

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ROMAN
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ashton-under-Lyne

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 131285

Headteacher: Mr A Brown

Reporting inspector: Mr P T Hill
6642

Dates of inspection: 30th October – 2nd November 2000

Inspection number: 224769

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Holden Street
Ashton-under-Lyne
Tameside

Postcode: OL6 9JJ

Telephone number: 0161 330 9521

Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. Fr. D Heakin

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Hill	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Information technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Geography	
		History	
Jennifer Farmer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ian Hocking	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Design & Technology	
		Physical Education	
		Under Fives	
Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	English	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Music	

The inspection contractor was: School Inspection & Consultancy, 19 Marple Road, Charlesworth, Glossop, Derbyshire. SK13 5DA

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 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Primary School is a mixed, voluntary aided school, located in Ashton-under-Lyne. The school has 214 pupils on roll, aged between 4 and 11. There are 31 children in the nursery. Most pupils live in the area immediately surrounding the school but some, because of the denominational nature of the school, travel from further afield. The circumstances of the families in the area are similar to, or slightly below, national averages. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Only two pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils' levels of development, on entry to the school, are in line with those anticipated for children aged under-five. There are 38 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs, and of these, five pupils receive some support from outside specialists. No pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. There has been a significant improvement in many areas since the last inspection. Pupils' levels of attainment, as measured in national tests for 2000, have improved significantly. Teaching is good overall with significant amounts of very good and excellent teaching. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is very well supported by the deputy head. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It has achieved considerably improved standards in the standard attainment tests (SATs) for 2000.
- Teaching is good overall with a significant amount of good and very good teaching.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and direction.
- There is very good provision for children aged under five.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good and strengths of the school.
- Spiritual, moral and social education is very well provided for.
- The school's aims and values are very well reflected in all aspects of its work.
- Pupils are very well cared for and supported.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and coverage of the National Curriculum for information technology.
- Raise standards at the end of Key Stage 1 by improving the quality of teaching at the end of the key stage.
- Further development of the monitoring of teaching and of performance management.
- Attainment in science, especially higher levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1998, at which time it was found to have some serious weaknesses. In September 1999 Ofsted reviewed the school's progress in implementing its action plan to remedy the areas of weakness. At that time the school was found to have made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues. Although there are still some areas for development in relation to the key issues, the school is currently making good progress in addressing them. There has been a significant improvement in standards in both key stages and especially by the end of Key Stage 2.

Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, even though science results remain lower than those of similar schools. Much work has been done in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and, as a result, teaching was found to be good overall, an improvement since the last inspection. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and targets in their education plans are matched to their individual needs. Although standards in ICT remain below average, and the requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject are not met, the school has made considerable and impressive progress in providing an excellent ICT suite and a well-planned subject curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	B	A
mathematics	E	D	B	A
science	E	E	E	D

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

The above table shows that standards reached in the 2000 test results in English and mathematics were above average when compared with standards nationally, and well above average when compared with similar schools. Although standards in science are well below average, pupils' levels have improved recently although no pupils achieved higher levels in science. The school has set realistic targets for improving results in English, mathematics and science, particularly with regard to increasing the number of pupils who ought to achieve higher levels in national tests. Standards in ICT are below average for all pupils, because, as yet, the considerable recent improvements in provision for ICT are only now beginning to have an effect. Standards are improving year on year with pupils achieving well in English, mathematics and showing a steady improvement in science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, by the vast majority of pupils throughout the school, is very good; this is a strength of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, they notice what needs to be done and often take responsibility for doing it.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils obviously enjoy attending school.

The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development identified at the last inspection has been maintained. This is a very strong area of the school. Pupils of all ages, and in most classes, concentrate very well for long periods and apply themselves very conscientiously to their tasks. They are keen to

come to school, form very good relationships, are polite and helpful and are confident and want to do well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in teaching. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. In 41 percent of lessons teaching is good, in 11 percent it is very good and in 7 percent it is excellent. In 37 percent of lessons teaching is satisfactory with unsatisfactory teaching occurring in just 4 percent of lessons. Teaching of the pupils aged under five is good, in lessons for those aged five to seven is satisfactory overall and for pupils aged seven to eleven is good overall. In both key stages, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well enabling pupils to make solid gains. Teaching is good in mathematics and is satisfactory in English. Lesson planning is a particular strength and the curriculum now makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, the teacher confused the need to ensure that the lessons were purposeful and conducted at an appropriate pace with hurrying the lesson along. This resulted in pupils being unsure about what they were to do next, losing concentration and talking to each other when they should have been listening to the teacher. There has been a considerable improvement in teachers' confidence and expertise in the use of information technology, but this still needs further development to ensure the full utilisation of the very good provision in the ICT suite.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. The curricular and other opportunities offered to children aged 5 to 11 are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements, apart from in information and communication technology (ICT). The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Extra curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall with good planning and support to meet individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well provided for and take a full and active part in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual, moral and social education is very well provided for and, together with pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships are strengths of the school. However, the development of pupils' awareness of living in a multi-cultural society does not currently receive enough attention.
How well the school cares	The school cares for its pupils very effectively and provision in this area is very

for its pupils	good. The teachers know their pupils well and they are aware of their particular needs, including those with special educational needs.
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The school has good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. As a result, teachers know their pupils well and provide good guidance and support. The curriculum is satisfactory, apart from ICT, and provides a wide range of activities. Developments in the ICT provision have resulted in considerable improvement since the last inspection report. However, the subject currently still fails to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Parental involvement in the life of the school is good and the school has productive links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and promotes high educational standards within a distinctively Catholic ethos. Subject leadership is good in English, mathematics and science.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a very clear view of how the school is progressing and are active in supporting future developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory with good developments in reviewing teaching. However, the school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are currently unsatisfactory. The school makes good use of assessment data.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All funding is carefully and appropriately targeted with good use being made of available finances. The school has made excellent use of available resources to considerably improve the ICT provision.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff. This leadership is a major factor in ensuring that there has been an upward trend in the overall standards attained since the last inspection and especially since last year. The school is clearly aware of, and applies, the principles of best value. Resources are provided to ensure best value for expenditure, as in the case of the new ICT provision. Staffing adequately meets the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are at least adequate in all areas. They are good for English and are now very good for ICT. The accommodation is soon to be improved by re-roofing the building. It currently provides adequate facilities, considerably enhanced through the provision of the new library and ICT suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Over 90% of parents who returned questionnaires agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Behaviour is good. • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard. • Parents feel comfortable approaching school about problems and suggestions. • School is helping children become mature. <p>Well over 80% of parents strongly agree, or agree, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children get the right amount of work to do at home. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information that they get about how their children are getting on. • The range of activities that the school provides.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed. Those parents who attended the Parents' Meeting spoke highly of the school and many support it in its work. Inspectors also agree that the information that parents receive about their childrens' progress needs to be reviewed and developed. A number of parents expressed a wish for the school to provide a wider range of out of lesson activities. However, the number and range of activities provided compares favourably with other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds were above the national average in English and mathematics and well below in science. In comparison with similar schools standards were well above average in English and mathematics but below average in science. This represents a significant improvement on standards in English and mathematics in previous years and is a result of the positive impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The current Year 6 class is weaker academically than the previous one but the attainment of most pupils is still average and shows that the school is maintaining the improvement in standards since the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

2 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds were below in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with the national average. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science indicate that pupils' performance was in line with the national average but above average for similar schools. The attainment of most pupils in the current Year 2 class shows an improvement on previous years and is average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is a reflection of the positive effect that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having in helping to raise standards. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

3 On entry to Nursery many children have reached the levels of development anticipated for their age. However, a significant minority has under-developed skills particularly in the key areas of language and mathematics. They experience a good range of worthwhile activities that develop them across all six areas of learning recommended for children under five. By the age of five, most achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. This represents good progress and is a direct result of the good teaching that the children receive in the Nursery and Reception classes.

