning with careful evaluation of manufactured shoes against criteria such as colour, appearance, and comfort. Pupils show appropriate levels of skill in their designs and include pertinent detail such as measurement and materials to be used. They have successfully used manipulative skills such as cutting, gluing and stitching, in order to produce some attractive artefacts.

112 Standards attained by 7-year-olds are above the level expected for their age. Examples of work completed by Year 2 pupils indicate that pupils are able to plan, make and evaluate their products to a level beyond that expected for their age. For example, pupils are able to use skills of accurate measuring before cutting and joining cardboard boxes and other re-cycled materials to make an "Incy Wincy Spider machine". Year 2 pupils have examined and created different types of winding mechanisms from construction materials before planning their own design. They have used accurate drawing and cutting skills to produce good quality work.

113 Design and technology tasks provide relevant contexts for pupils to apply learning from other subjects. Examples include: use of mathematical skills such as measuring nets to construct containers; application of scientific knowledge of electrical circuits when making torches; and making Tudor houses, linked to work in history

114 On the basis of pupils' work displayed around the school, photographic evidence and teachers' plans, it is clear that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are provided with sufficient and relevant opportunities to learn about design and technology.

115 Enthusiastic and effective co-ordination of this subject has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection, especially in pupils' ability to engage in the processes of design and evaluation. There is now a secure basis for long and medium-term plans that ensures a consistent and cohesive approach to lesson planning and ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

116 The school recognises the need to introduce an efficient and effective system of recording pupils' work in the subject, an issue raised at the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

117 By the time that they are 11, most of the pupils attain standards expected for their age in geography and have made satisfactory progress through the school. As there was no history taught during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

118 The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to organise and manage their classes so that little time is lost during lessons. There is effective use of questioning to find out what children know and understand before they start their activities. Pupils are given clear explanations of what they are to learn and all teachers place emphasis on pupils using correct geographical vocabulary. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their mapping skills by planning a route from home to school and learn about transport and communication along with the different uses to which land can be put. In a good quality lesson for pupils in Year 2, pupils made good progress in their understanding of how life is different on an island, in comparison to that on the mainland. This was a result of the activities being exciting and the teacher giving pupils some responsibility for their own learning. They were able to use their mapping skills to accurately identify and locate various places on a map of the Isle of Struay. There is satisfactory development of older pupils' ability to extract information from secondary sources and appropriate progress made in their acquisition of correct geographical vocabulary, so that they can talk confidently about their work. This was evident in a lesson in Year 4 when pupils were discussing how King George's Field could be improved for use by different groups of people. They show appropriate understanding of how people can affect an environment, and are able to use signs and symbols to give information on a plan of the field. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils showed that they know the difference between physical and political maps and can use a key to help them understand the symbols that are used on these maps. They are able to use an atlas to investigate the main physical features of Europe, including the main rivers of the European Union. In other work, they show a satisfactory understanding of the features of river systems and the nature of the Water Cycle.

119 The pupils' attitudes to learning in geography are positive. They sustain concentration and are willing to ask and answer questions. Pupils are willing to listen to the views and opinions of others and handle resources with care. They use their literacy skills to write reports of their findings, and their numeracy skills when involved in using co-ordinates in map work. Throughout the school, the teachers make some use of ICT to enhance pupils' work, but recognise the need to develop this further.

120 There is satisfactory curricular provision in both subjects, so that all pupils are able to enjoy a broad range of relevant experiences. There is secure leadership by a co-ordinator, who knows how the subjects can be further developed, such as by improving assessment procedures and the use of ICT. There is effective use of visits to provide further learning opportunities for pupils. In history, they have visited the Roman Museum in Chester and have undertaken a study of the history of Middleton. In geography, there is good use of the local environment and of an observational field trip to Saddleworth. The school has improved planning for both subjects since the last inspection and this now takes account of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, so they can be given work that is appropriately challenging. In both subjects there is adequate resource provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

121 Management has recognised the need to improve ICT provision throughout the school and has increased the level of hardware and software, created a central ICT resource area of six networked computers and has computers in each classroom. However, the number of pupils to each computer

remains above the average for similar schools. Currently, it is difficult for the school to provide enough contact time for each pupil to ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and that each new aspect of ICT that pupils learn builds successfully on previous knowledge and understanding. As a result, standards in ICT are average in Key Stage 1 but are below average for pupils by the end Key Stage 2.

