

INSPECTION REPORT

VICTORIA PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Stretford

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106327

Headteacher: Mrs Sutherland

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 18th - 21st September 2000

Inspection number: 225121

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Davyhulme Road East Stretford Manchester |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs D Angel |
| Date of previous inspection: | July 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Eric Jackson 3108 | Registered inspector | Art and design; physical education; English as an additional language. | Results and achievements; teaching and learning; management and leadership. |
| Maureen Roscoe 9884 | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; care and welfare; partnership with parents. |
| Margaret Entwistle 30651 | Team inspector | Mathematics; geography; history; equality of opportunity. | Curriculum. |
| Mike Wehrmeyer 15015 | Team inspector | Science; information and communication technology (ICT); design technology (DT); special educational needs (SEN). | |
| Mike Roussel 22157 | Team inspector | English; music; religious education (RE). | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is of average size, housed in a new building about half a mile from its partner infant school. It serves a mixed catchment area of mainly private and some local authority housing. The intake to the school is broadly average, although there are significant areas of disadvantage in the catchment. An above average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. There is a higher than the national average number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, a few of whom are at an early stage of learning English. There are more pupils on the register of special educational needs than is usual in a primary school, two of whom have statements of their needs. Attainment at entry to Year 3 is about average, although it varies year-on-year. A significant number of higher attaining pupils leave the school between Year 3 and Year 6, as their families move house. They are replaced by other pupils moving into the area whose prior attainment is often not as high. For example, 27 per cent of the pupils in the last Year 6 class had joined the school since Year 3. The aims of the school reflect its primary philosophy, emphasising the achievement of potential in a warm, caring atmosphere, leading to high academic standards and independent self-discipline. The newly appointed headteacher had been in post for only two weeks prior to the inspection. There was also an acting deputy headteacher, and three temporary teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has substantially improved since its last inspection, and it is in a strong position to build on its successes under its new headteacher. Standards of attainment have risen in line with the national trend, and from being well below average in 1999, have improved significantly in 2000 to exceed the school's agreed targets comfortably. This represents good progress in pupils' learning. The quality of education provided is good, supported by good teaching, particularly for the Year 6 pupils. Pupils' personal development is good, founded in strong working relationships fostered by the staff. Behaviour is satisfactory, although temporary staff lack consistency in managing difficult behaviour. Successful monitoring and evaluation of the school's work by the previous headteacher and governors has helped to target its development on key priorities, such as the successful raising of boys' attainment. It now provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides good teaching leading to good learning, particularly for the Year 6 pupils. All staff have a determination to raise standards, and enthusiastically maintain a broad curriculum.
- It provides well for the learning and progress of pupils with special needs, and also those learning English as an additional language.
- There is good leadership from those in management positions, well supported by governors.
- The successful working relationships lead to good attitudes to learning and behaviour for most pupils.

What could be improved

- The consistency of behaviour management across the school.
- The development of language and information and communication technology skills in and through all subjects.
- Records of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in order to more accurately monitor pupils' progress and set appropriate development targets.

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 1996. The governors' action plan implemented at the time has been fully dealt with, although there is a continued concentration on assessment, recording and reporting procedures, and on improving attendance in the summer term. The management of the school, from the effectiveness of the senior management team to the evaluative involvement of the governors, has become much stronger. Very good progress has been made in raising pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, with notable increases in the attainment of high attaining pupils and of boys by the end of Year 6. Problem-solving opportunities in mathematics and good investigative work in science are now both strongly represented in teachers' planning and pupils' work. These improvements are linked closely to the development of teaching through further training, and the very effective use of classroom monitoring. The successful adoption and adaptation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have also helped to improve teachers' planning

and management of learning.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 | |
| English | D | E | C | B | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | D | E | C | B | |
| science | D | E | C | B | |

Standards overall in English, mathematics and science have risen in line with the national trend, from a low base in 1996. The school's results have improved dramatically in 2000, far exceeding the agreed targets. The attainment of Year 6 pupils at the higher levels has been markedly improved in 2000, and the school's performance compared to the national trend has also improved. Indeed, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in English is five per cent higher than the national average. The school has also improved significantly in comparison to schools in similar circumstances. The school recognises that standards of attainment needed to be better, but can take pride from the rate and level of progress since the last inspection. Standards in current work are in line with the national expectation. Given the large turnover of pupils between Year 3 and Year 6, pupils' progress in their learning is good. The school maintains the broadly average attainment at entry, despite the loss of a significant percentage of pupils who attained high levels in the national Key Stage 1 tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | The great majority of pupils have good attitudes to the school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Satisfactory. Behaviour is good on most occasions, and in most lessons. Occasionally, the response of a small minority of boys is unsatisfactory in lessons taken by temporary staff. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is sound; relationships are generally good. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. |

Good relationships are achieved throughout the school, most successfully in Year 6 with the most experienced teachers. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are generally good, but pupils' response is occasionally unsatisfactory in lessons taken by temporary staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | 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.

The quality of teaching is good, and it is often very good in Year 6, which leads to good achievement for the pupils. There are examples of good teaching in all year groups. The teaching is very good or outstanding in 25 per cent of lessons, good or better in 60 per cent, and at least satisfactory in 94 per cent. In six per cent of lessons seen teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The teachers' planning of their lessons includes a clear identification of what pupils will learn, and these are shared effectively with the pupils, helping them to achieve well in the main. The teachers' enthusiasm for what they teach also strongly affects the way that the pupils approach their work, leading to positive attitudes and good behaviour in most instances. Occasionally, less-experienced temporary teachers have difficulty dealing with problem behaviour, and in sustaining pupils' interest during long sessions. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and often make good progress towards their learning targets. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support, and make good progress. Through careful lesson planning, the teachers ensure that the needs of all pupils are properly catered for.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory overall - breadth and balance maintained well. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good - there is some very good, focused support for individuals and groups. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | These pupils receive good support both from a local authority support teacher, and in class. This leads to confident and rapid progress in learning English. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good, particularly for moral, social and cultural development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good care and welfare; monitoring of academic progress, personal development, and behaviour is satisfactory. |

Following a period of unsatisfactory relationships with parents prior to the appointments of an acting and now a permanent headteacher, effective measures are in progress to improve the situation. There is now an atmosphere of high expectation amongst the parents, and a willingness to engage closely with the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good; co-ordinators contribute well; the acting deputy works well with the newly appointed headteacher, who has made a good start, with the strong support of governors and parents. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors are effective. They fulfil statutory requirements and are very closely involved in the work of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | This has strongly improved. The process has been very thorough, with governors fully involved, and information used well to make changes. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. Support staff well deployed. The school makes good use of the resources available. |

Staffing is good, and both teaching and support staff contribute well to pupils' learning. The accommodation is in good condition, although cramped for the number of pupils. There is no library area, nor a suitable space for musical activities or confidential meetings. Storage space is inadequate. Resources for learning have improved,

and are good in many areas.

Overall, the school gives good value for money, improved since the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That children are expected to achieve their best, and enjoy coming to school.• Teaching is good, and helps children become mature and responsible.• They now feel comfortable about approaching the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of the information they receive, and more parental involvement.• The consistency of homework arrangements.• The range of activities outside lessons. |

The inspection endorses the parents' positive comments. Recent management changes are beginning to affect the quality of information to and involvement of parents. Homework is similar to that in most primary schools, and the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The pupils' results in national tests in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have improved in line with the national trend in recent years, and in 2000 have far exceeded the school's targets. In 1999, they were well below the national average, and marginally below the results in schools in similar circumstances. However, the improvement this year in the number of pupils attaining at the higher levels is impressive, as is the improvement in the attainment of boys. This is against the national trend for boys' results. The 2000 results are above those in similar schools in the three subjects. The level of attainment of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is below and sometimes well below national averages. However, the pupils receiving SEN support work hard and make good, and often very good, progress. The attainment of ethnic minority pupils is the same as that of other pupils, and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. Literacy and numeracy skills are good, reflecting the effect of the increased concentration on them from the adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
2. The school recognises that standards of attainment needed to be better, but can take pride from the rate and level of progress since the last inspection. Standards in current work are improved sufficiently to be in line with the national expectation. Given the large turnover of pupils between Year 3 and Year 6, pupils' progress in their learning is good and the broadly average attainment at entry is maintained, despite the loss of a significant percentage of high attaining pupils.
3. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, and writing meet expectations at this early stage of their final school year. However, written work from the last academic year shows that by the end of the key stage pupils' standards of attainment met the national expectation. Good progress has been made since the last inspection because good teaching is more evenly spread across the school. The 1999 National Curriculum test results in English were well below national expectations when compared to national averages and just below national expectations when compared to similar schools. However, the results of the standard attainment tests for 2000 show a significant rise in standards, with more pupils achieving the higher levels, representing good improvement.
4. There has been good progress in mathematics since the last inspection, so that standards of attainment are now broadly in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The results of national curriculum tests show continuous improvement over the past three years, and follow the national upward trend since 1996, whilst remaining below national levels until the current year. The school outstripped its targets for mathematics in the last two years. In comparison with other similar schools, statistical analysis for 1999 places the school at just below the average, and the 2000 results are in line with the national average, but above those in similar schools. In contrast to national trends, boys are achieving better than girls, especially at the higher levels. Evidence from the inspection supports the view that pupils are achieving well in mathematics, bringing attainment in line with expectations in current work.
5. For some years the school's results in science have been below the national average and below the results in similar schools. The boys were not achieving as well as the girls, and very few of the higher attaining pupils were achieving at the higher levels. With a determined effort the teachers set about improving provision for science. As a result of concentrated effort by the staff and pupils, they achieved the best results yet in the 2000 national standard tests. The boys improved slightly better than the girls; against the trend nationally. The number of pupils achieving level 5 rose dramatically. The school is pleased that it has

exceeded the targets it had set and that the teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment has been borne out.

