

INSPECTION REPORT

ROLLS CRESCENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hulme, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 131953

Headteacher: Mrs W Zaidi

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 March 2001

Inspection number: 230465

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior, with nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rolls Crescent
Hulme
Manchester

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Fr Matt Thompson

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	Eric Jackson	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9884	Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents
30651	Margaret Entwistle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Music	
27326	David Frost	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rolls Crescent Primary School is in Hulme, near the centre of Manchester. The school's situation is very unusual, and extreme caution is needed in comparing its performance with national or similar school statistics. The school opened in September 1999 from the amalgamation of two primary schools, on the site of one of the closing schools. An extension providing an extra classroom and a music room was added to accommodate the extra numbers. The school serves a regenerated inner-city area, where new housing is a mix of private and housing association properties. However, there is still severe economic disadvantage for many of the families locally, with eligibility for free school meals amongst the highest in the country. The school is involved in a small education action zone with a newly appointed key worker to help improve attendance and punctuality. The school is popular, and the number of pupils on roll is steadily rising. It is of average size, and with its nursery has 219 pupils, 100 boys and 119 girls. Seventy four per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is very high nationally. The school has also welcomed a growing number of Somalian refugee pupils recently. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language at 24 per cent is much higher than the national average. Some of these pupils are at a very early stage of English acquisition. The level of pupil mobility in and out of the school is also well above average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is above average, with very high numbers in some classes. There are three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is about average. Attainment at entry to the nursery covers a wide range, but is generally very low. Attainment at entry to Key Stage 1 by five is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school offers a very rich educational experience for pupils from a wide variety of ethnic groups and backgrounds. The whole school community is committed to achieving the highest standards possible, and all its members strive to fulfil its aims. Standards of attainment in national tests at seven and 11 after its first two terms of existence disappointed everyone. However, strong teaching and an effective curriculum are beginning to raise standards rapidly. The headteacher leads the school very effectively, well supported by senior staff and governors. She is very clear about how the school should develop, and sets the highest standards for staff and pupils who rise inspiringly to this challenge. Teaching and learning for children in the reception class do not yet meet the school's high expectations, however, and pupils in other classes do not decide for themselves sufficiently how to tackle their work. Some aspects of the accommodation are inadequate. The school is generously funded, and is in the process of turning a large budget surplus to good use on behalf of the pupils. It provides good value for the financial and other resources it receives.

What the school does well

- Achievement in English, mathematics and science is improving rapidly because teaching and support staff are very effectively deployed to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils achieve good standards in music, physical education (PE), and religious education (RE) because the quality of teaching and learning is high.
- The headteacher and senior staff lead the school very well, ably supported by other staff and governors.
- The staff insist that all pupils, whatever their background or prior level of achievement, have full access to an exciting range of educational opportunities, both in and outside lessons.
- The school enriches pupils' personal growth very well in moral and spiritual development, and provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' cultural development.

- Through their very caring approach, the staff help the pupils to behave well, have good attitudes to their work, and understand the targets for their own learning.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by seven and 11.
- Teaching and learning for children in the reception class.
- Opportunities for pupils to take further responsibility and initiatives for their own learning, including access to research using library and computer facilities.
- Further involvement of parents in their children's learning, including the use of the school's facilities as much as possible.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE OPENING

The school opened in September 1999, and has not previously been inspected. A process of extensive evaluation following the disappointing test results last year has led to renewed vigour in target-setting for the pupils, and even more closely focused teaching. The effects of this concerted effort has begun to raise standards rapidly, which have improved towards the end of both key stages. Using better assessment techniques, the teachers and support staff plan lessons and activities that meticulously build on pupils' prior learning, and push the pupils to improve their basic skills. This is particularly the case in the nursery, at Key Stage 1, and in upper Key Stage 2. Staff employed to help pupils from minority ethnic groups to achieve higher standards, and bilingual support staff, are effectively deployed to make good contributions to pupils' learning. New information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and staff training have led to much more effective teaching and learning in the subject. The governors are well informed about the school, and have made a good start in their monitoring and evaluation of its work.

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	
	2000	2000	
English	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	
Science	E	D	

The table shows that the school's results in the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds were well below the national average, compared to all schools. They also show that the English result was average when compared to schools in similar circumstances, whereas the mathematics and science results were below average. However, any comparison of the school's results last year with national or similar schools must be treated with extreme caution, as it was the school's first year. The pupils' levels of achievement are rising swiftly, and show a big improvement on last year, though still below the national average in all three tested subjects. The school's agreed targets are very demanding for 2001 and 2002, but the staff are determined to raise standards to at least equal the national average. Attainment by

age five represents good progress across the Foundation Stage in the nursery and reception classes, although it is still well below average. At Key Stage 1, pupils make rapid progress and attain just below the national expectation by seven. In 2000, reading and writing were well below average, with mathematics below average, and science assessed as below average. These results were above those in similar schools in reading, mathematics and science, although below in writing. Standards in ICT, RE, art and design, design and technology (DT), and PE are above average towards the end of Key Stage 1, but they are below average in written work in geography. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, standards in ICT are below average, but they are above average in RE, music and PE. In history standards are average towards the end of both key stages. They are also average in music at Key Stage 1 and in art and design, DT and RE towards the end of Key Stage 2. These standards represent very good achievement for the pupils, founded in the high quality of teaching and learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; the pupils generally enjoy their lessons, and like being in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; both in lessons and in the playground, the pupils behave well. Some pupils struggle to maintain high standards of behaviour, but receive good support to keep them on track. Exclusions were about average nationally last year, but there have been none this year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and staff are good, and the school helps the pupils to develop effective skills in working together cooperatively.
Attendance	Good; the school works hard with parents to maintain this impressive standard. Punctuality is the current target for improvement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall, with particular strengths in the nursery, at Key Stage 1, and in upper Key Stage 2. Teaching was outstanding in ten per cent of lessons seen, very good in 28 per cent, and good in a further 34 per cent. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory, the rest being satisfactory. Further improvement of teaching and learning in the reception class is required, however, and in the management of behaviour at lower Key Stage 2. In general, the whole staff manage the pupils' behaviour well. They deal with the pupils consistently and without bias, and provide interesting learning activities which keep the pupils' attention. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good across the school, and there are also strengths in the teaching of PE, music, and DT, and in history and art and

design at Key Stage 1. This leads to good and sometimes very good learning in the Foundation Stage, especially in the nursery, and at both key stages, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6. The school involves all the pupils fully in all activities, and great stress is placed on meeting individual pupils' needs. This enables them to develop basic skills well, to grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, and to become confident in their own ability to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; very good in the nursery. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, is broad and balanced, and is enriched by wide cultural experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The teaching of pupils with SEN is good; they are included in lessons very effectively. Very good target-setting by teachers and support staff helps the pupils to concentrate on basic skills well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good; all staff insist on high standards of teaching, which has strong impact on the pupils' rapid development of oral and written English skills. Bilingual pupils are supported well to bridge between their home language and English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good, and a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare, and to both monitor and support pupils' personal development. Academic progress is monitored and reported to parents well.

The school works hard to involve parents in its work and their children's education, including the drive to improve punctuality. However, more should be done to engage them in helping with reading and other aspects of homework, and in the pupils' overall learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff lead and manage the school very effectively. This accounts for the good levels of achievement in the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good understanding of the school and play an effective role in shaping its direction. They ask searching questions about targets and performance and act as 'critical friends' to the school.

The school's evaluation of its performance	There are good systems to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school. All assessments of pupils' work are carefully analysed, and the quality of teaching is regularly assessed with a view to further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school applies the principles of best value well. The headteacher and governing body actively seek value for money in the services they buy.

The number, expertise and experience of the teachers mean that the curriculum is covered well. The support staff, particularly the nursery nurses, make a valuable contribution to the educational provision and to the standards achieved. The learning resources are used well as a result of the development of the curriculum planning. The accommodation in the school is adequate overall but has some deficiencies: the music room is not adequately sound-proofed; the hall is also the central corridor to all areas of the school; there is no school library; parents complain that the previous school had a meeting room for them, which is no longer available.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher leads the school well, and is well supported by other staff. • The quality of teaching, and the staff's high expectations for their children. • The school is very approachable and works closely with parents, keeping them well informed. • Their children like the school, and it encourages them to be mature, responsible and well behaved. • There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accommodation, particularly there being no parents' meeting room.

At the meeting held to receive their views, the 16 parents present were unanimous in their very strong support for the school in all areas of its work. They described the whole staff's work as inspirational.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's results in the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds were well below the national average, compared to all schools. The English result was average when compared to schools in similar circumstances, whereas the mathematics and science results were below average. However, any comparison of the school's results last year with national or similar schools must be treated with extreme caution, as the school had only been open for one year at that time, and the school's context is much more complex than many primary schools in a similar category based on pupils' eligibility for free school meals.
2. From inspection findings, the pupils' standards of attainment are rising swiftly, and show a big improvement on last year, though still below the national average in all three tested subjects. The school's agreed targets are very demanding for 2001 and 2002, but the staff are determined to help pupils from all the different ethnic and cultural groups to achieve them. Their aim is to ensure that the school meets national expectations as soon as possible.
3. Children start school in the nursery with much lower skills and understanding than expected for their age. Their attainment by age five represents good progress across the Foundation Stage in the nursery and reception classes, although it is still well below average. At Key Stage 1, pupils make rapid progress and are set to improve on last year's results in national tests. Then, reading and writing were well below average, with mathematics and science below average. However, these results were above those in similar schools in reading, mathematics and science, although below in writing.
4. Standards in ICT, RE, art and design, DT, and PE are above average towards the end of Key Stage 1, but they are below average in written work in geography. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, standards in ICT are below average, but they are above average in RE, music and PE. In history standards are average towards the end of both key stages. They are also average in music at Key Stage 1, and in art and design, DT and RE towards the end of Key Stage 2. These standards represent very good achievement for the pupils, founded in the high quality of teaching and learning.
5. Those pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress because the teaching and support staff involve them fully in all activities, and build on their prior language skills to help them become confident and competent users of English. Many of these pupils are Somali or Brava speakers, and some of the newer entrants to the school are at a very early stage of acquiring English. However, older pupils who have attended this school, and earlier one of the two amalgamated schools, have made very good progress in learning and using English, and have attained good levels of competence, although in many cases below national expectations for their age group. This, however, represents very good achievement.
6. At Key Stage 1, the attainment of all pupils identified as having SEN is well below the level expected for pupils at the age of seven, although they make good progress in the later stages of the phase. Pupils with individual educational action plans (IEP) make good progress towards their numeracy or literacy targets.

