

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitefield, Manchester

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105310

Headteacher: Mrs M McGoldrick

Reporting inspector: Mr P Snelling
3624

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th November 2001

Inspection number: 230622

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Victoria Avenue Whitefield Manchester
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor D Boden
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3624	Mr P Snelling	Registered inspector	Science Music Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed Key issues for action
9952	Mrs L Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30954	Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education Religious education	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language Geography History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
1492	Mr D Twist	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Design and technology	Teaching and learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitefield Primary School is smaller than most schools of this type, with 167 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. Of these, ten are children who attend full time in the nursery and 19 part time. Since the last inspection in 1998 the number on roll has fallen by more than a third. The school is situated three miles from the centre of Bury and six miles from the centre of Manchester, close to a motorway. The school draws most of its pupils from a surrounding council estate that has high levels of social and economic need. There are a few more girls than boys. More than half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Similarly, forty eight per cent of pupils have special educational needs. Many of these children have emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as specific learning needs. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average and the number of families that move in and out of the area higher than is normally found. Whilst the school population is predominantly white, about ten per cent of the children come from homes where English is not the language mainly spoken and most of them need additional support. The majority are from families speaking Ibo, French or Lithuanian. A small number of children have been admitted recently from families seeking asylum. The pupils' attainment on entry is well below average and many have a very limited range of language when they start school. The school is finding it difficult to attract an experienced teacher for a vacant post, to lead in Key Stage 1.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitefield is an effective school. Standards are rising, although pupils' attainment in the present Year 6 is well below the national average in English and below in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well from a very low base when they start at the school and younger pupils are on course to reach higher standards in the future. There is more very good and good teaching than when the school was last inspected. The headteacher, who is new since the previous inspection, leads the school very well. With the support of staff and governors, she is moving the school forward. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher is a committed, astute and determined leader with a clear vision for the school;
- The school is improving rapidly under the headteacher's leadership, with very good support given by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors;
- Teaching is good or better in more than half the lessons and children work hard;
- Children behave well, enjoy their learning and take part enthusiastically in the activities the school offers;
- The school takes very good care of its pupils, values them as individuals and works hard to raise their self-esteem.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills throughout the school;
- Use of the outdoors for children in the reception year;
- Building on the good attitudes of pupils by giving them more opportunities to organise their own learning;
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. Since then, under the strong leadership of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, a dip in pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes to their work has been reversed. Effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour have been implemented. The provision and teaching in religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) are much better, with pupils achieving far more. Teaching overall has improved, with no

unsatisfactory lessons seen this time. Pupils are challenged more in lessons because teachers' assess their progress more accurately and use the information to set targets for them. They have more opportunities to take part in after-school activities and they learn more about other cultures than before. The local education authority has offered good support to the school during this time. There is still work to be done in raising standards in English, mathematics and science but there is a clear trend of improvement from year to year. The school is well placed to continue getting better.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	E	B	well above average above A average B
Mathematics	E	E	E	C	average C below average D
Science	E	E	E	C	well below average E

The results of last year's tests are well below those found nationally but are the same as, or better than, those achieved in similar schools. More children reached a higher level in English (Level 5) than ever before. Inspection findings confirm that standards remain well below average in English in the present Year 6 but they are rising from year to year, with more pupils each year reaching the expected level at eleven. In mathematics and science, they are reaching standards closer to average than last year, although they are still below. Forty-seven per cent of these Year 6 pupils have special educational needs and find learning difficult.

A lot of pupils join the school at different times, but of those who stay, many achieve well. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2, where teaching provision has been more stable recently. When children join the nursery their attainment is poor and it takes a long time for them to catch up. Their skills in language are especially weak. Their progress through the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but at the end of the reception year their attainment remains below what is expected in all areas of learning, except personal, social and emotional development. Speaking skills remain weak throughout the school and pupils do not pick up a wide enough vocabulary to help them become competent writers. In Key Stage 1 the children's achievement is satisfactory though at age seven, the attainment of most is still well below average in literacy, numeracy and science. In other subjects, their attainment is average, as it is at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve better in the junior classes, because of the more stable teaching. Standards in ICT, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are all average. The school has been particularly successful in tackling underachievement in ICT and religious education.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when they work in small groups withdrawn from class. The school uses 'catch up' programmes well to help low achieving pupils, children from families seeking asylum and other pupils for whom English is not their first language. Higher attaining pupils are stretched more in English than in mathematics and science, where they are not given enough problems or challenges to work out for themselves. Gifted pupils, though identified only informally, are stretched by being placed in groups working at a higher level for some of their lessons. Achievement for boys and girls is not significantly different. The school's targets are based on a detailed and careful analysis of the achievements of the pupils in each year group and are suitably challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the children enjoy school life and are keen to work in lessons

	and take part in wider activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, both in the classroom and playground. Pupils know and follow the rules. Only very occasionally do pupils try to distract others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are tolerant and respect each other. They accept responsibility very well but have too few opportunities to organise their own learning and take initiative in lessons.
Attendance	Well below average despite the school's efforts. This is mainly due to persistent absence of children from a small number of families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

Just over half the lessons seen were good or very good and the remainder were satisfactory. Teaching in all classes meets the needs of pupils and enables them to achieve well or make steady progress in their learning. The very good teaching was seen across the junior classes, where most teachers are more experienced, and know the children well from having been in the school for longer. Some very good teaching in music and ICT in Key Stage 2 resulted from teachers swapping classes to use their particular skills more widely. Teachers manage and motivate the pupils very well during lessons so they work hard and productively.

Teaching of English is satisfactory overall, with reading taught better than writing. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach pupils the skills to read new words. Teaching in writing is not as effective because teachers do not sufficiently develop pupils' ideas through discussions. Speaking skills are not given enough attention in lessons. Teaching of mathematics is good. A particular strength of numeracy teaching is the way teachers challenge all the pupils in mental arithmetic sessions. They consequently develop a good understanding of number facts. However, they are not given enough opportunities to apply their knowledge to solving problems or to use their number skills in other subjects. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory. Strong relationships are established by the teachers with the children which gives them confidence in their learning. More opportunities need to be created for pupils to develop their speaking skills at this early age.

On most occasions teachers match work to different pupils needs so all are challenged appropriately. However all pupils, but higher attainers in particular, would benefit from more opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in research, investigations and solving problems.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Better in the nursery than reception where not enough use is made of the outdoors. A good balance between subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. A good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Very good when pupils are working separately in small groups. Now and again, work in class is not well enough matched to ability for the pupil to complete it without close support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils quickly develop their spoken language through well-planned and skilled support
Provision for pupils'	Good. The school values the individuality of pupils and works hard to

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

raise their self-esteem. It is effective at teaching children how to relate to each other and share their feelings. They learn to appreciate the richness of life in a multicultural society

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. It effectively ensures their welfare and safety. Staff know the children well and use this knowledge well to decide the next steps in their learning.
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Some literacy and numeracy work is too formal too soon in reception. Throughout the school there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' speaking skills. Whilst pupils undertake practical work in science, it is usually following the teacher's instructions rather than setting up their own tests to solve a problem. The school has a satisfactory partnership with its parents. They have confidence and trust in the school. There is a lot of effort put into helping parents improve their own education, and become more involved in their children's, but this does not always bring just reward.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is a strong and determined leader, who is giving clear direction to improving the school. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and has forged a good team with the staff. All take their share of responsibility and play their part in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and development needs of the school and contribute well to its improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher had taken a strong lead in analysing pupils' performance in tests, and factors in teaching and learning. The outcomes are used well to set priorities for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school gets good value from grants and projects. The ICT suite is used very well in promoting good achievement, though the library is not.