4 In English, standards in speaking are average and are above average in listening for pupils aged 5 to 11, with most achieving well in relation to their abilities and to their prior attainment on entering the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other pupils and consequently there is good development of their listening skills. In some classes there are very good opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their ideas, as was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 4 on learning about the main features of instructional texts. However, in some classes such opportunities are limited and consequently pupils do not develop their speaking skills as effectively as their listening skills. To improve the standards in reading the school has timetabled guided reading sessions for all classes and pupils aged 5-7 now make satisfactory progress in their reading and pupils of all abilities achieve appropriately. The school has greatly improved its library provision since the last inspection and this now provides a stimulating environment for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading. The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing since the last inspection, with termly targets being set for pupils to achieve. This is now having an effect and pupils aged 5 to 7 are now achieving appropriate standards in their writing. Pupils aged 7 to 11 make satisfactory progress in their reading and writing and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority of older pupils are competent readers who can read a range of texts accurately and can recount stories and express preferences. The improved library provision has meant that pupils are now able to develop their library

and individual research skills to the level of which they are capable. 5 Pupils can write in a variety of forms across the curriculum and standards of handwriting are good. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in extended writing activities and as a result they are developing their skills and are achieving appropriately in this aspect of English.

6 Pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. In mathematics lessons the pupils have opportunities to develop these skills when reading questions and then discussing and explaining their strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. Pupils label diagrams in science, and in geography and history record their ideas in a variety of written formats.

7 In mathematics, pupils aged 5 to 11 are making sound progress in developing their recall of number facts and in mental manipulation of number. They are increasingly becoming adept at explaining their methods when mentally performing calculations. Pupils in Year 6 have appropriate levels of skill in written calculations, but few have reached the required standards in mental calculations because they have only experienced the National Numeracy Strategy for the relatively short period of time of just over one year.

8 Pupils use their numeracy skills in a satisfactory way across the curriculum, as is seen in science work where they use data collection and graphical representation to record their findings. In geography and physical education lessons teachers make good use of opportunities to reinforce the positional and directional language of mathematics.

9 In science, pupils aged 5 to 7 make appropriate progress and achieve satisfactory standards, but by the time that they are 11 standards are below average and they do not achieve appropriately in relation to prior attainment. This is because there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to be involved in investigational activities that effectively develop their skills of interpreting, evaluating and explaining their scientific findings.

10 In information and communication technology, standards are below average and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. The statutory requirements in the teaching of this subject are not met, as aspects of data handling, control and solving problems are underdeveloped. However, the greatly improved provision for the subject, with the creation of a computer suite and a greater emphasis on the direct teaching of skills, is beginning to have a positive effect and pupils are now making good progress in their learning in the aspects of the subject that are taught.

11 In art, history and geography, pupils achieve average standards by the time that they are 11. In design and technology, music and physical education, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards or pupils' achievements at the age of 11. However, it is evident that pupils are skilled in singing and by the age of 11 pupils are confident when performing in front of an audience.

12 Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment and achieve appropriately. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13 The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development identified at the last inspection have been maintained.

14 Whilst in the nursery and reception classes, most children make very good progress in their personal and social skills and are able to relate well to one another and to adults. They show respect for resources and most are able to take turns sensibly. As pupils progress through the school they show a very good attitude towards their learning and the majority are able to sustain concentration and are keen to participate in the activities. Pupils apply themselves willingly to tasks and are very keen to answer questions and participate in discussions. Pupils also show good attitudes when in assemblies and when participating in all other aspects of school life.

15 Behaviour by the vast majority of pupils throughout the school is very good; this is a strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate very good behaviour in classes, in and around the school, particularly in assemblies and the playground. As pupils progress through the school they develop a very good level of self-discipline. Even nursery children take responsibility for accessing their own activities. By Key Stage 2, pupils are taking ownership of the rules and sanctions that contribute to the very good quality of life within the school and most pupils demonstrate that they understand the impact that their actions have on others. Many pupils are spontaneously polite and courteous; they show visitors around, open doors for them and greet them with 'good morning'. Pupils show good care for the building, property and resources. Bullying is not a significant problem in the school. Staff are continually vigilant and deal with the rare incidence quickly and effectively. Much of the very good behaviour can be attributed to the very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils have confidence to talk to staff about any concerns they might have. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the tasks and challenges presented by the teachers.

16 Personal development is good. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, they notice what needs to be done and get on and do it willingly. For example, pupils are seen helping in the hall assisting with clearing away after assemblies; they take registers to the office and do other errands in the classrooms as and when required. There is a very good 'Buddy' scheme where Year 6 pupils befriend the younger pupils when they start full time education. They help them at playtimes, during the lunch break and generally help them to settle into school. Pupils become more confident as they mature and, when given the opportunity, take more responsibility for organising their own work. Particularly good examples of this can be seen in the literacy hour when pupils work without the direct intervention of the teacher.

17 Attendance is satisfactory. Although the majority of pupils obviously enjoy attending the school and make every effort to do so regularly and on time, the actual attendance levels are only broadly in line with the national average. Some of the absence is parent-condoned, for example taking pupils on holidays during term time. This practice is, unfortunately, affecting some pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. In 37 percent of these lessons teaching is satisfactory. In 41 percent of lessons teaching is good, in 11 percent it is very good and in 7 percent it is excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in just 4 percent of lessons. Teaching of the pupils aged under five is good in 73 percent of lessons, very good in 9 percent of lessons excellent in 9 percent and satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching in the lessons for those aged five to seven is satisfactory overall. In 42 percent of lessons teaching is

satisfactory, in 8 percent it is good and in 33 percent it is very good and in 17 per cent it is unsatisfactory. Teaching for pupils aged seven to eleven is good overall. In 48 percent of lessons there is satisfactory teaching; in 30 percent teaching is good, in 13 percent it is very good and in 9 percent it is excellent.

19 The teaching of pupils aged under five is at least satisfactory in each of the areas of learning in which teaching was observed. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory in English, science, history, and information and communication technology (ICT) and good in mathematics and physical education. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory in English and science, and good in mathematics and ICT.

20 In both key stages, whilst predominantly good teaching was observed, insufficient lessons were observed to enable secure judgements to be made about the teaching of art, design and technology, geography and music. Similarly, no judgement is made about the teaching of history and physical education in Key Stage 2.

21 Teaching of the pupils aged under five is good overall. Planning is shared and teaching is very well prepared, making good use of resources. A notable feature of this successful teaching is the high emphasis that is justifiably given to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to their personal and social development. Regular assessment of pupils' progress enables staff to gain a clear knowledge of pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms provide a secure and stimulating environment that engages pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. Good teaching and occasionally excellent teaching, for example in a Reception class numeracy session, enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Pupil behaviour is managed very consistently, effectively and unobtrusively. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate and listen. Very good relationships between the staff and pupils contribute to very effective class control.

22 In the most successful lessons, very good quality relationships between teachers and pupils enabled lessons to proceed briskly, with pupils concentrating on their learning. Enthusiastic teaching, allied to good subject knowledge, prompted very good learning. For example in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, on the use of a calculator, the teacher's high expectations of pupils' ability to work collaboratively was well rewarded.

23 In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, crystal clear teaching points were given to the pupils, which resulted in good learning about "odds" and "evens". One of the examples of excellent teaching observed in Year 4 was that of a literacy lesson in which pupils were learning to write instructional text. The teacher rapidly captured the pupils' attention and interest with her lively start and searching questioning both of which contributed to very good learning which was later consolidated within the ICT suite. Here very good teaching of the use of "cut" and "paste" enabled pupils to discover the ease and effectiveness of text manipulation on screen. Valuable support from the caretaker, in "trouble shooting" within the ICT suite, contributes significantly to the smooth running of lessons.

