

INSPECTION REPORT

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

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105703

Headteacher: Mrs H Hampson

Reporting inspector: Mr D Byrne
28076

Dates of inspection: 25th - 28th June 2001

Inspection number: 215022

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

School category: Church of England

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address
Fitton Hill
Oldham

Postcode: OL8 2PY

Telephone number: 0161 624 0053

Fax number: 0161 665 2484

E-mail address head@st-martins.oldham.sch.uk

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Carole Marsden

Date of previous inspection: 5th July 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. D. Byrne 28076	Registered Inspector	Science Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Mr. B. Harrington 31279	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
Mr. D.Carpenter 31807	Team Inspector	Design and technology Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
Mrs. F Gander 21265	Team Inspector	Special educational needs	
Mrs. J.Boden 12301	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs. Wilkinson-Tilbrook 10068	Team Inspector	Foundation stage Art and design Information and communication technology	
Mrs.G.Beasley	Team Inspector	English Music Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Lynrose Marketing Limited
Bungalow Farmhouse
Six Mile Bottom
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 0TU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Martin's Church of England Primary school is situated in the Fitton Hill area of Oldham. The school is of average size with 242 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven years including 27 full-time equivalent Nursery places. The attainment of the majority of children when they are admitted to the Nursery class is well below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (40%) is well above the average and the socio-economic circumstances in the locality of the school are very low. The vast majority of pupils are of white origin with 1% from other ethnic backgrounds. No pupil requires support for English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils registered on the school's special educational needs register (24%) is above the national average with 2% requiring statements of special educational needs. The school educates pupils who are visually impaired and successfully ensures that they are included in all aspects of school life.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Although standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design and information and communication are below the standards expected for eleven year olds, standards are improving and pupils are now making good progress in English, mathematics and science from the very low levels of attainment with which they start school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage with some examples of very good and excellent teaching throughout the school. The head teacher provides the school with good leadership and a strong senior management team is established to support an effective range of strategies to raise standards further. The school budget is wisely spent to benefit the pupils and the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership by the head teacher ensures that the school has a clear educational direction.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are given a good start to their education.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially for visually impaired pupils.
- A good ethos within the school promotes good attitudes and behaviour amongst all pupils and good levels of personal development.
- Standards in design and technology are above expectations at the end of both key stages.
- Good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development.
- Good provision is provided for ensuring pupils' welfare and for pupils' personal development.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered.

What could be improved

- Standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in English mathematics and science across the school but particularly in Years 2 and 4.
- Standards in art and information and communication technology by the age of eleven.
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- The rate of attendance.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

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 the school has made good progress and the serious weaknesses identified in 1999 have been rectified. The governing body has reacted promptly and effectively to implement and achieve an effective action plan. A strong and effective head teacher has been appointed and as a result the school is improving rapidly and has a good capacity for further improvement in the future. The quality of teaching is better and standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are rising. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and levels of personal development have improved from satisfactory to good. Each subject now has a scheme of work to guide planning across the school and there is a good structure for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science guided by a good quality assessment policy. Ways of improving standards are at the forefront of everyone's mind and all staff are working determinedly to achieve higher standards. The role and effectiveness of the governing body has developed significantly and ensures that effective financial management occurs. The value for money provided by the school has risen from being unsatisfactory to satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	D	B	Very high A*
Mathematics	E	E	E	D	well above average A
Science	E	E	E*	D	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

When children start school in the Nursery class, their attainment is well below the expectations for their age in each aspect of their development. As a result of good teaching and management in the Nursery class and very good teaching and learning in the Reception class, children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress so that by the time they start Year 1, they have achieved each of the early learning goals with the exception of speaking which remains below expectations. Although most children speak with confidence, many have a limited knowledge and use of vocabulary. From the very low level of attainment when children start school, the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science and in Key Stage 2 good progress occurs overall in each of these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall in response to good levels of support and guidance.

The results of the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests and assessments indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below the national average. Over the last five years, standards have fluctuated but have been consistently below the national average. The school has recently put into place a number of effective strategies to raise standards. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is still close to the national average in reading, but below the national average in writing, mathematics and science although there has been a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the standard expected for seven year olds.

The school's Key Stage 2 results have been consistently low over the last three years. The 2000 results show that standards in English were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Standards in mathematics were well below the national average and in science they were in the lowest 5% nationally. Attainment in both mathematics and science was below the average for similar schools. When the school's performance figures for Key Stage 2 are averaged out over the last five years, there has been an upward trend that is broadly in line with the national picture. The head teacher and staff have introduced a number of very effective strategies to raise standards. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are currently just below what is expected for eleven year olds. When the very low level of attainment with which children start school is considered, this represents good progress overall across the school. The work seen during the inspection and the evidence from the results of the 2001 test results indicate that standards are rising rapidly, particularly in mathematics and science.

In other subjects, pupils generally perform satisfactorily although there are some variations in performance between some subjects. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in geography, history, music and physical education are in line with national expectations but in information and communication technology and art and design they are below expectations. Standards in design and technology exceed national expectations by the end of both key stages.

Pupils' attainment is rising steadily but it could be even better. The school has set targets for both literacy and numeracy for 2001 that indicate improving standards since 2000 but the targets are not sufficiently challenging and do not reflect the improved standards in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and work well together in groups and as individuals.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved both in lessons and outside at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships exist amongst all pupils. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn to deal well with responsibility. Levels of tolerance amongst pupils are high and visually impaired pupils are totally integrated into all aspects of school life. Pupils have satisfactory levels of personal development.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The rate of whole school attendance is below the national average. High numbers of pupils take holidays during term time and this contributes to an above average rate of authorised absence. For the pupils involved, their progress is adversely affected by the time out of school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
56 lessons seen	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons observed with 5% being unsatisfactory. 59% of lessons were good or better with 11% being excellent and 16% being very good. The quality of teaching is good overall in the nursery class and very good in the Reception class. A wide range of well-organised and challenging learning activities ensures that children make a very good start to their education. In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), both literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Teaching in science is satisfactory with a weakness in guiding pupils to develop adequate skills of performing independent investigations. Expectations for higher attaining pupils are too low in Year 2 and in parts of Key Stage 2 and this reduces the overall attainment of pupils. In Years 1 and 6, very good teaching ensures that pupils learn rapidly. Throughout the school, lessons are usually planned well and provide pupils with a stimulating range of work. As a result pupils are willing to learn and keen to do well. The quality of marking varies and is not used enough to set targets for pupils to improve their work. Although teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of most subjects of the National Curriculum there is a weakness in how to effectively use computers to support learning in all subjects. Better use could be made of teacher assessments to guide planning. Very good use of assessment information directs support for the visually impaired pupils so that they are totally integrated into school life and this contributes to the very good levels of teaching and learning for these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school provides a very good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. For Key Stage 1 and 2, the curriculum is well planned to ensure that each subject of the National Curriculum is taught for an appropriate amount of time with the exception of art and design. Good links with the community support some elements of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is provided especially for visually impaired pupils. Good planning and support ensures that all pupils have full access to all parts of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school provides good opportunities to develop pupils' social skills and moral understanding and awareness. The school makes satisfactory provision for the development of pupils' spiritual development and for the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good levels of support and guidance ensure that pupils' welfare is successfully maintained. Good support is provided for pupils' personal development.
How well the school works with parents and carers.	Very good links with parents and good quality information keeps parents informed about the life and work of the school. The school welcomes help from parents and values the views that parents have about the quality of education provided for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The head teacher is a strong, visionary person who is rapidly establishing effective strategies for improving standards across the school. A strong senior management team has recently been established and an effective school improvement planning process accurately identifies and prioritises the next steps for development. The role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring standards is still unsatisfactory, but good plans exist to rectify this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All responsibilities are performed satisfactorily. The governing body is well structured so that all of its duties are effectively performed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	An honest and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses exists amongst governors and the senior management team and very good use is made of analyses of results from end of key stage National Curriculum tests to create ways forward.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. All resources are used well in order to support pupils. The head teacher and governing body carefully monitor the impact of spending and the principles of best value are applied so that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Pupils benefit from being educated in spacious and well-maintained school buildings with good outdoor play and sporting facilities. With the exception of some resources for information and communication technology resources for learning are adequate and the number and qualifications of teaching and support staff are suitable to meet the needs of all pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good progress their children make. • The quality of information received from the school. • The ease with which they can approach staff. • The effectiveness of the head teacher. • The way the school helps their child to develop good attitudes and to become mature and responsible. • The way the school tries to involve them in school life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to participate in extra-curricular activities. • More details about what is expected with regard to homework

The inspection findings support the parents' positive comments. A good range of extra-curricular activities is already provided for pupils in the school day although some thought should be given to considering the feasibility of providing more opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils. The level of homework is appropriate for pupils' needs, and is of good quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment for the large majority of children when they start school in the Nursery class is below the expectations for their age in each aspect of their development. As a result of good teaching and management in the Nursery class and very good teaching and learning in the Reception class, children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress so that by the time they start Year 1, they have achieved each of the early learning goals with the exception of speaking which remains below expectations. Although most children talk confidently, a significant number have a limited knowledge and use of vocabulary.
2. By the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2), assessment data between 1998 and 2000 indicates that standards have been consistently well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Over the same time, the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) has also fallen below the national average for their age. The impact of better teaching, higher expectations of both staff and pupils from the newly appointed head teacher and improvements in the curriculum have increased the rate of learning. The percentage of pupils achieving the standards expected nationally for both seven and eleven year olds has increased significantly and the percentage achieving standards that exceed national expectation is starting to improve. Between 1998 and 2000 the rate of improvement in the average points score of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 was close to that made by schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys or girls.
3. In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), pupils make satisfactory progress overall from a very low level of attainment when they start school. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are now rising and are currently close to national expectations in reading but still below national expectations in writing, mathematics and science. In Year 1, pupils learn at a rapid rate and progress is very good. Very good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities work at levels that match their needs and pupils achieve well. In Year 2, however, the progress made by higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory because they are not given work that is challenging enough. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to achieve standards that are above the national average and this reduces the overall performance of pupils when compared to all primary schools nationally. The results by the end of key stage National Curriculum tests in Key Stage 1 in 2000 confirmed the judgement that standards were rising slowly but standards remain below the national average in mathematics, English and science and in comparison with similar schools standards were below average.
4. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) the rate of progress is good overall, although it varies between classes. In Year 4 pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall whilst in Year 6 pupils make very good progress. The disruptions in staffing caused by illness and absence coupled with uncertainties in the leadership of the school have adversely affected the quality of teaching and consequently the standards achieved. Recent improvements in the school's management, adaptations to the curriculum such as the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and greater stability in staffing, are contributing to an improvement in the standards of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The particularly good progress in Year 6 is partly because of very good quality teaching that is effectively identifying and challenging higher attaining pupils and partly because of recent improvements in the preparation for pupils in Year 6 prior to taking

the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. Although the end of key stage National Curriculum test results for 2000 show that standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average, and for science in the lowest 5% nationally, the percentage of pupils achieving the standard expected of level 4 is increasing rapidly. Inspection evidence is that standards are now just below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools results in 2000 showed that the pupils' performance in English was above average but in mathematics and science performance was below average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys or girls.