7. At Key Stage 2, those placed on the early stages of the SEN register with individual targets to meet make good progress, so that some pupils raise their level of achievement from well below to below the levels expected for pupils aged 11. Pupils with a deeper learning need make satisfactory progress towards the numeracy and literacy targets on their individual action plans, but learning tasks for the older pupils in withdrawal groups are sometimes at too high a level to help them practise the basic skills they need to develop.
8. Many pupils receive extra support in their learning from staff funded through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. This help is very well directed for qualifying pupils, and is instrumental in lifting their attainment across the curriculum, but especially in English and mathematics. Because the whole staff see themselves as jointly responsible for the pupils' learning, the wider aspects of pupils' personal development also contribute strongly to raising their self-esteem and confidence in themselves as learners. For example, projects on slavery, based on a visit to the museum in Liverpool, and celebrations of black culture and achievement, give powerful signals of the importance accorded to all pupils from whatever ethnic or cultural background.
9. Children enter the nursery with a very low level of skill and understanding in all areas of learning, apart from a few exceptions. As a direct result of the good quality of teaching, and the carefully planned and imaginative environment of the nursery, the children make good progress, especially in mathematical development, in their enjoyment of stories and in physical development. This raises their achievement on entry to the reception class. The reception class teacher has developed a secure understanding of the aims and content of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and has successfully led a revision of weekly planning and assessment to ensure that the curriculum of both the nursery and reception classes fully matches the Early Learning Goals. However, she is inexperienced in teaching very young children so that her teaching is not always well directed at their needs. Many children leave the reception class at a level well below or below that expected of children of their age in most areas of learning, although they make satisfactory progress overall.
10. Results in the 2000 tests at 11 in English were comparable with those in similar schools, but well below the standards achieved nationally at both seven and 11 years. With a few exceptions, girls did better than boys, particularly in writing, and African-Caribbean girls achieved highly. Other minority ethnic groups within the school did less well. African-Caribbean boys' results in 2000 were very low in writing and Somali/Brava speaking pupils achieved less well than other pupils. However, pupils from minority ethnic groups did better in this school last year than those in similar schools in the city. Moreover, although still below national expectations, standards are now higher than in May 2000. The National Literacy Strategy is now fully embedded as a teaching tool, and the teachers make use of all its elements well to promote pupils' learning.
11. Pupils develop speaking and listening skills well, and they achieve levels close to those expected by seven and 11. They learn the importance of listening carefully to others and respecting what they say because the staff set good role models, listening carefully themselves to the pupils, and valuing their contributions to discussions. Those learning English as an additional language have many opportunities to practise speaking and listening, and make good progress. Recent entry Somali or Brava speaking pupils work in structured sessions with multi-lingual support workers who encourage them successfully to develop their confidence and skill in English, whilst valuing their skills in their home language. For example, one of these workers has translated a well-known English storybook, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', into Somali

and Brava. With the help of the nursery staff, he has made a good quality multi-lingual book to use with nursery and reception children who are at an early stage of learning English.

12. Pupils make good progress in learning to read because the teaching is systematic, and helps them to develop a list of words they recognise easily, and to sound out new words. This is particularly helpful for pupils with SEN, or who are learning English as an additional language. Reading standards are lower than expected nationally by seven and 11, however. Few pupils say that they read regularly at home, and few have developed a real love of reading for pleasure or information.
13. The school has focused strongly on the development of writing, and standards are rising quickly. However, standards are below average at seven and 11. Handwriting and spelling are variable in different pieces of work, partly dependent on pupils' concentration.
14. Attainment in mathematics is below average towards the end of both key stages, but is rising rapidly because the teaching is very good. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been managed very effectively by the staff, with the expert guidance of the subject leader who is a leading mathematics teacher for the local authority. This has led to the pupils developing a range of strategies to solve problems orally, and is helping them to recall number facts more quickly.
15. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, a girl at an early stage of learning English as an additional language was skilfully encouraged by the teacher to focus closely on her mouth as she spoke the words, then match the correct symbol to the word, reinforcing both her English and mathematical development. Two African-Caribbean boys worked with a support assistant in the same lesson to increase their confidence in counting to ten. The game situation kept them interested, and they soon became skilled in altering the focus number in order to trick their partner, showing that they had grown in confidence! This exemplifies the school's determination to help all pupils to make progress in basic skills.
16. In science, standards of attainment in national tests last year at 11 were well below average, and below average compared to results in similar schools. At seven, attainment was assessed as below average nationally, but this was above results in similar schools. Girls attained higher levels than boys at the end of Key Stage 2 by a higher margin than the national trend. Currently, attainment towards the end of Key Stage 1 is average, and below average at Key Stage 2. However, attainment is rising rapidly towards the end of the key stages in response to good teaching. Pupils with SEN receive good support to make progress, and there is often help from support staff for pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language to enable them to take a full part in the work. This was the case during the inspection in all lessons seen.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils have good attitudes to school and this helps them to apply themselves well in lessons and take full advantage of what the school provides. Parents report that their children like school, and this is evident because many pupils eagerly scurry into classrooms each morning. They enjoy lessons and they usually respond well to questions put to them. Staff have high expectations that the pupils will take a full part in all activities. In assemblies, for example, pupils provide thoughtful and relevant answers when asked about trusting others. These good attitudes begin in the nursery

where children become easily engrossed in the valuable learning activities planned for them. As they move through the school, pupils often show amazing levels of concentration, as during the production and successful performance of a difficult repeated rhythm in a Year 5 music lesson.

18. Pupils work hard, and the staff are quick to praise and reward them when they try their best. Pupils' positive attitudes are also demonstrated by their willingness to explain what they are doing in lessons. Because of the school's design, pupils could easily disrupt other classes or groups as they move round. They move about the school without disturbance, though, showing respect for others' learning by walking calmly, holding doors open and ensuring they are quietly closed.
19. Behaviour is good and sometimes very good in lessons. The majority of pupils know and obey the rules on acceptable language and safety, but there are some boys who need constant reminders about their disruptive behaviour. These occasional lapses are generally well handled by the teachers, who use their very good working relationships well to manage difficult behaviour. The staff constantly reinforce the school's high expectations here. Parents describe their children's willingness to follow the behaviour policy and their own understanding of how it works. Exclusions from school are rare. This sanction has been used only once recently in order to safeguard the safety of the pupils.
20. Pupils play together happily at break times, and co-operate very well in the sensible use of play equipment. For example, a newcomer to the nursery was cared for beautifully by other children, because they showed kindness and consideration in including her in their game.
21. Lunchtimes are generally pleasant social occasions where meals are taken in small group sittings. Pupils have good opportunities to chat together and behaviour is generally satisfactory. Although a small minority sometimes misbehave, the experienced mid-day staff are quick to deal with this with a warning reminder or support to the children involved. The headteacher keeps a close eye on the situation, and is readily available to support the mid-day staff if necessary.
22. Pupils' personal development is good. The school's behaviour policy is helping them to understand that their actions have consequences. Parents described the extent to which staff inspire pupils to 'do better and be better'. Good relationships have been strongly woven between pupils of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and between staff and pupils. A good example was when a blindfolded pupil in role-play fell safely backwards in the knowledge that he would be caught in a teacher's outstretched arms. Pupils' participation in assembly shows a developing maturity as some describe their private innermost thoughts to a remarkably receptive and respectful audience. Many pupils are impressively reverential during assemblies, and clearly show they understand and value the times when they come together for acts of worship.
23. In lessons, good opportunities are presented to work in groups or in pairs. One child in a Year 1 English lesson operated the 'mouse' so that the class could read a story line by line as it appeared on the computer screen. A class of Year 3 pupils co-operated superbly to get out and put away gym equipment during a PE lesson. Good collaboration occurred also in a technology lesson when pupils discussed how to achieve the best design possible in the time allowed. This co-operative work is carefully encouraged and managed by the staff.

24. Pupils gain in confidence as they move through school. For instance, they express their appreciation of being able to play in the steel band. When asked, they proudly describe their awards and achievements. There are satisfactory opportunities for some pupils to take responsibilities, such as caring for the class rabbit or supporting younger children. Older pupils willingly carry out tasks allocated to them such as tidying the hall or acting as monitors. But duties do not become progressively more demanding as pupils mature, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their own work as they move through the school.
25. The high attendance levels achieved are remarkably good; this is because the whole school works in partnership to promote them. It starts well in the nursery, and continues in letters sent to parents as their children move through the school. As a consequence of full attendance being demanded by the school whenever possible, a pattern of late arrival by some pupils is developing. The school clearly wants pupils to attend, and does not want to push punctuality so hard that pupils begin to stay away rather than be late. A link worker funded through the small education action zone has been newly appointed to help resolve the situation, which is presently affecting the progress of a number of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with particular strengths in the nursery, at Key Stage 1, and in upper Key Stage 2. Teaching was outstanding in ten per cent of lessons seen, very good in 28 per cent, and good in a further 34 per cent. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory, the rest being satisfactory. Further improvement of teaching and learning in the reception class is required, however, and in the management of behaviour at lower Key Stage 2.
27. In general, the whole staff manage the pupils' behaviour well, as they deal with the pupils consistently and without bias, and provide interesting activities which keep the pupils' attention. They use a modified system based on an assertive discipline method, which promotes good behaviour through a series of rewards and sanctions. Where this is used well, and rewards far outnumber sanctions, it increases pupils' self-esteem and helps them to concentrate in lessons. However, for a small minority of boys in Years 3 and 4, the use of sanctions such as withdrawal from class has begun to lose its impact, and further strategies to help these pupils improve should be considered.
28. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good across the school, and there are also strengths in the teaching of PE, music, and DT, and in history and art and design at Key Stage 1. This leads to very good learning in the Foundation Stage, especially in the nursery, and at both key stages, particularly in Years 1 and 2, Year 5 and Year 6.
29. The whole school is committed to involving all the pupils fully in all activities, and teachers and other staff place great stress on meeting individual pupils' needs. This enables the pupils to develop basic skills well, to grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, and to become confident in their own ability to learn. Teaching support for bilingual pupils learning English as an additional language is good, drawing on the skills of all teachers and support staff, but making very good use of the multi-lingual support staff recently added to the school's teaching resources. The teacher funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant co-ordinates this work well, and that for minority ethnic pupils to accelerate their progress.

30. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good, and the way that they are included in lessons is very good. All teachers plan for their full involvement in lessons, ask them questions that they can answer and praise their answers. This builds the self-esteem of pupils with SEN, as does the way feedback to them on their learning is often an important part of the end phase of the lesson. Teachers also set work for them at the right level, and provide support with the tasks.
31. The high level of additional classroom support, funded by the local authority, from the Standards Fund, and from the school budget, makes this possible. The result is that pupils with SEN learn well in lessons, and are usually able to understand and learn about the lesson content at a level suited to their needs. They cope well with their tasks, and achieve alongside other pupils. For example, a child with SEN was able to use a thermometer correctly and to benefit from an investigation in science because of close monitoring and intervention by an additional support teacher.
32. Pupils with an Individual Action Plan also make good progress towards their specific targets in Key Stage 1. This is because the work of pupils in the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's (SENCO) withdrawal groups is directed towards teaching the pupils how to link sounds and letters, and at securing an understanding of the early stages of number, and classroom support relates closely to their targets. At Key Stage 2, the strategy of attempting to keep the pupils with SEN in line with the Numeracy and Literacy content for their year group is less successful, and the pupils who find learning difficult are therefore not receiving the practical and structured support that they need in the SEN withdrawal group.
33. For instance, during withdrawal sessions, a group of Year 3 pupils struggled to sort, add and multiply without sufficient practical resources to help them and Year 5 pupils needed a more structured approach to teaching the spelling of months of the year than was given. All pupils with SEN benefit from the one-to-one teaching given by teachers from the local education authority (LEA) support service. The three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need learn well, given their specific difficulties with attention span, dyslexia or physical disability.
34. Teachers' lesson planning is very good, founded on good subject knowledge and schemes of work, and the effective use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They generally use effective methods to engage the pupils' interest and push them forward in their learning. Because they assess the pupils' achievements regularly and thoroughly, they plan further activities that closely match the pupils' needs. A particularly good feature here is that teachers tell the pupils what they are expected to learn in each lesson or series of lessons, and return to this at the end of lessons to help pupils to monitor their own learning. The teachers plan and prepare learning tasks well in the main. However, in some activities they do not encourage the pupils sufficiently to make their own decisions about how to tackle the work, or to choose the resources and tools they need to pursue their own thinking and ideas. Homework in English and mathematics is closely linked to the work in class, and helps to improve standards of attainment. It would be helpful, however, to involve parents more in this part of the pupils' learning.
35. As a direct result of the good quality of teaching in the nursery by the nursery nurses, and the carefully planned and imaginative environment of the nursery, the children make good progress, especially in mathematical development, in their enjoyment of stories and in physical development. This raises their achievement on entry to the reception class. This is especially commendable as there is no trained teacher in the

nursery: the two staff are very experienced with the age range, however, and have highly developed management and teaching skills.