The school has sufficient staff and resources to meet its needs. The accommodation is adequate. The school applies the principles of best value well. It consults with its parents and children about provision and compares its performance with other schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard. • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • They find it easy to approach the school. • The children like school and it is helping them to grow up and become responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number would like to receive an update on their children's progress during the spring term.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views. The school agrees that the time between its meetings about pupils' progress (autumn and summer) is too long. It plans to hold an additional meeting in the spring term 2002.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils are achieving more than in the past. Much of the improved progress stems from the leadership and drive of the headteacher who is very effective at getting to the heart of problems and identifying what needs to be done. Since her appointment as headteacher, she has worked particularly hard with staff to implement better management of pupils' behaviour, leading to the right conditions for good learning. This work is now beginning to pay off through rising standards. Pupils' attitudes to their work are better and so is teaching. The targets set by the school reflect careful analysis of pupils' achievement from year to year and are appropriately challenging.
2. When the children start in the nursery (the Foundation Stage) their attainment is wide ranging though many are well below average. They particularly lack the language needed to help them speak clearly to others and talk about what they are doing. They make satisfactory progress in the nursery class but do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. This reflects the close attention adults give to developing their confidence as learners, and their social skills. Not all the children in the nursery move on to the reception class and historically, many of the more able ones have moved into a reception class in another school. This means that the attainment of pupils entering reception is also well below average.
3. The emphasis on developing personal and social skills continues in reception, and the children's achievement is good in this area of learning. They move more quickly through the 'stepping stones' than might be expected so that they are on course to reach the standard they should (the early learning goals) at the end of the reception year. In all the other areas of learning pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They do not make up enough ground in their communication, language and literacy skills, because too little emphasis in the Foundation Stage is put on speaking and listening activities. By the end, pupils are still well below the standards expected for their age. They do make up some ground in mathematical development knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development though they are not on course to achieve the early learning goals.
4. In the national tests at eleven in English in 2001, the school's results were well below the national average. However, compared to pupils in similar schools, results were the best ever achieved. This was because more children reached the higher Level 5 than ever before. At seven, results were also well below average, though not as low as in previous years. There is a trend of improvement from a very low base though there is still more to do. In particular, standards in speaking across the school are too low and not enough is done to enable pupils to make up the deficit they bring into school. This in turn affects pupils writing in that they have too little vocabulary to write well.
5. In the national tests in mathematics, the standards reached by the pupils at seven were very low. At eleven, pupils showed improvement in that although standards were still well below average nationally, they did as well as pupils in similar schools. Standards have been slowly rising over the past two or three years and this was confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. Standards for the current Year 6 are below average rather than well below. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on course to achieve better standards this year as well. Pupils' numeracy skills and understanding of number are improving as a result of the good mental arithmetic sessions, which

take place daily. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills in solving problems.

6. Standards in science are also getting better and this is reflected in improving results in tests at Key Stage 2. Although the school's results last year were well below the national average, four out of five children reached the level expected at eleven. Three years ago, less than half the pupils reached this level. The 2001 results were low because very few pupils achieved a higher than average level. Pupils did as well as those in schools similar to Whitefield.
7. Standards in religious education, and information and communication technology (ICT) have risen significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards are as you would expect at seven and eleven. In religious education, interesting lessons are now taught in all classes. Teachers use an exciting range of resources, visits and visitors to enliven their teaching. In ICT, teaching has also improved, with some very good specialist teaching by the teacher who leads the subject. Children work with much better computers and software than before. They achieve their best standards in word processing and handling data, though they are not so skilled in researching information. In both cases, subject leadership is very good and has driven the improvements.
8. In all other subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards reached at eleven are typical of those found in most schools. Through history and geography pupils build up a good knowledge of facts, events, places and the environment, though their research skills are not so strong. In music, singing is a strength and specialist teaching again has a positive influence. In physical education, pupils' swimming reaches a high standard. In art and design, and in design and technology, pupils are offered a wide range of different experiences that build their skills well from year to year.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against their individual targets and make good progress. They are best supported when working in small groups. At these times they receive intensive help through highly focused teaching to clear targets set out in small steps. For example, pupils made good progress with spelling when learning words ending with 'y' and 'ies'. They practised at home and were tested and corrected on this work in school. The challenge to above average pupils varies in different subjects and is inconsistent. In literacy they are challenged well in Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in the most recent tests. At Key Stage 1 they are not challenged enough. In mathematics, although number work is well matched to their higher ability, they are not given enough problem solving work to make best use of the skills they have. Similarly in science the more able pupils are the most disadvantaged by there being too few opportunities to tackle problems through designing, carrying out and recording investigations in their own ways. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified formally but there are occasions when younger children with exceptional capability work with older children.
10. Pupils with English as an additional language and asylum seekers make good progress in developing their spoken language. Staff are very aware of their needs, and are quick to identify their ability levels and challenge them accordingly. They are encouraged to make contributions during the introductions to lessons through carefully crafted questions by teachers. They are likewise encouraged on occasions when language is not required; for example to demonstrate movements in physical education. The school receives expert advice from support agencies and the training teachers have received in meeting the needs of asylum seekers is reflected in the children's good achievement. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by ethnic minority pupils or by boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good. There is a happy atmosphere in the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. The personal development of pupils and their relationships with adults and with each other is good and this results in good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that behaviour is good and there was unanimous agreement that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible and expects them to work hard. This view is strongly supported by the inspection findings. Despite deterioration in attitudes and behaviour after the previous inspection (evident from records and discussions with governors, parents and children), standards have recovered and are now good. Pupils confirm that life in school is more enjoyable.
12. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard and show very good levels of personal motivation to improve their work. This makes a significant contribution to their success and to the progress they make. For example, in a well taught Year 3 English lesson on writing instructional text, pupils were keen, excited and eager to start writing the instructions for making a 'magic' sandwich for a dragon or a witch. They used their imaginations well to 'take a slice of moon and sprinkle it with dust from a volcano!' As a result of their lively interest and perseverance, they made good progress in the lesson. More opportunities of this sort need to be offered to pupils. Children in the nursery and reception classes develop good attitudes to learning. The supportive and encouraging atmosphere helps them to settle into routines quickly. Outside of lessons, many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. The 'Cool After School' club is a very good opportunity for pupils to work on a range of activities. Pupils of all ages enjoyed making puppets and their interest and enthusiasm was a pleasure to observe. These very good attitudes to learning are shared by pupils for whom English is an additional language and by most pupils with special educational needs.
13. Pupils' behaviour is good and is fostered through the school's consistent expectations and its emphasis on giving praise. In lessons, most pupils behave well all of the time, with only isolated examples of pupils attempting to distract others. For example, the behaviour of a large group of Year 6 pupils was good during a games lesson when they practised their basketball skills. They made good progress in learning due to their good self-control and their willingness to work safely with each other. Ideas of right and wrong are established early for children in the foundation years. All pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and most comply with the standards set. Pupils move sensibly around the school. In the playground, their play is lively and happy. When things go wrong, the sensory room provides a quiet haven and an opportunity for reflection. There have been five fixed period exclusions in the last year and this reflects the school's determination to allow all pupils to work in a calm, purposeful learning environment.
14. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils and staff work closely together in a caring atmosphere and this improves the quality of pupils' learning and the life of the school. They make good progress in their personal development when they accept responsibilities around the school with cheerful enthusiasm. For example, older pupils act as 'Friends' to pupils new to the school and parents confirm that this helps them to settle quickly into school life. Children in the foundation years gain good personal and social skills and are happy to explain their tasks to adults. There is a school council and pupils have a 'voice' in the school. Older pupils were observed looking after pets and clearing the garden area of leaves. However there are too few opportunities given for pupils to learn and research independently so these skills are not sufficiently strong. Most pupils have shown by

their improved attitudes and behaviour that they are now capable of accepting more responsibility for their own learning.