5. Since the last inspection pupils' attainment by the time they leave school has improved significantly in English, mathematics and science. In 2001, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard for eleven year olds has increased significantly. In mathematics the percentage of pupils in the school achieving level 4 has increased from 48% to 83% and in science the percentage has improved from 52% to 93%. The percentage achieving the above-expected standard of level 5 is also increasing. Inspection evidence is that the good quality of leadership that is uniting staff and establishing expectations for good standards provides a very good basis for continued improvement in the future.
6. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are close to the national expectations for seven year olds in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In design and technology standards exceed national expectations. These judgements represent improved progress and attainment in art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology and in other subjects standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection in 1999.
7. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have been maintained since the last inspection in most foundation subjects. In geography, history, music and physical education standards are close to the national expectations for pupils of their age. In information and communication technology, standards are better than at the time of the last inspection but are still below the national expectations for eleven year olds. The improvement is as a result of a major investment in better quality computers and the introduction of a well-organised curriculum but although standards are rising they could be even better. Weaknesses exist in the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils in art and design. The school recognises this and has recently acted to strengthen the teaching of art and design by using the skills of a local artist who voluntarily works with groups of pupils in the school. This has improved the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 and standards in some classes, particularly Year 5, are improving. Good leadership and very effective strategies for teaching design and technology have improved standards considerably since the last inspection and much of the work seen in Key Stage 2 is at a standard that is above national expectations for eleven year olds.
8. Since the last inspection the school has implemented a wide range of strategies to raise standards in particular by the end of Key Stage 2. The introduction of homework clubs, booster groups and rigorous revision prior to the end of key stage National Curriculum tests have contributed greatly to improving standards in Year 6. Standards in both literacy and numeracy are improving steadily as a result of these initiatives. The majority of pupils are extending their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and of the skills of reading and writing at a good rate but a high percentage struggle to overcome the low level of attainment with which they start school. There is an intention to improve progress in literacy in Key Stage 1 by providing additional literacy support in order to raise standards further in speaking and writing.

9. The school's very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that all pupils with learning or physical disabilities make good progress in their learning. Good support and guidance for visually impaired pupils ensure that each pupil is involved in all aspects of each lesson so that the targets set for their learning are reached. Although the school sets targets for achievement by all pupils in English and mathematics in the end of key stage National Curriculum tests, they are not challenging enough and do not reflect the true potential of pupils and the impact of higher expectations introduced by the new head teacher and senior management team. Future targets need reviewing so that the success of higher attaining pupils is considered more carefully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved since the last inspection. Inspection findings are that pupils have good attitudes to school and to their work. In the Foundation Stage children behave well and show high levels of interest in activities and display very positive attitudes to learning. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils show interest and make good contributions to the lessons, and they readily engage in the activities during most lessons. During a swimming lesson, pupils of all abilities responded very well to the good pace of the lesson and the high expectations of their teachers. This helped to maintain a high rate of learning, the results of which were evident in the pupils being willing to undertake more challenging activities, thereby increasing their self-esteem and confidence. Most parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons, and during group and social activities during the day. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection, and parents state that any such behaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been three fixed period exclusions of pupils in the last twelve months when all other sanctions have been unsuccessful.
11. Relationships within the school are good. Pupils respect the feelings of others and have a good understanding of how their actions affect others. Pupils of all ages recognise the special needs of those pupils with visual impairment and are pleased to help these pupils to find resources and move easily about the school. The school promotes pupils' self-confidence, and this contributes greatly to the personal development of all pupils. In a recent parental survey undertaken by the school, parents concurred that relationships are a strength of the school are improving. The good relationships in the school enable each pupil to feel valued and this gives them the confidence to learn.
12. Pupils develop good levels of personal development. Across the school, pupils are pleased to undertake jobs as class monitors, with Year 6 pupils being appointed prefects. Older pupils help to manage the movement of pupils at lunchtime, and two pupils from each class sit on the School Council. Pupils take these roles seriously and by taking responsibility, acquire an improved understanding of the needs of others and of the school community.
13. Attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection but remains unsatisfactory because the rate of attendance is below the national average. The school has recently introduced a number of initiatives in an attempt to improve the attendance rate and reduce the levels of unauthorised absence e.g the introduction of a reward system designed to reduce truancy. However, a large number of parents take their children on holiday during term time and this has a significant effect upon the attendance figures. Through the school's efforts, the rate of unauthorised attendance has been reduced to 0.1% in the current year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with strengths in the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage. Variations exist in the quality of teaching between classes and year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are pockets of excellent and very good teaching and in one class in Key Stage 2 there is some unsatisfactory teaching. The vast majority of teachers are working hard to raise standards and are responding very positively to the clearer expectations made of them by the newly appointed head teacher. In Year 2, the quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall does not identify the higher attaining pupils clearly enough so that suitably challenging work can be provided for them. In Year 4, teaching is unsatisfactory and there are poor relationships and communication between the class teacher and pupils. A major strength of the school is the very good quality of teaching observed in the Reception class and the very good quality of teaching of visually impaired pupils across the school.
15. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons observed with 5% being unsatisfactory. 59% of lessons were good or better with 11% being excellent and 16% being very good.
16. In the Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes), the quality of teaching is good overall sustaining the good standard at the time of the last inspection. Good planning and teaching ensures that children in both the Nursery class and Reception classes are given a good start to their education. Skilful teaching and very good relationships between children and the teachers and support staff ensure that most children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They become confident to work independently as well as learning to share with others in groups. Good progress in reading, writing and listening occurs as a result of teachers providing a wide range of stimulating activities and ensuring that children are motivated and enjoy learning. A good emphasis is also placed upon promoting the first stages of writing and reading and children respond well to the creation in the classrooms of bright and lively reading and writing areas. Teachers and support staff successfully promote mathematical understanding through well structured play activities such as measuring ingredients during cooking activities and also good use of incidental time when children are encouraged to make up story rhymes during snack time.
17. Teachers and staff plan a wide variety of activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Good use is made of computers to support literacy and numeracy skills. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the way in which children in the Foundation Stage are taught to develop an historical understanding and in the provision for their physical development. Very good support is provided for children with special educational needs and this ensures that they are included in all activities. The teaching of creative development is good and ensures good progress in terms of children's artistic and musical development.
18. In Years 1 and 2, the satisfactory standard of teaching at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. The quality of teaching varies however between classes. In one Year 1 class the quality is very good. High expectations are set for all pupils including, higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, and a range of well-prepared and effectively organised activities is provided that invigorates and inspires pupils to learn. Very good examples of pupils' own work are displayed on the classroom walls and worktops are complemented by the teachers' well presented and appropriately explained displays of information. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are presented in a lively manner. Good planning, based upon teacher assessments of each

pupil ensures that everyone is given activities that challenge and extend their knowledge and understanding and skills. In Year 2, although planning is satisfactory and lower attaining and average pupils make satisfactory progress, not enough use is made of teacher assessments to identify higher attaining pupils. Expectations for these pupils are not high enough and the standard of planned activities is often too low with the consequence that whilst these pupils make some progress it is not good enough and therefore they do not attain standards of which they are capable by the age of seven.

19. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is improving standards of writing in particular. In Key Stage 1 literacy is taught satisfactorily overall but in Year 2, higher attaining pupils are not given work that is challenging enough. Recent initiatives to improve handwriting and writing in general are starting to raise standards and pupils are responding with good levels of enthusiasm. In Year 1, the quality of teaching in literacy is very good. Very high expectations are made of pupils regarding the style in which they write and very good models of writing are provided for pupils. Pupils know that they are expected to start sentences with a capital letter and end with a full stop, and if work is not as neat as it should be pupils know that they will have to repeat it. This attention to detail results in pupils working very hard and producing work that is neat and tidy for their age. In Year 2, expectations are not as high and pupils work at slower pace. The range and quantity of written work in pupils' books is less than it should be and standards of handwriting, although showing signs of improvement recently are only satisfactory. Throughout Key Stage 1, teachers give pupils good opportunities to read and a love of books develops. Most pupils read with enthusiasm and the teachers have recently strengthened the teaching of basic sounds to pupils and this is starting to raise standards. Although teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy, and planning is adequate except for higher attaining pupils in Year 2, a weakness is the planned provision to promote speaking across the curriculum and this contributes to standards of speaking being below expectations by the time pupils reach the age of seven.
20. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall but it varies between year groups. In Year 6 it is very good and promotes very good progress. Good use of teacher assessments are used to direct work that challenges higher attaining pupils and prepares them well for the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. A lively and exciting style of teaching supported by well organised and paced activities results in enthusiastic motivated pupils who try their best. In other classes the quality of teaching varies. In Year 3 strengths were observed during the inspection when a brisk pace and enthusiastic manner inspired pupils to compose a letter based upon text from a Roald Dahl story. Activities were well organised so that both lower and higher attaining pupils were challenged and well-led discussions ensured that pupils developed a good understanding of the features of a humorous poem. In Year 4, the quality of teaching has some unsatisfactory features because the pace of lessons is too slow and activities lack challenge. In Year 5, satisfactory teaching makes sure that pupils learn at a steady rate. Work is well planned and whilst pupils show reasonable levels of involvement in tasks provided, opportunities for pupils to work independently are not always fully exploited and opportunities for developing speaking skills not taken.
21. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to teach numeracy and pupils are developing good strategies for solving number problems but a weakness of teaching is that not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their knowledge to problem solving in other areas such as shape, measurement and handling data. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and in Year 1 it is excellent. The

feature of excellent teaching is the high level of organisation of well-prepared activities that test the knowledge and understanding of all pupils including higher attaining pupils. Very good subject knowledge informs demanding and well-directed questions that challenge pupils' existing knowledge. Pupils show high levels of concentration as they respond to the class teacher's skilful introduction of a mild level of competitiveness. In Year 2, good use is also made of competition by using a quiz to develop pupils' mental arithmetic strategies and lessons are planned well in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy guidance, but not enough challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils and this reduces the progress that they make. An analysis of pupils' work in exercise books in Year 2 indicates that the range of work provided for pupils is not broad enough to challenge the knowledge and understanding of higher attaining pupils and this restricts the progress of this group of pupils so that they do not do as well as they can in the end of key stage National Curriculum tests.

22. In Key Stage 2, the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall with a strength in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the end of key stage National Curriculum tests prior to the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. They are provided with good opportunities to revise and prepare. Work is set which meets the needs of all pupils; it is at a high enough standard to challenge the higher attaining pupils whilst catering effectively for the needs of lower attainers. As a result Year 6 pupils like mathematics and work at a good pace. In other Key Stage 2 groups, teaching is broadly satisfactory although evidence from the analysis of pupils' work indicates that too little attention is given to providing work that extends and challenges the higher attainers. The quality of planning for numeracy is satisfactory but too few opportunities are planned for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday problem solving situations.
23. Science is taught satisfactorily overall in terms of developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of science and using correct scientific vocabulary but not enough time is given to teaching skills of independent investigation. Despite some recent staff training, there is still an uncertainty about how to manage and organise lessons that involve pupils in performing either experiments or investigations. The overall impact of this is that pupils make satisfactory progress overall in terms of their knowledge and understanding of science but unsatisfactory progress in their problem-solving skills. In both Key Stage 1 and 2, lessons are well planned and organised when teaching knowledge and understanding but too few opportunities are planned for pupils to carry out simple tests and to record the results in an appropriate way. Although some opportunities exist for the use of information and communication technology and the planned development of both literacy and numeracy objectives in lessons, these are not systematically planned and therefore there is a reduced opportunity for pupils to apply their basic skills across the curriculum. Science activities tend to be planned with the lower attainers and the average pupil in mind and not enough thought is given to challenging higher attaining pupils. This is the main reason why the end of key stage National Curriculum test results have been well below average in recent years. Better use is now being made of teacher assessments and in Year 6 especially this knowledge is being used to provide suitable activities for all pupils. This is starting to improve standards and develop more enthusiasm for science amongst pupils.
24. The team of teachers and support staff in Key Stage 1 and 2 have a secure subject knowledge of each subject of the National Curriculum although the confidence and knowledge of some staff to teach information and communication technology is weak and also some teachers are unsure of how to teach art and design. Good teaching in design and technology, geography, history and some aspects of physical education and music significantly contributes to some good standards of work in aspects of each subject. At the moment there is no policy for sharing staff expertise through the use of specialist teaching, although the voluntary support of a local artist is boosting standards

in art and design in parts of Key Stage 2.