36. The reception class teacher has developed a secure understanding of the aims and content of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and has successfully led a revision of planning and assessment to ensure that the curriculum of both classes fully matches the recommended Early Learning Goals for five year olds. However, she is inexperienced in teaching very young children and her teaching is not always well directed to meet their needs. Tasks and activities are always planned at different levels, but they do not always capture the children's interest or involve them intensely enough to sustain the good rate of progress achieved in the nursery.
37. The quality of teaching in English is very good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is good overall, but varies from very good in Year 6 to satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. This leads to a dip in progress that has to be picked up later in the key stage. All teachers provide well-structured, carefully planned literacy hours. They share the purpose of the lesson with pupils, and return to it during the lesson to check progress and again at the end to consolidate achievement. In most lessons, teachers work hard to make all the pupils feel warmly included. They do this by asking questions to keep the pupils involved, give praise to develop self-esteem, and often build on the pupils' answers well to extend their thinking. They teach the basic skills of literacy well in lessons, but need to enlist the help of parents more in helping the pupils to practise their reading skills, and further encourage the development of pupils' independent research.
38. The teaching in mathematics is very good, with real strengths at Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. This leads to good and sometimes very good learning for the pupils. They develop the basic skills in numeracy and problem solving well because the teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of the different groups in their class. Very good support from extra teachers and support staff for pupils with SEN, bi-lingual pupils, and pupils from minority ethnic groups helps them make good progress.
39. Science lessons are generally good across the school, leading to good learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the aspects of the subject they teach, and spend time researching beforehand to ensure that they are able to help the pupils develop their understanding. The skilled work in Year 2 by the subject leader augurs well for the progress of the subject as these pupils develop good scientific methods that can be built on as they move through the school. Good support is made available from support staff, who work with targeted groups of pupils to ensure that they have full access to the activities, and understand the instructions and how to record their findings.
40. The teaching of ICT is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is always at least satisfactory for the level of work taught, and in most cases good or very good. They understand how to present new skills clearly, and make well-judged teaching points at individual and class level. Teachers keep up to date with new teaching and learning programs, and integrate them into the whole curriculum as much as possible.
41. The teachers' planning for geography lessons at Key Stage 1 is thorough and very detailed, and the scheme of work covers all the attainment targets. In Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory. The scheme of work has been designed to build well on the cultural heritage of the pupils, and lessons are very well planned from it. Teaching in history is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The

clever use of artefacts and photographs at Key Stage 1 brings the learning to life for the pupils in a stimulating and challenging manner. At both key stages, teachers plan well and introduce work that meets the needs of all their pupils.

42. Of the limited number of lessons observed in music, teaching was good. The teachers make good use of the school's set of instruments, which are exceptionally well looked after and used with great care by the pupils. The tempering of the adopted scheme of work to class needs is a real strength, as is the good class organisation and management, including the use of additional support staff. All teachers have a confident and enthusiastic approach to teaching the subject that spreads to the pupils, who work hard and intensively during lessons. Teaching of dance is very good and in gymnastics it is never less than good. Teachers have a good understanding of both aspects of the subject and teach with confidence, sensitivity and imagination. They interest the pupils and provide challenges to those of all ability. The lessons are good examples of valuing the capabilities and efforts of all pupils. Teaching in RE is also good at both key stages. Great care is taken to respect different faiths and teachers skilfully use the experiences of the pupils. Marking is sound with some good examples of guidance on how standards can be raised. The subject is used well to develop the pupils' writing skills, especially imaginative prose.

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

43. All pupils have access to a broad curriculum. In the nursery, all the areas of learning are well covered and the children get a grounding that prepares them well for the National Curriculum. All primary National Curriculum subjects are taught and all statutory requirements are met. There is an appropriate range of enriching activities involving trips out and visitors to the school.
44. The strategies for the delivery of literacy and numeracy are very well thought out and give the pupils the chance to make good progress and to achieve well. The school sensibly devotes over 50 per cent of lesson time to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The approach in these subjects, however, uses texts relating to other curriculum areas. In literacy, examples are the 'water cycle' as a vehicle for structured writing, painting in the style of Monet for poetry writing, and Reincarnation in RE for imaginative writing. In mathematics, map co-ordinates are learnt which are useful in geography, and data-handling skills are used in science. The time allocated to RE and PE is greater than often found in primary schools but it is used well. In RE the pupils develop a deeper and broader understanding of different faiths: this is particularly important in this culturally and religiously diverse school. The RE curriculum plays a major part in the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils. The schemes of work for other subjects show that the time allocation is appropriate and they are appropriately covered.
45. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. These include clubs for learning such as English and mathematics clubs, a computer club, homework support, and opportunities to try a range of sporting activities, such as, five-a-side football, squash and Kwik Cricket. The steel band is highly regarded in the community and pupils have been involved in several music and drama events such as a project with the Halle Orchestra.
46. A strength of the school is the way it ensures that all pupils of no matter what ethnic or cultural background or prior attainment are fully integrated in its life and work. The school is a model of good practice. The ethos of the school is strongly multi-cultural

and this is reflected in the attitudes of the staff, and in the celebration of diversity in assemblies, displays and teaching and learning materials. Acts of collective worship intricately intertwine Christianity with other faiths and pupils are interested in, and show respect for, the beliefs of others. Worship is essentially Christian in nature and all pupils take part. They also have the opportunity for quiet inner reflection in assemblies. The school prayer is known and said by all. The displays in the school illustrate the concern and understanding for other cultures and black history is well depicted. There is also a moving display of the thoughts of refugee pupils on having to leave their country and the experiences they have encountered in different countries.

47. The needs of pupils with SEN and those learning English as an additional language are well met. They are given additional support in such a way that their individual learning targets are met without them being excluded from any part of the full curriculum of the school. This is very influential in helping them to develop the basic skills to give them the confidence to take a full part in activities across the curriculum. The SENCO writes the IEPs for those pupils not receiving support from her so that target setting is consistent. These are well focused for younger pupils, but the attempt to use group curriculum targets as the basis of IEPs in the older classes, in order to keep the pupils in line with the work done by the rest of the class, means that they are not always sufficiently specific. The three pupils with a formal Statement of Special Educational Need are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
48. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is effectively delivered through the RE and science schemes of work. The health education policy has been agreed with parents and covers sex education, with help from the school nurse. The document does not cover drug abuse as specifically as it might.
49. The school welcomes people from the local community and several make a useful contribution to pupils' learning. Religious leaders speak to the pupils at assemblies and the school makes good use of the experiences of parents and grandparents. The history curriculum has recently been enriched by a grandparent talking about the toys she had when she was young, and another grandparent of black Caribbean heritage telling the children about moving to England and contrasting her life experiences. The local community is a rich resource and the pupils would benefit from even more use being made of these links.
50. The school has good links with the local secondary school and with the local authority. As a member school of the new Educational Action Zone teachers are in close contact with specialist staff and the development of strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils with poor records. If successful, this will ensure more pupils have full access to the curriculum.
51. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good and a strength of the school. In whole-school assemblies the pupils are given the opportunity to consider moral issues in an atmosphere of quiet reflection. They reinforce their own beliefs and consider those of others. In their writing, pupils frequently describe special moments in their life. The youngest children marvel at the wonders of nature as they see caterpillars change into chrysalises and when tadpoles emerge from frog's spawn. Much of the display material inspires awe in the children. One boy in Year 6, when asked to say what sort of animal he would like to be if reincarnated said, "I would like to be a peacock ... because peacocks are beautiful and wise". When asked to describe a relaxing place a Year 3 pupil said "My relaxing place has the sound of doves, it feels like feathers, it smells flowery".

52. Moral development is also very good. The RE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, such as trust, honesty, forgiveness and promises. Each morning the assembly provides 'food for thought'. The school is a moral environment where the pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The code of behaviour is clear and the rewards and sanctions are accepted by the pupils as fair.
53. Social development is good. The pupils know and accept the school rules and relate well to one another. At playtime they mix well and understand the need to be sociable and to act responsibly. They greet visitors with courtesy and work well together. Adults in the school are good role models. Nursery staff induct the children into the patterns and expectations of school life with great sensitivity, and begin the school's process of helping pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds to get on well together. This is continued well by staff throughout the school, although occasionally some pupils in the reception class and in the lower juniors fall below the school's high standards in their social behaviour. Social development would be further enhanced if the pupils were given more opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.
54. Cultural development is outstanding. There is great sensitivity in the school to the needs of all pupils and they are encouraged to understand the way of life of the different ethnic groups and how they make up the rich diversity of the school and of the community.
55. The cultural traditions of all groups are built upon in the curriculum. In history, pupils study famous black people; in English, texts by minority ethnic authors are used; in geography the life of people in Africa and the Caribbean are viewed positively and not just as examples of 'Third World' economies. The RE scheme of work is inclusive and due weight is given to all faiths and beliefs. The school steel band and African drumming classes are popular with pupils from all backgrounds, who perform to a high standard, and music from around the world is studied. The choir is popular and pupils learn a distinctive repertoire of songs in a variety of languages. Pupils are also introduced to the arts, and the displays in the school reflect an interest in the theatre with photographs and accounts of their acting in 'The Forest' and of the study of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Their artwork is inspired by consideration of the work of famous artists such as Monet, Lowry, Rothko and Warhol.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school is a friendly environment where pupils are safe and very well cared for. All staff show a genuine desire to do their best for the pupils, whether this is safeguarding their welfare or helping them to learn effectively. Parents strongly support the school, and say that their children like school because they are expected to work hard and achieve their best.
57. Very good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare. Support staff work well with individuals or groups to promote learning. Bilingual help is provided for those pupils who need this extra assistance. The headteacher ensures that safety and child protection procedures are followed in all respects and that parents are informed about this area of the school's responsibility.
58. A detailed health and safety policy guides the staff in ensuring pupils' welfare. Some assessments of risk have occurred but there is more yet to do. For example, the level of adult supervision at lunchtimes has not been reassessed to check that the

- appropriate number of lunchtime organisers are employed. Detailed first-aid records are kept and treatments by adults are always appropriate. Parents are informed promptly about injuries sustained by their children.
59. The school procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. They work very well because of the constant attention paid to them. Good or improving attendance is rewarded and this also helps to reinforce its importance. The school is not complacent though, and strives to achieve even higher levels of attendance and punctuality. It involves the education welfare officer as necessary and works closely with its home-school support worker through the education action zone in an attempt to improve punctuality, and thus raise attainment for the pupils involved.
60. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and the staff apply them well to ensure calmness and to accelerate pupils' personal development. Good behaviour is expected and rewarded with recognition, praise, and simple rewards. Occasionally, poorer behaviour is not checked quickly enough in lessons. This is directly linked to weaker teaching: when teaching is strong, pupils' behaviour is good and often very good. Staff focus on raising pupils' self-esteem and parents report that this is done 'brilliantly'. They see improvements in their children's self-discipline, particularly in their willingness to admit they have been taken out of class to 'cool off', and even why the sanction was necessary.
61. Pupils are familiar with school and class rules and the majority practise them because they are regularly drawn to their attention in classrooms and assemblies. Most staff use rewards and sanctions consistently. This encourages tolerance, and is having a positive effect on the quality of relationships, and on pupils' learning. Pupils know where they stand with staff, and this is helping them to speak and behave appropriately.
62. Support staff play their part in working well with teachers, sensitively helping those pupils needing extra help with their behaviour. The behaviour policy is an effective document, and supports pastoral care well because punishments are graded in severity, and are fair. The headteacher's active monitoring of which pupils are taken out of class, for example, shows an over-representation of a particular group of boys. Staff are discussing ways to deal with this finding. The school continues to offer a good range of extra-curricular activities to make deliberate efforts to see that pupils work together in mixed ethnic and gender groups. The steel band is but one shining example of such provision.
63. There are good procedures for monitoring incidents of oppressive behaviour or harassment. Parents know of and support the zero tolerance principle taken by the school. They are confident that issues are tackled immediately and that they and the children involved are supported well. Good recording of incidents by teachers and lunchtime organisers also helps to eliminate instances of unkindness. No evidence was seen of tensions between pupils from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds because tolerance and respect flourish in this happy school.
64. Very good procedures are in place and used well to both monitor and support pupils' personal development. Academic progress is monitored well and parents have regular times for hearing about the progress their children have made. Additionally, classroom wall charts enable parents, staff and pupils to see at a glance how many smiley faces or merit points are being won. Good systems exist to identify pupils who need extra help with their learning to ensure their needs are met. Their progress is assessed on a regular basis and parents are invited to be as involved with these reviews as they want to be.