24 The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching confused the need to ensure that the lessons are purposeful and maintain an appropriate pace with hurrying the lesson along. This then resulted in pupils often being unsure about what they are to do next and, consequently, losing concentration and often talking to each other when they should be listening to the teacher

25 In Key Stage 1 and 2, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The teachers' delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies is enabling pupils to make solid gains.

26 Systems of assessing and recording pupil progress in English, mathematics and science are used effectively to plan future work. This means that teachers are able to present work at levels that are appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment and therefore enables them to build on what they

already can do, know and understand. The school recognises the need to extend record-keeping to cover all subjects.

27 Teaching is at least satisfactory for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for those with special educational needs (SEN). All teachers and support staff have a good level of awareness of the needs of pupils and lesson planning reflects this. Teachers and support staff respond sensitively and appropriately to the needs of all pupils.

28 Homework is set appropriately in line with the school policy.

29 There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection when the quantity of unsatisfactory teaching was identified as a Key Issue. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been substantially reduced, i.e. from over 20 percent to 4 percent, and the amount of at least good teaching has increased from 50 percent to 62 percent. Much of this improvement is attributable to the work of the headteacher in his monitoring of teaching throughout the school. Also, there have been key changes in teaching methods, as a result of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Furthermore, weaknesses in planning and in teachers' subject knowledge have been addressed successfully. However, despite substantial improvements, since the last inspection, in teachers' expertise and confidence to teach ICT, there remains a need to continue this development in order to fully utilise the very good provision in the ICT suite.

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

30 The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage of learning, in the nursery and reception classes, is good. There is a strong emphasis on promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development that allows them to grow in confidence and quickly settle into everyday routines. The teachers and other adults working with children aged up to five have made a good start in providing a stimulating learning environment for the children in their care, leading to them making good academic progress. Children are well prepared for the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1.

31 The curricular and other opportunities offered to children aged 5 to 11 are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements, apart from in information and communication technology (ICT). The provision for ICT has been greatly improved since the last inspection by the creation of a computer suite with more up-to-date computers and software for children to use. However, there are some aspects of the subject, such as control and data handling that are not yet sufficiently developed to allow children to attain appropriate standards. The National Literacy Strategy is better implemented by some teachers than others, but overall it is being carried out in a satisfactory way that is helping to raise standards in English. There is good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy that has led to a significant improvement in standards in mathematics in the last year. The Salford Diocesan RE Guideline are planned for appropriately. The school does not teach personal, social and health education in a structured way and recognises that this is a priority area for development. Insufficient attention is given to teaching children an awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. The school is currently exploring ways of teaching sex education in a sensitive and supportive manner that would emphasise family values.

32 The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, which shows significant improvement since the last inspection. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now satisfactory with appropriate procedures in place for the identification and

assessment of these pupils. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met in full. The individual education plans give suitable targets, which are broken down into small steps to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve in an appropriate way.

33 The school has improved its planning procedures since the last inspection and there is now a satisfactory structure of long, medium and short-term planning in place to ensure that learning, in all subjects, builds on what pupils already know and can do. The long-term planning provides an overview of the aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study delivered by each year group over the year. The medium-term consists of schemes of work that outline what is to be taught. Short term planning is taken from these schemes and details the key knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught.

34 The provision for extra-curricular activities offered to pupils is good and includes football, volleyball, rugby, athletics and choir. Pupils are able to take part in a variety of competitive team games and have achieved notable success in local athletics, football and swimming competitions. The school gives all pupils opportunity to take part in a wide variety of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences for pupils. Younger pupils have been on visits to Manchester Airport, Chester Zoo, and the Museum of Science and Industry. Older pupils have visited Styal Mill to support their work in the study of Victorian England and to Stalybridge Art Gallery to further their appreciation of famous artists. Pupils in Year 6 are able to take part in a residential stay in a retreat in Derbyshire that provides good opportunities for personal reflection. There have also been visits from authors to develop pupils' skills in reading and writing throughout the school.

35 The school has links with the community and the church that makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The parish priest visits the school to take masses that very effectively supports pupils' spiritual development. At Christmas the pupils sing carols in Ashton town centre and have been involved in planting bulbs to improve the environment. The pupils are actively involved in raising money for a variety of charities, including 'The Rainbow Trust' and 'The Willow Wood Hospice' that enable them to gain a good understanding of the needs of others. There are satisfactory links with the secondary school that effectively prepare Year 6 pupils for transfer to this school.

36 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with spiritual and moral development being particular strengths.

37 The pupils' spiritual development through the curriculum and acts of collective worship is very good, being set within the secure context of the Catholic Faith. Pupils have many opportunities for reflection in assemblies and at other times of the day in classrooms. A very good example of this was seen in an assembly, led by the headteacher, in which pupils had time to think about friends who had died and gone to heaven. In this assembly there was very good use of music to heighten the mood of spirituality. All classrooms have a focus for reflection that is effectively used by teachers during the saying of class prayers. Spirituality is also effectively promoted through links with the church with the parish priest coming into school to take mass. All teachers value pupils' ideas and efforts and this is shown by the way that all pupils are encouraged to make contributions during lessons.

38 The school's provision for moral development is very good and it is a very orderly community in which the vast majority of pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong. Moral themes feature in many aspects of the curriculum and are an integral part of the school ethos. The pupils are encouraged to develop good moral values through the behaviour policy and through the good examples set by teachers. The pupils are given clear expectations of their behaviour and they take part in agreeing the classroom rules. The staff work hard to promote a sense of fairness among pupils and is successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other.

39 There is good provision for the social development of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. From the start of their time in school pupils are provided with good social development opportunities, with the staff providing good role models. There is a 'Special Friend' system in which pupils in Year 6 are able to take the responsibility of looking after children in the Reception class to help them settle into the everyday routines of school life. Pupils listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round-up sessions of most lessons. The provision for extra-curricular activities and the opportunities for older pupils to take part in residential visits contribute significantly their social development.

40 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn to appreciate aspects of their own culture by visits to places such as the Bridgewater Hall, to see the Halle Orchestra, Whitworth Art Gallery and Saddleworth Museum. They also have opportunities to work with visitors including authors and theatre groups. In religious education, pupils learn about the Catholic Faith and the beliefs and traditions of other major world faiths. The last inspection report indicated that the school was less successful in teaching pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. There has been some work done on this in art and music when pupils learn about the lifestyles of other cultures, as was seen in the artwork of pupils in Year 2 who were studying the colours used by the New Zealand Maoris in their paintings. However, the school recognises the need to do rather more to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 The school cares for its pupils very effectively and provision is good. The teachers know their pupils well and they are aware of their particular needs, including those with special educational needs. Although the Behaviour Policy, which has been introduced since the last inspection, is a minimal document and, for example, omits reference to bullying, there is a consistent approach to behaviour management throughout the school, which results in very good behaviour by the majority of children. The school has effective systems to deal with child protection issues with the Year 6 teacher identified as the named person with responsibility for child protection issues. The school provides a safe environment for pupils and regular and detailed health and safety reviews have identified minor issues, which the school has dealt with satisfactorily. The school involves Governors and the Site Manager in these risk assessment checks. There are sufficient adults on duty to supervise pupils at play, at breaks and lunchtime. They have good relationships with the pupils and pupils play well together. A satisfactory range of visitors supports pupils' well-being. Staff have received training in first-aid.