25. Teachers have mostly good relationships with their pupils and organise and manage lessons effectively so that the majority make satisfactory progress. Features of the very good and excellent teaching observed are the rapid pace, highly motivating manner and effective use of praise and encouragement for all pupils. The few cases of unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection were because the teacher did not communicate effectively with pupils and there were weaknesses in the relationships between the teacher and pupils. The lessons moved at a very slow pace and consequently pupils lost attention and concentration and therefore did not make the progress of which they are capable.
26. The quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory overall with care taken to identify realistic objectives for each lesson but there is a weakness in planning to develop pupils' skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects where obvious links can be made. This reduces opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills to a range of new and practical contexts. The needs of lower attaining and average attaining pupils are generally recognised and effectively planned for but, with the exception of Years 1 and 6, there are occasions when not enough thought is given to challenging the knowledge and understanding of higher attaining pupils thereby reducing their progress. Good use is made of individual education plans by all staff to help to provide suitable work for visually impaired pupils and those with learning difficulties. Throughout the school, class teachers and support staff work very well together so that support is effectively directed to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Although there is a detailed marking policy in place, it is not fully implemented by all teachers. Only occasionally does marking direct pupils to improve their work and use comments that form the basis of targets for future development. Whilst teachers know the pupils in their classes well, not enough use is made of teacher assessments to appropriately direct tasks towards pupils' individual needs.

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

27. The school provides a broad curriculum for its pupils with a good range of learning opportunities available outside of the formal curriculum. The school is now close to meeting the statutory requirements in relation to the curriculum, which is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection when the overall breadth, balance and relevance were reported to be unsatisfactory. The school has recently adopted the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidelines as a framework for some of the foundation subjects. Policy documents are in place for all subjects and some of these are scheduled for review during the next school year. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and these are beginning to have a positive impact on the standards being achieved by the pupils. Although some good examples were seen during the inspection of pupils applying their literacy skills in other subjects for example in geography and design and technology the full impact of the literacy strategy has yet to be seen across the curriculum. At times, good work done in other subjects is let down by the pupils' poor writing and recording skills. There is a weakness in the allocation of time for the teaching of art and design and the school does not yet give enough priority to the subject. There is, however, an art club provided by the school that is very popular and which has produced some work of exceptional quality currently on display throughout the building. The curriculum provided for the Foundation Stage is very good and complies fully with the nationally recommended framework for children in Nursery and Reception classes. The very

good quality of education provided at this stage does much to prepare the pupils for their entry into full time statutory education.

28. Overall the quality of long-term and half-termly planning is very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and 2. In the classroom, teachers are working to clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils and form part of their evaluation of their own achievements and progress. In the two mixed age classes at Key Stage 1 planning takes account of the different learning needs of the age groups and evidence from the inspection indicates that neither group suffers any barrier to its learning from the arrangement.
29. The school has an Equal Opportunities Policy and addresses the question of educational inclusion very successfully. Not all subject policy documents are fully up to date on the question of educational inclusion and this will need to be incorporated into the documentation as revisions take place. No major problems arise concerning gender differences in the progress and attainment made by the pupils in the different classes. The very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs ensures that the majority of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are making very good progress towards the targets that are set for them. At present, insufficient challenge is being provided for the small group of higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 4.
30. The school offers a good range of extra curricular activities each day. These include musical and sporting activities, and computer, art and Braille clubs. All activities are available to older pupils, and younger pupils are encouraged to join the recorder group. Pupils with visual impairment are fully integrated and take part in extra curricular activities. Pupils arriving early at school are able to take advantage of the table tennis facilities under the guidance of teachers and the caretaker, and the art club also holds a session before the school day begins. In addition to developing the skills of pupils related to the activities, pupils' team and social skills are further developed through extra curricular activities, with morning activities encouraging pupils to come to school early. Despite the efforts of the school and a few volunteer helpers, a few parents think that the school does not provide a sufficiently interesting range of activities outside lessons.
31. The school presents a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education through lessons, Circle Time, and other curricular subjects in addition to the incidental opportunities taken by teachers to support pupils' personal development. Younger pupils are regularly involved in role-play that enables them to examine problems from a variety of perspectives, and older pupils undertake more formal debates on moral issues of the day. The School Council is a good feature of the school that successfully develops amongst pupils an understanding of democracy and a sense of responsibility. These activities provide pupils with the necessary skills with which to make informed judgements. A co-ordinator has recently been appointed to ensure that the school meets national requirements for personal, social and health education. She has received significant training and has disseminated relevant information to other members of staff. A policy and scheme of work are in place and resources have been acquired to match the planned activities. The school recognises the need to review and update its policy for sex education.
32. The school has good links with the community it serves and these enhance the quality of pupils' education by broadening their experiences and enabling them to apply skills to different situations. Recently, the school has been involved in a community initiative to develop health, leisure and educational facilities in the area. Good use is made of the locality for the study of geography, and pupils visit the group of local churches for

major Christian celebrations, and pupils have visited museums at Ordsall Hall, Saddleworth and Manchester University as part of their studies. Parents and friends visit the school to talk about their experiences of twentieth century life. There is an artist in school each week supported by a parent and the head teacher in extending the art experiences and skills of older pupils.

33. Members of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra held a performance in school which pupils from the local Roman Catholic primary school were invited to share. The school has strong social, curricular and medical links with the neighbouring special school, and has just established links with a local primary school that has a large number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. These links provide pupils with an insight into the lives of pupils with cultures different from their own, and promotes sensitivity to living in a multicultural society. There are very good induction routines for the parents and children joining the nursery that help children to settle easily and feel secure in school. Year 6 pupils use the information and communication technology suite in the local high school to which most of them transfer, and the high school design and technology teacher has worked with pupils to make books. The schools plan to develop their physical education links in the next year.
34. Through Christmas events, pupils and parents have raised funds for Francis House Children's Hospice, and many pupils were part of a massed schools' choir that performed at Manchester Arena in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. In these ways, pupils have become aware of and helped children who are less fortunate than they are. Students from local colleges and high schools are welcomed into school to undertake their work experience placements. Two parents work in school each week as part of their training as classroom assistants and provide good support for pupils.
35. The school has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is now satisfactory overall. Pupils learn as soon as they start school that everyone in school is special and that everyone plays an important role in developing the welcoming atmosphere in the school community. The very good integration of pupils with visual difficulties into the full life of the school shows this clearly. Pupils accept and support each other, waiting patiently for their turn to speak and respecting the views of others in turn. Pupils develop an awareness of the importance of caring for the environment in science and geography lessons and are able to talk about the part that they must play in its upkeep. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The codes and rules of behaviour are displayed clearly and prominently around the school and are followed consistently by all staff and pupils. Pupils learn about right and wrong and are encouraged to consider moral dilemmas as part of personal and social education activities. Pupils are strongly encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others and 'Circle Time' offers good opportunities for pupils to consider the feelings of others. A friendship wall displays how well pupils have thought about values and relationships.
37. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The extra curricular clubs enable many pupils to entertain social groups in the neighbourhood and the choir in particular enjoys singing to older members of the community. During recent instrumental music lessons, brass and violin players have rehearsed diligently for next week's performance at the Oldham Music Festival and all pupils are keen to do well when representing the school. Although this year's residential visit has been cancelled due to the foot and mouth outbreak, this regular event enables pupils to develop their social skills away from the

school environment. Pupils are given good opportunities to take on the role of monitors from the earliest age in nursery when jobs include tidying and sorting out apparatus right through to Year 6 when pupils take responsibility for caring for younger pupils at lunchtimes and tidying away equipment used during lunchtime play activities. More opportunities to develop social interaction through collaborative group work in lessons would enhance social development further. The School Council plays an important role in making school decisions and pupils who are voted onto the committee gain a great deal from the experience.

38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school has recently bought a range of reading books, which are used effectively in literacy lessons to extend pupils knowledge and understanding of a range of cultures around the world. The recent celebrations of World Book Day provided a useful opportunity for pupils to listen to a number of stories from around the world. The display in the corridor shows the writing that pupils have done about a number of countries and Year 6 pupils' poems based on a reflection of their chosen culture shows a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of cultural issues. Visits into the local community develop pupils' awareness of the local cultures further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The head teacher has been nominated to deal with issues concerning child protection or affecting "looked after" children. She is supported in this role by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, the educational psychologist, and the local education authority staff.
40. Recent risk assessments of the premises have been carried out by members of the premises sub-committee of the governing body and by the local education authority. The head teacher monitors any identified hazards and reports on progress to the governing body. The school premises are safe and secure with pupils under supervision at all times. Responsibilities for health and safety are well documented and three members of staff have received first aid training. There are first aid boxes in each classroom and in the school office. Should it be necessary, further advice is sought from the nurse attached to the dental practice in the adjacent special school. Three pupils regularly visit the special school for physiotherapy.
41. Pupils are provided with good educational and personal support and guidance. Educational support is provided through the effective questioning of pupils during lessons and by target setting for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well, monitoring the personal needs of individual pupils, and fulfilling those needs as best they can, often through individual and group awards. The pupil of the week in each class is posted in the foyer, and a talent tree allows pupils to state what they are good at. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been revised and now include class awards for punctuality. Daily monitoring of absences by the head teacher is beginning to have an effect and the school takes all opportunities to remind parents of the need to send their children to school. The school is making good use of national incentives by providing resources that make the school and its facilities attractive to pupils who are reluctant to attend.
42. A recent review of the behaviour management policy and procedures has resulted in a whole school approach to behaviour management that is demonstrably effective. There is a range of rewards for good behaviour and good work which are cumulative and benefit individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils value these rewards highly and proudly

wear the badges given for 50 and 100 awards. Sanctions are needed infrequently but include home-school reports requiring the support of parents with a weekly review meeting involving all interested parties.