15. Attendance at the school is well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Attendance has fluctuated since the previous inspection showing a steady deterioration over the last three years. The school tries hard to seek the support of parents and whilst almost half of the pupils attend regularly, there are a number of children who are persistently absent with the approval of parents. These parents do not always appreciate the effect that poor attendance has on the progress that their children make. The school's attendance figures are also worsened by families who move without notice, with pupils then necessarily kept on the school's roll until they are informed of their admittance to a new school. Some parents also take children on holiday in term time. Despite the measures the school takes to improve attendance, including the good support received from the education welfare service, attendance remains unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection when a third of lessons were good or better and one in ten were unsatisfactory. Now over half of lessons are good or very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The strongest teaching was seen in Key Stage 2 where almost two in three lessons were judged to be good or better. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, this was nearer to one in two.
17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although there is joint planning between nursery and reception there are some differences of emphasis, particularly in literacy and numeracy teaching. These work against having the same approach across the Foundation Stage. For example, in the joint reception and Year 1 class, the practice of following the nationally recommended pattern of the 'literacy hour' to meet the requirements of Key Stage 1 pupils does not provide the best possible learning for the reception children. They need to build up more speaking skills and early writing experiences before they can cope with these more formal activities. A particular strength in the Foundation Stage teaching is the high quality of the relationships which teachers establish with the children. Staff are very effective at building the children's confidence, which helps them to settle quickly into school, and makes them willing to attempt new learning. The most productive parts of lessons are when teachers talk with the children as a group. They do not always give them enough guidance for activities.
18. A number of factors contribute to the good teaching in Key Stage 2. Most teachers have more experience than those in Key Stage 1 of the particular needs of the Whitefield children and know them well. This helps them to pitch the challenge of their lessons effectively to match ability levels. There is plentiful adult support in many lessons, for example when pupils work on computers. They have the benefit of an adult nearby to call on for advice or help, which prevents time being wasted and speeds up their learning. The use of specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6 in music and ICT makes best use of expertise and raises standards in both subjects. In Key Stage 1, there has been a lot of change over the past year, with a newly qualified teacher with reception and Year 1 and a temporary teacher in Year 2. Whilst teaching is satisfactory, the pupils' learning has been interrupted more. The school is currently seeking to appoint an experienced teacher to lead the work in this key stage.
19. A good feature of teaching across the school is the way teachers manage the pupils' behaviour. By common agreement of both staff and pupils, this has improved immeasurably of late and is due to the way in which teachers implement the school's agreed approach to rewards and sanctions. By concentrating on recognising positive

effort and behaviour, and teaching with patience and good humour, staff create an atmosphere in which pupils are keen to learn. Pupils' motivation is raised when teachers give praise for their good attitudes to work and when they shape their questions to enable pupils of all ability levels to offer answers. They are particularly effective at drawing into the introductions to lessons those with special educational needs or who are learning English as a second language. For example, in Year 3 when introducing a lesson on food hygiene and preparation, the teacher asked a pupil with limited English to identify some common foods. Her success was an opportunity to offer praise and thus raise her self-esteem and confidence to attempt to answer other questions. Revisiting the initial aims of the lesson in a summary at the end is a widespread feature of lessons. This helps teachers to drive home the key points covered as well as checking that pupils have grasped them.

20. The most effective lessons seen were the early morning 'starter sessions' observed in junior classes, most of which were judged to be very good. These concentrate on building basic reading, writing, spelling and number skills. They have a sharp focus, are well prepared and are taught with pace and enthusiasm. In Year 3 for example, pupils knew exactly what was expected of them as they practised joining particular letters in a handwriting session. Their use of individual white boards and pre-prepared templates to follow, enabled them to iron out any mistakes before working in their books. The results were an impressive improvement on previous efforts and repaid the work that had been put into preparing the session.
21. An aspect of pupils' learning that has scope for improvement is the degree of independence which pupils are encouraged to show in activities such as researching information or undertaking investigations. Much of what they do is more closely directed by teachers than is necessary. For example, in their science work pupils need more opportunities to design tests and experiments and to decide how best to record their outcomes as opposed to being given close guidelines to follow. In a mathematics lesson, higher attaining pupils were unable to move on to their next task because they had been told to wait for more instructions, which slowed their learning unnecessarily. In literacy work, the library is not set up to enable regular information research and this restricts the development of independent skills. Given the effectiveness of the school's current approach to managing pupils behaviour, they are now ready to take on more responsibility for their own learning and this should be encouraged.
22. Literacy teaching is satisfactory overall, though there are instances when a more flexible approach to the literacy hour would be beneficial to pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson in which the teacher introduced a thought provoking war poem, more discussion would have benefited the pupils instead of moving on to the next element of the lesson. Most numeracy teaching is strong because teachers set work to match the range of ability in their classes. In Year 2 for example, the class was split into three levels to play an addition game. The lower attaining group dealt with numbers to 20 whilst at the other end of the spectrum, higher attainers operated with numbers up to 100.
23. The usefulness of teacher's marking varies in providing guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Many comments such as 'be more careful' do not indicate clearly enough what the pupils should do to get better. On occasions, work that is ticked clearly does not represent pupils' best efforts and teachers have accepted presentation that is below an acceptable standard. Teachers' use of homework is satisfactory. There is a homework club every Thursday which is well attended and there are some examples of interesting tasks being set, such as interviewing parents to find out what makes them laugh, in relation to work about Comic Relief.

24. Teachers generally cater well for pupils of different abilities. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. It is at its best when they are working in small groups or in intensive one-to-one sessions. Special support assistants are well trained and have good skills; for example in questioning or intervening to consolidate learning before moving on. In the classrooms teachers usually vary the work they give to different groups but sometimes the low attainers struggle to achieve in literacy if there is no additional support available. High attainers are challenged well in numeracy though not sufficiently through problem solving. Similarly in science there is potential for greater challenge to more able pupils.

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

25. The school provides a satisfactory range of relevant and worthwhile experiences for all pupils. Shortcomings that were identified in the previous report have been addressed. The school now makes better provision for ICT. Religious education is planned and taught to the levels set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
26. In the Foundation Stage, all recommended areas of learning are planned for. The nursery children enjoy a good range of imaginative activities. Good use is made particularly of the outside area. However this is not the case for reception children, where provision is not so thoughtfully planned and is unsatisfactory. Throughout the Foundation Stage there is insufficient emphasis on improving children's speaking skills.
27. The school uses the national frameworks for literacy and mathematics as a basis for planning. There is a particularly strong emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing, which reflects the school's concerns about standards in those areas. Effective organisation in Year 6, where pupils are taught writing in separate ability groups, has a good impact on standards and achievement. Planned opportunities for drama and debate do not feature sufficiently in the curriculum and consequently pupils do not develop as confident and articulate speakers. More flexibility over the use of time within the literacy hour to encourage better speaking and listening would provide a useful springboard to better writing.
28. Pupils are helped well to develop their basic number skills. Good use of time at the start of the day and skilful intervention and support are helping to improve standards.
29. Computers are used well to support learning particularly in literacy. There is a good example of pupils using ICT skills in science, when they use data from spreadsheets to construct bar graphs and record thermometer readings from their observations. The importance of developing literacy skills in other subjects is highlighted well through monitoring of standards. For example as a result of checking the quality of work in religious education books, the school has been able to plan more challenging writing tasks for some pupils.
30. There are satisfactory arrangements for personal, health and social education. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are made aware of the dangers of drugs, and sex education is taught in Year 6. Pupils learn about growth and healthy lifestyles through the science curriculum. Matters of citizenship are addressed in whole class lessons.
31. Provision for pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs is good. Individual learning plans clearly address pupils' academic and personal development. Targets for learning are concise and used effectively to measure progress when pupils are taught individually or in small groups. In class situations however, work does not always closely reflect the targets identified in individual plans. Support staff are clear about their roles and liaise well with class teachers. Additional

language programmes have been implemented and these are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' language development.