6. Good progress has also been made in attainment in ICT, helped by the successful use of the improved computer hardware. Standards are now in line with expectations, although the skills learned are not yet used sufficiently across the curriculum. Pupils achieve as expected in the Agreed Syllabus in RE, where the pupils learn about a much deeper comparison of beliefs and faiths than at the time of the last inspection. Standards of attainment in all other subjects are also as expected, except in music where the school's continued focus helps many pupils to attain at higher than expected levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. This area of the school's work has been maintained at the same good level as at the last inspection. Because of the effort made by all staff to maintain good relationships, pupils' personal development is good overall, exemplified by the confidence shown by the majority of pupils in lessons and around the school.
8. Pupil's attitudes to school are good. Most show a lively enthusiasm and are keen to achieve, taking their work seriously and trying to improve. In one class for example, pupils happily continued a task well into their playtime. Most pupils are developing in a sensible way, in line with the school's expectations, although on occasion a small minority of pupils fall below these standards.
9. Pupils generally respond well to the school's reward and sanction system so that behaviour in and out of class is mostly satisfactory, and often good. In the majority of lessons pupils listen well and follow the teachers' instructions carefully. In the few lessons where pupils' behaviour is less than satisfactory this is usually due to weaknesses in class management by teachers new to the school, and unclear instructions given to pupils. Most pupils are clear about the way they are expected to behave in the corridors and playground. Some, however, have little self-discipline and take advantage of the opportunity to misbehave when they are not directly supervised in these areas of the school. There are good opportunities for Year 6 pupils to accept responsibility when they undertake 'monitor' posts across the school very well.
10. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their work. They learn to concentrate for longer periods. They do their best for their teachers and their support assistants, who encourage application and improved presentation. Pupils whose behaviour is a concern make good progress towards a calmer approach to work and sensible attitudes in class.
11. There had been twelve exclusions in the recent past, but none since Easter when the acting headteacher, and subsequently the newly appointed headteacher, have begun to involve parents and pupils more fully in setting clear boundaries and expectations. Parents are generally satisfied with the manner in which bullying incidents are dealt with and report that they find behaviour to be generally good in the school.
12. The quality of relationships is good. Most pupils respect differences between themselves and others. Pupils listened very respectfully when a class assembly touched upon the importance of working together for the common good. Pupil and staff relationships are good. However, a small minority of pupils attempt to disrupt the learning or playtime of others. At these times some pupils find it difficult to accept the authority of lunchtime assistants or obey the school's 'routine' rules.
13. Almost all parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels are satisfactory, but the rate of unauthorised absence is higher than average. At the time of the previous report the attendance of pupils in Year 6 in the final term was unsatisfactory, but has now improved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good. It is very good or outstanding in 25 per cent of lessons, good or better in 60 per cent, and at least satisfactory in 94 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in six per cent of lessons seen. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, and reflects the hard work put in by the staff under the guidance of the previous headteacher and her deputy. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, it is in classes where there are relatively inexperienced teachers who have not yet had chance to develop the essential relationships required to allow them to handle the behaviour of some of the more difficult pupils. The most effective teaching occurred in Year 6, where experienced teachers worked skilfully with classes formed in attainment sets, including some potentially unruly pupils. They helped the pupils to make good progress in their learning by effectively planning their lessons, providing firm but sensitive classroom management, using praise appropriately to motivate and reward the pupils, and by providing interesting and sometimes exciting work.
15. Strengths in the teaching stem from the enthusiasm and good teamwork of the staff. They clearly enjoy their work, and this transmits itself to the pupils. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the primary curriculum, and help pupils to learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher used speculative questions to help the pupils to think and explain their reasoning when working out real-life problems using the two and three times tables. Support staff are well deployed, particularly in support of pupils with special needs, or those learning English as an additional language. Lesson planning is well founded in good schemes of work, and teachers make good use of their day-to-day knowledge of pupils' achievements in planning further work for them. Their careful marking of the pupils' work often helps the pupils focus on how to improve, as well as commending their achievements. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, these often centre on difficulties in managing challenging behaviour, particularly of boys. Unsatisfactory behaviour is also linked sometimes to the slow pace of lessons and inappropriate set tasks, leading to unsatisfactory attitudes for a minority of pupils. The long, unbroken afternoon session also affects some pupils' concentration, which makes the teachers' job more difficult.
16. Most teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. They deploy the support assistants where they can be of most help to the pupils with specially planned work. Staff use patient explanation well to put particular points across. This teamwork between teachers and support staff creates good learning conditions. Teachers use more support during actual lessons than they did at the previous inspection, when pupils were taken out of class more for extra help. This means that pupils with special educational needs are more fully included in the life and work of their own class. For example, a boy in Year 4 with poorly developed language skills created a superb series of abstract images in a whole class lesson based on indigenous Australian art. Those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language receive good support in developing a growing and effective vocabulary of useful words and phrases. The visiting teacher helps them to develop conversational skills, and to learn the conventions of writing using a different script from the one they know. She also skilfully builds their self-esteem, as when she encouraged a shy Japanese girl to demonstrate her piano skills, and receive praise.
17. The common format for short term planning across the school has improved consistency and plans now contain clear, focused objectives and sufficient detail. Ongoing assessment of pupils' attainment to inform daily planning is now good, so that future teaching is adapted to meet the assessed needs of individual pupils or the class. Teachers use the information gained during a day's teaching effectively to refine their planning of their next day's lessons. Records of assessment information are entered half-termly in a whole class file. However, the recording of assessment over time remains sketchy and needs review and improvement. The school is aware of this, and of the need to plan more activities to develop independent and collaborative learning. At present such opportunities are not provided consistently across

all subjects.

18. In English, teaching takes account of all abilities, including those with special education needs. In each lesson the teacher has clear objectives so that the pupils are fully aware of what they are doing. This helps to motivate them to do their best. Teachers are confident in the teaching of literacy and the teaching of basic skills, improved since the introduction of the Literacy Hour. Lesson planning is good and the best teaching includes high expectations of pupils, a brisk pace to learning, and good assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the teacher working with the lower-attaining Year 5 and 6 English set made excellent use of her own knowledge and understanding of the subject, and how to motivate pupils to learn. She had very good relationships with the pupils, and helped them to understand how they could improve their own learning so that they gained in better basic skills, and in personal confidence and self-esteem.
19. The school's positive response to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped in the improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics, which has progressed from sound to very good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and adopt a strong, direct approach to teaching. A particular strength is the mental arithmetic session at the start of each lesson. Here teachers in all classes take this effective approach, giving clear instructions and making good use of resources to demonstrate and clarify methods and reasoning, so that all pupils are able to follow and understand each step. The school has improved the development of the pupils' problem-solving skills since the last inspection.
20. In science, the teachers explain things very clearly. For pupils with special educational needs, they give extra time to simplify the explanations. For these pupils, and those for whom English is not their first language, teachers often provide appropriate, easier task sheets. They also often arrange the groups so that these children have valuable help from the support assistants to enable them to make good, and at times very good, progress. The teacher's preparation of materials and resources, and the way they are used contributes well to pupil's progress, so pupils can begin their investigations promptly. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher effectively taught the pupils how to measure and record their own and others' pulse rate in preparation for the following day's practical investigation. Big improvements have been made since the last inspection in teaching the pupils how to investigate, and conduct fair tests. For instance, during a Year 6 investigation into the dissolution of materials, the teacher skilfully probed the higher attaining pupils' jumbled ideas about variables to enable them to create an ordered sequence that could be tested. Occasionally, however, teachers spend too long on lesson introductions and use time available for practical activities to discuss theory that limits pupils' learning through investigations.
21. In art, very thoughtful planning and preparation allowed the Year 6 teachers to use the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games skilfully to stimulate pupils' ideas for hat designs as part of a study of costume design. This is an example of planning which the teachers in the school routinely prepare, but which in fact typifies the care and effort put into lesson planning by the staff. In the small sample seen of lessons taken by the music co-ordinator, the quality of teaching was very good overall. The choir sang beautifully under her direction, and with concentrated effort learned two new songs in one practice session. She has taught the recorder group to read music confidently, and to play in unison and in two parts. It was early days for the school orchestra with them in the early stages of learning the theme from a popular television programme. However, they played "Blues Band" well and were obviously more confident with practice under the co-ordinator's guidance. Visiting teachers also take effective weekly sessions in the violin, flute and clarinet.
22. In geography, teachers have good subject knowledge so that they explain clearly and use probing questions to help pupils to spot patterns and to offer reasons for things being as they are. In the best lessons, the pace is excellent, with lessons packed with a range of experiences. Teachers take an investigative, questioning approach that promotes active listening and develops reasoning skills. In history, the staff work hard to develop pupils'