122 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of computer usage and other aspects of ICT, for example how to control a floor turtle. In a Year 2 lesson, which made strong and very good links with art, pupils downloaded quilting patterns from the Internet and, in doing so, demonstrated their competence and their at least average level of skill in this aspect of ICT.

123 By the end Key Stage 2 most pupils are confident in a number of aspects of ICT and especially the use of computers. However, somewhat restricted access to computers does mean that they do not have sufficient time to develop the expected skills knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT. For example, although pupils experience data handling through using spreadsheets and presenting information in the form of graphs, this is not consistently built on in other subjects of the National Curriculum, especially, in mathematics and science. By the age of 11, pupils have limited experience of the use and structure of databases. Pupils are competent in accessing and finding information from the Internet and during the inspection week this was used well in a number of contexts, for example as a part of a Year 6 geography when pupils researched countries they were studying. Some very good examples of word-processed work were seen, for example the illustrated books of poems and letters compiled by pupils in Years 4 and 6. In both of these examples pupils combined amusing written work, competently word-processed with their own illustrations. The presentation of this work is very good.

124 Teaching is at least satisfactory in the lessons observed, with good planning and often clear demonstration and explanation. The limited amount of time that pupils have for learning ICT is a significant factor in the lower than average standards attained by the end of Key Stage 2 and teaching needs to address this. During the inspection week, teachers made only limited use of ICT as a part of their pupils' classroom work. Not enough links are made between aspects of ICT and other subjects, for example recording in science or entering data in a table.

125 Group work supported by the ICT technician is helping to improve standards. Groups of six pupils from each class work with him, usually once a week. This regular support and direction from a knowledgeable person is steadily improving standards and is going some way to addressing the shortfall in pupils' access time.

126 All pupils have equality of access to the use of ICT. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for, taking their turn in the ICT resource area with other pupils and covering the same aspects and uses of ICT as the rest of the class. Pupils who receive additional specialist support often work with appropriate software, for example to develop their number skills, or reading and spelling skills. Specialist teaching and support is very well organised with good relationships between pupils and adults and, as a result, pupils make good progress.

127 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in ICT lessons are good. When requested, they share computers well and are considerate of each other. They work with enthusiasm and interest and listen very well to teachers and support staff.

128 Co-ordination and organisation are good. The co-ordinator has only fairly recently taken on the role. There has been an audit of all resources and software and the QCA scheme of work has been introduced. Areas for development and for the further provision of resources have been identified and



ICT is an important part of the School's Improvement Plan. The profile of ICT has been raised throughout the school and it is clearly an essential area for development. Staff training is underway and this is felt by staff to have been a considerable help in developing expertise. Much hard work, planning and resources have been put into the provision for ICT and the subject is improving throughout the school.

129 Hardware resources are of good quality and supported by appropriate software. The school has a mixture of PC and Apple computers and a small network of PC's in a central position. A mobile interactive white board is beginning to be used effectively for demonstration in a number of classrooms. Good use is made of digital photography for recording events and pupils are beginning to use the photographs in presentations and in their printed work. The issue, which the school recognises, is to provide pupils with sufficient access time to ensure that they cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in sufficient quality and depth to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding develop systematically and securely and can be used in a variety of contexts.

## **MUSIC**

130 There was opportunity to see only limited aspects of the subject and, consequently, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the overall standards that pupils attain, by the time that they are 11. However, it is evident that pupils reach satisfactory standards in singing and are confident when performing in front of an audience.