32. There is good support for pupils who learn English as an additional language. The school liaises well with specialist teachers employed by the local authority to provide specific language targets and monitor progress. These pupils are full participants in school activities and in lessons and benefit well from the support they receive. There are no formal systems for identifying gifted or talented pupils. However most pupils' individual talents are recognised and nurtured. A Year 4 pupil, for instance, joins Year 6 for writing so that his skill with language can be developed in line with his ability.
33. A wide range of activities outside of school time enriches the curriculum. This provision has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are able to develop their skills in winter and summer field sports and practise them in competitive team games. There is a thriving 'after school' club at which pupils engage in art and craft activities. The popular breakfast club provides good opportunities for social development as well as improving punctuality.
34. Links with the community and the 'feeder' secondary school are satisfactory. A local football club provides some coaching for pupils. Visits to places in the locality such as churches, synagogue and a local supermarket are featuring more strongly now in provision than previously.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and other people's beliefs within the curriculum for religious education. In a Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils reflected on the true meaning of Remembrance Day as the teacher explored the impact of the First World War and a pupil read the poem 'In Flanders Field'. Older pupils easily made the link to a current conflict and music gave all pupils an opportunity for quiet reflection. Displays around the school reflect pupils' spiritual development. They write poetry that shows them exploring emotions, beliefs and values. They consider the emotions that works of art evoke. Pupils enter details of their most treasured possession on a poster. Pupils in the reception class talked sensitively about their feelings of sadness, happiness and sometimes anger. The school does much to encourage pupils to consider spiritual aspects of their lives by raising their self-esteem and showing them that they can succeed within the 'family' of the school.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school provides a strong moral code and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in classrooms as well as around the school. The pupils consider that the school rules are firm but fair and all staff apply them consistently. Assemblies give strong support to teaching the principles that distinguish right from wrong, fostering such values as being a good friend and respecting one another. There is a strong sense of care for one another permeating the school. Pupils are proud of the school and are happy to talk about the activities they share. The school has good policies on how to deal with bullying, harassment and discipline and these give clear guidance for staff to follow.
38. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils have welcomed children who are seeking refuge from conflict in other countries and who need help to learn English. They are also sensitive to the needs of children who may have difficulties with learning or behaviour reflecting the display that says, 'We are all one family under the same sky'.

39. Staff encourage pupils to relate positively to each other, developing their awareness of each other's good qualities and why they like their friends. A meeting with members of the school council showed that they take their responsibilities seriously and are very proud to be councillors. The breakfast club, after school club, homework club and choir are all good opportunities for pupils to work in a friendly, sociable environment.
40. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In music, pupils listen to a suitable range of work from different composers and their awareness of them is reinforced in assemblies. Pupils gave some good renditions of favourite hymns with a moving performance of 'Make me a Channel of your Peace'. Pupils explore aspects of their locality and have planned a route to the local supermarket, identifying houses and shops along the way. There are visits to museums and places of interest. All of Year 6, who make up the choir, have participated in a prestigious musical event in Manchester. There has been an improvement in multicultural awareness since the previous inspection. Pupils have visited a synagogue and a visitor inspired pupils to create their own Jewish wedding. An infant assembly showed children listening intently to a story about the festival of Diwali. The link was maintained when they made their own 'divas' in class and designed a Rangoli picture. Pupils now have a greater awareness of the rich cultural diversity of their own community and that of the wider world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school takes very good care of its pupils and fulfils its maxim of 'Growing Together'. Staff have a good awareness of the diverse needs of the children.
42. The procedures for child protection, monitoring behaviour and ensuring pupils health and welfare are very good. The procedures for monitoring and promoting academic and personal development, including attendance, are good. This results in a school that is a harmonious community with no incidents of racial tension or oppressive behaviour. Parents confirm that the school looks after their children well.
43. Although there are thorough procedures for monitoring attendance and for following up absences, they only meet with limited success. It would benefit the school to review its approach to promoting good attendance, by analysing why almost half of the pupils have higher than the national average attendance, and building further incentives from this. Registration periods are efficient and provide an orderly start to the day.
44. The staff promote good behaviour well. All adults have a clear picture of how good pupils' behaviour should be and they are consistent in their approach to any lapses. Pupils are confident that the headteacher and staff will deal quickly with any worries they may have about unkind behaviour. The opportunities given for pupils to work in pairs and in groups ensure that they help and support each other. The very good support given to younger children by older ones is a very good example of how this caring community works.
45. The school provides a safe place for pupils and adults to work in. The site manager keeps the school clean and pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure. There are clear health and safety procedures supported by a good health and safety policy. The governing body, the headteacher and the site manager regularly monitor all aspects of health and safety in the school. The medical needs of pupils are planned for well. The installation of closed circuit television cameras has reduced the amount of vandalism by outsiders. Pupils confirm that they are now more motivated to keep the school clean, tidy and litter-free.

46. There are effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and the information is put to good use. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, the headteacher carries out an analysis of test results for Years 3, 4 and 5. These are then compared with their Key Stage 1 and other previous results in order to identify those pupils needing extra support. The school carefully monitors results by gender and by the number of children with special educational needs. From this analysis, priorities for improvement are identified. The annual assessment of pupils' attainment is put to good use in core subjects in terms of groupings and targeting particular groups for extra support. The good practice of setting targets for individuals as a result of information gained from assessment is established in English. The use of assessment is good in ICT and satisfactory in the foundation years. Information from assessment is used well to set targets for pupils with special educational needs.
47. There are good procedures for the educational and personal support and guidance of pupils. For example, visitors from the emergency services raise pupils' awareness of aspects of personal safety, whilst older pupils attend the 'Crucial Crew' safety training. Pupils receive awards for good effort and behaviour and parents feel that they are well prepared for the transfer to secondary education. The school offers children the opportunity to grow and develop within a caring community and lives up well to its mission statement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents view the school as a good school, which is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They feel positive about the school and the improvements that are being made. At the parents' meeting prior to the inspection and through the questionnaires, parents confirm that their children are making good progress because the school expects them to work hard and achieve well.
49. The information which parents receive is satisfactory. There are regular newsletters and letters home about events in the school. The prospectus is a 'parent friendly' document, which gives good information about the work of the school. There are two parents' meetings each year. There is a 'settling down' one in the autumn term and one in the summer term when reports are issued. However, parents feel the gap between them is too great and they would like a meeting in the spring term to enable them to further encourage and help their children if needed. The school has plans to make this change. The school sends out information each term on what children will be learning and this helps parents to identify ways in which they can help. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to the review meetings but some do not take advantage of the opportunity to discuss their children's future education. Reports to parents on pupils' progress give detailed information on achievement in subjects and show that teachers know pupils well. Although there are some basic targets set for future development, there are inconsistencies in the quality of the advice given on what pupils need to do to improve.
50. The school reaches out to parents but not always with the success it deserves. Parents are willing to attend assemblies, concerts and social events in the school but meetings of an academic nature are not well attended. The school has offered workshops to parents on literacy and numeracy but with little response. A reasonably successful venture was a family learning initiative but only six parents attended this. Some parents listen to children read at home and help them with their homework but others do not. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and school is less than usually found. A continuing effort is needed if the school is to raise the interest of parents in helping their children.
51. The headteacher recently sent out a questionnaire to seek parents' views of the school but no replies have been received. The school involves parents early on in

their children's education through induction meetings when children enter the nursery and reception classes. Only a few parents help in school with activities. The small but dedicated group of parents who make up the Parent Teacher Association receive help and support from teachers with their social and fund raising activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher and deputy lead the school very well. The headteacher has been in post for less than two years during which time the school has improved significantly; the pace of change is impressive. After the previous inspection in 1998 the school went through a period of instability in its management. From her appointment in 2000, the current headteacher focused primarily on improving pupils' behaviour, which records show had deteriorated since that inspection. Through highly effective leadership some children who might otherwise be excluded are showing good attitudes to their work and learning successfully. She has a clear vision and has established the systems and structures needed to put it into practice. For example, a senior management team has been formed which works extensively in analysing the school's performance and identifying the right priorities for improvement. The staff work together well as a team and the effects of this can be clearly seen in the consistent way pupils are managed. Standards and the quality of teaching are rising under leadership where the headteacher shows a quiet determination to succeed. She has raised expectations and this is one reason why there is an upward trend in pupils' achievement.
53. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Weaknesses identified in ICT and religious education have been rigorously tackled. The teaching, learning, curriculum and resources in these subjects is much better and the standards pupils reach are similar to those in many schools across the country. Pupils' behaviour is now of a good standard that provides a strong platform for teachers to give pupils more responsibility for their own learning in the future. Extensive procedures have been established for analysing test and assessment results and identifying where weaknesses need to be tackled. For example, analysis of pupils' attainment in literacy has led to initiatives to improve particular reading skills in both key stages and contributed to decisions about where best to place support staff. All the staff are involved in this work which leads to a greater understanding of the targets which are then set for classes and for groups of pupils. The school now makes good use of information gathered to set realistic targets for pupil performance.
54. Systems for keeping a check on teaching and the everyday work of the school are also well established. Lessons are observed by the headteacher, some subject leaders and by local authority staff. Teachers are given feedback on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. For example, observation of lessons in religious education identified a lack of challenge in developing pupils' language skills which has been addressed. The school has established its performance management system and objectives have been set for teachers that reflect the main priorities for school development. Teachers new to the school are given close and regular support by experienced staff, which helps their confidence and extends their skills.
55. The responsibility for overseeing the provision and teaching in each subject falls on a relatively small number of teachers at present. One teacher is temporary and two are newly qualified teachers in their first year who do not have subject responsibilities. The headteacher has been particularly successful in promoting higher standards in literacy and religious education, and developing the provision for special educational needs. The mathematics coordinator has been effective in promoting better teaching through implementing the numeracy arrangements. The ICT coordinator has led very successfully the rapid improvement in this subject, particularly through giving