enquiry skills and to teach them about the range of historical evidence. Good use is made of visits to museums such as Manchester Museum, the Jorvik Centre and Tatton Park. In IT, teachers are particularly good in planning to teach pupils the basic skills they need. They explain clearly and either demonstrate what they mean using a computer screen or a poster. The pupils therefore understand what they have to do and can make a quick start when they reach the computer suite.

23. In the satisfactory teaching of PE, teachers' lesson planning covers the recommended curriculum, and has a balance of warm-up, practice, and skill development, with some but not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their performance. Control in the sessions seen was sound, and teachers made clear to the pupils what was expected. In RE, the teaching seen was good and there is a balance of themes guided by the Agreed Syllabus. Christianity is covered in depth in Years 3 and 4 as well as an introduction to other faiths.
24. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Parents provide good help in helping their children develop their reading skills.

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

25. The school has maintained the satisfactorily broad and balanced curriculum noted in the last inspection and areas of concern have been successfully addressed.
26. The science curriculum now includes a suitable amount of investigative work, and problem solving is very evident in the teaching of mathematics. At the time of the last inspection, schemes of work did not exist for many subjects, including mathematics and science. All subjects now have schemes of work, and the quality of curriculum planning has improved from satisfactory to good. The common format for short term planning across the school has improved consistency and plans now contain clear, focused objectives and sufficient detail.
27. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained since the previous inspection. The individual programmes for pupils' class work have improved because the activities within them are more closely linked to the pupils' needs. The staff use their knowledge of the pupils well when they are constructing learning targets for the pupils in the individual education plans. The arrangements for setting pupils in groups according to their prior attainment in literacy and numeracy also work to the benefit of pupils with special needs when they are placed in smaller sets taught by experienced teachers.
28. The school has put a great deal of energy and commitment into the development of the subject co-ordinator role, and co-ordinators for each subject now make a strong contribution to the development of the curriculum and the school generally. The previous inspection found that the procedures in place for the monitoring of teachers' planning files were not having a sufficient impact on the quality of planning. There are now some examples of very good practice in curriculum monitoring and evaluation across the school, for instance in geography and physical education.
29. All subjects of the curriculum are taught so that the curriculum meets National Curriculum statutory requirements. The curriculum for religious education (RE) follows the locally agreed syllabus. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the results in recent national test results reflect their successful impact. Pupils are given opportunities to read for information and to write in different styles in other subjects, for instance in history, geography and RE, although as yet find it hard to apply literacy skills independently. The recent development of a computer suite is enabling the school to build upon the sound quality of IT observed in the previous report. The quality and range of learning opportunities is made very secure by the wholehearted enthusiasm that teachers hold for the planning and teaching of the foundation subjects. This is a strength of the curriculum. The school's clear action plan for reviewing subjects to bring them in line with the National Curriculum 2000 is complete, and implemented from September 2000. The

majority of subjects have adopted nationally recommended schemes, but have adapted their approach to ensure local relevance and interest to the pupils.

30. The school has a strong equal opportunities policy that is evident in practice. It is largely successful in ensuring that the 20 per cent of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds have equal access to the curriculum. For instance, four pupils new to the school, from Iran and Japan, who are at an early stage in learning English, receive good quality teaching from support staff and are beginning to develop an accurate working vocabulary. In a mathematics class in Year 6, a support teacher gave good one-to-one instruction to ensure that pupils at an early stage of learning English could take a full part in the oral work. A lunchtime club to help pupils from minority backgrounds with their reading gives pupils with English as an additional language further help in accessing the written curriculum. In lessons observed, teachers generally give their attention, praise and support equally across all groups of pupils, and this is reinforced in assemblies and extra-curricular events. Pupils from minority groups are equally spread around the different sets for English and mathematics, and class lists of test results indicate that these pupils achieve as well as most other pupils. However, there is no analysis of national test results by ethnicity yet, which is a weakness. Also, during the inspection, very few of the tasks, problems or stories reflected the cultural heritage of the minority groups in the school. Boys and girls are given equal access to the taught curriculum and to extra-curricular opportunities, and the school is very successful in raising the achievement of boys, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
31. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and make a sound contribution to the development of personal and social skills, and to the pupils' learning in music and sport. There are plans to begin after school clubs in art, information and communications technology and mathematics, and to restart an Environmental Club. Pupils' learning in all year groups is stimulated and enriched by a well-planned use of the immediate and more distant local environment. A highlight of this approach is the day visit to a local stately home at Dunham Massey, incorporating historical and geographical learning. Museum visits are planned for each year group and the oldest pupils benefit from a weekend visit to High Ash Farm in the Peak District, which develops the pupils' independence, self-confidence and social and cultural development. Links with the community also make a contribution to learning. For instance, the choir sing to raise funds for charity and there are links with the Greater Manchester Police and Manchester United Football Club. Sports teams play fixtures against other schools, and there are informal as well as formal links with the local infant and High School, particularly for the use of sport facilities. The school receives teachers in initial training and pupils benefit from their cross-curricular projects.
32. Personal, social and health education is sound. There is a comprehensive, sensitive and challenging policy for Personal, Social and Health Education that includes work to counter possible prejudice, drug abuse, and also covers sex education. This is allocated curriculum time, but some of the periods are too short for the high quality of discussion demanded by the scheme.
33. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal development is good. Teachers include personal development as part of their weekly lesson planning, and in some lessons teach these aspects very well through the subject content. One such effective example of this was in a Year 6 geography lesson. A Year 6 pupil of low attainment in reading was selected to present his research findings, and through skilful teacher intervention, was shown to have uncovered key information that others had not been able to locate. The teachers create effective programmes for pupils with behavioural difficulties, which are beginning to have a positive impact on their social development. Several pupils took an important step in social learning this week, when after some reflection they went to own up to something that they had done earlier on the way to school.
34. The provision for spiritual education is satisfactory, as in the last inspection report. The most evident provision is through the daily act of collective worship, which meets statutory requirements. School assemblies are thought provoking, and those observed encouraged

pupils to think of themselves in relation to others, to understand the uniqueness of an individual and the strength of a team. Award ceremonies celebrate the talents and achievements of others and promote self-esteem. Religious education lessons help pupils to explore the values and beliefs of others and music lessons and extra-curricular music heighten pupils' aesthetic pleasure and understanding.

35. The moral development of pupils is well catered for in school, as in the last inspection, and is a vital element in maintaining the stability of school life. All parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school expected their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. Pupils understand the school's moral code and know right from wrong. Teachers seize every opportunity to help pupils to consider the impact of their actions upon others, and to be responsible and accountable for their behaviour. Often they share their own feelings about school life with their pupils in order to do this. The prompt and sensitive handling of an out-of-school incident during the inspection, for instance, led to a group of boys growing sufficiently in moral courage to be able to own up to their actions, despite knowing that they would be punished.
36. Social development is also good, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils continue to take on responsibilities that improve the well being of others. Charitable fund-raising events such as the UNICEF non-uniform day, and the 'Blue Peter' sale, are organised and led by the pupils with great success. Over 90 per cent of the parent questionnaire respondents believed that the school helps the pupils to become socially responsible. Year 6 pupils carry out a range of 'prefect' tasks in a mature, unselfconscious way. Within lessons, however, there are too few opportunities to show independence of thought and action. When expected to do so, however, pupils work well alongside others.
37. Cultural development has improved from the time of the last inspection and is now good, including good opportunities to study a variety of faiths and cultures. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn more about traditions and ways of life other than their own. For example, they learn of Muslim beliefs in RE, the cultural traditions of the inhabitants of St Lucia in geography, and in history the development of the Indus Valley civilisation, and the art of the aborigines. Knowledge and understanding of the ethnically white pupils' own culture and tradition is given good emphasis through the visits to museums, art galleries, living museums and study centres. Visits to the school, for example by a research worker on the Salford Quays project, enhance the quality of pupils' cultural development. Their understanding of local, regional and national British cultural traditions is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has continued to care well for all its pupils, and they are confident and outgoing. Staff work hard to develop and maintain good relationships and provide a secure environment where pupils can enjoy their learning. Good formal procedures for child protection are well established. Parents are pleased with these good levels of pastoral care.
39. The provision for health and safety is supported by good systems such as effective treatments when pupils need first aid. For example, a serious injury sustained by a pupil during a games session was dealt with sensitively and efficiently. Some parents are rightly concerned about vehicles entering and leaving the grounds before and after school when parents drop off or pick up their children. The school should consider control systems to reduce the risk to pupils entering and leaving the site at these times. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. However, rates of unauthorised absence are above expected levels, although summer term attendance levels for pupils in Y6 have improved slightly. Procedures for monitoring attendance are not sufficiently rigorous, as there is too long a time lapse between absence occurring and follow-up action being taken.
40. The school has extended its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress since the previous inspection. Overall these arrangements are satisfactory, and in