43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. This is an improvement on the situation identified in the previous report when assessment procedures were found to be unsatisfactory. Baseline assessments are carried out when pupils begin their schooling and are used to set initial learning targets and to provide early identification of pupils who may have special educational needs. At present not enough attention is given to using the data to identify pupils of potentially higher attainment. As part of the overall assessment policy the school takes part in the Oldham Accreditation Scheme and this allows the sharing of levelled work with other schools in the authority to give an idea of standards nationwide. A portfolio is established for pupils' attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and it is planned to add information and communications technology work to this portfolio. Assessment has a priority in the school improvement plan, and staff training and development have been provided. End of key stage results are analysed and the data is beginning to feed the identification of subject areas where performance is weakest, for example, a need has been identified to improve pupils' writing and the school has given priority to this area. There are, however no effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in foundation subjects and this reduces the ability of teachers to identify and provide for pupils with particular talents or weaknesses in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
44. The recent introduction of the subject guidelines provided by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority for subjects other than English, mathematics and science provides an opportunity for subject co-ordinators in the foundation subjects to establish an assessment system for the whole school. No up to date portfolios of pupils' work are currently available to provide teachers with more detailed information about the quality of pupils' work in subjects throughout the school.
45. Pupils' work and behavioural achievements are celebrated and merit awards are a much-prized possession. In classrooms teachers discuss rates of progress with their pupils and this helps them in their achievements. The value of the discussions is not always followed up by the quality of the marking and in many books work is undated and only ticks indicate that it has been checked. Opportunities for using the marking of work as a basis for setting targets for future learning have not been fully developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents' have very positive views of the school. Their views have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection as a result of recent improvements in the leadership and management of the school. All parents responding to the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best, and that their children were making good progress in school. They also think that the school is well led and managed, that the school works closely with parents, and that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Almost all of these parents believe that behaviour in school is good, and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. A small number of parents have reservations about the quality of teaching. The school recently asked parents to state what they considered to be the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The responses were very supportive and identified rewards, newsletters, relationships, homework, behaviour management, and the integration of pupils with special educational needs as strengths of the school.

47. The school's links with parents are very good. They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on and the events taking place in school. There is very good quality formal information provided for parents through the prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents, annual progress reports, and consultation evenings. Termly class newsletters provide valuable information about visits, timetables and topic work, whilst the weekly newsletter provides useful school and community information. Parents of children entering the Nursery and the Reception classes are invited to induction meetings, and all teachers provide parents with the opportunity for the resolution of concerns at the beginning and end of each day.
48. Parents involve themselves to a satisfactory extent in the work of the school. A small number of parents help in class regularly and one parent runs a football club. A larger number of parents involve themselves in school trips and book week. Some have attended the numeracy and literacy workshops organised by the school and this has helped them to support the work that their children do at home, especially in maintaining reading records. A small but significant number of parents think that their children are not getting the right amount of work to do at home. Inspection findings indicate that the current quantity and quality are satisfactory.
49. The Friends of St Martin's Association organises fundraising and social events, and provides additional resources for the school. Recent acquisitions have been the netball kit and a CD player and CD Roms. Parents' evenings are well attended as are performances and end of term assemblies.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. There have been very significant improvements in the quality of leadership and management since the last inspection when serious weaknesses were identified. The leadership and management of the school are now satisfactory overall and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.
51. The school has been through a troubled few years, without a permanent headteacher until October 2000 and without a permanent deputy until very recently. The head teacher has a clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards, and in the short time she has been in post she has put into place good systems to effect the changes needed. Most important of all, through effective communication, she has raised staff morale and developed a good team spirit so that all of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work together effectively with the shared determination to raise standards. She has gained the confidence of the parents, who now hold the school in very high regard. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection.
52. A good start has been made to the monitoring of teaching and learning in classes. This is linked appropriately to performance management targets. Teachers are given effective feedback and when weaknesses are identified, they are given appropriate support. A weakness in the monitoring of teaching and learning is the role that subject co-ordinators play. Their roles have been more clearly defined and they now take more responsibility for their subject areas. However, they are not yet in a position to know how their action plans are being implemented in other classes because, although they monitor planning to ensure coverage, they do not routinely examine outcomes by looking at pupils' work or talking to the pupils and they do not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
53. The school is in the process of establishing good procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance. The head teacher and senior management team make

good use of data from the end of key stage National Curriculum test results and interim tests to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of pupils. A good ethos amongst the staff and the governing body has been developed that ensures that governors make good use of all available information to honestly evaluate how well the school is doing. The outcomes of this process have been used to establish a number of effective strategies to improve standards. The school sets targets for pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy by the end of Key Stage 2 but the existing targets do not reflect the improvements being implemented by the school and consequently existing targets are too low and not challenging enough.

54. The school improvement plan is well considered and addresses effectively the areas identified for development. Whilst the targets in the plan are monitored to check on progress by using useful criteria for ascertaining whether priorities are completed successfully, a weakness is the lack of precise criteria for measuring the impact of spending decisions on pupils' learning. The school now has schemes of work for all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education that reflect the aims of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
55. There has been a significant improvement in the role of governors since the last inspection. They are now effective in their role and have a well-established committee structure that covers all aspects of the school's work and ensures that all statutory duties are met. Through their effective involvement in the running of the school, they have a good understanding of its strengths and of what it needs to do to improve. As a result of good communication from the head teacher and the impact of specific governor training, governors are now much better informed. The governing body is very supportive of the head teacher and her staff and this makes sure that the reasons for the results of end of key stage National Curriculum tests are accounted for so that effective steps are taken to improve them.
56. The governing body has established a finance committee and has properly defined its role. Governors are meeting their responsibilities in relation to budget setting, and expenditure is monitored rigorously. Funds allocated for specific purposes, such as staff training and the support for pupils with special educational needs, are all properly targeted. In comparing its own performance against that in other schools and ensuring that money is spent wisely, the school applies the principles of best value in the use of its resources. Financial control and office administration are satisfactory. The recommendations of the latest audit report have been addressed satisfactorily. The use of new technology is currently unsatisfactory but there are plans in hand to update the systems.
57. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to match the demands of the curriculum. The school employs ten full-time teachers including the head teacher, and two part time teachers. There is also a part time teacher for the visually impaired pupils. Co-ordinators' responsibilities are evenly distributed and are matched as far as possible to teachers' qualifications. The head teacher has established a good programme of in-service training linked to the targets in the school's improvement plan. Staff are provided with opportunities to undertake personal and professional development. Thirteen part and full time staff provide additional education support for individual and specific groups of pupils and make a valuable contribution to the education of all pupils but particularly to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Administrative staff provide good support for the head teacher enabling her to concentrate on raising standards in the school. A member of staff now has responsibility for developing the curriculum provision with regard to educational visits, visitors to school, museum artefact loans, and library block loans and this area of provision for pupils is satisfactory.

58. The school buildings and grounds are in very good condition. Classrooms are light and airy, and the spacious hall is effectively used as a gymnasium and dining hall. Very good use is made of the various outdoor playing surfaces for lessons and play. The school caretaker keeps the school and grounds clean and tidy, and works hard to ensure the well being of children and adults in school.
59. Resources, in general, are satisfactory. Resources for mathematics, design and technology, history, geography and group reading books are good. Resources for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage have improved from the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be insufficient. Despite major investments in new computers and accompanying software, resources for information and communication technology are still unsatisfactory. The number of up to date computers is below the number recommended for a school of this size and this restricts opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology as much as they need. This is exacerbated by some limitations imposed by the incompatibility of some older machines, and a shortage of suitable software across the curriculum.
60. The value for money provided by the school has improved from the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to improve the standards further and improve some aspects of the quality of education provided for all children in the school, the governing body, head teacher, senior management team and teaching and support staff should:

1) **raise standards in English, mathematics and science by**

- ensuring that higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 4 are appropriately identified and given appropriately challenging work. (*paras 19, 21, 23, 26, 43, 94, 96, 99, 107*)
- making better use of assessment data to set targets for groups of pupils to raise standards that are reviewed at least annually. (*paras 19, 21, 23, 26, 43, 94, 96, 99, 107*)
- developing the role of subject co-ordinators so that opportunities are regularly provided to monitor the progress and attainment of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. (*paras 44, 52*)
- devising strategies for promoting pupils' independent learning skills in each subject. (*paras 21, 105*)
- Devising and implementing strategies to improve pupils' speaking skills. (*para 81*)
- Improving teachers' planning so that planned opportunities are identified for pupils to practise and apply literacy and numeracy skills as part of each subject. (*paras 26, 84*)

2) **raise standards in information and communication technology and art and design by the age of eleven by:**

- continuing to improve the range of computers and software and implementing existing plans to provide effective training for all staff. (*paras 127-134*)
- improving opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum. (*paras 127-134*)
- ensuring that a manageable system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in information and communication technology is developed. (*para 134*).
- balancing the overall time spent on art and design across the school so that each element of the subject is taught for an appropriate amount of time to each Year group. (*para 108*)

3) **improve attendance and reduce absence by:**

- continuing to implement good strategies for monitoring and tracking the attendance of all pupils and targeting those causing greatest concern. (*para 13*)

Additional minor issues that might be included in the school's action plan:

- ensure that the school's marking policy is implemented in each class. (*paras 26, 83, 97*).
- improve the quality and quantity of pupils' recorded work in books and folders. (*paras 27, 121*)
- devise and implement manageable systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in the foundation subjects. (*Paras 43, 118, 122, 126*)

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY VISUALLY IMPAIRED PUPILS

62. The overall provision for pupils who have a visual impairment is very good and has been maintained from the last inspection. The school continues to be a resource base for pupils who are either registered blind or who have significant difficulties with their vision. There is a very positive partnership between the school and support service for the visually impaired. At present there are 7 pupils placed at the school and the majority have additional special educational needs as well as visual difficulties. Not all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need but all are on the school's special educational needs register. A large percentage of the pupils have attended specialist pre-school provision, or have been supported by the learning support service for the visually impaired prior to being admitted to the school. All have therefore had their needs thoroughly assessed and identified. Following the joint policy of the school and the service for the visually impaired, all pupils are firstly pupils of St Martin's School and secondly pupils with additional difficulties. Due to this, pupils are taught alongside their peers in class groups, and only withdrawn for individual work on specific areas of development that require specialist teaching or knowledge of their specific needs. At all other times, the intention is that they are fully included in all aspects of school life. An advisory teacher for visually impaired works in the school, and in addition pupils are supported in lessons by special support assistants, and at lunchtime by special mid-day supervisors.
63. Individual pupils achieve well and make good progress. This is the direct result of the quality of the continual assessment that is carried out by the learning support service, which results in modifications to the learning environment and the curriculum, and adaptations to resources. All the pupils' needs are clearly documented and conveyed very well to all staff working with the pupils. For example, teachers and support assistants are aware of the correct angle and light source for working, as well as the necessary print size for each pupil. This clarity of information enables pupils to access the learning activities and make good progress. A particular strength is the support given by special support assistants in lessons, and is the result of the quality of the training that is provided for them by the support service for visually impaired. The support assistants work very well as individual enablers, and through the effective systems which the support service and the school has devised in their partnership, the individual modifications to the learning activities are communicated to the assistant well in advance of the lessons. This allows plenty of time for the activities to be modified, teaching strategies discussed and resources obtained. This all has a positive impact on the achievement of pupils and the progress pupils make.
64. Pupils who require additional individual input from the advisory teacher for specific areas of development or needs, such as, independent living skills, Braille reading and writing, or touch typing are given excellent support and as a result make very good progress in these areas. For example, pupils who come into the school with delayed language and communication make rapid progress, and very soon are asking searching questions about their environment. They listen, understand and carry out instructions, and read and write using Braille, and show they understand the stories they are reading. Work around the school shows that pupils with the greatest visual impairment understand how co-ordinates help with finding places in geography, sort materials into categories by tactile differences, write pieces of extended writing about the seasons of the year, make sandwiches, and locate the 'home-keys' on a key board. The teaching by the advisory support teacher is excellent. It is obvious that the teacher knows all the pupils very well, and that assessments have been very thorough. The teacher has a very high level of expertise and experience. All this has a great impact on the quality the provision and the progress that pupils make.