42 The personal development of pupils is good and is promoted effectively by the school. Pupils are expected to behave well and to relate well to one another. They are expected to contribute to the life of the school and to caring for each other and the less fortunate in the wider world. The time given by staff to developing relationships with pupils, both in class and through extra-curricular activities, contributes significantly to the promotion of good behaviour and pupils' personal development

43 Attendance levels in the school are in line with the national average and since the last inspection the school has improved its monitoring and recording system for attendance and unauthorised absence. However, the school could do more to ensure all parents are fully aware of the need to ensure their child attends regularly and on time. For example, it needs to remind parents regularly of the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.

44 The systems for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make, in English, mathematics and science, as they pass through the school, are good. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. There is an effective whole school system of

assessment and record keeping that can be used by teachers to determine pupils' levels of attainment and set targets for improvement in these subjects. The school recognises the need to expand these record-keeping procedures to incorporate all other subjects of the curriculum. Effective procedures are in place to analyse the optional and statutory test results to identify areas of weakness and then set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individual pupils. These procedures have helped the school to significantly improve standards in English and mathematics. Assessment information is effectively used, by most teachers, to evaluate pupils' performance so that they can plan future learning experiences accordingly. Assessment information for pupils with special educational needs is used in a satisfactory manner to plan future work. Baseline assessment is in place and the information from these assessments is used effectively to plan subsequent learning experiences.

45 Annual reports to parents, whilst they have improved since the last inspection, are limited in content and still do not sufficiently identify pupils' levels of achievement, strengths, weaknesses or areas for development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46 Partnership with parents is satisfactory with parents being welcomed into the school. The help given by a few parents in classrooms, and their attendance at assemblies or other school functions, is widely appreciated and encouraged by the school and contributes to pupils' learning. A small group of parents help with fund raising through the 'Friends of Our Lady of Mount Carmel'. However, the school is concerned that there are indications that a significant proportion of parents have only limited involvement in what the school has to offer. For example, approximately only fifty percent of parents attend the parent/teachers evening at the school and a similar percentage of parents have signed and returned the Home/School agreements. Since the 1998 inspection the school has introduced regular Coffee Mornings/Afternoons to try to encourage more parental involvement but as yet this has only had limited success.

47 Information to parents is now satisfactory. The lack of information for parents, highlighted in the 1998 inspection report, has been addressed by the introduction of regular class newsletters which tell parents about areas of study, homework projects, PE days and other topics of general concern. In addition the school sends out letters as and when necessary. The School Prospectus is a well presented document, successfully promoting the school. However, it needs to be reviewed to ensure that it provides parents with the necessary information that they require. For example the curriculum aims are not included in it. Pupils' Annual Reports also lack information to parents. For example they do not give levels of achievement, they are brief in content and do not place enough emphasis on targets and areas for development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48 The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff. The leadership and management effectively promote high educational standards and provide clear educational direction within a distinctively Catholic ethos. This leadership is a major factor in ensuring that there has been an upward trend in the overall standards attained since the last inspection and especially since last year.

49 The good leadership and management of the school has been central to the good progress that has been made since the last inspection, especially in improving standards in English, mathematics and science and in raising the quality of teaching generally. When the school was last inspected in June

1998, it was found to have some serious weaknesses. At that time two schools had been amalgamated to form the present school, and, as often happens on such occasions, although successfully accomplished, the reorganisation was stressful for staff and new systems took time to settle. Almost all of the key issues identified in the last inspection have now been fully addressed. There has been good progress in the monitoring of teaching, identifying areas for improvement, and in providing support. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved in most areas of the school, and standards have risen. The effective leadership by the co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science has been key to raising standards. Subject leadership is good in English and mathematics and, as a result, National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented. This has played a significant part in the overall improvement in standards.

50 Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a very clear view of how the school is progressing and are active in supporting future developments. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, with the chair of governors regularly taking Masses. This frequent contact, linked to an effective governing body structure, ensures that governors are up-to-date with their information about the school and are able, not only to fulfil their statutory duties, but to play a full part in shaping the direction of the school and in contributing to its improved performance.

51 The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory with good developments in reviewing teaching. Since the last inspection there has been a structured approach to evaluating the quality of teaching with the headteacher observing lessons across the subjects of the curriculum and the deputy-head reviewing literacy lessons. The observation of full lessons is supported by shorter, but more frequent, monitoring sessions. In this way the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is effectively contributing to the improvement in standards. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are, however, not fully in place and are currently unsatisfactory.

52 The school makes good use of assessment data especially for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection, where a key issue was to improve the way in which teachers used assessment information. This improvement is having a positive effect on pupils' progress and achievements. Assessment systems for the foundation subjects and for ICT are at an early stage of development and are not as effective as those for the core subjects.

53 The strategic use of resources is good. All funding is carefully and appropriately targeted with good use being made of available finances. A good example of this is the way in which the school has made excellent use of available resources to considerably improve the ICT provision. Centrally provided funding has been enhanced to provide, not only hardware, but an excellent environment which supports and stimulates pupils in their learning.

54 The school is clearly aware of, and applies, the principles of best value. Resources are provided to ensure best value for expenditure, as in the case of the new ICT provision. Staffing adequately meets the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are at least adequate in all areas. They are good for English and are now very good for ICT.

55 The accommodation is soon to be improved by re-roofing the building. Meanwhile the school continues to cope well with the problems associated with leaks. Overall, the accommodation currently provides adequate facilities, considerably enhanced through the provision of the new library and ICT suite and through good displays of pupils' work in most classrooms.

56 Planning for future development takes into account the principles of best value with governors and headteacher comparing the work of the school with that of others. This feature has been brought

into much sharper focus recently and the school is clearly aware of its performance in comparison to neighbouring schools in the LEA and schools nationally. When taking into account the overall standards achieved and the cost per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school clearly recognises the following areas for improvement and has already taken steps to bring about improvements. These are detailed in the School Development Plan.

- Raise standards in information and communication technology by: (Paragraph 10, 29, 52,107)
 1. ensuring National Curriculum requirements are met;
 2. further enhancing teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject.
- Raise standards in Key Stage 1 by improving teaching in Year 2 (Paragraph 18, 24)
- Further develop the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and of pupils' levels of attainment. (Paragraph 44, 51)
- Raise the levels of attainment in science, especially of potentially higher attaining pupils. (Paragraph 9, 88)

OTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the above areas for further improvement, the following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Improve the provision for multi-cultural education
- Broaden pupils' awareness of harmful substances
- Review and improve reports to ensure that parents provided with:
 - guidance about what pupils know, understand and can do and;
 - guidance on targets for further development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7%	11%	41%	37%	4%	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	194
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	7	9	11
	Total	19	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (87)	78 (84)	85 (87)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	8	11	11
	Total	20	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (87)	85 (90)	85 (90)
	National	82 (65)	86 (65)	87 (72)

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
		1999	18	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	10
	Girls	17	12	13
	Total	25	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (63)	61 (45)	61 (53)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	10
	Girls	16	13	13
	Total	25	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (61)	63 (50)	61 (66)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.7
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	375901
Total expenditure	365595
Expenditure per pupil	1597
Balance brought forward from previous year	5991
Balance carried forward to next year	4315

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	214
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	35	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	46	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	54	10	2	0
The teaching is good.	40	58	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	44	21	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	42	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	52	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	50	13	4	11
The school is well led and managed.	19	65	6	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	63	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	56	27	0	9

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

57 Pupils aged under five are prepared well for entry into Key Stage 1. The school provides a secure, caring and stimulating environment for pupils. A range of first-hand experiences and well-chosen activities are offered within a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the required Early Learning Goals and provides a smooth transition to the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

58 On entry to Nursery, many children have reached the levels of development anticipated for their age. However, a significant minority have under-developed skills particularly in the key areas of language and mathematics. By the time pupils are ready to transfer to Key Stage 1, almost all have reached the standards expected for five-year-olds. This represents good progress and is a direct result of the good teaching they receive in the Nursery and Reception classes.