science they are particularly effective. Close study of how well pupils performed in the Year 6 national science tests in 1999 enabled the school to reinforce teaching of the weakest areas. Regular testing on science topics also enables teachers to identify accurate starting points for lessons. Assessment information for English and mathematics is not linked as closely to long and medium term planning as in science. A new system is being introduced for information and communication technology, but procedures in other subjects are not fully developed.

41. The school has improved its procedures for monitoring pupils' progress as a whole. By analysing its test data it was able to identify how boys were falling behind girls, and adjust planning and teaching to encourage boys more and achieve a significant improvement in their results. By raising its targets generally the school has raised its performance year by year. Based on this success, teachers are beginning to set targets for individual pupils as a tool for raising standards, including for pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers also use assessment information very effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs and when setting targets for their work. They regularly monitor the pace at which these pupils are progressing.
42. Monitoring and promoting good behaviour is a constant priority, and has been reviewed regularly with some success. Most teachers use a variety of rewards and sanctions, which almost all pupils respond to well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Extra support is sometimes provided by staff from other agencies, whose work complements the school's efforts in improving the behaviour of some children. However, where the teaching is weakest there are low expectations standards of behaviour, and a lack of clarity in praising acceptable behaviour to reinforce what is expected. Pupil achievements are acknowledged in assemblies where rewards for effort and improved behaviour are carefully explained, and greatly appreciated by the pupils. This provides a good model for classroom practice.
43. Midday assistants speak kindly to pupils and support play activity. Play fighting occurs, however, which sometimes escalates into squabbles and heated arguments whenever pupils are not reminded about playground rules.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has a good range of links with parents and most hold the school in high regard. The school is planning to further develop this important area of its work. The newly appointed head teacher has made a good start here in setting a welcoming and approachable tone. For example, many parents have now expressed a spirit of optimism and feel encouraged to approach the school with their concerns and suggestions. At this stage, following a period of parental unrest about this area of the school's work prior to management changes at Easter, the efforts made to build a responsive and successful partnership with parents are satisfactory.
45. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory, and is improving. Parents view the recent more welcoming tone of the letters and other informative occasions such as open evenings as a good response to their previous concerns. Some parents feel that the written annual reports they receive on their children's progress are too impersonal. They are justified in this, and the new headteacher is already considering different options for this year. Reports do meet requirements, however, giving an overview where progress has slowed for some pupils. Published documents such as the Governor's Annual Report are of particularly good quality.
46. Parents are encouraged to support children's work at home, and many do so, particularly in reading. Many parents are satisfied with what the school provides and achieves, but there are some concerns about the relevance of some homework in some classes. Homework arrangements seen during the inspection, however, were satisfactory, and made a reasonable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading.

47. Those parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed of procedures and invited as necessary to attend review meetings. The satisfactory links with parents mentioned in the previous report have been maintained.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is good. The transition between the leaving of the previous headteacher and deputy at Easter was well handled by the acting headteacher, who was appointed temporarily from another local school. He was ably supported by the acting deputy, who has deep knowledge of the school, and is well respected by the parents. The acting deputy headteacher is now working closely with the new headteacher to ensure that important areas of the school's work in teaching, learning and the relationship with parents are maintained and strengthened. The headteacher has made a confident start, and is seeking to set a welcoming tone that incorporates high expectations with enjoyment in teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators take their responsibilities very seriously, and have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject and a clear vision for its future development. The foundation for the improvements in many areas of the school since the last inspection was laid by the previous management team, and has resulted in impressive recent improvements in standards of attainment by the end of the key stage.
49. The governing body fulfils its role well. It has taken a good lead by deferring the appointment of permanent staff to ensure that the new headteacher will be able to take part in the filling of current vacancies. Governors have made sure that there is a full staff complement, but need to support the headteacher in providing appropriate help to enable the temporary staff to cope effectively, particularly those who are newly qualified. The governors are ably led by an experienced chair, who knows the school well, and is very involved in its affairs. She monitors its work appropriately, and keeps a close eye on the efficient deployment of its resources through regular meetings with the administrative officer, the local authority finance officer, and the headteacher. Governors have managed the budget carefully to achieve a reasonable surplus, and all funds are effectively deployed, including those for special needs, English as an additional language, and staff training. The grant for the improvement of computer facilities has been used to set up a computer suite in what was the library area. This is a useful addition, although the pupils' seating is inadequate. However, this has resulted in the school having no library, a weakness now in overall provision. The finances of the school are deployed and managed efficiently and effectively. Proper consideration is given to the need to obtain best value when deploying financial and other resources in the school. Other governors have taken on specific roles for example for monitoring literacy, numeracy, and SEN, to which they give a great deal of time. It is a relatively new governing body, with a considerable number of parents represented. There is a feeling of great enthusiasm amongst the governors, and a desire to move the school forward in a newly refreshed partnership with parents and the community.
50. Development planning has improved since the last inspection, and the current priorities are appropriate to the school's needs. Governors have sensibly left the review of the school improvement plan until the headteacher has been in post for a while, in order that she can make informed contributions to its new priorities. The headteacher has taken the reasonable view that she needs to take stock before seeking to implement other than required changes, such as the implementation of Curriculum 2000. She has recognised and begun to intervene in the management of behaviour, particularly where there are relatively inexperienced temporary staff, and to help individual pupils to cope better with their own response to the school. She sets a good tone in assemblies, where she uses humour effectively, but also sets out clearly her own expectations for pupils and staff. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching was well advanced under the previous headteacher, and the governors intend to use this as a model for their new appraisal and performance systems.
51. Curriculum time is thoughtfully allocated. An appropriate emphasis is given to the core

subjects of English, mathematics and science. These subjects account for approximately 60 per cent of teaching time, with English taking a larger percentage of time than any other subject. Other core and foundation subjects have adequate time allocations, similar to those of most schools. Moreover, mornings have not been reserved for numeracy and literacy alone. Some lessons of PE, science, ICT, history, geography and art are timetabled for morning sessions to make better use of facilities and resources. Short slots of time before assembly are currently being used very productively, to introduce new concepts and skills that are built upon in a second period later in the day. This is working well. Occasionally, the long afternoon session appears to drag for some pupils, and they lose concentration.

52. The management of provision for special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator increases the staff expertise by arranging appropriate training. and skilfully plans the complex timetable for support staff to be in the right place at the right time and sees that it runs smoothly. She guides staff in the writing of individual programmes for the pupils for which the paperwork is complete and up to date.
53. The school runs smoothly day-to-day, due in no small measure to the efficient work of the school administrator. She works as a personal assistant to the headteacher, and is also the important first contact for parents. The site manager and cleaner keep the school very clean and smart, aided by the care taken by the pupils and staff of equipment and furniture. The school receives useful extra finances through a number of lettings overseen by the site manager.
54. Resources for learning have improved since the last inspection, particularly in ICT and RE, and they are used well to support pupils' work. There are no maintenance problems with the building and grounds, which are in good condition. The chief difficulty is in the size of the accommodation for the number of pupils, and the activities they need to pursue to fulfil curriculum requirements. It is a smart newish building, but the hall is small, there is little useful storage space, and there is now no library, inadequate confidential meeting space, nor is there a sound-proofed space for musical activities. The peripatetic music teacher is forced to teach clarinet and flute in a PE changing room!