65. Parents feel that their children's personal development is encouraged further by inspirational staff who teach their children a strong value system and a love of learning. They feel their children make good progress against the targets set for them. Both parents and pupils appreciate and use the records of achievement, which are high quality documents, showing care, respect and enthusiasm. These booklets begin in the nursery and provide evidence of the deliberate steps taken to develop pupils' belief in themselves and celebrate each success.
66. Good procedures are in place for the early identification of pupils with SEN. Teachers and teaching assistants complete identification assessment sheets from the Nursery upwards. The school takes particular care to avoid incorrect identification through misunderstanding of the needs of pupils at an early stage of language acquisition. The SENCO works well with the Ethnic Minority Achievement and Support team to assess and meet the needs of late arriving pupils who may need additional support with basic skills in English and mathematics, or who may need help to cope with emotional trauma. The SENCO knows the needs of the pupils on the SEN register very well, as she works with them both within and out of class. She assesses their progress regularly through formal testing and also gives daily feedback to class teachers through a planning and recording sheet that is included within the class teacher's file after each focused session. This means that teachers know what progress has been made and can plan to build on this. IEPs are reviewed formally on a termly basis and new targets set. This is good practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

67. The parents who returned the questionnaire made it clear they hold very positive views of the school and are very satisfied with the care it provides for their children. Enthusiastic parents who attended the meeting held prior to the inspection echoed these comments, but did regret that school premises did not offer a meeting place for their use, as one of the previous schools had. In light of the recent reorganisation of two school populations into one and the regeneration of the area, the parents consider this necessary. They feel that the provision of a 'parents' room' would enable them to draw upon the local community and the wide cultural interests within it to enhance their children's learning.
68. Parents do feel very welcome at this school. They described their appreciation of good teaching, and their confidence in how the school is managed and led. Most parents feel that their children like school and work hard to achieve their best. Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home; some want more, some want less, and some want consistency between classes. Homework arrangements observed during the inspection were satisfactory. However, insufficient is done to promote parents' involvement in their children's reading at home, and in involving them more in other aspects of children's education.
69. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Class teachers provide information sheets describing what pupils are to learn, and regular times are set aside where parents can meet and discuss with staff their children's progress. There is an understanding that some parents may need help in assessing information, but few information leaflets are translated into community languages. However, the school enlists the help of those who can help with some translations whenever possible. The prospectus is in draft format but there are informative newsletters, well written and friendly in tone explaining the behaviour policy for example. Information about

how to help children at home is not consistently provided and this would help parents to know how to become more involved in supporting their children in their learning.

70. Reports on progress issued annually meet requirements and teachers' comments are usually positively phrased. This sometimes makes it difficult to pick out where progress is slowing for some pupils, or what needs to be done to improve. Notice boards and posters are thoughtfully placed around the school. These give information and also reminders about a prompt start to the day.
71. Effective links have been formed between school and pupils' homes because staff have the confidence of parents. Class teachers are available to greet parents and children each morning. Parents entering the nursery are not sufficiently encouraged to become involved in the well-prepared learning activities at the start of the day. The headteacher is always on hand at the beginning and end of the day to speak to parents and greet and say goodnight to the pupils.
72. The school uses knowledge about the parental community to support pupils' learning about other faiths. For example, religious festivals from all the faith groups represented in the school are celebrated to strengthen links with parents from various backgrounds and traditions, and to help the pupils learn tolerance and understanding of different beliefs and practices.
73. Many parents respond to the school's invitation to attend profiling days and educational visits are always well supported. Some parents, for example volunteered to accompany infant pupils when they went to investigate how seeds grow at a local garden centre. Good efforts are made to inform parents about new curriculum initiatives such as literacy or numeracy, and meetings are held for this purpose, although few parents attend. However, those who do value the experiences offered. The school is at the early stages of consulting parents about the curriculum and how resources should be used, but has an open-minded attitude to dealing with parents' concerns and requests. It remains the case that the school's recent approach to encouraging parents to support their children's reading at home has not been as successful.
74. Procedures for informing parents about the identification and progress of pupils with SEN are sound. A strength is the knowledge that the co-ordinator has of the pupils' family circumstances, and her talent for communicating with families and care agencies in order to get the best for them and their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

75. The headteacher and senior staff provide very effective leadership and the school is well managed. The headteacher has a clear vision of where the school is going and is successfully achieving her goals. She leads by example and has her finger on the pulse of the school. She is ever present around the school, available to speak to parents at the start and end of the school day, provides curricular guidance in two subjects and monitors the work of the staff, giving them appropriate guidance and support. The members of the senior management team work well together and discharge their duties efficiently. Delegation is good and responsibilities are readily accepted. Subject co-ordinators are becoming established in their roles and most provide good curricular leadership and have produced highly effective subject plans and schemes of work. The quality of the leadership is a main reason for the good levels of achievement in the school.

76. The school aims have been carefully chosen and are well reflected in the work of the school. They stress tolerance and respect, the development of a curriculum to meet the varied needs and talents of the pupils, and increasing pupil motivation through positive self-image. They also state how importantly the school values parents as partners in education, and in preparing children to live in a multi-ethnic society. This is a school that values and builds on the ethnic diversity of its pupils and appreciates the rich history of its location.
77. The governing body is relatively new, being constituted in January 2000. It has the advantages of all members being appointed at the same time yet several having considerable experience of governing one of the schools operating on this site before amalgamation. There is a good range of experience and expertise among the governors, and the community and parents are well represented. The governors have a good understanding of the school and its problems and play an effective role in shaping its direction. There are link governors for each curricular area and they regularly visit the school. The curriculum governor is involved in the monitoring of teaching and the chair in performance management. The chair of governors regularly attends in-service training sessions. The governing body asks searching questions about targets and performance and acts as the critical friend to the school. The annual report to parents is informative and all statutory requirements are met.
78. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are well established in the school and is very good. The senior managers monitor subject leaders' planning and the headteacher, deputy headteacher and literacy co-ordinator observe class teaching and formally report back to the teacher concerned. Raising the standards of teaching is a constant aim of the school and is an important element in the performance management procedures in the school. The school has a good system and all staff welcome it and view it positively. It is used well in determining school and personal development objectives.
79. The school has a sensible three year school improvement plan (SIP), but this is not supported by a one-year plan. The latter is needed to show what has been achieved in the recent past, and what has had to be modified. The planning issues are well laid out, costed and state where the responsibility lies and what the success criteria are. The priorities are appropriate with the principal focus being on raising the levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
80. The school has set clear targets for improvement. Pupil assessment procedures are very good, especially in English and mathematics, and provide information used in the regular review and amendment of targets. Some targets appear to be ambitious but this fits with the determination in the school to strive for improvement through the setting of challenges. The staff have a high level of commitment to the school and work with great energy and enthusiasm to achieve the improvement goals.
81. The school is a caring community and this includes the care and support given to newly appointed teachers. The induction and mentoring arrangements are good and teachers settle quickly. New teachers all say how well they are supported and they are content at the school. The school has the potential to provide rich experiences for trainee teachers.
82. The school has a healthy budget surplus resulting from the deficit being written off and a transitional budget being set in 1999 when the 'new' school was created. Previously, schools in the area had been accustomed to managing large deficit budgets and the governors have taken time to get used to managing a surplus.

Following an auditors' report, the governing body has produced a spending plan that has yet to be formally approved by the local authority. This will account for over half the surplus and the governors are well aware of the needs to balance prudence with spending to enhance the educational provision for the pupils in the school. The financial management is sound, and the school is being helped with day-to-day financial administration while the school secretary is on maternity leave. The points raised in the audit report have all been addressed.

83. The school's specific grants are being used well. The level of additional support for pupils with SEN and those with English as an additional language is good and well deployed. An element of the Standards Fund Grant has been well spent in contributing to the costs of employing an extra teacher. The SENCO organises SEN support well, making a good contribution to the overall management. She is very familiar with legal requirements, which are all in place. She is expert at drawing together the various threads of provision for each child, and keeps a close eye on their progress. The new arrangement whereby she does not have a class teaching responsibility is working well, and is planned to improve further when a very structured, practical programme of work in the basic skills is worked out for her withdrawal groups. The creation of a computerised database is envisaged, and this should give a very clear picture of which pupils and groups of pupils receive support and indicate overall progress. Similarly, the teacher who co-ordinates the teaching of English as an additional language, and additional support to raise the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, performs her duties well. She oversees the work of learning support assistants and newly appointed bilingual staff effectively.
84. The school applies the principles of best value well. It makes good use of outside bodies particularly in the delivery of extracurricular activities and to enrich the pupils' learning especially reinforcing cultural diversity. The headteacher and governing body actively seek value for money in the services they purchase, and recently have made a major saving in grounds maintenance. The school pays for the services of a budget control officer, which is useful in keeping track of the school's finances.
85. The number, expertise and experience of the teachers mean that the curriculum is well covered. The support staff, including the nursery nurses, make a valuable contribution to the educational provision and to the standards achieved. The learning resources are good and have improved recently; they are being used well as a result of the development of curriculum planning. It would improve the use of the resources and the development of pupils' independence if they had more opportunities to choose for themselves which resources to use to aid their work.
86. The accommodation in the school is adequate overall, but has some weaknesses. The new classroom and music room provide much needed additional space but consideration should be given to improving the sound proofing of the music room. The main disadvantage of the school's layout is the need to go via the hall to reach all the classrooms. This inevitably leads to disruption to hall-based activities and frequently distracting noise. The school is well provided with teaching spaces but again most of these are in thoroughfares. However, these weaknesses have only minor impact on the quality of learning taking place. The school benefits from an integral playing field and a large tarmac play area. Parents regret the loss of a meeting room that they previously used in this building before amalgamation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. In order to maintain and further improve the quality of education and standards achieved, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- i. continue to raise attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT to meet national expectations by implementing the school's development plans for these subjects, and involving parents more in a learning partnership with the school; (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 117, 118, 127, 128)
 - ii. continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning for the pupils in the reception class by further improving the classroom management and organisational skills of the teacher and support staff; (Paragraphs 9, 26, 36, 89, 90)
 - iii. provide further opportunities in all subjects for pupils to take initiatives and personal responsibility for aspects of their own learning by:
 - a.giving them more choice in deciding how they will solve problems and use resources during lessons;
 - b.establishing a reference library to promote pupils' independent research skills; (Paragraphs 24, 34, 37, 108, 124, 129, 141, 156)
 - iv. continue to build on current initiatives to involve parents more fully in their children's learning by:
 - a. offering training opportunities to enable parents to help their children more effectively with their work;
 - b. improving parental involvement in support of their children with homework, particularly reading;
 - c. providing a suitable meeting place for parents in the school as a focal point for discussion and community development. (Paragraphs 34, 37, 63, 64, 65, 69)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	28	34	26	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	189
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	158

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	2.9	School data	0.8
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	15	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76	78	81
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments				
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78	81	81
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. There are no school results from the previous 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	12	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	7	6
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	11	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42	54	58
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments				
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	8	8
	Girls	10	9	9
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58	65	65
	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	59
Black – African heritage	32
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	45
Any other minority ethnic group	34

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	1

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	168

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00*
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* Figures represent 2 terms only – Sept 1999 to April 2000.

Total income	356, 119
Total expenditure	292, 342
Expenditure per pupil	1, 025
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	124, 621

** these figures do not include planned spending of over £80,000 recently submitted to the local authority to reduce the surplus.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	214
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	44	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	22	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	22	6	11	0
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	33	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	11	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	11	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	16	0	0	11

At the meeting held to receive their views, the 16 parents present were unanimous in their strong support for the school in all areas.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

88. The Foundation Stage comprises a nursery and a reception class, each with 30 places, co-ordinated by the reception class teacher. Transfer from the nursery to the reception class takes place in September and January. The nursery practitioners prepare the older children for the transition by bringing them together as a group at least once during the day during the summer term.
89. Children start in the nursery with a very low level of skill and understanding in most areas of learning, apart from a few exceptions. As a direct result of the good quality of teaching, and the carefully planned and imaginative environment of the nursery, the children make good progress, especially in mathematical development, in their enjoyment of stories and in physical development. This raises their achievement on entry to the reception class.
90. The reception class teacher has developed a secure understanding of the aims and content of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and has successfully led a revision of planning and assessment to ensure that the curriculum of both classes fully matches the recommended Early Learning Goals for five year olds. However, she is inexperienced in teaching very young children and her teaching is not always well directed to meet their needs. Tasks and activities are always planned at different levels, but they do not always capture the children's interest or involve them intensely enough to sustain the good rate of progress achieved in the nursery. Many children leave the reception class at a level still well below or below that expected of children of their age in most areas of learning at five.