131 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning follows the scheme of work so that pupils are able to build on previous learning. Lessons are well prepared and organised so that no time is lost when pupils move to different activities. This was evident in a good lesson in Year 2 in which pupils were responding to music by moving jerkily, like a camel. The teacher gave them a variety of stimulating activities, including accompanying the movements and singing with percussion instruments, which made learning fun and effectively developed their ability to perform a rhythm pattern with rests. As indicated in the previous inspection, good links are made to other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 developed their understanding of how music differs in various parts of the British Isles, when singing a folksong from Tyneside and in listening to Northumbrian Pipes, and used their geographical skills to locate these areas on a map. The historical knowledge of pupils in Year 6 was consolidated when learning a song about the evacuation during the Second World War and discussing what it must have felt like to be an evacuee in those times. In both lessons pupils showed that they can listen carefully and make simple appraisals of the music and songs. They show control of their voices when singing and have an appropriate musical vocabulary to talk about the work they are doing.

132 Pupils have positive attitudes and are appreciative of the musical talents of others. In school assemblies, they sing with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment, and the music plays an important role in their spiritual development. Pupils are given opportunities to take part in a range of musical performances, such as at Christmas and end of term concerts. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development, as they are able to play instruments and listen to and appreciate music from other countries. Pupils are able to join the choir, which has performed at the Young World Concert in Manchester. The leadership of the subject is secure, with the co-ordinator having recently taken over after the departure of the previous co-ordinator. She is aware of the need to develop the composing aspect of the subject and to use ICT more effectively. There is also an intention to provide pupils with more opportunities to listen to live music, which would build on the visits of pupils from the Middleton Technical School to give instrumental performances. Assessment and record-keeping procedures follow those in the programme of work and are satisfactory. There are sufficient resources to enable coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. The

accommodation is good as pupils are able to use the music room, which ensures there are no distractions from other classes during lessons.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133 Pupils nearing the end of Key Stage 2 attain standards that match those expected nationally. Year 6 pupils are competent when they successfully throw and catch a large or small ball. In gymnastics, they are able to satisfactorily synchronise their actions when they work in pairs, performing rolling and balancing actions. A few higher attainers show confidence to take their body weight on hands whilst in inverted positions, such as cartwheels, handstands etc. However, very few show any sense of aesthetic awareness of their body form when performing such actions. Almost all the pupils learn to swim to the standard required by the National Curriculum, and many exceed this standard.

134 On the evidence of a games and a gymnastics lesson in Year 2 it is evident that pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 1 exceed the level expected for 7-year-olds. In gymnastics, many are confident and competent in performing a variety of movement and balancing actions with good style. Pupils show good levels of skill when bouncing a large ball and when directing a small ball with a hockey stick. They make sensible use of available space, showing awareness of others, for example when performing gymnastic actions and when practising ball skills.

135 Throughout the school, pupils are aware of the need for warm-up before physical exercise and have an elementary understanding of the effect of exercise on the body. Examples of particularly effective warm-ups were those seen in lessons involving Years 1, 2 and 4, where pupils were well prepared for the physical activity that followed.

136 Teaching for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but the quality varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. Excellent teaching in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson resulted in pupils making very good gains in their ability to perform good quality bridging actions. The lesson was very well planned and directed by the teacher. Her enthusiasm and personal example, allied to excellent relationships, contributed greatly to the very good level of respect and co-operation shown by pupils. When she required pupils to observe the actions of others, she gave pupils a clear focus, for example, when asking which type of base gives greater stability within a balancing action. This enabled all pupils to develop their understanding and ultimately it improved their own balances. Her high expectations, both of pupils' performance and behaviour, were duly rewarded, as evidenced in their high energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment.

137 Less successful learning arises when excessive time is taken to set up apparatus or distribute equipment and, or, the teachers' management of the class is not as effective as it should be. For example, in one unsuccessful lesson in Key Stage 2, frequent interventions by the teacher to reprimand pupils, disrupted the pace of learning. This was exacerbated by some unfair treatment of minor transgressions, in that boys were sanctioned but girls' similar behaviour was not dealt with in the same way.