65. The curriculum for the visually impaired pupils is broad and balanced, and through the additional activities, such as, the teaching of Braille, mobility and independent living skills is made very relevant to their needs. Great effort is placed on addressing the needs of the pupils so that they have the necessary coping skills for accessing the curriculum and making progress. The planning to meet the visual needs of pupils is carried out through the very good Individual Education Plans in which targets are devised and assessed. The targets are specific and measurable, and allow staff to see the progress pupils are making. Where pupils have a Statement of Special Educational need the targets are very well linked back to the objectives on the statement. The school meets the provision identified in the statements. The school in conjunction with the support service arranges additional support for pupils and parents, and for one pupil they are supporting the learning of the language that is spoken at home. Record keeping is very comprehensive and shows that parents are given good support, guidance and advice. The school has purpose built accommodation as a resource base for withdrawal work, and its use for one to one teaching and independent skills has a positive impact on the overall provision.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

56

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

35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11%	16%	32%	36%	5%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	215
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	97

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	58

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	17	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	15
	Girls	13	15	16
	Total	23	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (48)	75 (55)	86 (61)
	National	83(82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	15	14
	Girls	13	16	16
	Total	23	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (52)	86 (70)	83 (67)
	National	84 (82)	88(86)	88(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	12	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	8	9
	Girls	8	6	6
	Total	19	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (64)	48 (47)	52 (64)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	8	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	14	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38 (53)	48 (61)	38 (58)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	238
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.5

Total number of education support staff	1.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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	1999-2000
	£
Total income	519,386
Total expenditure	522,825
Expenditure per pupil	2160
Balance brought forward from previous year	27521
Balance carried forward to next year	24,082

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

242

Number of questionnaires returned

57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	31	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	58	42	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	37	11	2	4
The teaching is good.	67	21	2	10	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	30	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	33	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	49	47	0	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	54	44	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	36	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	44	8	5	10

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents express the desire to have three parent's evenings each year rather than two.

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

66. Children enter the Nursery class with levels of attainment that are well below average in all the areas of learning, particularly in their development of communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. The very low attainment is confirmed by the initial baseline assessment that is conducted at the start of the children's time in the Nursery. Further baseline assessment is carried out at the end of the Reception class and the results of this provide clear evidence that the children make very good progress across the Foundation Stage in both the Nursery and Reception classes.
67. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good overall and has improved since the time of the last inspection in 1999. Provision is good in the Nursery and very good in the Reception classes. Teaching in the Nursery class is consistently good. For the Reception children it is very good and at times excellent. Staff provide a rich and stimulating environment for all children. The best teaching is characterised by very good planning and organisation, with a wide range of activities that are well matched to the abilities of the children. Teachers have very high expectations and ensure that all children are suitably challenged. This results in children making very good progress in acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills so that by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority achieve the early learning goals. In all classes teaching assistants support children very effectively. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good throughout all classes including the provision for children with visual impairment.
68. There have been changes in the way that children are admitted to the Nursery class since the last inspection. There are now full time and part time children attending. Staff have worked hard to ensure that all children have full access to all activities and have been very successful in this. The quality of curriculum planning is excellent. Staff plan together and ensure that all elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are fully covered. Planning is linked closely to the assessment procedures. Record keeping is clear, detailed and manageable and demonstrates how well assessment is used to inform teachers' planning for different group and independent activities. Staff work closely as a team in all classes and are very well deployed. The level of care for the children is very high and this ensures that children are secure and confident to participate in activities.
69. Parents and carers are given information about the curriculum through booklets and newsletters. They are invited to share in their children's learning through books that are taken home and invitations to events. In the reception classes regular homework is given to children three times each week. This includes reading, number and activities associated with their current topic.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Very good teaching ensures that children make very good progress in their learning in the area of personal, social and emotional development, and by the time they start Year 1, the majority achieve the early learning goals. This is due to the skilful teaching and very good relationships in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the nursery enthusiastically and readily approach adults. They show confidence as they work at the different activities that are provided for them and select from a range of resources and materials. Children work well independently, for example, working at the computer or

selecting a number or reading activity. They work very well in pairs and groups and often show consideration for each other. For example, during the inspection, one child took another's hand saying, 'it is nice to be friends'. Children share resources well and take turns, for example, sharing the letter cards in literacy in the Reception class and building Cinderella's castle with wooden bricks in the Nursery. All children show high levels of interest in activities and concentrate well. In both classes children's behaviour is good and often very good and children have very positive attitudes to learning. They show personal independence as they wash their hands before lunch and collect their possessions at the end of the session. In the Reception class they take responsibility for signing their name at each activity they visit as part of a self-checking procedure.

71. Staff select stories and poems from other cultures and children take delight in exploring these, for example, they have looked in detail at the story of Handa's surprise and talked about how her life differs from their own.

Communication, Language and Literacy

72. Children make very good progress in reading, writing and listening, and progress in speaking is satisfactory overall. By the time the children start Year 1, the majority have developed skills of early reading and writing that match the targets of the early learning goals, but a significant number of children lack confidence in speaking.
73. Teaching is never less than good and often very good; teachers are often highly creative in the activities they plan. Many activities in the Nursery include elements of literacy and oracy, for example, children making biscuits are encouraged by staff to extend their vocabulary as they talk about the recipe. Most children talk readily to adults, but their vocabulary is often limited for their age. In all classes children show enjoyment in looking at the books that are very attractively displayed in book areas in the classrooms. In the Reception classes children read simple words and sentences and compare the difference between an illustrator and an author. Most children give the title of the book they are reading. Literacy lessons are very well planned to include all elements of the literacy strategy as well as a good range of activities that are well matched to the needs of these young children. Very good use is made of puppets for story telling and supporting children's learning of sounds and letter names. Children delight in the activity in which each child has a finger puppet representing a letter sound and this ensures that very good progress is made. Writing is well planned with a good range of activities that include both those that the teacher leads and free writing. For example, writing an invitation or list of items for 'The Teddy Bears Picnic'. Children know a number of songs, rhymes and poems and sing these with enthusiasm. The computer is used very well to support children's literacy with a good range of software including adventure programs and 'living books'. The weekly homework supports children's learning well with all children in the Reception classes taking home books and a list of words to learn

Mathematical Development

74. In both the Nursery and Reception classes children make very good progress in the mathematical area of learning and by the time they start Year 1 achieve the targets of the early learning goals. The quality of teaching is very good and actively promotes mathematical understanding, skills and language through structured play and small group work. Children in the Nursery class count confidently to five and some count beyond this. They know a wide range of number songs and rhymes and sing these with enthusiasm. They know the names of many two dimensional shapes and one child in the Reception class described accurately how to make a pyramid in mud. Children in the Nursery class solve mathematical problems as they weigh and measure the

ingredients when cooking. As children move through the Reception classes these skills are built on effectively through skilful teaching in numeracy sessions. Lessons are well planned and teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject. This results in children becoming well-motivated and showing eagerness to learn. Group work is very well organised and includes number skills with dice, sorting by shape and recognising and making patterns. Large group work at the beginning of lessons is highly effective as children listen enthralled to number stories, and are ready to contribute to the answer demonstrating a secure grasp of addition and subtraction. There is sand in each classroom and question sheets encourage children to explore mathematical ideas. In addition there are good incidental opportunities for children to learn about number. For example, they make up number stories during snack time and use the number train on the computer for number sequencing.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

75. The very good quality of teaching ensures that very good opportunities are provided for children to explore and investigate the world around them so that by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. Teachers plan a very good range of activities that encourage children to develop their ideas and increase their understanding. The very good teaching results in very good progress across all elements of this area of learning. In the Reception classes children have investigated different materials when making a shelter for their teddies. They have found out which materials are waterproof and understand how this keeps their teddy dry. Teachers encourage children to consider what they have discovered and look closely at similarities and difference in plants and animals. In science lessons Reception children learn the names of different body parts and look at the environment as they walk around the school locality and visit shops. They record their visits through photographs, drawing and writing. There is an interest table in each class and in the nursery the children have a 'looking' table, which they fill with shells, stones and cones. One child has brought in a snakeskin that she is very keen to show visitors. In technology lessons children experiment with different kinds of material and make collage and models with recycled materials. They use scissors with increasing skill and model with clay, dough and plasticine. Good use is made of the computer in all classes to support literacy and numeracy skills. During the inspection one child described with enthusiasm an adventure program that they had recently used. There is a programmable toy, which is well used. Children learn about events in the past and look at old and new toys and bring in photos of themselves as babies as part of their topic on 'Ourselves'. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which found insufficient evidence of work to develop the children's historical understanding. Children in the Reception classes are beginning to learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs through a good range of books and stories.

Physical development

76. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children achieve the early learning goals in terms of their physical development. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. The children in the Nursery class have a particularly good range of activities with structured physical education lessons in the hall, and regular outdoor play that includes playing with a good range of wheeled toys. This is an improvement since the previous inspection that found that the effectiveness of this area of learning was limited by a lack of resources. In outdoor play there is a range of structured activities and a useful check sheet to ensure that all children cover all the activities. This is also an improvement since the last inspection, when there was a lack of structure to the development of children's skills in outdoor play. Teaching is good and often very good with very effective support given to pupils with special educational

needs ensuring that they are fully included in all activities. Throwing and catching skills are regularly planned and children use the outdoor area well showing good control and awareness of space and each other. Both the physical education lessons and outdoor play sessions give good opportunities for children to climb and balance and travel around under and over apparatus and develop their manipulative skills as they work with a range of malleable materials. They make good use of tools as they roll out dough and cut out teddy bear shapes. They make their own sandwiches, spreading the bread, use the grater with care and mix the ingredients in cooking. There is a good focus on developing children's road sense and a very wide range of resources to develop road safety awareness. Children are aware of why they must wash their hands before cooking and eating and learn about their health as they visit the local dentist. There are very good planned opportunities as the role-play area becomes a clinic or restaurant.

Creative Development

77. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children attain the national early learning goals in this area of learning. They make good progress in all classes including the nursery.

78. The good quality of teaching provides a good range of opportunities for children to explore different media and experience a wide range of resources to encourage painting, drawing, and printing. In the Reception classes children learn how to make tints using colour and white paint and show excitement and enthusiasm in their work. They use their imagination when they make shapes with the play dough and build with plastic construction materials and toys. In role-play skilful teaching ensures that children take on different roles and use the puppet theatre creatively. In the reception class, for example, children take on the role of each of the characters of Goldilocks and the three bears. In the Nursery class children are encouraged to use their senses as they explore the feel of dough, and smell the lemon peel as they grate the lemon in cooking. Older children make attractive models using a range of different joining mechanisms including split pins, and in all classes children have made masks of the characters in the books they have read. Children sing with enthusiasm and know a wide range of songs and rhymes. They explore different sounds with musical instruments and they have made their own shakers. They use sound to accompany stories, for example, using coconut shells to indicate the prince riding by. Good planning ensures that all children have experience of working with a wide range of materials and staff encourage children to share their work and comment appreciatively on their own and other children's efforts.