Personal, social and emotional development

91. The nursery children make very good progress in this area. The intriguingly 'in-and-out' layout of the nursery tempts children into exploration and helps concentration when their interest is engaged, for instance by the budding amaryllis in one bay of the room. They settle quickly into the structure of the day, know what to expect of the routines, and are independently able to collect aprons, to put on shoes and socks after a dance lesson, and treat all resources with care. They are very gentle with each other, and some pupils showed consistent, loving care to a child new to school. Because of the high expectations of the nursery nurses, they sit very still during discussion, or when they are waiting their turn for dance at the side of the hall, and know not to interrupt when an adult is talking to someone else or to the class.
92. The nursery practitioners provide very good role models for the children. They listen to and respect what the children have to say, and reply politely however busy they are. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to understand one another's point of view.
93. However, children's attitude to learning is not as positive in the reception class, so that by the end of the year, most children are still some way off achieving the full range of learning goals in this area. They are generally less attentive during discussion time and concentrate less well on their tasks. This is largely because the teacher does not always make her expectations clear, or insist that the children follow expected routines and patterns of behaviour. Because of the very good start made in the nursery, children concentrate, listen and behave excellently when they are fully

engaged. For instance, they conducted themselves very well on a visit to a local garden centre, and at the start of an ICT lesson they entered the suite sensibly even though an adult was not present as they went in. The class teacher treats the children with courtesy, and is at pains to make the most of learning opportunities to teach right from wrong, and to consider the consequences of their actions. It is the lack of consistency in maintaining her high expectations that prevent faster learning in this area of development.

94. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in each of the areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, but it is very good in helping children to develop their physical skills.

Communication, language and literacy

95. Pupils start in the nursery with a very low level of skill and understanding in reading and writing. Because of the talented teaching in the nursery and the regular attention to literacy in the reception class, they make progress overall and reach a level that although remaining well below that expected nationally for their age, represents good achievement. This is especially the case when taking into account the significant minority of children for whom English is an additional language.
96. Progress in the nursery is good because listening and speaking, writing and reading are all taught together, and the children enjoy listening to stories and talking about them. During the week of the inspection, the story of Goldilocks was a central theme. Each day, as pupils waited for porridge to be cooked, they enjoyed recalling the story-line, correcting each other's sequence of events and using different voices as they pretended to be Goldilocks or one of the three bears. All adults in the nursery setting are good and active listeners, and show children that they value their efforts to communicate. They talk with great purpose, speaking effortlessly, tirelessly and effectively with the children. The result is that pupils learn to be confident speakers, and leave the nursery with sound speaking and listening skills, and their skills of recall and recounting events remain with them through the school. Recent entry Somali or Brava speaking pupils work in structured sessions with multi-lingual support workers who encourage them successfully to develop their confidence and skill in English, whilst valuing their skills in their home language. For example, one of these workers has translated a well-known English storybook, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', into Somali and Brava. With the help of the nursery staff, he has made a good quality multi-lingual book to use with nursery and reception children who are at an early stage of learning English.
97. In both the nursery and reception class, the teachers place high emphasis on children's awareness of books, words and letters, and reading develops at a faster pace than writing. In the nursery, they learn to listen for the initial sound in words such as the days of the week, or their names, and enjoy repeating these sounds and linking them to the letter shape and name. They see this as fun, because the activities are kept short, enjoyable and linked to other learning such as the growth of their amaryllis, or tadpoles. The enjoyment of stories carries over to the reception class, but the teacher is not as skilful in retaining the children's interest in the sound and letter patterns of language. Most children can hear and say the initial sounds of words, and match these to letters, but they are not taught effectively to use this as a way of reading words that they do not recognise when attempting to read very simple texts independently. This helps to explain the low level of reading on entry to Key Stage 1.

98. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers and in both classes writing areas are provided. In the nursery, they learn to form recognisable letters and to develop a positive attitude to writing. In the reception class, some pupils begin to write simple sentences independently, but many still rely on copying their teacher's writing. Here, they are not always reminded how to form letters when they start the shape in the wrong place, or move the pencil in the wrong direction.

Mathematical development

99. This area is very well taught in the nursery, and the children achieve well. The nursery provides a host of enjoyable and practical activities through which children explore shape and colour and classify by size as part of everyday routines, as well as through well chosen mathematical games and materials. A unique strength of number teaching is the use of a 30 minute 'tidying-up' period in which the older children are questioned, challenged and given a range of number tasks that allow the practitioner to assess their learning but also to challenge and inspire through high quality and tireless questioning and direction.
100. Towards the end of the reception year, many pupils have continued to make satisfactory progress, especially in their understanding of number, so that they are close to achieving the Early Learning Goals. They recognise and count the numbers to ten and more able children are able to record their work using equivalence signs. Their knowledge of shape and pattern continues to develop. Opportunities are missed to provide mathematical challenges as part of daily routines, or to teach awareness of number through a range of play situations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

101. At the end of the reception year, some children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals because the teaching is good, but many will still be working towards them.
102. The nursery practitioners plan very carefully for experiences that will encourage the children to look, touch, investigate and enquire, and never miss a chance to follow children's excited lines of enquiry. For instance, the children 'investigate' and learn that flowers take in water through the stem. When prompted, they stir, smell and taste porridge, notice the changes whilst cooking, and the change of taste when sugar is added. Pupils regularly use the computer, and are confident to log on and to use the mouse.
103. The reception teacher values the enquiring approach that the children bring from the nursery, and also provides opportunities for the children to learn from play activities such as sand and water, and creates role-play areas such as a garden centre, to enrich the current theme. Children sustain their proficiency with computers, and learn new skills through timetabled sessions in the ICT suite. A successful topic on growth is linked to learning about the locality, through a visit to a local garden centre, growing plants in the classroom, and observing tadpoles growing. The children do not make as much progress as they could because the layout and arrangement of the classroom lacks liveliness, originality and vibrancy, so that the children's imagination and interest are not well captured. In some sessions, the children do not get full benefit from the carefully planned experiences, because they are not given a clear enough structure within which to work and play.

Physical development

104. Overall, children's physical skills develop well because of the very good teaching, and most children have reached the Early Learning Goals by the time they are five. The inspired development of the outdoor play area has been a major factor in helping the children to develop their physical skills. It has a carefully chosen selection of large apparatus on which children can balance, jump and climb. Because it is used each day for sustained sessions of outdoor play and as a teaching and play space, the children learn all they can from it. They learn how to share space with others, to take turns and to care for the safety of others. Another factor is the priority that the school places on physical development, so that the staff of both nursery and reception classes have very good subject knowledge and high expectations for PE, dance and games.
105. As a result, the children move with a good level of confidence, safety and control. In dance lessons in both classes, the children moved into spaces well, responded imaginatively to music, and thoroughly enjoyed guiding their bodies to respond to the music. Their co-ordination and agility is above that to be expected of children of their age.

Creative development

106. The children start from a very low level of skill when they enter school. The provision and teaching in the nursery are very good, but progress slows in the reception class because the teacher does not provide a wide enough range of activities, or make activities to develop creative skills available to the children often enough.
107. In one good session, nursery children were learning how to make circular patterns on paper plates, inspired by a collection of patterned plates brought to school by the practitioner. They were able to name the primary colours, and to hold and load the fine brush correctly. At least half of the children created a recognisable pattern, keeping the white space between colours clear of splodges.
108. In both classes, role-play areas are created that inspire the children to play imaginatively, taking on the characters suggested by the current themes of 'Goldilocks' and 'Garden Centre'. In both classes, the children find it hard to sustain their play unless an adult is able to join them to encourage and model the use of language and materials. Because of the sharp focus on other adult-led activities in both classes, this does not happen often enough.

ENGLISH

109. Standards in English are low, but are rising steadily higher than the very low national test results of last year. Results in the 2000 tests were comparable with those in similar schools, but well below the standards achieved nationally at both seven and 11 years. With a few exceptions, girls did better than boys, particularly in writing, and African-Caribbean girls achieved highly. Other minority ethnic groups within the school did less well. African-Caribbean boys' results in 2000 were very low in writing and Somali/Brava speaking pupils achieved less well than other pupils, although they made good progress. However, minority ethnic groups do better in this school than those in similar schools in the city. Moreover, although still below national expectations, standards are now higher than in May 2000.
110. This is because the school has carefully analysed these results and is doing all it can to raise skills in reading and writing generally, and to bring the attainment of boys from minority ethnic groups up to that of the rest of the pupils. Given the very low level of

skill in the beginnings of reading and writing development for most pupils on entry to the Nursery, pupils make good progress across the school, especially in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. However, the pace of progress is not yet fast enough to meet the challenging 2001 school target of 63 per cent of Year 6 pupils reaching Level 4 in national tests. However, with the high quality of extra support currently given through booster and additional literacy classes, enough pupils might make sufficient progress to attain that target. If so, that will be a remarkable achievement for those pupils, and for the school.

111. Standards in speaking and listening are close to those expected at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils make good progress in learning to listen very carefully and attentively in lessons, because of the good role model set by their teachers, who always listen respectfully to what pupils have to say. A Year 5 class curbed their longing to attempt to play an African drum rhythm and listened carefully to instructions from the drumming teacher about 'using the music' because they understood its importance. Speaking skills develop steadily, and Year 6 pupils offered their own thoughtful ideas about arguments for and against euthanasia. Many find it difficult to develop their ideas and explain their strategies for working something out in lessons, although the way most teachers have begun to challenge pupils to do this in subjects such as mathematics and RE is having a good effect.
112. Standards in reading are low at Key Stage 1. However, teachers teach reading well, given that most pupils start in the nursery with limited experience of print, and that a significant minority of pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. The majority of pupils, especially those with SEN or who are learning English as an additional language, have benefited from systematic teaching that helps them to sound out new words. The efficient work of the teacher employed to specifically help pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve better is also helping to raise reading levels for this minority ethnic group. A 'Kickstart' reading recovery programme is having an excellent effect on the confidence and skill level of underachieving pupils in Years 1 and 2 because of the skilled teaching. This means that by the end of Year 2, most read aloud independently and steadily, but they do not read with the fluency or expression expected of pupils at age seven. Few pupils say that they read at length at home, for reading's sake, and so are not learning to read more difficult texts independently, or to practise using various clues to work out unknown words and meaning. This is why so few pupils do very well in reading by the age of seven and helps to explain why too many fail to reach the standard expected for their age. The pupils entering school at an early stage of English acquisition often attain at lower than expected levels, but make good and sometimes very good progress.
113. Standards of reading at Key Stage 2 are just below those expected of pupils at this stage. Many Year 3 and 4 pupils still read word for word rather than for meaning and comprehension, and although by Years 5 and 6, pupils can read aloud fluently, only the better readers can discuss well what has been read independently. Pupils, including boys of black African and African-Caribbean heritage, achieve a higher level of reading in lessons than this, because of the quality of the teaching. Pupils with SEN are also able to use their more limited reading skills to the full in lessons, because of the good levels of support and well-designed tasks. In lessons, most pupils are able to refer directly to key phrases and words of a text to support their opinions and evaluations of what they have read. For example, the Year 5 class could readily identify the technical terms within a text on 'Cool Foods' and the Year 6 pupils followed a sophisticated and challenging text on the subject of euthanasia, showing a good grasp of its meaning, and of the figurative use of language, picking out telling phrases such as a 'roller-coaster of pain'. They use the Internet to access

information, and the recent purchase of information texts in order to interest boys more in reading is improving their ability to locate and find information in books. However, pupils' reference skills are severely hampered by the lack of a central Dewey referenced library in the school. Too few pupils have developed a love of reading for its own sake, and have not extended their reading of quality fiction much beyond the Harry Potter series. This helps to explain their weaknesses in understanding the use of language for effect and aspects of the author's craft.