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to improve, and raise pupils' standards of attainment further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. In line with the priority in the school development plan
 - a. review the management of pupils' behaviour;
 - b. provide additional training in the application of the discipline policy;
 - c. ensure a consistent approach by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, in order to help all pupils to become more self-disciplined and have positive attitudes to their learning. (Paragraphs 9,12,14,15, 42, 62, 85)
2. In reviewing the literacy strategy, plan clear opportunities to help the pupils to develop and use their language and literacy skills in all subjects. (58, 68, 89, 94)
3. Continue to improve pupil's skills in ICT, and ensure that these are used more fully across the curriculum, including the use of computer facilities in classrooms. (6, 60)
4. Develop and use simple but effective record-keeping systems for pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in order to track their progress more effectively, and to better inform teachers' lesson planning. (17, 59, 68)

The governors may also wish to consider the following minor points for inclusion in their action plan:

Conduct risk assessment on the entry and exit of vehicles to the school site immediately before and after school. (39)

Consider adapting the afternoon timetable to provide a break for the pupils. (15, 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

62

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

48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 5 | 20 | 35 | 34 | 6 | 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 | Y3 – Y6 |
|--|--------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 263 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 64 |
| Special educational needs | |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 63 |
| English as an additional language | |
| | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 15 |
| Pupil mobility in the last school year | |
| | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 19 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 14 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.7 |
| 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 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 38 | 32 | 70 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 31 | 29 | 34 |
| | Girls | 25 | 21 | 25 |
| | Total | 56 | 50 | 59 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 80 (64) | 71 (59) | 84 (79) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 29 | 26 | 33 |
| | Girls | 26 | 20 | 26 |
| | Total | 55 | 46 | 59 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 79 (61) | 66 (56) | 84 (54) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 12 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 18 |
| Indian | 10 |
| Pakistani | 4 |
| Bangladeshi | 2 |
| Chinese | |
| White | 215 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 11 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 3 | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | 9 | |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 12 | |

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: Y3– Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 11.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24.6 |
| Average class size | 27.3 |

Education support staff: Y3– Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 42 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 1999-00 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 475882 |
| Total expenditure | 481761 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1765 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 20751 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 14872 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 273 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 35 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 46 | 49 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 37 | 52 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 26 | 56 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 20 | 49 | 26 | 5 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 46 | 46 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 37 | 40 | 15 | 5 | 3 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 54 | 38 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 40 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 23 | 51 | 20 | 3 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 20 | 54 | 5 | 5 | 16 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 40 | 52 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 11 | 52 | 17 | 8 | 12 |

Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting, attended by eight parents, there was considerable discussion of the perceived lack of rapport between the previous senior management group and parents, which they felt had affected the school's reputation locally. Inconsistency in the setting of homework, and its lack of relevance to current classwork, were mentioned as concerns. The quality of annual progress reports was also questioned, particularly that they were too impersonal.

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

ENGLISH

55. There has been significant improvement in the teaching and learning in English and a subsequent raising of standards of attainment since the last inspection.
56. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, and writing are in line with national expectations for the age of the pupils at this early stage of their final year. Good progress has been made since the last inspection because the good teaching is more evenly spread across the school. For example, the 1999 National Curriculum test results in English were well below national expectations when compared to the national average and below average compared to similar schools. However, the results of the standard attainment tests for 2000 show a significant rise in standards. The effective analysis of the results of standard attainment tests and other school assessment has led to the setting of challenging targets. Targets set to raise the performance of boys have been successfully introduced and evidence of the high achievement of boys in their final year is confirmed in the most recent standard attainment test results. Due to the setting of pupils by attainment in the core subjects, pupils of all abilities make good progress in their learning, especially in Year 6.
57. The co-ordination of literacy is shared effectively by two teachers in the lower school and upper school. Although these co-ordinators have only been in post since the summer term, their teamwork and enthusiasm has raised the profile of English and the subsequent raising of standards. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has improved teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well structured and teachers are clear what they want their pupils to learn. Pupils' reading and writing skills are built on systematically as they move through the school and teachers are confident in teaching these skills. Additional literacy support has been also introduced to Year 4 with pupils successfully progressing a level in one year. A literacy lunchtime club for ethnic minority pupils has supported their development in language skills. In addition, booster support has been offered to Year 6 pupils during lunchtimes in an effort to raise attainment even further.
58. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted satisfactorily. Opportunities for the development of speaking and listening are provided through discussions in circle time, when they talk about things that they feel are important to them. They give their own opinions and listen well to the opinions of others. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class were talking about the ups and downs of friendships. In four groups they discussed four short stories where there were different examples of friendship problems. For example, 'when best friends split', or a 'best friend moving away.' The teacher was very effective, moving around each group encouraging discussion and asking probing questions to stimulate pupils' thinking. Other opportunities are presented through literacy sessions when pupils discuss stories, read in groups and talk to the teacher. At the end of lessons they share ideas and talk in an informed way about what they have learned. In addition, pupils present class assemblies and have opportunities to talk to other adults and visitors to the school. However, speaking and listening skills are not highly developed in mathematics. For example, although pupils make contributions, teachers tend to take over without encouraging further explanation, justification or elaboration.
59. Reading skills are well taught and there has been a significant rise in standards in reading since specific targets have been set. Pupils generally have basic library skills and understand how to use the contents page, index and glossary in order to locate information from books, and they understand how useful this skill is. This was demonstrated in a geography lesson where pupils were given information texts, photographs and selected pages from a travel book. Their task was to select ten facts and a majority of the groups were able to read ahead, locate the facts and explain clearly the strategies they used. Pupils read different types of

texts with their teachers and in group reading. By the end of the key stage, a majority of pupils read fluently and are developing into avid readers. This eagerness and enjoyment of reading can be traced to the interest and positive support of parents who listen to their children reading regularly, combined with high profile of reading in the school and enthusiasm of the staff. However, records kept by teachers of pupils' reading are inconsistent across the school. In the best practice, good basic reading skills are taught to the class, good records kept, progress tracked from the previous year and pupils are heard to read regularly. As pupils become more confident they choose their own books as free readers and many books are brought from home. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in reading and very good progress is made in Year 6. For example, the previous year's top set of boys was targeted to raise their standard in reading. All successfully achieved a reading level well above national expectations.

60. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but with good examples throughout the school. By the time most pupils leave the school, their ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences is good. Pupils' write stories, some illustrated, and letters for a purpose. For example, letters of complaint, or persuasive writing such as adverts, posters and as in one example, 'Save our Pond!' Pupils' describe how to make a cheese and cucumber sandwich, or write instructions on how to make a model windmill. They practise writing plays and learn how to set scenes, write stage instructions and dialogue. There are examples of cross-curricular writing in all years. For example, in Year 4 they link with history with World War 2 when they write about 'the doodlebug' and 'I'm being evacuated,' or in art where they write a story using abstract symbols to represent the elements. The literacy skills learned in English are insufficiently practised in other areas of the curriculum, however. Pupils throughout the school read and write poetry competently, and last year the Year 6 pupils entered 51 poems in a National Poetry Competition. Of the 51 entries, 43 were selected to be published in a North West Poetry Book, a terrific achievement. Year 6 pupils successfully write biographies, newspaper reports, report writing on a school trip and writing in the style of a chosen author. A particular weakness in writing, however, is in the use and development of ICT. Few examples of word processing were seen in the scrutiny of pupils' completed work or around the school. The use of CD-ROM for accessing information is also underdeveloped.
61. Standards in and the teaching of handwriting are satisfactory, but with some weaknesses. Although there are examples of neat, well-presented writing the teaching of handwriting is inconsistent across the school. In the poorest examples, handwriting is inconsistent in size and inaccurate in form. During the week of the inspection few lessons were planned for handwriting practice and in one the handwriting lesson was cancelled to make way for another subject. However, it is significant that where the quality and expectations of the teacher are high and particular attention is paid to handwriting, then there is a subsequent rise in standards. Pupils' development of grammar and punctuation is generally good.
62. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching takes account of all abilities, including those with special education needs who get very good support, concentrate well and work hard, and make good progress overall. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and receive good teaching. In each lesson the teacher puts the lesson objectives on the board and because pupils are fully aware of what they are doing and why, they are generally well motivated and eager to do their best. Where the teaching is less effective it is where there are temporary teachers who are still getting to know their pupils. Teachers are confident in the teaching of literacy and the teaching of basic skills. Planning is good and where there is high quality teaching there are high expectations, brisk pace to teaching and good assessment. For example, pupils are given published reading tests, and optional standard attainment tests to prepare pupils for the standard attainment tests at Year 6. Where teaching is weaker it is where the pace of lessons is too slow causing boredom, or

there are too long introductions by the teacher. Some teachers have ineffective behavioural strategies.

63. English resources are satisfactory and there is planned expenditure for purchasing more books. However, the library area has been replaced by a computer suite, which creates the need to develop a new library to encourage the pupils to love books. There is a significant number of books in need of replacement through wear and tear, and some that are out-dated.