colleagues analytical feedback from observations and following up to see the impact of changes. The nursery teacher provides sound leadership of the Foundation Stage and in science, which is a more recent responsibility.

56. The headteacher is keen to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve as much as they can. As well as analysing data for the different ability or ethnic groups in the school, staff show a strong awareness towards meeting needs as they arise. For example, the school has begun to admit a growing number of pupils from families seeking asylum. The headteacher quickly arranged for staff to receive training in meeting the needs of these children. Provision for the substantial number of pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively by the headteacher. Extra support has been brought in through the use of standards funding. The way the school identifies and supports pupils with behavioural problems, who make up a fair proportion of those on its register, is successful. Indeed the way the school values individual pupils and recognises minority needs is reflected in many of their decisions. For example, it has established the 'dolphin room' to provide a suitable place for individuals who may need to 'chill out' and the 'breakfast club' has been introduced to provide for those who need it. Although there is as yet no formal identification of gifted and talented pupils, arrangements have been made for one very able pupil to work at higher levels.
57. The governing body performs its role very well. Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved, and they discuss these areas confidently. They are very committed to the school and to its continued improvement. This is reflected through their decisions as a group but also through the involvement of individual governors. For example, one governor has made a significant contribution to the recent developments in ICT and provides daily support for activities in the playground at lunchtime. Another makes an important contribution to the school's highly effective arrangements for child protection and health and safety. They have a full understanding of the financial running of the school. There are a few omissions from the governors' annual report to parents that need to be addressed to ensure statutory responsibilities are fully met.
58. The school budget is managed efficiently, including funding for specific purposes. The school makes good use of initiatives and additional funding in its efforts to raise standards. For example, it successfully applied for funding to run the 'breakfast club' and this is leading to improved attendance and enthusiasm in pupils. The school seeks best value in its work. It tries various ways of consulting with parents, though responses are often few. It is very successful in knowing the views of pupils through a confident and well-run school council.
59. The school administrator ensures that the day-to-day running of the school is efficient, which enables teachers to concentrate on delivering their lessons with minimal disruption. The building is adequate and space not housing classes is thoughtfully used. The computer suite and 'dolphin room' are particularly valuable in helping the school to achieve its improved levels of behaviour and ICT attainment; the library does not make the same valuable contribution to promoting literacy. Resource levels are satisfactory and where the school has shortages, loan sources are used well.
60. Whilst the school has an adequate number of teachers, it finds difficulty in recruiting staff. The governors recently tried to appoint an experienced teacher to lead Key Stage 1 but the post remains unfilled owing to a lack of applicants. Whilst the teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, the lack of a permanent leader makes it more difficult to raise standards.
61. The school gives good value for money. Pupils make good progress over time from a very low base. They experience a good education at a reasonable cost.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To build on the work done so far and continue to raise standards and pupils' achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

in the Foundation Stage:

- increase the emphasis on and opportunities to develop speaking skills throughout all six areas of learning;
- make full use of the outdoors to extend the work of reception children. (paragraphs 3, 17, 26, 63 – 82)

in Key Stages 1 and 2:

- improve speaking skills by creating more planned opportunities for drama, debate, talking to groups and role play, as a springboard to widening vocabulary and better writing;
- improve learning by providing a better balance between giving pupils information and challenging them to make their own decisions on how to tackle problems, undertake research and find things out for themselves. (paragraphs 4, 8, 14, 21, 23, 27, 63 - 151)

in English:

- make more use of marking to help pupils improve;
- raise the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work. (paragraphs 23, 83 - 100)

in mathematics:

- give pupils (particularly higher attainers) more opportunities to undertake investigative and problem solving work, and to use their knowledge of number in their other work. (paragraphs 5, 9, 24, 101 - 107)

in science:

- give pupils (particularly older and higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2) less teacher direction in practical work and more opportunities to design, carry out and choose how to record their own investigations;
- improve the range, quality and appropriateness of recording. (paragraphs 9, 23, 108 - 113)

in attendance:

- further develop the systems already in place for monitoring attendance and rewarding good attendance. (paragraphs 15, 43)

In drawing up the action plan, the governors may also wish to consider the following minor issues:

- the establishment of a register of gifted and talented pupils;
- improving the quality and usefulness of the library;
- ensuring the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information. (paragraphs 9, 32, 56; 21; 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

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

22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	17	19	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	40	44	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	147
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	82

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	70

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	10	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	3	2	4
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (43)	53 (33)	65 (52)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	3	4	6
	Total	10	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (43)	65 (52)	76 (67)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	12	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	7	11
	Girls	13	12	15
	Total	17	19	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (62)	59 (53)	81 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	6	11
	Girls	11	12	16
	Total	15	18	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (47)	56 (53)	84 (59)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	119
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	484,712
Total expenditure	482,447
Expenditure per pupil	2,773
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,122
Balance carried forward to next year	24,387