59 Pupils aged under five make good progress in **communication, language and literacy development** and almost all meet the expected levels by the time they enter Key Stage 1. As a result of good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, strong emphasis is given to improving pupils' language skills. Reception pupils can select an appropriate letter sound and match it to a relevant object, for example, "a" for "apple", and "b" for "brush". They are developing an awareness of the purposes for writing, for example, writing invitations to a party. Nursery pupils listening to "The Gingerbread Man" learned about the main characters and recited, with great enthusiasm, "Run, run, as fast as you can etc.," They develop increasing confidence to express their thoughts orally. In almost all cases, pupils' speaking and listening skills are progressing well. Adults in Nursery and Reception take every opportunity, including snack times and play, to encourage dialogue between pupils and themselves. The use of ICT is a motivating factor, which contributes to pupils' success in reading, for example, in consolidating their knowledge of reading scheme characters and in pupils' "writing" about themselves. Pupils develop a familiarity with and love of books for example; pupils in Reception were encouraged to predict the ending of the story of "Not Now Bernard". Expressive reading by the teachers provides good role models and sustains pupils' interest and enjoyment. As a result, pupils are able to listen well and concentrate in order to follow such stories, and show good levels of understanding.

60 As a result of good teaching, pupils are making good progress in **mathematical development** and are on course to meet expectations. Nursery pupils begin to learn the names of simple 2D shapes. This is extended in Reception such that most know the names of shapes, such as triangle, square, rectangle and circle. Some good teaching in the Nursery class promoted pupils' learning to count within the context of a dice game. Pupils responded with high levels of enjoyment and excitement. Most pupils in Reception have secure skills in counting to ten both from aural and visual stimulus, for example, when joining in number rhymes. Many can recite numbers in twos up to twenty and in tens to one hundred. Most can determine the "bigger" of two numbers. An excellent lesson in Reception resulted in almost all pupils understanding the concept of "one more than". This excellent teaching was

characterised by the high enthusiasm of the teacher, very good provision of a wide range of resources, questioning that challenged and engaged all pupils, and an ethos of enjoyment.

61 Pupils are making good progress and are on line to attain expected levels in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. For example, following some very good teaching, Reception pupils understood the concept of “growing up” and were able to identify differences between themselves and babies. This lesson was brought to life by the presence of a mother and her baby who provided an ideal stimulus for pupils’ curiosity and questions. The teacher managed this learning most skilfully and brought pupils to a good level of understanding; pupils’ response was exemplary. Pupils in Nursery show a good knowledge of dinosaurs, with several pupils being able to accurately name various models.

62 Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in **physical development**, especially in the skills of fine motor control. They make good progress in Nursery in developing their manipulative skills, as seen in their rolling and cutting of Play Dough. Pupils in Reception can exercise control of technological equipment such as a computer “mouse” and some know how to “log on” to ICT equipment. Reception pupils listen well, follow instructions promptly and behave safely within physical education lessons. Good teaching encouraged pupils to show ingenuity and skill, for example, in travelling around the hall and in applying such skills on benches. Nursery pupils can confidently propel themselves down the slide during indoor playtime.

63 Little observation was made of teaching within the **creative and aesthetic area of learning**. However, from the available evidence it is clear that children are given suitable opportunities to develop these skills to the expected level, especially within painting, drawing and clay work activities. Nursery pupils have drawn self-portraits and have used chalks to mark skeletons on black paper. Reception pupils have made some good quality clay hedgehogs.

64 Pupils make very good progress and are on line to meet the expected levels in their **personal social and emotional development**. Teaching is very good; children are encouraged to communicate with others, in a variety of contexts including at play, in whole-class sessions, and in more intimate groupings, such as when listening to a story. Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and the adults are very good. Pupils show increasing confidence when answering questions. Reception pupils are able to express their feelings, for example, in writing about things that make them happy or afraid. In the context of a story, they are able to distinguish right from wrong, as for example when Ben disobeys his parents. In playing, even the youngest pupils in Nursery co-operate well with their peers, with most taking turns as necessary, for example, when using large play equipment inside. They follow instructions and readily comply with class routines. When working alone, or in large groups, they behave well and sustain concentration. Pupils carefully use school resources such as books and materials. During acts of prayer, and particularly in Mass, pupils are reverent and participate appropriately.

65 The good quality teaching that the pupils receive encourages them to develop academically, spiritually, personally and socially. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons, in most lessons it is good and occasionally very good or excellent. Teaching is purposeful and has clear learning outcomes. Lessons are exceptionally well planned. Resources, both human and material are used to maximum effect. Thorough initial assessments are made both in Nursery and in Reception and the information gained is subsequently updated. However, the school acknowledges that further work is necessary in establishing a consistent system of record keeping that takes account of the recently introduced Early Learning Goals. A key characteristic of the teaching of the pupils aged under five is the effective collaborative working of the teachers, nursery nurse, classroom assistant and voluntary helpers. Their cohesive teamwork ensures a consistent approach to the teaching and welfare of the

pupils. There is a happy atmosphere, which helps pupils to develop towards each of the Early Learning Goals. The quality of liaison between home and school is good and engenders the valuable support of parents. Pupils in the Nursery benefit greatly, especially in language development, from the small groupings made possible by the ratio of adults to pupils.

66 All resources are very well organised and accessible to children. Classrooms are also well organised and are enhanced by good quality displays.

67 Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has attended many courses and brings a clear philosophy and practice to the provision made for young pupils. She has produced a good quality policy document and has ensured that the importance of the Foundation Stage is duly recognised in terms of resourcing. The experience, expertise and enthusiasm of the team contribute to the smooth running of the Nursery and Reception classes. At the last inspection, provision for children aged under five was identified as strength of the school; this remains so.

ENGLISH

68 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds were above the national average and in comparison with similar schools standards are well above average. This represents a significant improvement on standards in previous years and is a result of the positive impact of the National Literacy Strategy and an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The current Year 6 class is weaker academically than the previous one but the attainment of most pupils is still average and shows that the school is maintaining this improvement. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

69 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds are below average in reading and writing in comparison with the national average. However, in comparison with similar schools standards were above average in reading and average in writing. The attainment of most pupils in the current Year 2 class shows an improvement on previous years and is average in reading and writing. This is a reflection the positive effect that the National Literacy Strategy is having in helping to raise standards. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

70 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers plan thoroughly to follow the structure of the literacy hour and prepare and resource their lessons in an appropriate way. They use questioning effectively to find out what pupils know and can do before they start the activities. Most teachers make suitable use of the introductions and the plenary sessions to develop pupils' speaking skills, which are satisfactory through the school. In some classes there are very good opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their ideas, as was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 4 on learning about the main features of instructional texts. In this excellent lesson the expertise of the teacher gave the pupils the opportunity and confidence to take full part in a class discussion that very effectively developed their communication skills. The pupils responded positively and were keen to show initiative and take responsibility during this activity. However, in some classes such opportunities are limited and consequently pupils do not develop their speaking skills as effectively as their listening skills. Pupils are very well behaved, have good powers of concentration and a high work rate. The listening skills of most pupils are good, which helps them to make relevant answers to the teachers' questions and to gain a suitable understanding of the work that they are to do. The teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other pupils and consequently there is good development of their listening skills.