MATHEMATICS

64. There has been good progress in mathematics since the last inspection, so that standards of attainment are now broadly in line with those to be expected nationally for pupils at this stage in their final year. The results of national tests show continuous improvement over the past three years, and follow the national upward trend since 1996, whilst remaining below national levels until the current year. The figures for 1999 show that 59 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above, which is a rise of 10 per cent from the previous year. In 2000, 71 per cent of pupils reached Level 4 or above so that the school outstripped its targets for mathematics in both of the last two years. In comparison with other schools in similar socio-economic circumstances, the school's results are above average. In contrast to national trends, boys are now achieving better than girls, especially at the higher levels, due to close monitoring and target-setting, and improved teaching. The attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities is the same as that of other pupils. Evidence from the inspection supports the view that pupils are achieving well in mathematics, bringing attainment in current work in line with national expectations.
65. The school has successfully put right the weaknesses in attainment in mathematics described in the previous inspection report. The unsatisfactory progress made by the youngest and oldest pupils has been rectified, so that it is now pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 who make the best progress. In 1996, pupils' ability to solve problems within mathematics was described as weak. Staff development sessions by the co-ordinator, and a determined drive by all teachers to improve pupils' ability to use reasoning to solve problems, has made a significant difference. All teachers place a firm emphasis upon choosing and explaining strategies and using different means of calculation to solve problems. Problem-solving skills are built up in careful progression from Year 3 onwards, so that by the beginning of Year 6 pupils were observed extending their written explanations of multiplication methods. The highest set were beginning to recognise the operations and mental strategies most suitable for given problems, to group these and apply the appropriate calculation accurately. Pupils' understanding of place value is constantly reinforced, and this emphasis on understanding, and upon estimation and the use of calculators as a check, results in generally accurate calculations. The majority of pupils are confident and competent in using numbers, and in mental calculations, by the end of the key stage. Further improvement would be in pupils' use of subject specific terminology and in oral explanations, which remain under-developed. For instance, pupils in Year 6 learned to produce accurate written records of multiplication problems that required doubling and halving, but were very hesitant when explaining the steps in the process aloud to their peers, in the plenary session. There are also insufficient challenging opportunities to practise and use their numeracy skills in non-routine situations outside mathematics lessons. Work completed during the past year shows that data handling skills are sound, and applied well in geography and science. The application of ICT to this aspect has been limited as yet. Recorded work also shows that pupils present their work well and have a satisfactory understanding of the aspects of the programmes of study covered within each year group.
66. The school's positive response to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has much to do with the improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics, which has progressed from sound to very good overall. No lesson seen was unsatisfactory. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and can therefore adopt a strong, direct approach to teaching, in contrast to the 1996 findings of a low level of teacher input in some lessons. A particular strength in this school is that the best teaching within the Numeracy Hour framework is in the introduction to the main activity. Here teachers in all classes take an

active, direct approach, explaining clearly and making good use of the whiteboard and other resources to demonstrate and clarify methods and reasoning, so that pupils are able to follow and understand each step. For example, a Year 6 average attainment set was taken through the strategies and operations involved in written multiplication problems in such a well-sequenced way that every child understood what was expected and how to tackle the task. The pace of lessons is generally good and teachers are confident enough to make flexible use of time within the Numeracy Hour. A good example of this occurred when a Year 3 class were taught to recognise the steps and operations within two-stage problems, and worked through several examples individually and as a class, at a pace that allowed for checking of results and ironing out of difficulties. Planning is given structure and progression through the use of a commercial planning scheme but this is used wisely and creatively, and daily plans are a judicious side-by-side combination of school and commercially produced layouts. The school component ensures that evaluation and assessment of one lesson feeds forward into the next. Lessons are regularly adapted to meet pupil needs, as when one Year 3 teacher very successfully re-planned a lesson on money notation in the light of her perceptive assessment of the cause of pupil misconceptions in the previous lesson. Resources are used well, without the over-reliance upon textbooks noted by the 1996 inspection. Teachers draw their examples and worksheets from the full range available in school, often composing their own to meet the lesson objectives more exactly. Setting arrangements in all classes have gradually improved the level of challenge for pupils in all ability bands, and in some lessons seen, specific tasks extended the work for the highest achieving pupils, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

67. Pupils have a very positive, involved attitude towards mathematics. In all but a very few lessons seen, pupils responded well, listened carefully to explanations and instructions, and worked quietly and with concentration. Sometimes, pupils were slow to start the first few examples within tasks, but as they gained confidence with new learning, their work output increased. They are given feedback on their work, both through comments in books and at the start of lessons. In some classes, this is highly specific and related to lesson objectives. A good example was in a Year 5/6 low attaining set where pupils were motivated at the start of the lesson by the highly specific and personalised marking comments in their books. The sharing of such good practice across the school would improve the quality of feedback even further.
68. Currently, teachers do not expect the pupils to explain their mathematical thinking enough, nor to use the correct mathematical vocabulary when discussing their results and strategies. Record-keeping systems are insufficiently developed to supplement the hard data gained from practice SATS and end-of-unit tests in order to monitor pupil progress over time. The pilot system in Year 3 classes, of target setting for individual pupils, could be extended to all year groups, to help pupils to take more personal responsibility for their own learning and progress.
69. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has very good subject knowledge, and an aptitude for sharing her expertise in an encouraging, supportive way. She has led the in-service training in preparation for the Numeracy Hour, chosen and ordered necessary additional resources and been involved in the Action Plan for Numeracy along with the Headteacher. She has taken her monitoring role seriously, observing classroom teaching and giving feedback to teachers. Samples of pupils' work have been collected and evaluated against medium term planning objectives, and any resulting issues have been discussed with the teachers concerned. All of this activity has contributed to a raising of standards across the school.

SCIENCE

70. For some years the school's results have been below the national average and below the

results of similar schools. The boys were not achieving as well as the girls, and very few of the higher attaining pupils were achieving at the higher levels. With a determined effort the teachers set about improving provision for science. The staff carefully studied the pupils' answers in the standard tests. They altered the planning so that more emphasis could be given to the areas in which pupils showed weaknesses. Teachers improved teaching methods so that boys would be involved more actively. They introduced new and sharper assessment procedures, and now use these more frequently to give teachers a much more accurate picture of where the pupils were at in science. As a result, pupils achieved the best results yet in the 2000 national standard tests, now above those in similar schools. The boys improved slightly better than the girls; against the trend nationally. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels rose dramatically. The school is pleased that it has exceeded the targets it had set, and that the teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement had been borne out.

71. The standards of year 6 pupils seen during the inspection are in line with the national expectation for their age. Pupils are particularly good at recording experiments in a logical, structured form. They state clearly how they have reached their conclusions and use the measurements they have made to explain their thinking. They have also remembered much of the factual knowledge that they were taught last year. They are not as good at working out for themselves how to set up an experiment or how to use ICT to help them with it.
72. The teaching is good. Teachers' planning is very effective. It lays out a carefully graded series of steps by which the pupils can progress. The pupils work in their books shows that they progress from simple ideas in Year 3 to much more complex ideas about fair testing, variables, and making predictions, by the time they reach Year 6. The work in books also shows that pupils make good progress throughout the year. At the beginning of Year 4, for instance, they are recording experiments in simple tables and charts, by the end of that year they are making a number of measurements and displaying the links between these in a variety of graphs.
73. The teachers explain things very clearly. For pupils with special educational needs, they give extra time to simplify the explanations. Teachers often provide appropriate, easier task sheets for these pupils, and those for whom English is not their first language. They also often arrange the groups so that these children have valuable help from the support assistants to enable them to make good, and at times very good, progress. Occasionally, teachers spend too long on lesson introductions and use time available for practical activities to discuss theory. In the best lessons, the teacher's preparation of materials and resources, and the way they are used contributes well to pupil's progress, so that pupils, always eager to make a start, can begin their investigations promptly. Teachers select just the right materials to put their points across and resources are usually plentiful. Occasionally, some items are not there when needed, so that a lesson on measuring pulse rates, for example, the teacher did not have enough timers to let all groups of children have a go.
74. The co-ordinator has encouraged the staff to adopt a lively and practical approach. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, which now creates good learning conditions where pupils can test their developing ideas against the things they see happening before their eyes. With the new scheme of work the co-ordinator ensures that the full range of the science curriculum is covered, but this does not yet give sufficient attention to the use of ICT. Teachers use and develop pupil's literacy skills well when they introduce them to the technical style of writing. They also develop numeracy skills well in measurement and recording during experiments. The co-ordinator has developed an assessment system for science that serves the school particularly well. It enables teachers to keep track of each pupil's progress, or to make accurate assessments of their attainment. More importantly it enables the school to adjust the pupils' rate of progress so that they arrive in year 6 with a very good foundation and sufficient time to get more pupils up to the higher levels.