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

176

Number of questionnaires returned

40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	23	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	40	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	28	5	0	3
The teaching is good.	83	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	23	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	35	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	30	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	68	25	3	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. Most children in the Foundation Stage are on line to reach the expected standards (known as the early learning goals) in their personal, social, and emotional development by the time they complete their reception year. The majority will not reach them in the other areas of learning: language, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development.
64. In both the nursery and reception classes, all groups of children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because staff concentrate hard on preparing them to work and play harmoniously, both with others and independently. As a result of their increased confidence and awareness of each other's needs, they settle well into school. Their good attitudes to work and play help them to learn and to enjoy their experience of school. In the other areas of learning they make satisfactory progress across the Foundation Stage. Children who have particular learning needs are identified at an early stage and staff very closely monitor their progress. Achievements are celebrated and any targets for learning in their individual education plans are based around small measurable steps, whether they be counting to 5 or learning to use a standard drinking beaker at snack time.
65. Children enter the nursery at age three and there are currently 29 on roll. Of these ten attend both morning and afternoon sessions whilst the others attend part time in either the morning or afternoon. The range of attainment on entry to nursery is very wide. Some children have average and above average skills and knowledge when they arrive but most enter at below average levels. Some children have very poor social skills and their speaking and listening development is significantly delayed.
66. At the end of their nursery year, about half the children transfer to other schools. Historically, many of these have been the higher attaining children. When they begin their reception year, children are assessed across a wide range of skills and although their achievement has been satisfactory in the nursery, the group has a high proportion of children who are still at an early stage of development, almost 40 per cent of whom are on the special needs register. Because of this, overall attainment on entry to school is well below average. A small number of children enter the reception class without having had the benefit of nursery experience.
67. The reception children are mixed in with six Year 1 pupils, presenting a challenge to the teacher to also meet the needs of Key Stage 1 children who are expected to be working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. This is resolved to some extent in literacy and numeracy by undertaking a version of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with all the children in the class. However, there are occasions when this is not appropriate for the considerable proportion of younger and lower attaining children who do not yet have the basic speaking, reading and writing skills to cope with some of the activities without a significant amount of adult support. The school is aware of the difficulties caused by the current class organisation and is considering alternative arrangements.
68. As with all nursery activities, other areas of learning in reception are planned with close reference to the recommended foundation curriculum. They are based largely around the 'stepping stones', which set out the small steps of achievement through which the children work towards their overall goals for the end of reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. This area is given a high priority in the nursery and reception classes, and the quality of teaching is good in both. The flexibility shown by the nursery at the start of term helps children settle in gradually as they experience a staggered start in smaller numbers. Parents are encouraged to spend time in the nursery as they drop their children off, thus reassuring those children who are less confident that they will not be left alone until they are happy to get on with their work and play. Nursery children learn to follow the established routines of the day, and during the introduction to activities they learn through gentle reminding that 'It is important to wait our turn to speak and listen to others when they are talking to us'. Nursery children are expected to work together to observe such rules as 'only three in the home corner' for which they have made their own sign. They do this as a matter of course, reminding others that they will need to wait until a red band is available to signify that they are allowed in. Every opportunity is taken to offer praise for good behaviour such as sharing resources with others. This reinforces children's awareness of what constitutes good social attitudes. For example, as two children collaborated to make a farmyard scene out of the 'small world' equipment, the teacher drew attention to their exemplary behaviour and used it as a model for others to follow. Children's independence is gently encouraged when they are expected to select their own beakers for milk at snack time, using their individual picture labels to identify them.
70. In reception, children respond well to expectations that they will put their hand up to speak in a discussion and respect others when they make a contribution. They show increasing maturity when, for example, they join in a discussion using a 'big book' about what makes us happy, sad, angry or frightened. Even though some children have difficulty explaining their ideas, sharing their thoughts in this way helps them to understand that others have similar emotions and need understanding. Teaching is very responsive to the individual needs of children. For example, when the teacher spotted that some children were tired and listless during an early morning session, she moderated her questions to ensure that they remained attentive. The work of the support assistant is invaluable as she encourages individuals to consider the effect of their actions on others and actively pursues the aims set by the teacher for the lessons.
71. From a low starting point for many children, good progress is made. Most are able to concentrate well for half an hour and work as part of a group. They learn to celebrate each other's success, as seen when they spontaneously applauded a chosen 'Star of the day'.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Teaching and achievement are satisfactory. The teaching is best when staff in both classes actively talk with children and extend their vocabulary and their confidence to express themselves. During their time at other activities such as the home corner (currently the Three Bears' House in the nursery and the Grocer's shop in reception), children make more varied progress. Those who are more able tend to initiate conversations as they adopt roles but the lower attaining children often find difficulty in bringing sufficient imagination to bear in their play situation. This limits the development of their speaking and listening skills. Useful activities such as painting, construction kits, water and sand play are not often enough linked to specified tasks. These would encourage children to collaborate and discuss their work more. Rather, they tend to play side by side, with too little focused conversation.
73. In the nursery, children grow in confidence as the teacher discusses topics such as the weather at the start of the day. Some suggest which symbol to attach to the weather chart and which might be unsuitable. One child suggested, for example that a kite would be no use 'because it's not windy enough'. They learn about the

sequencing of stories as they make their own fold out books with the help of the teacher. Children soon get to know their favourite stories and become engrossed in tales such as Goldilocks (the theme at the time of the inspection), with more able children even imitating the voices of well-known characters in the story. The use of simple tape recorders to encourage children to listen independently to stories is successful, and some manage to use this to record their own voices, showing surprise when they sound different to what they expect.

74. Reception children build further on these nursery skills, but again progress is better when they receive close support, particularly during written tasks. For example, when children were writing what they thought the 'three owl babies' from their current story might be saying in speech bubbles on a worksheet, many needed prompting to get underway. Although such activities are rich in potential for extending children's awareness of speech patterns, this one was too difficult for many lower attainers who were not skilled enough to both invent and record speech patterns. Some of these children need to build a wider vocabulary through talking before launching into writing extended sentences. When teachers work directly with groups on topics such as big books, their progress is better. The children show real enthusiasm for encountering a new text and try hard to answer the teacher's questions. These are pitched at various levels so that children of all abilities have a chance of success. Most can identify main characters in a story and can refer to their favourite book, although early reading skills are very limited for the majority who rely heavily upon picture cues to interpret new stories. Reading skills are taught through a phonic scheme, which has actions associated with each letter sound. This practical reinforcement is helping pupils to recall sounds of individual letters and blends of letters.

Mathematical development

75. Teaching and achievement are satisfactory for all groups. Whilst the majority are not on line to meet the expected standard at the end of reception, having started from a low baseline, there are more children likely to reach it than in language and communication. Again the best teaching is seen when teachers and support staff take small groups to develop their concepts of number, shape or size. In a good 'carpet session' in the nursery for example, the teacher led the group through the mathematical language of small, medium and large by using three teddy bears from the children's play area. This learning was reinforced as the children played in the three bears' house with its collection of small, medium and large objects. Children are mostly keen to contribute answers in these carpet sessions but for those who are unsure or hesitant, more prompting and encouragement needs to be provided by the nursery nurse who sits in with the children. In one session the teaching objective was to sequence objects according to their size. Good use of interesting resources allowed the children to make good progress in this task as they matched up the tops and bases of a series of Russian 'Babushka' dolls. A well-planned activity using the sand tray, and enthusiastically led by a student, captured children's imaginations as they hunted in the sand for model animals. Once found, these had to be graded by size. The activity succeeded in developing the children's understanding because of the high quality dialogue maintained between the adult and children. This is not always the case with such activities and at times tasks have too little focus to engage the children's interests and prevent them wandering off to another activity without having achieved much.
76. In reception, the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching are similar, with some strong examples of adults leading groups but less effective learning taking place when children work with less adult interaction. In a good number work session, the teacher taught children to understand the concept of one or two more and one or two less by playing a game with large cubes. As they drew cards at random, children had to add

to, or subtract from, their cubes accordingly until someone got rid of their cubes. The children's enjoyment of the game situation helped them to learn the relationships between the numbers, even though the lower attainers sometimes struggled to retain these without the help of the cubes to count. Good support by the nursery nurse helped some of the more able children to practise their ordinal numbers by describing toy cars in a race as 'first, second and third.' Again good use of resources helped the children to grasp the concept being taught. In other classroom situations such as shopping in the 'Grocery Store', children's learning is more dependent upon their concentration and imagination. Some create situations in which they exchange money for vegetables at the till, but opportunities to reinforce concepts of number, shape colour or size are not always fully utilised in these play situations. More challenges for the children such as 'Go and buy me four red apples, two green apples and something in a rectangular box' would focus their learning more effectively, especially where they lack sufficient ideas to create these situations for themselves.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Few children are on line to meet the standard expected in this area by the end of reception, as they have a lot of ground to make up from a very low starting point. However, despite having some difficulty in expressing what they understand, children show that they are making satisfactory progress in all areas except ICT, which they do not begin in the nursery until the spring term. In the nursery, children work together to explore real world situations through playing with miniature toys and models. Two children who constructed a farmyard were deciding where the best place would be to put the farmhouse and to place the different animals. Playing with model cars on a town plan map also gives them some insight into the geography of streets and buildings. There are plenty of construction activities for children to enjoy, and they show that they can join pieces together accurately. Some are capable of building to instructions, as was shown when they were challenged to 'build a house for baby bear'. More activity challenges such as this would benefit the more able children. All made good progress in understanding how food is prepared as they made porridge for part of their topic on Goldilocks. Practical activities such as these help to establish their early scientific understanding. Photographic evidence of children's outdoor activity shows that the school grounds are used well to give children experience of observing nature and exploring their environment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this area across the Foundation Stage.
78. In reception, more formal teaching of science concepts begins to prepare children for the early stages of the National Curriculum. Good teaching of the concept of light coming from different sources engaged children's interests as they examined the light beams of torches playing on the ceiling with the lights out. Their limited experience of this area of learning was illustrated however, when most found it difficult to suggest where light comes from other than the sun. Good prompting from the nursery nurse helped children recall their learning, but most found it very challenging to record their ideas, even in picture form.