138 On the evidence of almost all lessons it is evident that there are very good relationships between adults and pupils. This underpins the good control most teachers have of their classes, as a result of which pupils demonstrate sensible behaviour and good attitudes. Notably, in the better lessons, teachers do not need to make use of the apparently less effective "yellow card" system, favoured by other teachers. In all lessons pupils make safe use of equipment and are aware of the needs of others.

139 Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. A particularly good example was that of a Year 2 games lesson in which pupils devised and complied with their own rules for a game they 'invented'. Similarly good examples were in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were called upon to make evaluative and sensitive comments about the performance of

their peers, and in Year 6 when pupils collaborated to perform synchronised moves. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by events such as the Rochdale Dance Festival. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with significant physical needs, are fully integrated within lessons. Planning documents provide evidence that National Curriculum requirements are met. The school is currently trialling a simple and effective system for recording pupils' progress in the subject.

140 Good subject leadership has resulted in significant improvements since the previous inspection. Improvements include better resources, the development of a good quality policy and adoption of a scheme of work, and staff training in gymnastics.

141 Pupils' learning benefits from good quality play areas and adequate resources. They also benefit from the involvement of community footballers from professional clubs and from the visits of hockey and cricket coaches.

142 Provision of extra-curricular activities such as football, netball and rounders contributes significantly to pupils' personal and physical development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

143 By the time that they are 11, most pupils meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

144 The quality of teaching is good, with teachers having secure subject knowledge and being familiar with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that build on previous work, so that pupils can bring prior learning to help them understand new ideas. The activities are interesting and effectively challenge pupils of all abilities so that they make good progress in their learning and achieve well as they progress through the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught that the Bible is a special book for Christians and the effect that Jesus had on the people who met him. They show an appropriate knowledge about the key events in the life of Jesus, as was seen when pupils in Year 2 were discussing with their teacher the time that he met the fishermen and chose them as disciples. They know the names of the disciples and that they were special friends of Jesus. The teacher then skilfully related the idea of friendship to their own experiences as she encouraged them to talk about the qualities of a good friend. By the time they are 7, the pupils show a satisfactory understanding of key Christian values and can identify the moral issue in a simple story. As pupils progress through the school, teachers continue to use religious education lessons to foster pupils' social and moral development, as was seen in the work of pupils in Year 5 when they have considered what they had done wrong and what they could do to make it right. Pupils are taught the features of other major religions, as was seen in a lesson for Year 4 on learning about the significance of the Torah in Judaism. In a good quality lesson in Year 6 pupils showed understanding of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The interesting practical activity given to them effectively developed their knowledge of the symbols used by Christians to represent the Holy Spirit. By the age of 11, most pupils show familiarity with the life of Jesus and can give examples of how Christian belief changes someone's life.

145 The pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour in lessons is good. They show respect for the feelings, needs and beliefs of others, as well as demonstrating that they can reflect on the consequences of their own actions. In assemblies, they show that they can pray with reverence.

146 There is a broad and balanced curriculum with an emphasis on studying Christian beliefs, but also opportunity to learn, in depth, about other major world religions Judaism and Islam. The leadership of the subject is good, with the co-ordinator having an effective overview of the quality of teaching and

education in the subject. Acts of collective worship play an important role in the subject, as was seen during an assembly for pupils in Years 1 and 2 on the theme of 'Life's Journey'. The headteacher placed good emphasis on pupils helping others and related this well to how God can help and guide us through life by prayer. Assemblies that provide pupils with good opportunities for quiet personal reflection help to develop an understanding of an inner self. There are strong links with St. Gabriel's Church that give pupils further significant learning experiences. The vicar comes into school regularly to lead assemblies, work in classes and take part in the after-school Bible club. Pupils visit the church to take part in services and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the function of its key features. There are no formal assessment procedures but the school is about to trial a new record-keeping system. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including artefacts and reference books. The current provision shows good improvement since the last inspection.