ART and DESIGN

75. Pupils attain as expected for their age at this early stage of the final year.
76. They have opportunities to study the work of famous artists, and apply the ideas generated to their own work. For example, Year 6 pupils had used the work of William Morris well to develop their own designs using flower and leaf patterns. Similarly, Year 4 pupils studied the symbols in indigenous Australian art to create their own motifs to tell the story of a journey. Some of these abstract designs were of very high quality, including some startlingly skilled images by a pupil who often achieves little in school. Pupils also use their sketchbooks to practise observational drawing, and to experiment with a range of media and techniques. Teachers do not encourage the pupils sufficiently to see the sketchbook as for their own thoughts and ideas, based on the themes being studied. For instance, sketchbooks are not taken home, when pupils might have more time to work out how they wish to express particular effects, ideas, or feelings.
77. Pupils' attitudes to the work are positive, although they become restless when the teachers' introduction is too long, or the images they are to consider are too far away for them to see them clearly. During an inspired session using a video-recording of the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics to stimulate ideas for hat designs in a costume project, Year 6 pupils enthusiastically observed carefully, and made sensitive and thoughtful comments about what they could see.
78. The teaching is satisfactory, and ensures full coverage of the curriculum. The scheme of work and planning are strengths here, as they ensure that all the skills to be developed are touched at different points in a pupils' time in the school. A good example of planning involved the use of a video of the opening ceremony of the Olympics referred to earlier. This typifies the care and effort put into lesson planning by the staff. The co-ordinator, newly in post but a subject specialist, has very good ideas to improve this, and involve the pupils in visits to galleries, and with visiting artists. Whilst two-dimensional work is covered thoroughly, less attention is given to the development of weaving and pottery, and other three-dimensional work. This is in part because the classroom space is very restricted. This may also be partly instrumental in limiting the opportunities the pupils have to choose the resources and materials they need to achieve their aims for themselves, as storage space in the school is at a premium. This leads to teachers providing the resources they feel are needed as it is difficult to allow the pupils access to the restricted storage areas. However, there are times when Year 6 pupils are not given sufficient responsibility for deciding which resources they need to use to work out an idea: this is central to their development as artists in their own right.
79. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the inspection, as art was the focus currently for most classes. Teachers' planning shows that a full and interesting range of activities in the subject is planned for the year ahead, however. A good quantity of evidence exists in the pupils' workbooks for each class. This indicates that last year, pupils studied a wide range of topics and that the standards reached in them were those expected for the pupils' ages.
80. Provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection. The work reveals a lively response, with pupils putting a lot of thought and often imagination into their work. The teachers now give an equal balance of attention to pupils' designs as to the making of the articles. The older pupils use their designs carefully to guide their work, and modify their plans when the need arises. At the end of a topic pupils write what they think about their work and how it could be improved. They use their literacy skills effectively for completing this writing. There is little evidence of teachers using ICT to help pupils with their designing. Teachers do not at present track pupils' progress by any formal assessment system, which they should consider as time allows.

GEOGRAPHY

81. Standards are above those to be found in most schools, as a result of a well-planned and highly relevant curriculum, in which key skills are taught in tight progression within interesting contexts.
82. All pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress in acquiring knowledge of places and of different environments. Because of the good subject knowledge of most teachers, pupils gradually develop an understanding of the underpinning patterns and processes that explain why a place is how it is, how it has changed and why. A recent review of mapping skills has led to a sharper focus on this key skill, so that it is taught developmentally across the key stage. A particular strength is in the use of fieldwork and practical work where pupils have the opportunity to observe, investigate and enquire in different environments.
83. The understanding of place is developed from local and world studies in Year 3, to an excellent Unit in Year 4 on St Lucia, to an investigative study of mountain climates in Year 6. By Year 6, pupils are applying their knowledge in an imaginative way, such as planning a camping holiday in the Himalayas, which fosters good quality geographical understanding, and careful recording. Issues of climate, rainfall, water supply and environmental pollution are learned in relation to landscape features and land usage. There is a consistent emphasis on location. For example pupils in Year 3 knew of the countries of the United Kingdom as opposed to the British Isles and could position the capital cities on a map. The Olympic Games gave a Year 4 class the opportunity to use the map of Australia to locate Sydney. Mapping skills are threaded through the curriculum, so that, for example, Year 4 pupils learn about compass points and co-ordinates in order to move about a map of the Caribbean and to locate the St Lucia at the start of a unit largely on place. Year 5 pupils study a variety of maps including street maps as part of a local study unit, and make good use of their knowledge again as part of the field work on Dunham Massey, a local stately home and estate.
84. Pupils enjoy their work in geography and respond to the good level of challenge presented in most classes. From year 3 onwards, pupils are encouraged to raise questions and to interpret what they are taught or find out, as in the very good set of Y3 postcards from different places that include a good range of information about location, climate and buildings. All abilities are encouraged in this way, but in the best lessons tasks are designed to give high attaining pupils geographically challenging tasks such as in Year 4, writing their own explanations of why settlements were set up in particular places.
85. The quality of teaching is good overall, but varies from unsatisfactory to very good, with a significant proportion of the lessons being good or better. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge so that they explain clearly and use probing questions to help pupils to spot patterns and to offer reasons for things being as they are. In the best lessons, the pace is excellent, with lessons packed with a range of experiences. Teachers take an investigative, questioning approach that promotes active listening and reasoning skill. Tasks present a good level of challenge, as in the different resources given to Year 6 pupils for their 'mountains' investigation. In the most successful lessons, pupils are helped to make links between reading and writing strategies and the geographical task, but this is not yet consistent across classes. In all but the single unsatisfactory lesson, pace is good, so that pupils' interest levels are sustained and motivation remains high. Resources such as video clips, photographs, posters, travel brochures, pages from the Internet, information texts and ICT programmes are used well to give a varied approach.
86. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator's evaluation and monitoring of the subject is an excellent model of proactive innovation combined with teacher support, and of excellent

assessment of pupil attainment leading to focused work for the pupils.

HISTORY

87. The previous report found that standards in history were in line with national expectations. These standards have been maintained, and there has been improvement in the skills of historical enquiry. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and in some classes, where teachers combine a problem-solving approach with good quality introductions, pupils achieve well. Scrutiny of completed work showed higher levels of attainment than was evident in the lessons observed during the inspection, and there is an enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of history through the school. The history syllabus has been revised to accommodate new national guidance, and a timetable for its sequenced introduction to avoid replication of topics is in place.
88. Pupils in each year group continue to gain an adequate knowledge and understanding of the period of history studied, and are able to describe some of the main events, people and changes covered in each Unit of Study. For instance, they learn about everyday life in Ancient Egypt, and work in their books shows that they have a sound factual knowledge of the houses, clothes, buildings, food, gods and religious belief of the period. They begin to learn about the sources of historical evidence, such as the cartouche and the tomb writings and artefacts. Through tasks that involve simple comparisons, they extend their understanding of historical change. As they annotate pictures, or sort statements, they begin to use sources of information in a variety of ways. A Unit on Tudor Britain in Year 4 introduces a 'problem-solving' approach to the history curriculum, so that as well as knowing key facts such as the names of Henry VIII's wives, pupils begin to consider why he acted as he did. They also extend their understanding that evidence from the past comes in a variety of forms. For instance, in the lessons observed with Year 4 pupils they attempted to draw out evidence about Tudor lifestyles from Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII. A study of life in Victorian times by Year 5 pupils is well related to a local historical study so that pupils can examine how life changed in the locality during this period. This allows teachers to extend pupils' enquiry skills through the use of pictures and photographs as historical evidence and to help them to communicate these findings appropriately. Higher attaining pupils begin to combine information from more than one source, whilst other pupils answer questions about the past in order to create a sequenced piece of writing. They also practise using photocopies of first hand evidence such as census returns to derive historical data. In year 6, a study of the Indus Valley civilisation is enquiry based, although within set parameters.
89. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and in a few classes it is good. Overall, all the historical elements are contained within the planned curriculum. Pupils settle to their activities and produce satisfactory amounts of recorded work. Attainment varies slightly across classes within a year group according to the depth of subject knowledge of individual teachers and their level of teaching skill in the subject. The staff work hard to develop enquiry skills and to teach pupils about the range of historical evidence. Good use is made of visits to museums such as Manchester Museum, the Jorvik Centre and Tatton Park. The impact of enquiry-based learning is lessened by a shortage of visual and tactile resources, such as a wider collection of artefacts, videos, photographs and study packs would provide. There is also some over-reliance upon recording historical findings in a 'standardised' written form such as short reports, comparison lists and annotated diagrams. There are insufficient opportunities currently for independent, collaborative work resulting in oral presentations, ICT recordings or presentations of music, drama or dance, to help pupils to use historical vocabulary and explain their finding more clearly. As yet, there is no formal assessment of pupil progress in the subject.
90. There is a new co-ordinator from September 2000, who has already worked very hard to gain a good picture of the subject as it is now. Resource needs to support the new curriculum 2000 have been identified, and a co-ordinator file begun. She already has a clear picture of

strengths and weaknesses within the subject and a well-informed vision for its future development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