71 The school has timetabled guided reading sessions for all classes to improve the standards in reading and pupils aged 5-7 now make satisfactory progress in their reading and pupils of all abilities achieve appropriately. Standards in reading are average with pupils showing suitable ability to read accurately and confidently from texts appropriate for their age. By the time that they are seven pupils are able to use a satisfactory range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 2 in which they were studying a text to find rhyming words and in so doing showed suitable ability to read aloud in a large group. The school has greatly improved its library provision since the last inspection and this now provides a stimulating environment for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading. Pupils who are aged 7 to 11 age also make satisfactory progress and demonstrate an appropriate ability to recount stories, express preferences in reading matter and to talk in an informed way about famous authors. The improved library provision has meant that these pupils are now able to develop their library and individual research skills to the level of which they are capable. To further improve standards the school is to implement class reading record sheets and to encourage more parental involvement in developing pupils' reading skills.

72 The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing since the last inspection, with all teachers now setting manageable targets for pupils to achieve. This is having a positive effect and pupils aged 5 to 7 are now achieving appropriate standards in their writing. They can use an interesting range of vocabulary and show an awareness of the reader in their writing. Many pupils are able to write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with simple words spelled correctly. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson showed a suitable understanding of how to put a set of instructions in the right order. Pupils aged 7 to 11 can write in a variety of forms across the curriculum and their standards of handwriting are good. There are sufficient opportunities for them to be involved in extended writing activities and, as a result, they are developing their skills in a suitable manner and are achieving appropriately in this aspect of English. Pupils in Year 6 show an appropriate ability to identify the difference between biographical and autobiographical writing and how to change from active to passive tense. The school is in the process of formulating a marking policy that is specific to writing so that marking of pupils' work informs them how to improve their writing. The quality of marking in Year 6 is exemplary and provides a secure basis on which to proceed. Pupils make satisfactory use of information and communication technology to word-process their stories and poems. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment and achieve appropriately.

73 Pupils use their literacy skills in a satisfactory way in other subjects. In mathematics lessons the pupils have opportunities to develop these skills when reading questions and then discussing and explaining their strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. Pupils label diagrams in science, and in geography and history record their ideas in a variety of written formats.

74 The long and medium-term planning for English follows the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and is effective in supporting progression and continuity of pupils' learning through the school. Since the last inspection the school has improved its procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make as they pass through the school; they are now good. There are effective procedures in place to analyse the optional and statutory test results to identify areas of weakness and from which to set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individual pupils. This has resulted in the school successfully targeting an improvement in the quality of writing for all pupils. Assessment information is used effectively by most teachers to evaluate pupils' performance so that they can plan future learning experiences accordingly. However, these procedures are not consistently applied by some staff and this makes it difficult for their pupils to know what they need to do next to improve. Some teachers implement the Literacy Strategy more effectively than others, but overall it is being satisfactorily delivered. The

school has a collection of pupils' work to serve as exemplars of the required standards to support consistency between classes of the standards expected by teachers of pupils.

75 The leadership of the subject is good with the co-ordinator having a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Her action plans have prioritised improvements in provision that are having a positive effect on standards. The accommodation, in terms of the library provision, is good. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books in classrooms and shared areas for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading.

MATHEMATICS

76 The school's 2000 test results for 11-year-olds are above average when compared to all schools nationally and well above average when compared to schools of a similar nature. This represents a substantial improvement on the results of the previous two years, when standards were below average. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has been a major factor in bringing about this recent improvement. Also, last year's Year 6 pupils were judged by the school to be particularly able, especially relative to the present cohort which contains a much greater number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Nonetheless, scrutiny of work from the present Year 6 pupils, and lesson observations, indicate that pupils are broadly on line to meet national expectations.

77 The school's 2000 test results for 7-year-olds are below average when compared to all schools nationally and average when compared to similar schools. This is a significant improvement on the previous year's results, which were well below average, and, as for the 11-year-olds' results, reflects the impact of the NNS. Scrutiny of work from Year 2 pupils suggests that standards are slightly better than those of last year's Year 2 and are on line to meet national expectations.

78 Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching is good in 45% of lessons, very good in 22%, excellent in 11% and satisfactory in the remainder. As a result, pupils make good gains in their acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. In virtually all lessons, pupils' behaviour and concentration are very good. Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and respond well to the work they are set. They listen very well and co-operate fully with the adults who teach them, showing eagerness to answer questions and pride in written work.

79 In Key Stage 1, due emphasis is given to basic number facts and operations, such as addition and subtraction, and to the concept of place value. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to sharpen their mental skills, for example when counting in 2's, 5's and 10's. As a result of very good teaching in a Year 1 lesson, pupils are able to recognise that odd numbers are identifiable by the presence of a 1,3, 5, 7 or 9 in the units position. Higher attaining pupils are readily able to identify odds and evens. The teacher's crisp delivery and very clear exposition, using the visual aid of cube towers, promoted pupils' learning.

80 Pupils in a Year 2 lesson learned that 2D shapes retain their identity, regardless of the position they occupy in space. Pupils' initial misconception was dealt with sensitively and skilfully by the teacher and pupils' conceptual understanding was advanced. They have a secure knowledge of the properties of a square and higher attainers know that "corners" are referred to as "vertices". Work seen in pupils' books indicates that pupils can: solve elementary money problems involving change giving; group numbers in 2's, 5's and 10's and understand the concept of "tens" and "units". They are presently less secure in identifying pattern in simple number sequences such as 2, 4, 6, 8 etc.,

81 Pupils in Key Stage 2 further develop their mental and written computational skills. In a Year 3 lesson, good teaching led to pupils making good gains in their mental skills of determining multiples of

2, 3 and 5. The teaching was enhanced by skilful use of resources, well prepared tasks and a lively pace that engaged pupils' interest. Excellent teaching in a Year 4 lesson, involving pupils learning to recognise "odds" and "evens" amongst large numbers, resulted in very good learning. The teacher's pacy and skilful questioning, in the introductory activity, sufficiently challenged pupils of all levels of ability. Excellent relationships, and teacher enthusiasm, inspired pupils to similarly enjoy the work and make rapid gains in their learning. They are able and confident when explaining their strategies for mentally adding numbers. Very good teaching in a Year 5 lesson resulted in pupils making rapid gains in their skills of using a calculator. Pupils responded very well to the teacher's sense of humour and enthusiasm. Her effective use of an overhead projector calculator enabled pupils to understand clearly the basic functions of a calculator.

82 Good teaching in a Year 6 lesson resulted in most pupils being able to determine simple percentages of various quantities. Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge of the words "numerator" and "denominator" and understand and can carry out the process of simplifying fractions. They can competently derive equivalent fractions, order decimals by size and perform written calculations such as division.

83 Pupils throughout the school are making sound progress in developing their recall of number facts and in mental manipulation of number. They are increasingly becoming adept at explaining their methods when performing mental calculations. Pupils in Year 6 have appropriate levels of skill in written calculations but few have reached the required standards in mental calculations because they have only experienced the NNS for the relatively short period of just over one year. Pupils are able to use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in science, for example when measuring.

84 Throughout the school, pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language are appropriately provided for and make sound progress in learning.

85 Record-keeping systems are satisfactory and provide a secure basis for planning future work. Homework is set appropriately and supplements classwork.

86 Good leadership of mathematics allied to teachers' commitment has led to the successful introduction of the NNS. Considerable improvements have been made in the subject since the last inspection. The NNS has provided a very secure structure for lesson planning, textbook resources are used judiciously and teaching is systematically monitored by the head teacher. All these factors combined have driven standards up.

87 At present, there is some very good use of ICT to support mathematics, for example in Year 5, but the school now needs to provide more software in order to provide even greater opportunities for pupils to make use of the very good equipment recently installed in the ICT suite.