ENGLISH

79. Although the results in the national tests for seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved gradually for the last four years, in the year 2000 they showed attainment in reading and writing to be well below average when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were also judged to be below average. This year further improvements have been made in terms of the number of pupils who attain the standard expected for their age, but the number of pupils who exceed the standards expected for their age is small because higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not make the progress of which they are capable. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are gradually improving and are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are close to the national

expectations but in writing they are below expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1 but some higher attaining pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because of a lack of challenge.

80. The end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results have improved steadily for the last five years but in the year 2000 attainment was still below average when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools, attainment was above average. The percentage of pupils reaching the standards expected for eleven year olds of level 4 has improved further in 2001 although the number gaining the higher level 5 remains has remained constant. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good overall and very good in Year 6 due to very good teaching, the provision of booster classes, and better preparation for taking the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently just below average overall in English although in reading pupils achieve well and reach standards that are close to the expectations for their age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
81. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have poor speaking skills. Pupils' understanding of language is poor when they start school in the Foundation Stage and despite satisfactory progress between Reception and Year 2, most pupils still have a very limited vocabulary by the age of seven. Many find it hard to talk about their work and to contribute to or lead discussions. Listening skills are generally satisfactory and pupils steadily develop the ability to listen carefully to teachers and to each other. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of speaking remain below what is expected for eleven year olds. The standards of speaking are lower than they could be because the school is not yet providing enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and teachers rely too much on pupils answering questions in response to books and pictures rather than providing opportunities for pupils to initiate and lead their own discussions. The need to improve speaking skills is a focus in the school development plan and training is planned for staff in order to improve provision and raise standards in speaking in particular.
82. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are average overall. The school has put into place a structured phonics programme and this coupled with new resources to support guided reading in literacy lessons has helped to raise standards particularly for lower and average attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils still need further challenge however to attain higher standards particularly in Year 2. Pupils read with expression showing their understanding of the use of punctuation. They pay particular attention to speech and higher attaining pupils sometimes change the tone of the voice to respond to different characters in the stories and poems they read. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read satisfactorily for their age. A range of books is read with confidence and increasing levels of skill as they move through the key stage. Guided reading takes place in every class and books are well organised according to reading levels and interest of different groups of pupils. Discussion with pupils reveals how much they enjoy reading and how much they look forward to their visits to the library to find things out about their latest topic. The school has recently placed great emphasis on the development of pupils' knowledge of basic sounds and this is beginning to improve pupils' ability to tackle new and unfamiliar words.
83. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because there are not enough pupils achieving the higher levels in Year 2. Excellent teaching in Year 1 enables pupils to learn through a range of interesting and relevant activities. A range of teaching strategies including drama and games motivates pupils to do their best and helps them to learn and apply early writing skills. But in Year 2, although average and lower attaining pupils are given work that challenges them and promotes satisfactory progress, expectations for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are low and

these pupils do not make satisfactory progress. At times, pupils spend too long practising skills they have already acquired so learning does not move forward at a fast enough rate. Writing in other subjects is not marked closely enough, and pupils make mistakes in spellings, which are not corrected. Handwriting continues to be below average in both Years 1 and 2 because pupils do not always form their letters correctly and joins are not yet sufficiently well established.

84. Pupils' writing is also below average by the end of Key Stage 2, although there is good improvement as the pupils move through the school. Spelling is secure and pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of grammar and punctuation. There has been a particular focus on improving pupils' handwriting this year and although some progress has been made, presentation remains unsatisfactory in some classes. Although pupils are expected to use their literacy skills in some other subjects, for example, the writing of historical events or the recording of scientific activities, the development of literacy skills is not yet planned in a sufficiently detailed way to make sure that the skills of literacy are planned for and practised enough in other subjects. This reduces the progress made by pupils in applying their skills to a range of different contexts and in learning to write for a wide audience.
85. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. In Year 1 some excellent teaching exists. A good range of activities are planned and taught effectively so that pupils learn briskly and improve their skills of reading, writing and listening at a good rate. In Year 2, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress but higher attaining pupils frequently are not challenged enough and are given tasks that are often undemanding. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching varies. Where it is very good, for example in Year 6, all pupils are given work that is challenging and they are well prepared for national tests at the end of the year. Lessons are interesting due to the relevant contexts, the lively style and range of teaching strategies used to motivate all pupils to always do their best. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils spend too long completing formal exercises, which are neither interesting nor challenging and are not matched well enough to their individual learning needs. Time is therefore wasted in these lessons by practising unnecessary skills and completing work that lacks the necessary challenge to move learning forward at a fast enough rate. Throughout the school, not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in English. Pupils with visual difficulties are supported well across the school. Pupils use Braille machines to record their ideas and are supported extremely well by knowledgeable learning assistants
86. The co-ordination of English is satisfactory. Additional books to support guided reading have been organised well so that teachers are able to locate quickly appropriate books for pupils in their class. The monitoring of teaching and learning has recently started and the information gathered is being used to identify suitable areas for improvement in the school development plan.

MATHEMATICS

87. In 2000, the results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 2, the 2000 end of key stage National Curriculum tests showed that standards in mathematics were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Standards have fluctuated in the last five years but have been consistently below the national average. Inspection evidence is that standards are now improving rapidly and although standards are still below average at the end of both key stages, the percentage of pupils achieving the standard above that expected for both seven and eleven year olds

is improving. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard for eleven year olds has risen significantly in 2001 and the head teacher and senior management team have implemented good strategies to ensure continued improvements in the future.

88. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils get off to a good start in Year 1 and respond well to the very good teaching making very good progress. In Year 2, however, the rate of progress slows but remains satisfactory overall. Potentially higher attaining pupils are not always identified and the work does not challenge them to reach the standard of which they are capable. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress overall although, again, it is variable between classes. In Year 6, the very good teaching in lessons and booster classes leads to very good progress, with almost all pupils in Year 6 achieving their full potential.
89. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this has led to pupils throughout the school developing effective mental strategies to solve number problems. However, in some classes, particularly in Key Stage 2, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use these skills in problem solving in other areas, such as shape, measuring and data handling.
90. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of place value up to 100. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of the ten times table in selecting appropriate weights to balance objects. They realise, for example, that two twenty gram weights and a ten gram weight can be used to weigh fifty grams. Although the lower attaining pupils can count in tens, they cannot put this knowledge into practice. Higher attaining pupils do not have sufficient understanding of the two times tables to enable them to make connections in practical work. In a lesson observed, pupils made no attempt to double their estimate for the half-litre bottle when estimating how many cupfuls would fill the litre bottle. When estimating the capacity of different sized bottles, they could not see the connection between a half-litre and a litre bottle. They had difficulty when answering simple problems based on the practical work they had done. The work in pupils' books in Year 2 shows that they have a basic understanding of recording in block graphs and charts but there are not enough opportunities to develop their understanding further by constructing their own methods of presenting the information they have gathered.
91. By the end of Year 6, pupils have satisfactory number skills. They use their ready recall of number facts effectively to solve problems, for example, in converting percentages to fractions and vice-versa. The majority have a satisfactory understanding of shape, and find perimeters and areas by counting squares. They identify angles such as acute, obtuse and reflex correctly by their names. They know that the angles of a triangle add up to a hundred and eighty degrees and can use this knowledge effectively to find the size of an angle that is not given. Although the majority of pupils know the names of many two-dimensional shapes and can say how many sides they have, lower attaining pupils are not so secure in applying their knowledge of angles. In the lesson seen, during the inspection they posed a problem for others to answer, asking for the sum of the angles of a regular pentagon when all the angles were 45 degrees.
92. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall but it is variable between classes. The numeracy strategy has been implemented recently and is beginning to contribute to improvements in the standards of teaching of mathematics throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but in Year 1 it is very good. In Year 2 some good teaching exists and was seen during the inspection but analysis of pupils' work indicates that higher attaining pupils were not stretched as much as they might be and this reduces the progress that they make. The low expectation made of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 limits the opportunities for

higher attaining pupils to achieve their full potential by the age of seven. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall but it ranges from some unsatisfactory lessons observed to lessons where teaching was very good. In the very good lesson, the pupils were enthused by the lively introduction. The brisk pace of the lesson, with the constant flow of carefully devised questions tailored to challenge all the pupils, kept them enthralled and eager to learn more. The rate of learning as a result was rapid and pupils improved their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Good teaching in upper Key Stage 2 is contributing to the improved standards and progress now occurring by the end of Year 6. In Year 5 and 6, pupils are grouped by ability and provided with tasks that are challenging. Pupils are made to think for themselves and apply their knowledge and understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to a variety of situations. Good use of homework extends learning. In lower Key Stage 2, there are times when lessons lack clear direction and focus which results in pupils not working as hard as they can and not making the progress in lessons of which they are capable.

93. A good feature of teaching throughout the school is the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and visual impairment. These pupils are supported well in lessons and as a result they make good progress. The main weakness in the teaching is that in most classes teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan further work for individuals or groups. An examination of the work in pupils' books shows that most pupils complete the same work. Most of the work focuses on developing number skills. The fact that answers are rarely incorrect indicates a lack of challenge. On the rare occasion that answers are incorrect, the teachers' marking does not show pupils how to improve their work.
94. The pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behaviour in lessons is usually good where teaching is good and pupils respond very well and enjoy their work. In Year 1, the pupils displayed very good attitudes responding very well to the high expectations of their teacher and enjoyed the very challenging work. Pupils in Year 6 expressed their enjoyment, saying that their teacher made it fun to learn. They particularly enjoyed the fact that it was purposeful because it was presented in a relevant context. An example they gave was the topic on pizzas, where they had to use their measuring skills to make a box. They took pleasure in explaining the problems they encountered when making the nets for their boxes.
95. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The recently appointed co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards. She is a very good practitioner who leads by example, however, although good systems exist for assessing pupils' progress and standards of attainment, the co-ordinator does not yet monitor teaching and learning to evaluate their impact. As a result, she has not been aware that assessment information is not being used effectively to plan further work. Pupils develop their mathematical skills in a satisfactory range of contexts across the curriculum, for example, temperature charts involving negative numbers in science. The use of information technology is currently unsatisfactory. Although pupils learn to programme a robot effectively to carry out commands, there are insufficient computer programs available to support learning in mathematics. The school is aware of this weakness and has plans to address it. Overall, the provision for mathematics within the school is better than at the time of the last inspection and standards are rising as a result.