91. Pupils' standards are in line with those expected for their age at this point in their final year. Pupils' are acquiring competent skills in the handling of spreadsheets. They are not so good in applying computer skills sufficiently in other subjects of the curriculum.
92. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are particularly good in planning to teach pupils the basic skills they need. The teachers explain clearly and either demonstrate what they mean using a computer screen or a poster. The pupils therefore understand what they have to do and can make a quick start when they reach the computer suite. In the best lessons, where the teaching is good, teachers make the lesson introductions brief and to the point, thereby giving pupils more time at the equipment to practise skills. The teachers encourage good behaviour in the lessons and the pupils respond by listening carefully. Where the management of pupils is good, and that is in most lessons, the pupils concentrate well throughout quite long sessions. Pupils make satisfactory progress in most lessons. They make good progress in those lessons where teachers build in several objectives. This worked well for instance in the Year 6 work on spreadsheets, where the pupils first learned the simple method of adding columns, then a harder method and finally the formula method. These pupils enjoyed the challenge and were soon using their initiative to figure out how what they had just learned would let them add rows of numbers.
93. In those lessons where pupils worked in pairs there were many examples of pupils helping each other out, thereby extending their social skills. In some lessons half the class worked individually on the computers while the other half did some work on paper linked to the ICT topic. This system also worked well and pupils in the centre of the room worked steadily and patiently while waiting their turn. While waiting for the computer suite to be made ready, teachers have been laying a foundation of computer knowledge in the pupils' workbooks. It is possible to follow the pupils' progress through the years as they first learn the basic skills of word processing, handling data and using art packages, extending them year by year. Some of the theory lessons still occur, but are kept to a minimum. The work that Year 4 did on the layout of a front page of a newspaper is a useful introduction for when they come to create their own layout on the desktop publishing screen. Teachers help pupils with special educational needs well, by giving them extra attention and explaining things clearly. This applies equally to pupils whose first language is not English. It is the school's realised policy to give equal access to these skills for all pupils.
94. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection because it can guarantee a consistent amount of time for all pupils to use the computer. However, all of the time available in the school day is not used fully, so that teachers do not extend the skills taught sufficiently by encouraging pupils to use the computer in learning other subjects. For instance, word processing is not used enough in literacy lessons and the use of data-handling software is limited in science lessons. The co-ordinator, who manages the subject well, has prepared an action plan taking these points into account and also seeking to strengthen the teaching of weaker areas such as control and modelling software, by giving teachers extra training in them. The school has launched a new system for tracking pupils' progress through the skills, because it realises the importance of tailoring the planning to match the pupils' needs.

MUSIC

95. Pupils make good progress in music in the key stage. By the time they leave the school the quality of their knowledge and skills development is at a level above that expected for pupils of this age. The quality of music has improved since the last inspection.

96. The school choir sings with joy and feeling and the pupils are well behaved and attentive in rehearsals. The week of the inspection was only the second week of the choir rehearsing together. Already they stand smartly and maintain good postures. Their singing is well pitched, tuneful, and with good diction. During the rehearsal they learned a number of new tunes by singing after the teacher, a section at a time. In addition, music features in assemblies when pupils enter the hall quietly to recorded music playing and when singing hymns and choruses.
97. In the small sample seen of lessons taken by the music co-ordinator, the quality of teaching was very good overall. The planned music programme is in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study for music. It covers both listening and appreciation and performance and includes the musical elements of pulse, rhythm, form, dynamics and pitch. Pupils are also able to develop their skills in composing, reading notation, singing and playing instruments, individually or in a group. For example, there is a small school orchestra and recorder groups that rehearse weekly, with the pupils reading conventional music notation. Visiting teachers take weekly sessions in the violin, flute and clarinet. The recorder group reads music confidently, playing in unison and in two parts. It was early days for the school orchestra with them in the early stages of learning the theme from popular television programme. However, they played 'Blues Band' well and were obviously more confident with practice.
98. The music co-ordinator is a music specialist who has been in post for six years, and manages the subject very well. Recently the music policy has been reviewed and updated in consultation with the staff. At the present time the school is investigating new national guidance for music. The music co-ordinator is working with Year 4 on the new guidance and plans to report the results back to the staff. There is a music portfolio and this has examples of graphic scores and photo evidence of musical activities. For example, the photographs show pupils in the choir, recorder groups and orchestra performing in a special musical concert each year when over one hundred pupils take part. The school invites outside musicians into the school to work with pupils and has also taken part in a workshop with one of the city orchestras. In addition, the school has taken part in "Hosanna Rock" at the Trafford Centre, the Altrincham Schools' Music Festival and the Bowdon Music Festival. Pupils enjoy their music and are keen to take part in extra-curricular musical activities. Their attitudes to learning and overall behaviour are very good.
99. Music resources are sufficient to teach music through the school. However, since the school does not have a music room, problems of noise occur in open-plan areas. Furthermore, these problems also affect the visiting music teacher who has to teach in a cloakroom area.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. Pupils attain as expected for their age at this early stage in the final year. They experience the full range of the subject, which is accessible to them all equally. Satisfactory standards are attained in gymnastics, games and dance, and the pupils attain the recommended levels in swimming. They also take part in athletics and hockey at the local high school, and outdoor pursuits in the summer term during a residential visit. There are good links with other local schools through football, netball and swimming competitions, and extra-curricular opportunities in netball and football led by the staff, and lacrosse with a professional coach.
101. The pupils have good attitudes to these physical activities, and enjoy themselves. In a football coaching session led by coaches from the Manchester United coaching scheme, both boys and girls joined in enthusiastically. They took a full part in the preliminary practices, eagerly passing and receiving the ball to improve their skills. The pupils and staff all change into clothing appropriate for the activity, and the good profile given to the subject by the staff helps the pupils to see its value to their personal growth and development.
102. Little teaching by staff of the school was observed, but that seen was satisfactory. Teachers' planning covers the recommended curriculum, and has a balance of warm-up, practice, and skill development, with some but not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their performance. Control in the sessions seen was sound, and teachers made clear to the pupils what was expected. In a Year 6 games session, the teacher had clear rules for handling the equipment, and use of space. In this lesson, older pupils made good progress in their passing of a large ball from overhead, and in receiving a pass from a partner. Further opportunities were not included to enable pupils to develop the skill by devising their own partnered and small team activities. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson, the teacher began the lesson well with a good warm-up session, but lost the impetus gained by discussing the activity for too long with the pupils still. However, her instructions were clear, she had good control and relationship with the pupils, and used good observation to pick out for demonstration purposes for demonstration purposes pupils who performed well. Year 3 pupils made clear improvements in another gymnastics lesson, and when the teacher encouraged the pupils to use all the space available, their performance was markedly better. From simple four and three-point balances in Year 3, pupils progress to the complex routine performed by a high-attaining Year 6 girl. She skilfully combined a good bridge balance with an extended shoulder balance, leading to a stretched side balance on one hand and one foot, the whole linked with controlled twists and turns. In general, however, teachers do not push pupils to extend their performance by setting them greater challenges, and are too often satisfied with mediocre performance.
103. There are good resources available, which have been well cared for. There are good playgrounds, and a playing field. The hall is well equipped with a good range of fixed equipment, although it is small for the larger classes. The co-ordinator has had time to monitor other teachers' lessons, and is developing the subject satisfactorily.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. Attainment at this stage in the final year is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The pupils have learnt Bible stories from both old and new testaments, they know about the main events in the life of Jesus and the main Christian festivals and beliefs. They have been introduced to some of the beliefs and festivals of the other major world religions. The pupils are making sound progress.
105. There is a good balance of religious education themes guided by the syllabus. Christianity is covered in sufficient depth in Years 3 and 4 as well as an introduction to other faiths. In Years 5 and 6 the study of Christian beliefs is built upon successfully, in particular with reference to the Bible. Other faiths, including Islam and Judaism, are appropriately covered in more depth

in the upper school. Assemblies are used effectively to support work in RE. Children are skilfully encouraged through teachers' careful questioning to think and to share their ideas. They listen to each other courteously and are learning to be tolerant of the ideas and opinions of others. Insufficient lesson observations were made for an overall teaching judgement, but teaching in the lesson seen was good.

106. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It is securely based on Christianity and other faiths, acknowledged at a suitable level for the age and maturity of the children. The work in the subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Resources were mentioned in the last inspection as being insufficient. However, the school has remedied this and now there are good resources in bibles and other books of the Christian and other world faiths. Furthermore, the school has ensured there are boxed sets of artefacts for the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish faiths. The school has useful links with local churches, and invites visiting speakers to the school for assemblies, who also contribute well to the pupils' learning.