Physical development

79. Children make good progress in the nursery because of the wide range of activities that are organised for them both indoors and outside. In reception, progress is only satisfactory because the lack of opportunities to use the outside environment detracts from the overall provision. Most of the children are on track to meet many of the markers that represent the expected standards but there are some aspects that many find difficult. This makes it too difficult for them to achieve the learning goals by the end of reception. For example, whilst most reception children can move around the hall with enough awareness to avoid each other in their drama and movement

lesson, they find it harder to use their imaginations to recreate the types of movements asked for by the teacher. Despite good ideas by the teacher based around the class story of the 'Rainbow Fish', only a few children can combine the facial expressions and movements to represent a shoal of sad fish or proud fish. Most are able to manipulate small construction equipment with care and accuracy but there are some who still find this difficult. Teachers offer a lot of opportunities to practise skills such as cutting and sticking paper and materials. Children respond well to these though many need more practice with the physical aspects of their writing skills, such as perfecting their pencil grips.

80. Teaching is sound in this area. Nursery children are broadly on track with the development of their larger movement skills. They regularly use playground vehicles to develop their experience of steering or make good use of exploration equipment such as plastic guttering, which they adjust themselves to investigate how toy cars run down at different angles. In appropriate weather, activities such as making dens in the school grounds offer chances for development of physical skills at the same time as being great fun for the children. In their physical education session in the hall, the children made a good job of impersonating the likely walking strides of the three different sized bears, helped by the encouragement and demonstration of the adults. Manipulative skills are more varied. Some children are able to thread beads quickly for example, whilst others find this difficult. An example of the good teaching of this area in nursery is the opportunity taken to develop careful pouring skills as individual pupils take responsibility for pouring out their own milk from a large jug at snack time. Some need careful supervision but all are determined to try to do it successfully for themselves.

Creative development

81. All groups make satisfactory progress across the Foundation Stage. Children's achievements are stronger in artistic and musical areas than in using their imaginations in role-play. The limited ability of a significant proportion of children to be able to express their ideas and communicate effectively with each other means that few are on course to achieve the standard expected.
82. In the nursery, children have good experience of painting as they make pictures of the three bears, produce autumn colour pictures or work with the classroom assistant to paint colourful pictures of castles. They often work successfully in pairs to make their pictures. Most show careful handling of the brushes, as they select new colours or fill in areas of the paintings. Their free drawings of figures, however, show immaturity in their concepts of shape and appearance, with stringy legs emerging from a combined head and body. This immaturity continues into reception for some children though others make good quality pictures on subjects such as 'my favourite pet' to illustrate their early attempts at writing. There is limited evidence of three-dimensional work in nursery at this early stage in the year but reception children have made clay 'divas' as part of their topic on the festival of Diwali. Music is a strong part of the foundation curriculum, particularly singing. Every opportunity is taken to practise counting songs such as 'Five little speckled frogs' or story sequencing songs such as 'When Goldilocks went to the house of the bears'. The children respond well to these songs, quickly learning the words and picking up on the tunes with some encouragement and direction from the teachers. There is satisfactory teaching in this area in both nursery and reception. Staff are good at offering children guidance in some practical activities without over-supporting them. As a result, children learn from their experiences. However, more direction would help in activities such as role-play where children need the support of ideas and tasks to perform to initiate their imaginative play.

ENGLISH

83. Standards in English are well below average for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. These standards have been consistent since the time of the last inspection but there are factors which contribute to that picture. When pupils start school their attainment levels in language development are very low. A significant proportion has additional learning needs. Added to that, the number of pupils who join or leave the school during the year poses problems in maintaining continuity in pupils' learning and lowers overall standards.
84. Although the overall test results for pupils aged eleven were well below the 2001 national average, when compared only with similar schools they were much more favourable, showing a rising trend. Improvements in subject management and in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements. In the most recent national tests a creditable proportion of eleven-year-olds attained higher than the expected level. This shows a good improvement for the school and reflects the organisation and challenge which the school has put into the teaching of writing.
85. Data from the 2001 test results for seven-year-olds shows an improvement in both reading and writing. Although still well below the national averages, this is a promising achievement given the very low standards of pupils on entry to the school. It also indicates that despite the recent instability of teaching in Years 1 and 2, resulting from changes of teachers and recruitment problems, the school's positive action to raise standards is beginning to take effect.
86. The literacy hour is well established in the school. The national literacy framework provides the basis for teachers' planning to ensure pupils learn basic reading and writing skills systematically. This is not the case with speaking and listening skills, which are not given enough attention in planning or practice. Published schemes, such as the recently introduced 'Jolly Phonics', support the teaching of early reading skills well in that younger pupils develop a secure knowledge of letter sounds. Time at the beginning of each day for 'Early Work' is used very well. These sessions are well organised and sharply focused on improving basic reading, writing and spelling skills.
87. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress. Special support assistants are very skilful in their use of resources such as the 'Marian Dean' language programme and provide crucial help particularly for less able pupils. Overall achievement in pupils with English as an additional language was better in 2001 than in previous years. Their progress is monitored carefully and because of recent staff training, teachers are aware of their needs and ensure they are included well in discussions and other learning activities.
88. Standards in speaking throughout the school are too low. Pupils in Year 1, for example, have a limited vocabulary and too few experiences of the world around them to enable them to speak confidently. During informal times, pupils play alongside one another, without engaging in imaginative talk. In one lesson a group of Year 2 pupils made limited progress with their 'puppet play' because they were unable to negotiate with each other over the different parts. In the junior classes pupils are generally attentive but often unwilling to volunteer answers because of their lack of confidence. Where teachers encourage open discussion, for example when evaluating writing, there is a better response. However specific opportunities for drama, role-play and debate do not feature sufficiently in teachers' planning. Consequently good oracy skills, which underpin pupils' writing, are not being developed well enough.
89. The school is working hard to address the low standards in reading. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills, so that most seven-year-olds know their letter sounds and can begin to sound out unfamiliar words. The more able readers

have a confident approach to books, and recognise whole words without hesitation. They recall in detail stories they have read previously. Less able readers require more support and still rely on pictures to provide clues about the text. By the age of eleven, too few reach the standards in reading which are typical of that age. The more able pupils read confidently and with good expression, recognising the importance of punctuation. They can discuss an acceptable range of reading, including favourite authors such as JK Rowling, Roald Dahl, as well as Dickens and Enid Blyton. However pupils do not readily see underlying meanings when discussing stories or poetry. Although enthusiastic about stories, less able readers are hesitant and do not convey meaning well through expression or use of punctuation. Their range of reading extends only to the books available in school.

90. The quality and range of fiction and non-fiction books in school is adequate but many books in the library are out-dated. The library has not been developed as a resource for independent learning where pupils can search for information. As a result it is not used sufficiently by pupils to improve literacy skills across the full range of the curriculum.
91. At the age of seven most pupils' writing consists of simple statements that are not punctuated by capital letters or full stops. More able writers communicate meaning more logically and they begin to extend sentences by joining statements with words such as 'and' or 'but'. Simple words are usually spelt correctly. Most pupils have difficulty with spelling though they do try to sound the words out, so such attempts as 'it gos (goes) dac (dark) at nat (night)' occur frequently. Handwriting is weak with too little consistency in the size and shape of letters.
92. The range of writing practised is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils, for example, retell stories such as the 'Three Bears' after learning to sequence events into beginning, middle and end. Pupils in Year 1 express ideas more clearly when their writing is linked to their own experiences such as describing their favourite toy because the language is more meaningful to them. However, their limited vocabulary too often inhibits real expression.
93. By the age of eleven, although standards are still low overall, more able writers are beginning to use paragraphs to organise ideas. Writing shows an increasing use of descriptive words to enhance style such as 'they walked slowly but surely' or 'the golden glistening unicorn'. Some pupils try to capture the readers' interest by using 'dramatic' opening sentences such as 'The landscape surrounding them began to change...'. Most pupils, however, do not achieve such structure in their writing. Sentences are not extended and narrative retains a 'conversational' style, lacking descriptive detail. The standard of spelling is inconsistent and common words such as 'when' and 'whent' (went) and 'their' and 'there' are confused. Punctuation, particularly in dialogue, is too often incorrect. Pupils in the junior classes attempt a satisfactory range of writing including narrative, poetry and instructional texts such as 'How to make a sandwich'.
94. There is a clear focus throughout the school on writing in other subjects. Pupils use computers well for that purpose. For example, Year 4 pupils typed the questions to ask on their visit to a Synagogue. Pupils in Year 6 write accounts of Bible stories and record their predictions and outcomes of experiments in science books. Higher attaining Year 5 pupils combined their language and word processing skills effectively to write about 'sweet juicy clusters' of blackberries and 'conkers with polished russet coats'.
95. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory overall. It is stronger in Years 3 to 6 where pupils' achievement is good because teachers are more experienced and there has been better stability in staffing. There is no unsatisfactory