SCIENCE

96. The results of the end of key stage National Curriculum tests indicate that standards at the end of both key stages have been consistently well below average since 1997. By the end of Key Stage 2, there has been a steady improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard of level 4 each year since 1998. In 2000, pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 2 indicated that standards were very low and in the bottom 5% nationally and below average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection but remain just below average overall although the percentage of pupils reaching the above average standard of level 5 has increased significantly as a result of better teaching. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average in 2000 but close to the average for similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are below average overall because too few pupils achieve the higher standard of level 3. Throughout the school, pupils achieve better standards in their knowledge and understanding than in their skills of experimenting and investigating.
97. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject and has accurately identified the weaknesses in the curriculum and aspects of teacher knowledge. Through good liaison with the local education authority and independent consultants, some staff development has been organised and delivered in order to raise awareness of how to teach investigations. In addition, the science scheme has been radically overhauled to match the needs of pupils in the school. There is not, however, enough monitoring of teaching and learning with the result that inconsistencies in expectations between teachers have not been adequately identified. Currently, there is no coherent policy for promoting pupils' skills of planning, performing and recording investigations and this reduces opportunities for pupils to make adequate progress in this aspect of the science curriculum.
98. In Key Stage 1, although pupils of all ages and abilities acquire a satisfactory knowledge of plants and animals, the properties of a range of everyday materials and ideas about physical phenomena such as light, sound, electricity and the way things move, their progress in developing skills of performing scientific investigations and experiments is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in improving their scientific knowledge and develop a particularly good understanding of the characteristics of materials but although progress in performing scientific investigations and experiments improves as pupils move through the key stage, it is not as good as it could be. Teacher's lack of knowledge prevents the effective teaching of the investigative aspects of the science curriculum.
99. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the basic difference between animals and plants and use correct vocabulary to name parts of their body and the parts of a plant. Pupils observe with good levels of accuracy and use their senses to explore and describe the properties of a range of everyday materials such as paper, plastic and wood. They sort materials according to their properties using criteria such as being bendy or squashy or stretchy. In Year 1, pupils make good progress. The majority of pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the idea that a force is a push or a pull and confidently describe examples of pushes and pulls experienced in the local playground. Some higher attaining Year 1 pupils know and understand basic ideas related to friction being a force that slows moving things down. As pupils move through the key stage their progress slows and in Year 2 it is only just satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils do not have the chance to develop ideas that exceed expectations although in electricity, some pupils do develop a good knowledge and understanding of simple circuits and the skills of identifying faults in circuits that

prevent a bulb working. Pupils make some progress in identifying forces around them but struggle to plan and perform simple fair tests involving comparing factors that affect the way objects move down a slope. Pupils have great difficulty with recording independently and the quality of their written work is not as good as it could be. Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient guidance for recording their work.

100. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have improved their knowledge and understanding at a satisfactory rate. Their understanding of the way the body works is quite good with most pupils knowledgeably explaining the way the main organs of the human body function. Pupils classify animals and plants as having or not having backbones and understand the basic ideas of the interdependence between plant and animals in the web of life. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils steadily extend their knowledge of the properties of materials. The majority of pupils know about major changes that occur when common materials such as salt, sugar and sand are mixed with water, and can use terms such as evaporation and condensation to describe the changes in the water cycle. Most pupils, however, struggle to plan, perform and record to a suitably high level their own investigations into changes of materials because they have not developed satisfactory skills of investigation. Some pupils have a knowledge and understanding of changes of materials that exceed expectations for their age and competently and accurately use terms such as reversible and irreversible changes. A small minority of pupils use simple particle theory to explain the difference between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of light and sound are secure and are at expected levels for their age. Pupils adequately understand ideas related to gravity, air resistance and the forces involved in objects that float. A good knowledge and understanding of the solar system and the effect of the movement of the Earth upon the seasons and the pattern of each day is developed. Although pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of science by the age of 11, most pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop personal research skills through carrying out their own investigations and this reduces the opportunity for higher attaining pupils to reach standards that exceed national expectations for their age. Throughout the key stage, pupils do not systematically develop a consistent approach to recording the investigations that they carry out, and a lack of clarity of what is expected of them results in unsatisfactory progress in the application of their knowledge to practical situations.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and during the inspection some good teaching was observed in Year 6. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. A weakness in teachers' knowledge of teaching investigations is a key factor in too few pupils achieving standards that exceed expectations for their age. Teachers have not given enough thought to ways in which they might identify higher attaining pupils so that they might support these pupils' learning more effectively. Some good use is made of the local environment to add relevance to pupils' learning for example, the good use of a visit to the playground adjacent to the school inspired pupils in Year 1 to use construction kits to explore the way things move. In Year 6, pupils worked well following teacher guidance in establishing whether there is any truth in the statement that the tallest person also has the longest limbs and in so doing demonstrated good attitudes and behaviour by working well together in pairs and small groups.
102. Although all parts of the curriculum related to knowledge and understanding are taught effectively, expectations for pupils to record varies from teacher to teacher. In some classes the amount of recorded work does not do justice to the work in the school's scheme and the quality varies from being neat, orderly and well marked to being untidy with little evidence of marking. Most teachers use resources appropriately to engage the interest of pupils but not enough use is made of information and communication

technology and links with literacy and numeracy occur incidentally rather than being included in lesson planning. Teachers are committed to improving standards in science and are working hard to do so. The quality of some classroom displays in science is of a high standard and this successfully raises the profile of science in pupils' minds. Support for pupils preparing for the end of key stage National Curriculum tests has improved greatly, especially in Year 6, and this is contributing to raising standards in tests. However, there are still some gaps in the pupils' skills that are depressing the overall end of key stage National Curriculum test results.

103. Although improvement is occurring, pupils can still do better. Better use of assessment to identify higher attaining pupils so that teachers can suitably challenge everyone is starting to help pupils to achieve their true potential, but there is still some way to go. The commitment of the co-ordinator and the planned introduction of a consistent approach to performing investigations are effective strategies for continued improvement in the future.

ART AND DESIGN

104. There has been an improvement in the provision made by the school for art and design since the previous inspection. This has ensured that by the time the pupils reach the age of seven, attainment is in line with that expected nationally although by the end of Key Stage 2, standards remain below national expectations. Standards are rising throughout the school with pupils in Year 5 producing some very high quality work. However, because art and design has not been taught regularly to pupils in recent years, pupils in Year 6 have not gained the range of experiences or quality of teaching necessary to raise their standards to those expected for their age.
105. Progress across Key Stage 1 is good and builds securely on the very good work in the Foundation Stage; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, progress slows in Year 2 but remains satisfactory overall. Pupils explore patterns in insects and animals and are given a wide range of materials from which to choose and look closely at patterns on shells through a magnifying glass. However there is insufficient intervention from the teacher to ensure that pupils fully develop their ideas and techniques or look closely at their work and evaluate it.
106. Key Stage 1 pupils have used a wide range of techniques and media including paint, pastels and collage. They have illustrated stories from around the world and make very attractive tactile pictures using a range of different materials. They have drawn and painted their own portraits and model with clay, dough and recycled material. Year 1 pupils have looked closely at the work of Georgia O'Keefe and have made some very good representations of her work. Scrutiny of the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 indicate that pupils are developing satisfactory drawing skills
107. Pupils make uneven progress across Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make steady progress exploring and developing their skills across a range of different techniques. Year 3 pupils have made attractive black and white paper designs, paper mosaics linked with their history. Year 4 pupils are developing skills in paper sculpture paper weaving and have made attractive tactile pictures. Pupils make very good progress in Year 5 and the range of work they have completed is impressive. They use colour, texture and tone effectively to produce a very wide range of artwork and the quality of their observational drawing is particularly high with very effective use of space, line and form. In Year 6 the progress slows due to a lack of focus on the subject and limited opportunities for pupils to develop and refine their skills in this area.

108. Pupils' attitudes to artwork are generally positive with some pupils taking considerable pride in their work but others in discussion stated how little they enjoyed the subject. The art club is highly successful and pupils in Years 4 and 5 attend with enthusiasm and produce some very effective displays.
109. Teaching seen in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. Lessons are generally well prepared with a good range of materials available. Clear guidance is given at the start of lessons but praise is at times used indiscriminately with little input from the teacher to enable pupils to refine their skills and improve their work. The quality of the painting is poor and some pupils spend too long washing the pallets. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is improving and, judging by the good quality work in Year 5 is at times very good, however the low standards of pupils in Year 6 indicates that the quality of teaching across the key stage has been unsatisfactory over recent years. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 2 was in Year 4 and was unsatisfactory. Too much time was spent on the introduction and although the importance of creativity was stressed all pupils were given the same materials and were shown exactly how to make the bird sculpture. The pace of learning was very slow. Some pupils completed very little work by the end of the lesson and there was very little progress from the previous art lesson. The voluntary help provided by a local artist makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils skills and knowledge of art and design in Key Stage 2 and is improving the attitudes pupils have towards the subject.
110. The management of art and design has recently been strengthened but the impact upon the standards of pupils by the end of Year 6 is not yet visible. Improvements in the quality of the art and design policy and scheme of work, are providing a firm foundation for planning and provide the co-ordinator with a good route to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in art and design across the school. A suitable way of assessing and recording the progress of pupils in art and design has not yet been developed and this reduces opportunities for identifying pupils who are talented or those who find art and design difficult.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. There has been a significant improvement in the standards attained by pupils since the previous inspection and the vast majority of pupils are now reaching standards above national expectation by the end of both key stages. The school has a detailed scheme of work, which gives teachers a sound basis for their planning and ensures the development of appropriate skills as the pupils move through the school. Guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority have been adopted and are informing teaching in both key stages. As pupils move through the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
112. In Key Stage 1 there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of skills and pupils are able to enjoy the making process as they begin to take their first steps in design. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 improve their design and technology skills at a good rate. They have made a good range of moving and static objects using a variety of materials. They have applied skills of cutting and sawing to create good quality vehicles suitable for transporting an injured teddy bear to hospital. The introduction of food technology and the encouragement to eat a more healthy diet have been pursued with vigour. Teachers provide good opportunities that stimulate high levels of interest and involvement amongst pupils. Although recording is relatively limited at Key Stage 1, pupils do produce prototype drawings and they are able to evaluate the outcomes as they compare their finished models with the original drawings. However, pupils start to become reluctant to record at this stage and this becomes more noticeable as the

pupils progress through the school. Teachers are working hard to improve this aspect of the subject.

113. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' work and their understanding of design and technology have progressed very well and pupils have developed good levels of organisation and independence. During the inspection, high expectations of pupils in Year 3 introduced pupils to the first stages of designing control mechanisms using pneumatic forces. The tremendous enjoyment they gained from this was apparent throughout the lesson and the whole activity was characterised by good gender interaction and co-operation. By the end of the lesson every pupil had produced a first working design and they were able to evaluate these and the ones produced by their fellow pupils. Activities are usually linked to real life so that pupils can make sense of what they are doing. This is demonstrated by the way pupils in Year 6 have been engaged in the final stages of a food technology activity involving the making of pizzas. The class teacher expected them to experience the whole design and technology process including carrying out market research prior to making the pizzas. An initial survey was completed to establish design requirements and taste preferences. Good use was made of applying a wide range of skills and culminated in a great deal of cross-curricular activity that involved the use of spreadsheets, frequency polygons and pie charts. Well-organised and managed activities established by the class teacher ensured that the final product promoted great willingness amongst both boys and girls to work together and co-operate in using materials. Parents and learning support staff all played a crucial role in the lesson and the buzz of excitement and pride in their work was palpable throughout. In both Year 3 and Year 6 the impact of excellent teaching was a major factor in the quality of the work being done. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have also produced some good quality work during the year including the making of money containers and moving toys using control mechanisms. Some of the older pupils are able to visit the local high school and some sharing of computer aided design resources has been possible. The co-operative work and the sharing of ideas and resources are also contributing to the pupils' social development.
114. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good and occasionally excellent teaching observed. Teachers are particularly good at presenting the subject in an interesting way and at demanding high standards. The co-ordinator is particularly enthusiastic and involved in her subject. Lack of time for the monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom prevents the full sharing of very good practice around the school. The present scheme of work has been appropriately adapted for use in both key stages although there is no formal scheme of assessment, and staff are enthusiastic in their approach to the teaching of design and technology. Resources are good and are well used but there is a lack of suitable computer software and materials to support learning in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

115. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. This represents a considerable improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The policy and scheme of work for geography have recently been updated and now offer better guidance to teachers in their own planning and teaching of the subject. As they move through the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have acquired good basic skills in geography that they have practised through their study of the school and the neighbourhood. They have also begun to broaden their cultural horizons through their study of Lucea, a

village in the Caribbean. By starting with the immediate environment of the school pupils gain satisfactory knowledge of simple maps and plans and develop a sense of direction. As they extend their enquiries into the geography of the local environment their skills are tested further. In conversation they know that the area is quite steeply contoured in places and they identify key sites such as shops and play areas. In collecting basic data pupils achieve satisfactory standards. They explore the local weather and climate and there are plans to purchase a simple weather station for the collection of more detailed information.

117. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop a suitable vocabulary and satisfactorily extend their geographical skills. Pupils learn about geographical ideas and skills related to the study of rivers, the water cycle, using maps and identifying features of other countries. In Year 3 pupils have engaged in a persuasive writing project in which they have produced pieces of writing encouraging people to visit a particular country. This very good link with the national literacy strategy is marred by the poor quality of some of the presentation, but it has produced some good geography. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good working knowledge of maps and satisfactorily use atlases and globes to support their investigations. The study of rivers has produced some good work and has allowed pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of the historical and geographical heritage of the area with its dependence on water, coal and cotton. The school has used the local area very well in the teaching of geography. Geography further afield is included in the work on France and India, particularly the village of Chembakoli. Year 6 pupils in their current work on India are beginning to address some of the moral dilemmas that accompany the impact of human activity on the landscape. As in other areas of the curriculum, pupils do not always gain the full benefit from their investigations in geography because of their poor writing and recording skills although their level of interest and involvement is good.
118. The quality of teaching in geography is good overall and where it is at its best the quality of work produced by the pupils is good and pupils make good progress. Pupils are presented with interesting and stimulating tasks and good use is made of conventional resources such as books, atlases, globes and photographs. There is a lack of suitable CD-ROM and other computer based material although pupils are able to access encyclopaedia data in the classrooms. The co-ordinator has an overview of what is being done in geography but no time is available for the monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. At present there are no formal assessment procedures in place for geography and this is acknowledged by the school to be an area for development.

HISTORY

119. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. This maintains the position identified by the previous inspection. The policy and scheme of work for the subject have recently been revised and the school is adapting the guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. As they move through the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning.
120. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have acquired a repertoire of historical skills appropriate to their age and ability and they can use photographs, books and simple timelines to make distinctions between, old and new and now and then. Pupils can discuss their study of events and the associated lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. The majority realise that the famous people they study really did exist although a few are not sufficiently secure in their knowledge

by the end of Year 2 and they are inclined to the view that they are characters in fiction rather than fact.

121. By the age of 11 pupils have a secure grasp of events in historical contexts as diverse as the Egyptian, Greek and Roman Empires, Tudor and Victorian Britain and the local history of Oldham and district. Very good use is made of the local area in bringing history to life for pupils throughout the key stage. Pupils in Year 3 have produced a good collection of materials relating to the Roman Empire, although much of the work has been dependent on the completion of work sheets that have not provided sufficient stimulus to the development of individual research skills. Year 4 have similarly engaged in a study of Tudor times with considerable reliance on the use of worksheets, but their studies of local history have encouraged the good development of historical skills in individual research. Some good work in improving extended writing skills has been done by Pupils in Year 5 who have written some good accounts based on their study of ancient Greece. By the age of 11 pupils are able to make inferences from a range of data and are able to produce engaging descriptive accounts of historical events and processes. They are less secure in expressing opinions, when they often struggle to find an appropriate vocabulary. The very good quality of the teaching in Year 6 is providing the pupils in this year group with a good range of historical skills and concepts to take with them as they transfer to their secondary schools.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in history. Lessons are well planned and resources are used effectively. There is a lack of good CD-ROM based materials for history and this is recognised as a need to be addressed by the school. Although the co-ordinator has an overview of the subject, there is no whole school policy for assessment in history and there is too much reliance on the collection of information by individual teachers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. There have been considerable improvements in information and communication technology as the previous inspection found pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages well below the national expectations for pupils of this age. Standards are now satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but are below national expectations when pupils leave the school at the age of eleven. The low standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are due to the lack of suitable computers and software that has made it difficult for teachers to teach information and communication technology to a sufficiently high level.
124. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show confidence in using the computer and have developed a good range of basic skills. Progress is good over time with particularly good progress in Year 1. Progress slows to satisfactory in Year 2 because expectations for higher attaining pupils are not high enough for example, pupils copy out work that they have written in long hand and spend time changing the font size when they are already skilled in this area.
125. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write simple texts well using a word processor. In Years 1 and 2, pupils confidently change the font size and use the mouse and directional keys to move the cursor. Simple drawing programmes are used effectively to create pictures of a house and, using a painting program, pupils have produced very attractive colour pictures of snowmen that they have printed out. The sizes of objects are readily altered on screen by selecting a menu and making a 'bubble' design. Pupils play the adventure program 'Bugdom' with enthusiasm and estimate the distance that a programmable toy will go, programming it to go backwards and forwards.

126. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they become more proficient in their use of information and communication technology, especially in data handling. Progress is currently satisfactory overall and at times good. In Year 3 pupils perform a simple search using the Internet and download information with support, presenting the information as a histogram. They use the programmable toy to create and compose simple tunes and record these with musical notation. Pupils have taken photographs with the digital camera and, with support, re-size these on the computer as part of their design and technology topic. Year 5 pupils know that information is held in a variety of ways including a computer database. They collect and prepare information to create a data file and input information. They know what a search engine is and explore information looking for short cuts and print out information from the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 are able to find information on the Internet to support their projects, for example to research life in India in Geography and have used CD ROMs to learn about the Victorians in history. They talk about how computers are used in the wider world, for example, in the doctor's surgery and the use made by businesses of the Internet. They have used adventure programs incidentally, but have limited experience of designing or creating an interactive adventure.
127. Currently pupils in Year 6 are learning how to access the Internet independently, however, progress is adversely affected by the lack of appropriate resources. For example, during the inspection, pupils had no option but to observe their teacher operating a new program. Pupils concentrated well but then a lack of sufficient hardware meant that they were not able to have a suitable allocation of time to practise the new skills.
128. The teaching and learning in information and communication technology is satisfactory overall. During the inspection very little direct teaching was observed due to timetabling constraints. However, given the considerable improvement in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and the good progress made over time by pupils, teaching and learning is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils and give clear explanations and effective demonstrations. In a lesson observed, teachers drew on the pupils' past experience and knowledge and asked open questions to which the pupils responded positively. Relationships are good and the pupils show good levels of interest and enjoyment. However, lack of suitable resources and teaching space for information and communication technology means that the arrangement for teaching whole class groups is unsatisfactory. This means that limited opportunities for pupils are provided to consolidate their skills.
129. A part-time technician supports the development of technology very effectively. He takes small groups of pupils across the school and works on identified areas for development. Currently he is working with Key Stage 1 pupils exploring how to input instructions into a programmable toy in order to make it move forwards, backwards and turn 180 degrees. There is very good provision for pupils with visual impairment who have their own computer and a touch keyboard with Braille overlays. There is a good range of software designed specifically to meet the pupils' needs. .
130. The co-ordinator and staff have worked hard to develop the subject over the last two years and the recent improvements in resources and staff training have been instrumental in raising standards. Computer skills are regularly timetabled for each class and a checklist provides records of pupils' progress but assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. The school development plan indicates that information and communication technology has been a priority and there is a useful and suitably detailed scheme of work in place. However, there is still considerable progress to be made in developing the use of information and communication technology across the

curriculum. There are currently insufficient resources to ensure that pupils are able to reinforce their knowledge and understanding as well as practice their skills.

MUSIC

131. Standards attained by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are close to national expectations. The school has maintained the standards attained at the time of the last inspection. Singing remains a strength of the school and is still above average. Pupils sing enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment. A recent visit by the BBC Philharmonic orchestra made a significant contribution to older pupils' knowledge and understanding of instruments and improved listening skills in an interesting and motivating way. Pupils still talk about the experience with pleasure. Instrumental music lessons are also taught with a purpose. During the inspection violin and brass players were practising hard for the forthcoming performance at the Oldham Music Festival. The choir sings to the elderly in the local community and takes part in a number of singing events in Oldham. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. A suitable scheme of work gives useful support to teachers who plan a range of activities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical elements. Lessons are also suitably planned to develop musical skills. Skilful questioning in a Year 1 lesson enabled pupils to identify when the music got faster and louder when listening to 'Zorba's Dance'. As pupils get older they use their knowledge and skills to compose simple pieces of music, recording their compositions in pictures and showing clearly when to play loud, soft, fast and slow. There are too few opportunities for higher attaining pupils to record their music using notation despite those who have brass, recorder and violin lessons being able to read music. Pupils with visual difficulties are given good opportunities to develop their musical knowledge and understanding through practical activity and often work co-operatively with a partner who helps them to locate the instruments they need to play. Extra curricular clubs and activities make a strong contribution to pupils' musical experience throughout the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn brass or stringed instruments.
133. The co-ordination of music is satisfactory. The subject has recently been reviewed informally and this has allowed the co-ordinator to identify suitable developments and improvements. Although the scheme of work has identified appropriate assessment procedures, these have not yet been implemented into the subject. There is an adequate range and quality of resources to teach all musical activities although additional resources to use information and communication technology are required to support pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are close to expectations for pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Swimming and extra curricular opportunities are a strength of physical education. Standards in swimming remain above average. Pupils enjoy swimming lessons and are all keen to gain their certificates of achievements, which identify clearly particular skills and swimming achievements and also act as a precise assessment of pupils' learning. Targets are clear and pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what they must do to improve their own performance, knowledge and understanding in order to gain the next certificate. These careful assessments are ongoing and are used to set challenging

targets. Linked to very good teaching, they ensure that all pupils achieve well in swimming. The support given to pupils with visual difficulties is very good and enables these pupils to be fully involved in the activity.

135. Pupils across the school enjoy physical education lessons and join in enthusiastically with dance and games activities. Lesson observations show that standards in dance are average. Year 5 pupils have a sound understanding of the elements of dance and use these to compose a dance sequence, which reflects the mood of the music closely. Pupils think about the speed, direction and shape of their movements. They build in jumps and turns at various points of their performance to reflect the changes in the tempo, pitch and volume in the music. Most pupils are able to say what is good about each other's dance but as yet are not able to say how each other's performance can be improved, still relying on the teacher to guide them through this process. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is very good in swimming and good in games. In swimming pupils are challenged to perform tasks with increasing difficulty. They are given suitable advice to improve their performance and encouraged positively to succeed. This increases their self-confidence and self esteem. The pace of lessons is very good and this and the very positive relationships motivate pupils to rise to the challenges they are given. Teachers use their good expertise and subject knowledge to plan and organise interesting activities, which help pupils to learn and develop skills within a games situation both in lessons and during clubs. Pupils are competitive and keen to do well but at the same time welcoming into their group all pupils regardless of their ability. Suitable resources are used effectively to integrate pupils with visual difficulties into all lessons and the support of assistants enables all pupils to take part in lessons.
137. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and plans are being developed to strengthen physical education further. Resources are well organised and used effectively to give pupils worthwhile physical education experiences.