114. Most pupils achieve well in writing, despite not reaching national standards. At Key Stage 1, strong teaching of sentence structure and punctuation helps Year 1 pupils write simple sentences correctly. By Year 2, most pupils were eager in a lesson seen to correct their teacher's deliberately incorrect punctuation of question and statement sentences. They write a story plan well, and use these to make up stories that have a clear beginning, middle and end. Most of the stories are quite short, however, and there are not many examples yet of an imaginative use of language. Although pupils know how to use capital letters and full stops, they often forget to use these consistently in their own writing. Because of the teachers' high expectations and good teaching, progress is good for the full range of abilities.
115. By the age of 11, pupils have good knowledge and experience of writing in many different ways, and recognise that it is important to change the writing style for different readers. For instance, they use a diary format to write about the feelings of a young person on board a slave ship bound for Liverpool, and use the conventions of play script format in writing their own scene from 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream'. Personal, descriptive writing sometimes contains a sensitive use of language, such as, 'It shows that they (Hindus) really love and care...' following a visit to a Hindu temple. Well planned and sharply focused teaching is improving the use of punctuation, especially that of commas within sentences, and the use of connecting words to link sentences together smoothly. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not secure in these aspects yet. Handwriting and spelling are variable from piece to piece.
116. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is good overall, but varies from very good in Year 6 to satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. This leads to a dip in progress that has to be picked up later in the key stage.
117. All teachers provide well-structured, carefully planned literacy hours. They share the purpose of the lesson with pupils, and return to it during the lesson to check progress and again at the end to consolidate achievement. In most lessons, teachers work hard to make all the pupils feel warmly included. They do this by asking questions to keep the pupils involved, give praise to develop self-esteem, and often build on the pupils' answers well to extend their thinking. Teachers at both key stages are careful to use enlarged examples of the text, such as posters, large print paragraphs and Big Books, and to bring the class close together for shared discussion. In the best lessons, teachers use reading to teach writing, so that every lesson, and every minute in the lesson, is made to count. In a very good lesson for Year 2 pupils, they read pages from an information text about planting seeds, matched texts prepared by the teacher to pictures drawn by the children in a previous science lesson, 'corrected' with glee the deliberate mistakes in sentences scribed by the teacher, and created and read aloud a series of sequenced statements about planting seeds - all in 30 minutes! The teachers make good links between literacy and other lessons, which means that the quality of writing in subjects such as history, geography and RE is at least as good in English lessons, and sometimes better. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach writing, and regularly show the pupils how to be a writer,

acting as scribe and model and reminding them of taught features as they work. The best marking also tells the pupils what they need to practise or learn next, but not all teachers do this.

118. Support teachers and staff make a very successful contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. They work closely with the class teachers as strong teams to teach groups of pupils in attainment sets during literacy lessons. Often, they teach part of the class lesson alongside the class teacher, which adds variety to lessons and raises the esteem of their teaching group. Their teaching is also effective because it is focused directly on the half-termly reading and writing targets for groups of pupils in the class. This often leads to very good progress and a determination to improve on the pupils' part. A group of Year 6 pupils polished up their note-taking and report writing skills, for example, through very good support teaching that showed the group how to organise their writing into paragraphs, using sub-headings and connecting words.
119. Very good assessment procedures are also making a big difference to standards of writing, because the staff use the information gained to plan the next steps in learning. The school uses a suitable range of tests, and the co-ordinator and class teachers analyse these to find out weaknesses in each year group. They use this information to set half-termly 'group targets' for reading and writing in each class. The targets are raising pupils' aspirations and are also helping teachers to plan better lessons. Teachers can see what it is the pupils are not good at, and are consistent in showing them how they can improve, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers keep regular records of reading in class, but 'homework', especially reading at home with parents and carers, is not monitored regularly enough, especially for the less able readers.
120. The subject is very effectively co-ordinated by the lead teacher for English whose knowledge of the English curriculum is strong at Key Stages 1 and 2. He gives firm but supportive direction, and his infectious enthusiasm and ready advice has kept the staff up to date and enthusiastic about literacy lessons. He monitors the subject very well, and the overview of planning and regular lesson observations have resulted in better planning and more interactive teaching across the school.

MATHEMATICS

121. Standards of attainment in national tests last year were just below average nationally at seven, and well below average at 11. However, when compared to tests results from schools in similar circumstances, they were above average at seven and below average at 11. Boys attained higher results than girls to a higher degree than was the case nationally at the end of Key Stage 2, but girls achieved slightly higher levels than boys at the end of Key Stage 1. Fewer 11 year olds attained at higher levels than did so nationally, but more seven year olds attained at higher levels than expected.
122. Currently, attainment towards the end of both key stages in numeracy and other areas of mathematics is below average, but is rising rapidly in response to very good teaching. The adoption and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been managed very effectively by the staff, with the expert guidance of the subject leader. This has led to the pupils developing a range of strategies to solve problems orally, and is helping them to recall number facts more quickly. For example, in an excellent lesson, Year 6 pupils followed the teacher's rapid counting rhythm using a 'counting hoop' to count on and back in steps of 0.2 in positive and negative numbers. They enjoyed the teacher's method of acceleration in the counting, and were determined to keep up and be accurate. Pupils needing extra help were working at

- the same time outside the classroom with a support teacher, building on in 25s from zero and back, again at great speed, and with equal pleasure and commitment. These are very good examples of the mental warm-up activity at the beginning of a lesson being used by teachers to very good effect in promoting pupils' progress.
123. In a very good lesson with Year 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher used the main activity to help the pupils to add 2 x 2 digit numbers by separately adding the tens and ones using structured support such as a number line, a 100 square, and counting blocks. He guided them to build from the larger number in sensible steps so that by the end of the lesson most of the Year 2 pupils were using the technique successfully to add 3 x 2 digit numbers, up to 100. One high attaining pupil readily computed $35+15+15$ accurately in his head, then said, "Another 35 will make 100!" In this lesson, the pupils attained the levels expected for their age.
124. The quality of teaching is very good, with real strengths at Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. This leads to good and sometimes very good learning for the pupils. They develop the basic skills in numeracy and problem-solving well because the teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of the different groups in their class. Very good support from extra teachers and support staff for pupils with SEN, bilingual pupils, and pupils from minority ethnic groups helps them make good progress.
125. Teachers work to the lesson pattern suggested in the National Numeracy Strategy, but adapt it appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils. This approach is driving up standards rapidly, as the strategy has been introduced to accomplish. In a very good Year 1 lesson with the younger set of pupils, the teacher played a good variety of 'games' to interest and motivate the pupils. By sitting in the circle with the pupils, she could keep eye contact with all of them, but also monitor the responses they wrote on their individual whiteboards. The task was to use the symbols +, -, and = accurately in response to a variety of mathematical terms such as 'plus', 'minus', 'add', 'subtract', and 'equals'. Most of the pupils did this accurately, and the teacher set them a test question, saved on the board for her to check their understanding at the end of the lesson. Here also, a girl at an early stage of learning English as an additional language was skilfully encouraged by the teacher to focus closely on her mouth as she spoke the words, then match the correct symbol to the word, reinforcing both her English and mathematical development. Two African-Caribbean boys worked with a support assistant in the same lesson to increase their confidence in counting to ten. The game situation kept them interested, and they soon became skilled in altering the focus number in order to trick their partner, showing that they had grown in confidence! The setting of the pupils in Year 1 and 2 to make smaller groups and provide more focused teaching is having a good effect in raising standards.
126. As teachers follow the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy, all aspects of the subject are taught. Pupils in Year 1 learn to tell the time to the half hour, to compare length using standard measure, and gain some understanding of two-dimensional shapes. By Year 6, they read scales on thermometers in checking temperature, measure accurately to make models in DT, and calculate times for travel arrangements using the 24 hour clock well. They learn to apply their knowledge and understanding of number in handling data, including using ICT applications. In a very good lesson in the ICT suite, Year 6 pupils learned to use Microsoft Excel to create pie charts to represent data about the school population. The teacher allowed the pupils to try to work out how to apply what they had been taught, stepping in only to help them identify errors or misconceptions after they had explored for themselves.

127. The pupils' response and attitudes to their work are very good at Key Stage 1, and at upper Key Stage 2, and satisfactory at lower Key Stage 2. In general, they are enthusiastic about the work, and persevere to complete it. In group work, they discuss different methods of problem solving, and contribute a range of strategies in whole class sessions. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 5, the pupils worked with two teachers together very well. They rose to the class teacher's oral challenge, and enjoyed the fast, accurate repetition. As they moved to group activities, high attaining pupils revelled in the opportunity to handle large numbers beyond 1000 in deciding which cars they could buy. The teacher's planning of the car purchasing activity with amounts suitable for pupils of different prior attainment was exemplary. The co-operation between the two staff ensured that all pupils had support when they needed it, and could be pushed to stretch their thinking further, or to explain their methods clearly. The detailed tracking data for this group of pupils shows that their attainment is very low, and this concerted effort to accelerate their learning is improving their understanding at a good pace.
128. Sometimes, the teachers plan effective lessons but do not support the pupils sufficiently to tackle the work. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher extended the pupils' understanding of how to count on and back in tens and 100s. She had also prepared good activities to consolidate this work, and then to solve written number problems using the appropriate mathematical operation. She gave them useful advice to 'visualise it in your head' but many of the pupils would have benefited from practical examples and materials they could handle to help them do this. The SENCO, working with a small group of pupils from this class at the same time, had to work hard to keep them on task. They were also learning to recognise the mathematical operation required to solve written number problems, but found concentrating on abstract work without practical materials to support them very difficult. This illustrates a common thread in some mathematics lessons, where teachers expect the pupils to handle numbers and number operations without support materials such as counting sticks, abaci, or practical problems using actual objects.
129. Teachers and pupils make good use of mathematical knowledge and understanding in other subjects. In a Year 5 geography lesson, pupils used compasses accurately to draw circles to scale representing distances such as 20 kilometres. They also use time lines in history, reinforce their understanding of symmetry in PE and art, and learn to use co-ordinates for map-reading in geography. Teachers' assessment of mathematics in dedicated lessons and across the curriculum is thorough in most cases, and helps the pupils to think further about their problem-solving strategies.
130. The subject is very well led by an experienced and skilled co-ordinator. She is a leading mathematics teacher for the local authority, and has also given demonstration lessons for her colleagues. As well as advising her colleagues, she checks their lesson planning carefully, and has observed and commented on their teaching, and pupils' work in their books. She also leads an after-school 'Kickstart' mathematics club for pupils in Year 5, and ensures that the subject has a high profile, and that the drive to raise standards is maintained. For example, many classrooms, such as her own, have a clearly labelled mathematics teaching area, with prompts and reminders for the pupils to help them, particularly in numeracy. The current focus on developing staff skills in teaching data-handling skills using ICT is correct, and is helping to improve standards in both subjects.