SCIENCE

88 Although the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds are well below the national average in science, and below the average for similar schools, nevertheless there has been a considerable overall improvement in the subject over recent years. The 2000 results, where the number of pupils attaining National Curriculum Level 5 was well below average, were a disappointment to the school, although teacher assessment clearly indicates that the school was well aware of the situation. Language development is an area the school has concentrated on for some time and the development of scientific language is justifiably seen as an important area to ensure higher achievement in the tests. In most lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is average in the

topics they are studying. For example, in a Year 5 lesson involving a study of the earth and beyond, pupils asked very good questions related to the scientific topic and were able to make informed statements about what they think happens as the earth spins on its axis. They are able to explain why shadows change with the sun's position. Attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is below average and although they are careful when carrying out investigations, they often have some difficulty in drawing conclusions and some have difficulty in explaining the purpose of the investigation.

89 The 2000 teacher assessments for pupils in Key Stage 1 indicate that performance is in line with the national average but above average for similar schools. In lessons, levels of attainment are average for most pupils, but with a few pupils clearly having an above average understanding of the topics being covered. For example, pupils in a Year 1 lesson were able to group materials according to their properties and make statements about why some materials are used for making articles and others are not. In a Year 2 lesson, again exploring differences in materials, pupils were very successful at predicting which materials would melt and which would not.

90 Pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 enjoy their lessons. They are eager to answer questions and to put forward ideas, often by giving extended answers which frequently show good levels of understanding, as in the Year 5 lesson on the earth and beyond. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science lessons is good and often very good. They have good relationships with other pupils and with teachers and they co-operate very well, an important attribute when investigating in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is very good with pupils being polite and helpful and listening very well to each other and to their teachers.

91 Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of interesting materials and resources. Teachers often use good strategies for encouraging pupils to think about the topic and to predict what they consider is happening, for example, by asking pupils to write a statement or construct a diagram to explain what will happen. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection. In all lessons there is an appropriate balance of investigations and often stimulating presentation, using a variety of visual aids and teaching methods. There has been a reduction in the use of worksheets, with support material being appropriately presented to meet individual pupils' needs. Teachers and support staff work well together and make sure that pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, are properly provided for and have full access to all aspects of the lessons.

92 The co-ordination of the subject, and the structure of the curriculum, have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. Indeed, both were previously found to be unsatisfactory and the curriculum had some serious flaws. The science co-ordinator has worked very hard and effectively to put a clear structure and scheme of work in place. This guides teachers in their lesson planning and has resulted in improved standards as well as ensuring that lessons build progressively on what pupils already know, understand and can do. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards, having analysed results and samples of pupils' work, and reviews all colleagues' planning and timetable coverage. The headteacher has carried out observation of science lessons throughout the school and has fed back information on them to the science co-ordinator. In this way, apart from the year 2000 test results, there has been a year on year improvement in standards. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of areas for development and agrees that these include: increasing the number of pupils attaining higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2; further improving teacher confidence; further development of pupils' scientific language, and; developing the use of ICT in science.

93 The science resources are adequate overall and are good for a number of areas of investigation. There has been a review of resources to ensure that they allow the scheme of work to

be taught effectively. Use of, and resources for, ICT in science are currently inadequate. This is especially true with regard to appropriate software. The co-ordinator is aware of this situation and there are plans to address it as part of a joint focus in raising standards in ICT as a discrete subject of the curriculum as well as in science.

ART

94 Though only two lessons were observed it is evident from displays and by talking to pupils that by the time that they are 11 the pupils achieve average standards, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. This is a result of the school emphasising the teaching of basic skills in the subject so that pupils are able to suitably build upon their prior attainment. This progression of skills is seen in the way that pupils in the Reception class do random prints and then move onto printing continuous patterns using fruit and vegetables in Year 1. Pupils are presented with a suitable range of activities in all areas of the subject and develop satisfactory skills in the use of different media. Art contributes in an appropriate way to pupils' cultural development, with pupils benefiting from experience of meeting a range of artists and sculptors.

95 Pupils aged 5 to 7, develop satisfactory skills in using a range of media. They learn to control drawing tools such as pencils, crayons and pastels and develop skills using line, shading and tone when creating their pictures. Pupils in Year 2 explore the paintings of the New Zealand Maoris in terms of the kind of colours that they use. Pupils aged 7 to 11 work with a wider range of materials and work is often linked to other subjects. In a good quality lesson for pupils in Year 4, taken by the headteacher, the pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of how to make pinch pots out of clay. Pupils have opportunity to study the work of famous artists as seen in the way that pupils in Year 3 have drawn pictures in the style of Alexander Calder, and in Year 6 in the style of Lowry. In a Year 6 lesson on developing texture and shape in collage work, the pupils showed accurate folding and cutting out skills and responded with enjoyment and enthusiasm during the activity.

96 Effective leadership of the subject has identified areas for development. Monitoring of standards and progress in the subject is at an early stage of development and the school is aware of the need for this to take place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97 During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson of design and technology. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the teaching and pupils' learning in Key Stages 1 and 2. Similarly, insufficient evidence was made available to judge standards of pupils' attainment, at the end of each of the Key Stages 1 and 2.

98 In the one lesson seen, namely in Year 5, good teaching resulted in good gains in pupils' learning. The teacher had made thorough preparations for the lesson and provided very good first-hand experiences for the pupils. As a result of sampling several varieties of bread, from a range of cultures, the pupils were able to make accurate evaluations of similarities and differences amongst the sample. This lesson also made relevant contributions to pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science. Pupils responded well to this experience.

99 Effective subject leadership has resulted in satisfactory improvement being made since the last inspection. There is now a secure basis for long and medium-term plans that ensures a consistent and cohesive approach to lesson planning and indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum

are met. As a further consequence of introducing a secure and detailed system of planning, teachers have developed their own knowledge of the subject and feel more confident in their teaching. The school acknowledges the need to introduce a simple and effective system for recording pupils' progress.

GEOGRAPHY

100 During inspection week, there was opportunity to observe only one lesson, namely in Year 4. As a result, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure overall judgement on the quality of teaching and on pupils' standards of attainment in the subject. It is clear, however, from planning documents and from a review of pupils work in books and folders, that the subject is suitably covered within the planned curriculum in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

101 However, in this very well taught lesson, pupils studying Kenya had a well above average knowledge of what the country is like, could name the main physical features of the country and could talk confidently about environmental issues. The teacher was very well prepared and had very clear intentions for what pupils' should learn. She used resources skilfully to develop pupils' understanding. The tasks set were challenging and clearly understood by pupils. Expectations, of both teacher and pupils, were very high and there were excellent relationships. All aspects of this lesson were very good with pupils concentrating very hard, listening carefully to the teacher and to each other, and using their knowledge to ask questions about the area and make deductions about what it is like and why. In the same lesson a group of pupils made very good use of ICT in the new suite. Here, very well supported by a classroom assistant and the site manager, who plays an important and significant role in supporting ICT, pupils researched facts about Kenya, using CD Roms.

102 The subject is effectively organised and there is a policy and a scheme of work. These are followed throughout the school and now ensure that new learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection when the guidelines for teaching were not fully implemented. The classroom activities are well supported and enhanced through visits and fieldwork, mainly to local areas, and by a good range of resources. There has been a recent focus on the development of geographical skills and increased use of ICT.

HISTORY

103 During the week of the inspection there were only limited opportunities to observe history lessons and, as a result, to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' attainment. However, it is clear from the work in pupils' books, from the overall timetable and from the planning documents, that the subject is suitably covered within the curriculum in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

104 Pupils in a Year 2 lesson, exploring the life of Florence Nightingale, were able to give clear descriptions, based on a range of evidence, of the main aspects of her life and work. Most pupils in the class could use the materials to identify differences between life then and life today and were developing a clear sense of chronology, knowing that the events they were studying were well over 100 years ago. The teacher had very carefully planned a good variety of learning activities supported by good resources. The activities included researching information from books, photographs and material which the teacher had obtained from the Internet. This planning and organisation resulted in the pupils talking confidently and knowledgeably about the topic. The teacher emphasised historical

vocabulary and presented good relevant questions to the pupils. Pupils' responded by listening carefully, behaving appropriately and by answering questions enthusiastically.