SCIENCE

131. Standards of attainment in national tests last year at 11 were well below average, and below average compared to results in similar schools. At seven, attainment was assessed as below average nationally, but this was above results in similar schools. Girls attained higher levels than boys at the end of Key Stage 2 by a higher margin than the national trend. The school has analysed these results, and is directing specific help to improve the attainment of boys, particularly those from minority ethnic groups. The subject is covered fully, and pupils have opportunities to investigate and learn about living creatures and plants, different materials and their properties, and forces. Pupils with special needs receive good support to make progress, and there is often help from support staff for pupils from minority ethnic groups to enable them to take a full part in the work. This was the case during the inspection in all lessons seen.
132. Currently, attainment towards the end of Key Stage 1 is average, and below average at Key Stage 2. However, attainment is rising rapidly towards the end of both key stages in response to good teaching. Pupils in Year 2 have developed good skills in experimental work because the teacher encourages them to think about what they want to find out, and how they will organise a fair test to check. For example, in experiments with ice to learn about changes in materials brought about by temperature changes, the pupils framed their own questions. These included what would happen if cold water was poured on an ice balloon; if hot water was poured on; if salt was added to it? They then worked out how to follow the test through, with concerns for safety, regular observations, and ways to record their findings. The teacher's approach leads the pupils to think of themselves as scientists, and they readily describe the dangers of using electrical equipment, and how to make a working circuit light a bulb. Good links have been made with mathematics in graphs to explain the melting of ice in different locations in the school, which the pupils understand and can interpret accurately.
133. This development of proper scientific method in Year 2 includes the teacher encouraging the pupils to frame hypotheses, so that they begin to predict what might happen, then devise a test to check. In Year 6, pupils have studied the work of famous scientists such as Pasteur and Jenner in their work on micro-organisms, and understand that such pioneering work has changed the conduct of scientific enquiry. The teacher builds well on information provided by the school nurse on food hygiene in a previous lesson by giving the pupils samples of food in plastic bags at various stages of decay. They demonstrate good recall of what they have learned, citing 'germs', 'microbes', and 'causers of disease' in the introductory session. They understand that microscopes are helpful in viewing micro-organisms, but though the school has a good stock of microscopes, only magnifying lenses have been made available by the teacher for this lesson. This illustrates an area of the subject the co-ordinator is keen to develop, so that pupils are given opportunities to decide for themselves how they will conduct their investigations using the equipment and resources available to them in the school.
134. However, good observations and recordings of findings were made, and the Year 6 pupils in discussion extended their understanding of the effects of micro-organisms, and how hygienic storage could help to keep food fresh for consumption. This work was at higher than expected levels, although few of the pupils are actually secure in their knowledge at this level. Most attain levels at or just below those expected for their age, with a significant minority working at a lower level.
135. The pupils' response, attitudes and behaviour are good, and very good in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. In a good Year 5 lesson led by the school nurse, the pupils eagerly

contributed what they already knew about the work of the heart in pumping the blood round the body. They were attentive and very well behaved, and observed keenly the demonstration of the passage of the blood round the body and through the chambers of the heart in a clear and effective model. Pupils enjoy their work in science lessons, and co-operate well in using equipment, in discussing their findings, and in presenting their results jointly in tables and charts.

136. The quality of teaching is good across the school, leading to good learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the aspects of the subject they teach, and spend time researching beforehand to ensure that they are able to help the pupils develop their understanding. The skilled work in Year 2 by the subject leader augurs well for the progress of the subject as these pupils develop good scientific methods that can be built on as they move through the school. Good support is made available from support staff, who work with targeted groups of pupils to ensure that they have full access to the activities, and understand the instructions and how to record their findings.
137. For example, for a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher had consulted the local authority science adviser as to the best way to teach the pupils about thermal insulation. This work built on previous work with maintaining cold temperatures, now leading to tests with warm water. He had prepared a good variety of materials and resources, including a range of thermometers, to help the pupils test which of two materials would be the best to keep the water warm. However, the test left little room for the pupils to decide for themselves how to answer questions they might wish to pose, or to choose which materials to test. There was also no control built in so that change in temperature in an uninsulated container could be compared with that in the test containers. Despite this, the pupils made satisfactory progress in using the thermometers, taking systematic observations, recording their findings and interpreting them. An extra teacher supported two groups, and carefully explained the use and care of the thermometers, helping them through guided questions to conduct their own experiments, and record their findings reasonably.
138. The co-ordinator is making a good start to developing the subject effectively. He is clear about how he intends to help the other teachers to develop their own skills, particularly in allowing the pupils to make more of their own decisions, and how the subject can be integrated into other subjects, such as literacy. He is active in seeking links with local authority support staff, other local schools, and the school and local environment. He is bidding for the school to be involved in a Manchester project to develop science in the community, and pupils occasionally visit and work in the science department at a local high school.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

139. Few lessons were observed during the inspection. Although the subjects are taught separately, the subject leaders are both recently in post and the development of the different processes and skills for each area is a current focus in school improvement. However, there is strong evidence in displays and from talking to pupils and staff that both subjects have an important place in the curriculum, and contribute well to pupils' personal development.
140. Standards of attainment are average towards the end of Key Stage 2 and above average towards the end of Key Stage 1 in both subjects. The subjects are covered effectively, and there are very good examples of quality work in a variety of forms on display around the school. The hall has large hangings painted by past pupils with a

community artist, and outside each classroom there are good displays of pupils' work, including sensitive observational drawings, and illustrative work on such subjects as black history and slavery. There are very good batik and tie-dye prints by Year 5 pupils, and good models of photo frames and mosaic tiles in Roman style made by pupils in Year 3. Work using research into famous artists includes soft water-colours in the style of Monet, evocative Lowry style drawings and paintings, and horizontal and vertical colour bands by Year 1 pupils based on wall hangings by Rothko. There is some influence from different cultures in art and design, but further influences from a wider variety of regional and ethnic groups and cultures should be encouraged.

141. Pupils in Year 6 describe the processes of designing and printing fabrics using tie-dye and batik techniques, with good recall of the development from initial idea to finished product. Using their design books, they also explain how they followed the design process from initial idea to research, sketches, working drawings, to modelling for a bridge design. They understood that the forces involved were important, and considered carefully the use and fitness for purpose of their models. In their final evaluations, they indicated their growing understanding of techniques with a variety of materials, and how the model might be adapted from the working design in the light of experience. It is clear from these discussions that the pupils have been taught a range of effective techniques and skills in both art and design, and DT.
142. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and it is good at Key Stage 2. In an outstanding Year 2 art lesson, the teacher used images of faces based on work by Andy Warhol to inspire the pupils to create an artistic workshop of design and creativity. Here, six and seven year olds worked together in an organised perpetual motion machine of imaginative endeavour. Groups in turn overlaid a collage of black and white facial images with a variety of colour, apparently at random, but with the joint purpose of creating a pleasing effect. Others chose from a variety of photocopied drawn images of their own and other faces to stick and overlay them to form a fascinating assemblage, whilst others used cut sections from coloured and black and white images to fill in blank faces. The teacher moved round giving advice, reminding pupils of the effects and techniques they were practising. He stopped to quickly re-teach a pupil the technique using wax crayons to make a negative and positive image by drawing over a picture, then gave the responsibility for the creation back to the pupil – “Go on; now you do it for yourself.” The level of attainment in this work was high for the age, and from work on display, including using paint and design programs on the computer, this is the standard for this class and this teacher. In this lesson, he was very well supported by a learning support assistant with a fine arts background, who skilfully encouraged her target statemented pupil and those in his group to take a full part in the lesson, and to work at a good level.
143. Pupils respond really well in these lessons in art and design and DT at Key Stage 1, and they respond well at Key Stage 2. Behaviour is generally very good, and the pupils show lively and committed interest in their work. In a Year 3/4 lesson to design a torch, the pupils listened attentively to the teacher's questions about which of the variety of torches available to look at might provide the best shape for their own designs, given the construction materials and tools available. Because the teacher has very good subject knowledge, he maintains the pupils' interest well as they use their sketches to develop their designs. They apply themselves with good concentration, discussing quietly together how to make the most appropriate design. The teacher skilfully reinforces their understanding from science of how to make a working electrical circuit, and they try hard to measure the dimensions of their design accurately at his prompting. One boy who often behaves poorly has already been sent out of the lesson, however, and is very quickly sent out again on his return for

further misbehaviour. This is appropriate use of the behaviour policy by the teacher, but does interrupt this boy's development in the subject. On the other hand, it also allows the rest of the class to receive the teacher's attention and help.

144. In a generally effective art lesson with Year 3 pupils, the teacher developed work from the history topic on the Romans. She had taught the pupils to make an outline design, then develop it using the resources available. These included pieces of broken tile she had ingeniously saved from making herself a patio table, coloured squares of paper, and copied drawings of people in Roman dress from text books. The mosaic work was organised effectively, except that the pupils did not wear protective clothing nor was the working surface covered. The pupils used glue and grout well, achieving impressive effects, some of them choosing the coloured tile pieces carefully to shape their design. Those pupils drawing from texts, however, did not have sufficient guidance as to how to approach the work. Two girls said that they were looking for the easiest drawing to copy.
145. The co-ordinators have both only very recently taken over the portfolio, but have both made a sensible start to their subject overview. Both have chosen to review the subject, and teachers' current preferences. They both intend to develop schemes of work, and monitor their colleagues' planning. They are enthusiastic, and the art co-ordinator has made great strides in a very short time. It is important that they collaborate in those aspects of the subjects that overlap, and to be clear about the differences in subject emphasis. Currently, the design book used by the pupils is more effectively used for DT than for art and design, where it has not yet been developed as a collection of pupils' imaginative and artistic ideas, to be worked out in practice in art lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

146. It was only possible to observe one lesson of geography during the inspection. The following judgements are made as a result of talking to teachers and pupils, studying the displays and scrutinising the pupils' written work.
147. During Key Stage 1, pupils gain a sound geographical knowledge and understanding. They are able to talk about the location and layout of their school, the pattern of houses and the different types of shops in the vicinity. By the end of the key stage they can compare and contrast living in Hulme with the seaside in the United Kingdom and understand the differences between life in England and St Lucia in the Caribbean. Many of the pupils have difficulty expressing themselves on paper and the quality of their written work is below the standard expected for their age. However, their books show they have the ability to take information off the internet, for example, weather charts. They make good progress through the key stage.
148. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with expectations for their age. Pupils have a good understanding of the water cycle and use geographical vocabulary such as tributary, condensation, and evaporation. They can describe the course of a river from source to mouth. As at Key Stage 1, there are weaknesses in their writing but they have very good recall of prior learning and speak confidently. When discussing mountains, a group of Year 6 pupils could describe the major mountain ranges of the world and had a very good understanding of their geographical locations. They knew that vegetation changes as one goes up a mountain and could link this with climatic conditions. Geographical skills are well developed and reinforced through field work. There is clear evidence of progression in their books and they continue to make good progress through the key stage.

149. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching at key stage 1, although the planning is thorough and very detailed, and the scheme of work covers all the attainment targets. In Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory. Planning is very good. The scheme of work has been designed to build on the cultural heritage of the pupils and the modules on migration look at the movement of people from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom. The marking of pupils' work is very supportive but could give greater indication how standards can be raised. In the lesson seen there was a good variety of activities, links with numeracy, drawing the circle showing a travel to work area using as compass, and appropriate use of video clips. However, there could be more opportunity for pupils to find out for themselves rather than being told.
150. The co-ordinator is extremely conscientious and has produced an excellent subject handbook. She monitors the weekly planning of her colleagues and regularly reviews the curriculum looking to improve the delivery in the light of experience.

HISTORY

151. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with expectations.
152. In Key Stage 1, the pupils look at how places and artefacts change overtime. Year 1 pupils know that 100 years ago the kitchen looked very different from today. They learn that washing required washboards and mangles and that bed warmers and stone hot water bottles were used. Instead of vacuum cleaners carpet beaters were used. The pupils are developing early enquiry skills when trying to work out what certain artefacts were used for and ask thoughtful questions. In Year 2, through fieldwork and the study of photographs, pupils have a good understanding of changes in their local area. They can offer opinions on the changes and say what they like. They have a developing sense of when things happened and put events in sequence.
153. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge of events of the past, and can talk readily about the periods of history they have studied. Year 6 pupils were able to talk about the Gods of ancient Greece, the Battle of Marathon, and how the Trojans deceived the Greeks with their 'Trojan horse'. They described customs during the time of the ancient Egyptian civilisation and knew that important people were buried with their possessions. Historical language was good. They readily used words such as 'Mummy', 'hieroglyphics', 'Zeus', 'Athena'. The writing in pupils' books shows a sound use of secondary source material and a sensitive approach when describing social change. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
154. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The clever use of artefacts and photographs at Key Stage 1 brought the lessons to life and the children were both stimulated and challenged. At both key stages teachers plan well and introduce work that meets the needs of all their pupils. At Key Stage 1 the relationships are excellent and the pupils are managed skilfully and sensitively. More use could be made of homework in the top classes. Resources are generally well used although more use could be made of library books and ICT software to develop independent research skills.
155. The co-ordinator, also responsible for geography, has produced during the last twelve months a thoughtful and well-focused scheme of work. The subject is well monitored and staff are constantly looking for ways of improving the provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

156. Standards in ICT are good for pupils aged seven years. They are just below average for pupils at the age of 11. The older pupils have not benefited from consistent, systematic teaching of the basic skills in the past, nor as yet had sufficient time to consolidate their skills since the computer suite was installed 18 months ago.
157. However, subject development is moving forward rapidly. New developments since September 2000 have made a big difference to the pupils' progress and attainment in ICT over the past six months. The computer suite is timetabled for each class's regular use throughout the week and pupils are now making good progress in these lessons. They achieve well in 'learning about' ICT given the limited experience that many pupils have of the wider use of computers outside of school. There are several reasons for this spurt in achievement and attainment. The adoption of the nationally recommended scheme of work revived whole-staff enthusiasm for ICT, and the establishment of a 'lead teacher' for ICT based in Year 3 is helping to spread expertise and sustain the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2. An after-school computer club for Years 3 and 4 is helping in the same way. Staff confidence and competence to deliver the new curriculum are now sound and fast becoming good. This is because of the regular fortnightly training sessions, and the self-audits undertaken by staff that ensure that they can receive training on each new programme or function as it is needed. The support of an external agency for technical support and some training adds to teachers' confidence, especially as the link technician is also a teacher and trainer, and gives valuable advice, at the right level. Pupils are also given opportunities for 'learning with' ICT through access to the two computers per classroom although there are too few opportunities for pupils to use word processing skills or develop keyboard facility.
158. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' ICT competence is good. By Year 2, all pupils can open the Internet, recalling the sequence of operations well. They know which icons activate the programmes they want, and how to bookmark a preferred site, such as 'Policeman'. They can save and load their work, and recognise the computer as one way of many to find things out. They are confident to try things out and to explore what happens, because of teaching that raises their self-esteem and because they know that teachers can and will give swift and accurate help if required.
159. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils efficiently log on and off, load a programme and find previous work, if it has been correctly saved. A Year 3 class explored a new CD program of an investigation of a Roman town, worked independently and at a steady pace and used the prompts to 'find their way around the town'. They had difficulty in evaluating the quality of the information they could collect from the program, in comparison with other sources such as books, and it is this 'evaluative' strand that is poorly developed across the key stage, as yet. Year 6 pupils could quickly and efficiently access an Excel program, enter data about the school population, select a graph type and transform it into a pie chart, and each pupil accomplished this in a 30 minute session. They were confident to think for themselves, to experiment, explore and sort out their own problems and made visible progress in the use of the Excel application during the lesson. Nevertheless, this group of Year 6 pupils have not experienced all the threads in the ICT Programme of Study in sufficient depth. They have come late to the new elements in the 2000 National Curriculum, and are catching up fast, but standards at present are lower than national expectations for pupils aged 11.

160. It is the evaluative, reflective, review element that pupils are currently less proficient in, largely because of the drive to improve skill development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to use the computer for research purposes, and recognise it as a powerful learning tool, along with other sources. They are less competent at comparing their work in ICT with other sources, and in talking about how they might improve their work. Pupils themselves realise that their keyboard skills are not proficient, and this slows down the use of word processing for drafting, editing and re-drafting writing, or adding text to a program. The use of the computer for control purposes, and the bringing together of text, tables and images in features such as multi-media presentations is not fully developed.
161. Teaching of ICT is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge in the lessons observed was always satisfactory for the level of work taught, and in most cases good or very good. They understand how to present new skills clearly, and a particular strength is their ability to monitor swiftly and effectively, and to make well judged interventions at individual and class level. Teachers respond to the regular updating of software, and the briefing on its use offered by the co-ordinator and lead teacher. They integrate software packages into the whole curriculum as much as possible.
162. The subject is very well and tightly managed and led. The co-ordinator is hugely successful in his aim of creating a positive frame of mind towards teachers' professional development in ICT. Excellent relationships with the service provider benefit the school as a whole. The co-ordinator has an accurate picture of teaching strengths and weaknesses, knows the extent to which ICT is included within each teachers' planning and aims to monitor lessons from Summer 2001.

MUSIC

163. Attainment in music is good overall, rising from satisfactory with good features in Key Stage 1 to good in Key Stage 2. This is in part because each teacher takes the teaching of music seriously, and uses the school's adopted scheme well, planning from it carefully to meet the interests and musical needs of their class. The other important feature of the school's work in music is the rich range of musical experiences offered, as a result of the teaching by specialist teachers both in lesson time and in after-school clubs.
164. Older groups of children learn to play steel pan, African drums and violins in lessons provided by the local authority music service. Last year, two pupils achieved grade one with distinction in violin lessons. There are good links with drama and with the community through the musical experiences. For instance, Year 6 pupils took part in a dance/music project with the Halle orchestra based upon Stravinsky's 'Rites of Spring' which finished with a performance in one of the city's leading theatres. There is also a recorder club that has newly started, and an after-school steel pan club, both run by teachers within the school. A choir of older pupils is also taught by a visiting specialist teacher, and this group of pupils reach a very high standard of singing. During the inspection, they sang with great joy and accuracy in three-part harmony, maintaining the alto, mezzo and soprano parts by listening to each other. Although the more musically able pupils benefit most evidently from these more specialist lessons, the visiting teachers work hard to include all of the pupils and to raise their musical aspirations. For instance, in an African drumming lesson with the Year 5 class, pupils were highly challenged to read the musical notation for the drumming rhythm and play it out using a newly taught drumming stroke. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had achieved this, because of high expectations and good

listening skills on their part. Overall, these additional lessons and clubs ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of music from other cultures which helps them to evaluate and express their own musical preferences.

165. Pupils achieve well in lessons, particularly in singing, which is good across the school. During an infant and junior hymn practice, pupils sang with clear diction, feeling and good pitch, and in a well-controlled manner. This good standard is carried through to singing within assembly. Music lessons are taught by each class teacher, using a high quality scheme produced by the city's music service. This means that teachers can be, and are, sensitive to the different needs of their classes. Resources are good, and the school makes effective use of a music room within the new wing to the school. Its lack of sound-proofing is a disadvantage, as is the need for its shared use as a teaching room for SEN.
166. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the teachers aim to include performing, composing, appraising and listening in each lesson. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn to recognise and keep pulse and rhythm, and were able to listen to, recall and repeat the rhythmic patterns created by other pupils. They also use a range of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments with growing skill. By Year 5, in a lesson in which pupils achieving very high levels of concentration and effort, pupils were able to compose together in groups to introduce an ostinato pattern to a tune. This they achieved successfully, by composing the pattern, clapping it out and then accompanying the tune. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of music from different styles and cultures, listen to and discuss music and sing and play a variety of instruments.
167. Of the limited number of lessons observed, teaching was good generally. The teachers make good use of the school's set of instruments, which are exceptionally well looked after and used with great care by the pupils. Teachers also make wise use of the scheme of work that they have adopted. The tempering of the scheme to class needs is a real strength, as is the good management of music lessons and the use of additional support staff in some lessons. All teachers have a confident and enthusiastic approach to teaching music that spreads to the pupils, who work hard and intensively during lessons.
168. The subject is well co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher, whose own subject knowledge is very high. She also recognises the level of subject expertise of the staff, and supported the introduction of the present scheme so that teachers could feel confident with it. New staff are inducted carefully, often by working alongside the co-ordinator to build up confidence and expertise. Monitoring of teaching has not yet begun because of the current focus upon standards in the core subjects.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

169. Physical education is a strength of the school. Attainment at the end of both key stages is above average.
170. The pupils in the infants have good awareness of their bodies and move gracefully both in dance and gymnastics. They appreciate the need for space and move carefully showing respect for each other. In one Year 1 class the pupils were able to perform a sequence of floor exercises with a level of skill and application unusual for their age. They showed creativity in the choice of jumps and rolls they performed and constantly strove to improve their techniques.

171. In Key Stage 2, pupils consistently perform at a standard higher than expected for their age. In dance they show considerable inventiveness in interpreting music and poetry. Their movements are full of feeling and they are able to represent changes of mood both with their bodies and their facial expressions. A Year 3 class represented the heavy movement of machinery by slow determined movements, reaching up and down to simulate the turning of wheels and pistons. They were then able to switch to softer lighter movement to simulate a breeze through the trees. The Year 6 pupils imaginatively interpreted a poem and showed how well they had progressed in dance with some very good group and sequence movements.
172. In gymnastics the pupils are confident on the apparatus yet are conscious of the need to take care. They are developing independence in that they assemble the apparatus with minimum supervision and then establish their own and group routines. They are self-critical and listen to the assessments of the teacher and their peers. Hence they make very good progress in style and technique during lessons.
173. Year 4 were seen swimming. Although their standards are below expectations for their age they have made remarkable progress since they started swimming lessons last September. Pupils only receive swimming tuition in Year 4. Two terms ago 21 were non-swimmers, now there are only five. Thirteen now meet the requirement of swimming 25 metres. Although they swim with confidence they have yet to learn formal strokes such as crawl and backstroke.
174. Teaching of dance is very good and in gymnastics it is never less than good. Teachers have a good understanding of both aspects of the subject and teach with confidence, sensitivity and imagination. They interest the pupils and provide challenges to those of all ability. The lessons are good examples of valuing the capabilities and efforts of all pupils.
175. Pupils respond eagerly to the challenges and work well together. Occasionally some boys are over enthusiastic in dance and favour the more aggressive postures but in all aspects the boys and girls work well together. It would widen the subject coverage if traditional dances from a variety of cultures were also taught.
176. The scheme of work covers all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. In addition to the activities observed there is a programme of games and outdoor and adventurous pursuits take place at the annual residential camp. The pupils enjoy competing against children from other schools. The subject is very well co-ordinated by the headteacher.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

177. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils have a good knowledge of different faiths and have a growing understanding of themselves. The RE lessons play a very important part in setting the tone for the school, developing community spirit and shared values. In a Year 1 class the pupils showed a good knowledge of religious festivals and were able to say why Moslems fasted during Ramadan. They could offer opinions of what it must feel like to be hungry and knew that food gives energy. They looked at Islamic patterns and saw the beauty in the designs. In Year 2 the pupils study special religious places and they know where Jews, Moslems, Hindus and Christians worship.
178. In Key Stage 2 pupils work at a level expected for their age, and show good progress. In addition to furthering their knowledge of different faiths the pupils have a good grounding in moral education. They reflect on and discuss issues such as

temptations, forgiveness, trust and promises. Their words and actions show a depth of spiritual understanding. One excellent assembly, led by Year 6, looked at the Hindu belief of Karma and how this had relevance for everyone. In a Year 6 lesson on 'Reincarnation', pupils were asked to write about who they would like to be if not themselves. Several wrote about famous people but one boy wrote, "I would like to be my Nana because she has had to cope with hard things, so I believe she is a strong person. I would like to be like that, and she is also a strong Christian and I admire her for that".

179. Teaching is good at both key stages. Planning is very good and teachers have good subject knowledge. Great care is taken to respect different faiths and teachers skilfully use the experiences of the pupils. One Moslem boy made a very pertinent contribution to the discussion on Ramadan. Marking is sound with some good examples of guidance on how standards can be raised. The subject contributes well to the development of the pupils' writing skills, especially imaginative prose.
180. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus, which has a multi-faith approach and uses the Manchester School Improvement Service's scheme of work for Years 1 to 4. The subject is well co-ordinated by the headteacher, and the pupils are provided with a broader range of experiences than is usually seen in a primary school. Very good account is taken of the diverse backgrounds of the children. The time allocation for the subject is generous but it is used well to deliver not only the syllabus but also for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.