105 Pupils in year 6 have produced well written 'Diary Entries' depicting a day in the life of a worker at Styal Mill. This work built on information gained from a school visit to the mill. Pupils clearly used the information gained to place themselves in the role of a mill worker and show, in their writing, that they have a good knowledge and understanding of many of the circumstances facing Victorian mill workers. Pupils had been involved in careful observation of artefacts from the Victorian era and had considered the differences between old and modern ways of life.

106 Effective co-ordination and subject leadership has brought about satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There is now a structured scheme of work to ensure a logical progression in pupils' learning. Good quality book resources, artefacts and some computer software, clearly contribute to pupils' learning. The school makes good and effective use of the local education Authority scheme which provides research boxes of relevant materials and artifacts. The school's provision of visits to local places of relevant interest, for example Saddleworth Museum, have also enriched the history curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

107 There has been a considerable recent improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). At the time of the previous inspection there was not enough emphasis on the use of ICT, insufficient hardware and pupils' standards of attainment were below those expected nationally. Most of these issues, which led to ICT being a Key Issue for development for the school, have been successfully addressed although the improvements are too recent to have an appreciable impact on standards which remain below the national average in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

108 The school has developed a well thought out and comprehensive strategy to improve standards and provision. The management, including the governors and the ICT co-ordinator, have implemented a well-considered and financed plan which has guided the development of a central ICT suite to accommodate whole classes of pupils. This allows specific aspects of ICT to be taught successfully and regularly to all pupils, complementing the use of computers in classrooms in all areas of the school. The hardware provision has been accompanied by staff training in the use of the new machines and software. This provision and strategy is beginning to have an impact on standards. However, the school recognises the need to continue to enhance teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject.

109 From an early age pupils can access the network and are very competent with the computer interface, confidently using the mouse and keyboard. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils could log on to the network, select the correct programme, type their names and simple sentences selecting words from a prepared list, print out their work and then log off the network.

110 Pupils in a Year 4 lesson, using the computers for word processing, know that ICT can be used to re-order text to make meaning clearer and are secure in the skills of cutting, pasting and re-ordering, dragging highlighted text to a new position on the page. They are confident and competent in using the computer interface, with most pupils having very good control of the mouse and the ability to remember which icons and menus to use. All are able to log on and off the network and select the correct programme.

111 The strongest area of pupils' work with ICT is in word processing and here the standards are in line with expectation. There is also some good learning in other areas of the curriculum, for example in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils were developing skills in using a database. By the end of the lesson could create new fields, deciding which type the field should be and labelling it appropriately. In a Year 4 geography lesson, where most pupils worked in their classroom, a group of pupils guided by support staff, developed research skills. However, apart from word processing, in both key stages pupils' overall attainment in ICT is below the national average.

112 In most of the lessons observed, pupils' learning was good with considerable concentration on, and application to, the tasks set. Co-operation between pupils is generally good and on the occasions when they share computers, pupils do so sensibly and are helpful to each other. Their attitude and behaviour in ICT lessons is generally good and often very good, especially in the Key Stage 2 lessons observed. Pupils obviously value and enjoy the new facilities and this has a strong motivating factor.

113 Most of the pupils' use of ICT took place in the ICT suite, although pupils used computers in classrooms and as an integral part of subjects including geography and mathematics. Teaching is at least satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teacher expertise is developing and many staff have good levels of knowledge and understanding of computers and how to teach ICT skills. Lessons are well planned and organised and proceed at a brisk pace with good and effective classroom management. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching pupils were not given sufficiently clear direction about the next steps they should take, and, as a result of confusion, lost concentration and some motivation. Teachers make good use of the ICT suite facilities and ensure lessons run efficiently and are well directed and controlled. Support staff make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. The site manager also acts in a technical support role, providing a very valuable service to pupils and to teaching staff. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and often very good and this considerably enhances pupils' learning.

114 ICT is efficiently and well managed. The co-ordination of ICT has developed considerably recently with the ICT co-ordinator playing an important and successful role in raising the profile of information and communication technology. He has been successful in providing guidance and support for staff as well as pupils and has enthusiastically introduced a scheme of work and developed the hardware provision.

115 Resources, both hardware and software, are now very good with the newly developed suite of networked computers being effectively and well used. During the week of the inspection there was only limited use of the classroom ICT provision. The school is aware of this and plans to review the situation.

116 The school is aware that the next stage of development, in order to continue to raise standards, is to ensure that all the areas of the National Curriculum for information technology are covered in sufficient depth. Overall, there has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection, with very good improvements in facilities and computers.

MUSIC

117 Due to timetabling arrangements there was opportunity to observe only four lessons and consequently there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on standards attained or the quality of teaching in the subject. However, it is evident that pupils are skilled in singing and, by the age of 11, pupils are confident when performing in front of an audience.

118 In the good quality lessons for pupils in Years 3 and 5 the teachers showed good subject knowledge and were able to effectively demonstrate techniques for pupils to use. As a result Year 3 pupils made good progress in their understanding of dynamics in music, and the pupils in Year 5 effectively developed their singing skills. In a lesson for Year 2 pupils, the lack of direct teaching to improve pupils' performance meant they made limited progress in their understanding of how to keep a beat. In school assemblies the pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. Pupils are given opportunity to take part in a range of musical performances such as at the Christmas and end of term concerts. All pupils aged 7 to 11 have had opportunity to visit the Bridgewater Hall to watch a performance of the Halle Orchestra. There is a co-ordinator with secure subject knowledge who is able to effectively support and advise her colleagues in their musical activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119 During the inspection, it was possible to observe only two physical education lessons, both of which were in Key Stage 1. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. However, there is evidence that almost all pupils have learned to swim to at least the standard required by the National Curriculum, many exceed this standard, and a few achieve an exceptional standard.

120 On the evidence of one games lesson in Year 2 it is evident that pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 1 are on line to attain the level expected for 7-year-olds. They are able to make sensible use of available space, showing awareness of others. Almost all can make appropriate use of various parts of their feet to control a ball effectively.

121 Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall. In a Year 1 gymnastics lesson, good teaching resulted in pupils making good gains in their skills of travelling and balancing. They were able to demonstrate good levels of awareness of their actions, with many pupils beginning to enhance their performance as a result of observing the teacher's well-chosen exemplars. The teacher set appropriate tasks that challenged pupils' intellectually and physically. She made telling teaching points that contributed to pupils' learning. In a Year 2 lesson the very skilful expertise of a football coach resulted in pupils making rapid gains in learning to control a ball. Pupils responded courteously and enthusiastically to this tuition.

122 On the evidence of both lessons, it is evident that there are good relationships and mutual respect between adults and pupils. This underpins the very good and unobtrusive control teachers have of their classes. In both lessons, good contributions were made to pupils' social development. Pupils demonstrate sensible behaviour and attitudes. They make safe use of equipment and are aware of the needs of others.

123 Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator has expertise, is enthusiastic and has attended several relevant courses. The sound improvement made in the subject since the last inspection is attributable to subject leadership and to the commitment of the teachers. Improvements include much improved teacher subject knowledge. Much of this is as a result of the school's use of external coaching staff whose expertise has provided, and continues to provide, very good guidance to staff. Planning documents provide evidence that National Curriculum requirements are met. There remains a need to introduce a simple but effective system for recording pupils' progress in the subject.

124 Accommodation is adequate but the grassed area used for outdoor games suffers from the fact that ready public access leads occasionally to dogs fouling the grass. Provision of extra-curricular activities including cross country, soccer, rugby and volleyball are well attended and contribute

significantly to pupils' personal and physical development. Notable successes are achieved in soccer, athletics and cross country.