teaching. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. All teachers manage pupils very well. They are consistent in the behaviour standards they expect from pupils. There is a good climate for learning because of the high quality of relationships now firmly established. Pupils respond well, they work hard and are respectful to adults and to one another. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. All staff, including support assistants, have undergone recent training in the teaching of basic literacy skills. Staff apply this learning particularly well during the 'Early Work' sessions during which pupils make good progress with reading and spelling skills. A good example was seen in Year 4 during investigative work to find the pattern of how verb endings change when adding 'ing'.

96. Learning in a Year 6 lesson was effective because the level of extra support enabled pupils to be taught in separate ability groups. During the lesson each group was able to focus clearly on appropriate learning objectives. The close support enabled pupils to achieve well when writing 'unusual' endings to their stories. Sometimes tasks are not closely enough matched to pupils' needs even though the teacher's delivery of the lesson is sound. When this happens pupils make less progress because the work they have to do is either too easy or too difficult and they are without additional support.
97. Ideas for writing are sometimes stifled because teachers do not fully explore the opportunities for discussion. At the end of one lesson the teacher helped pupils read out sentences which they had already discussed when they might have been encouraged to think of other things which the story characters might have said in order to extend their vocabulary and their ideas for writing. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson also missed a good writing opportunity when their lively discussion of a Wilfred Owen poem was ended too hastily in favour a writing task which was not linked to what they just read and discussed.
98. Marking is satisfactory. Comments are supportive and encouraging, though teachers do not always set short-term targets for pupils to focus on in their next piece of work. This would enable teacher and pupil to check progress.
99. The quality of pupils' handwriting is unsatisfactory overall. Too many pupils have not yet developed a mature and joined writing style. Teachers expect too little of pupils by way of good quality presentation of work.
100. Leadership and management of English are very good. Although there is much still to do, a lot has been achieved in a short time and the pace of change is rapid. The headteacher has rigorously challenged the low standards in English by employing effective strategies that are beginning to bear fruit. Analysis of test data, monitoring of the quality of pupils' work and setting appropriate targets have provided a sound basis for improvement as seen in the better achievements of pupils across the school.

MATHEMATICS

101. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven in the most recent tests were very low in Key Stage 1. The standards achieved by pupils aged eleven were well below average nationally but broadly in line with similar schools. Since the last inspection there has been a gradual improvement in standards, particularly at Key Stage 2. Work seen during the inspection indicates that this upward trend will be maintained and pupils in both key stages are on course to achieve better standards by the end of this year than they achieved in 2001. Considering the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the high turnover of pupils in the school, this is encouraging.

102. There are a number of reasons for this improvement. The national numeracy strategy has been successfully implemented throughout the school. Staff have received training and are familiar with the new recommendations. Lessons are planned well and clearly identify what teachers want the children to learn in them. In most lessons this is shared with the class at the beginning and usually checked on at the end. For example, teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 used the time at the end of the lesson very well to check with the pupils what they had actually learned. The subject leader is very effective and has worked well to improve the standards. For example, results of tests are now carefully analysed to see where the pupils could achieve better. She has led training for staff and has observed teaching to see where improvements could be made. Teaching in mathematics is good and this, together with the better behaviour and attitude of the pupils that makes them willing learners, is another important factor in the improvement.
103. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in Key Stage 1. In Year 2 the teacher sets work that is challenging for all the pupils, including the more able ones and those who need help with their learning. For example, when pupils were counting numbers generated by using a dice, they worked with good concentration and application at their own level. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are developing an understanding of basic number skills, such as counting and ordering numbers. They can recognise and name common shapes such as square, circle and rectangle.
104. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2. Their better achievement is largely because of good teaching and pupils' keenness to learn as a result. Most of the teachers in this key stage have been in the school longer and they know their pupils well. They have formed good relationships with the pupils and this motivates them to work hard. Throughout the key stage work is matched closely to the abilities of the pupils. This gives them the confidence to complete the tasks and achieve well, as was seen in a Year 3 lesson when the pupils were learning that multiplication is repeated addition. By the end of the key stage, pupils can add and subtract large numbers accurately and have some knowledge of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work out word problems and problems involving 'real life' situations.
105. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing their basic number skills in relation to their abilities. Those pupils who have English as an additional language also make good progress. This is because teachers plan work at the right level for them and the classroom assistants give them good support. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were learning to divide. Low attaining pupils were given a different task after the introduction to the lesson and carefully guided in their work. The high level of support enables the pupils to achieve well. There is no significant difference now in the performance of boys and girls across the school.
106. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers use the mental arithmetic part at the beginning of the lessons very well. Teachers use a variety of resources such as number fans, whiteboards and number lines to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. The pupils respond eagerly to questions and teachers expect different answers according to the ability level of the pupils. For example in Year 5 when pupils were offering pairs of numbers that make 100, higher attaining pupils had to give pairs such as 64 and 36 whilst answers such as 95 and 5 were accepted from others. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ask challenging open-ended questions to consolidate the pupils' previous knowledge and extend the learning. This was seen in a lesson in Year 6, when the teacher was questioning the pupils about perimeters and two- and three-dimensional shapes. As a result, pupils successfully recalled what they already knew as a foundation for their new learning. Lessons generally have good pace (though higher attainers could be pushed faster at times) and the activities the teachers plan

ensure that the pupils remain interested and sustain concentration throughout. Pupils enjoy mathematics and were well behaved in all the lessons seen.

107. There are not enough opportunities created for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects; for example, they do not use graphs often enough to set out their results in science investigations. As a result, they do not use mathematical vocabulary as much as they might nor are their skills in using and applying mathematics developed sufficiently.

SCIENCE

108. Standards in science are getting better, with more pupils than in previous years reaching the expected level at eleven. This reflects a steady improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are building their knowledge more effectively from year to year through regular lessons based on a well-organised curriculum. This ensures that new work builds steadily on what has gone before and that all aspects of the subject are evenly covered. One or two pupils reach higher levels but not as many as in English. Pupils undertake a range of practical investigations, which develop their skills as well as their knowledge. However the teachers closely direct most of these activities, with all pupils following the same instructions. As a result, older and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged through planning and carrying out their own investigations to move beyond average levels.
109. Pupils' knowledge at seven is low, though they are beginning to build up their understanding of the importance of making tests fair. An example was seen during the teacher's demonstration in a lesson on forces in Year 2. When observing what happened to different materials or objects when dropped, many pupils recognised the need to do this from the same height. However only a few were able to compare the movements successfully. Pupils struggle to record work accurately because their reading, writing and presentation skills are weak. An analysis of pupils work from the infant key stage last year suggests that they were not always challenged at a high enough level.
110. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 the valuable emphasis on practical science is maintained. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall and better than at the time of the last inspection. All the lessons seen began with an introduction by the teacher, practical activities for the pupils and a summary at the end to draw conclusions. The best parts of the lessons were the introductions. Teachers have a good scientific knowledge on which to base their explanations and demonstrations and they are skilled at putting the key points over in interesting ways. In a lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher used a model well to help children learn about the different types of teeth and their uses. In Year 4, the teacher was very careful to check at the beginning of the lesson that pupils understood the scientific vocabulary needed; for example, reminding them of the meanings of 'investigation', 'recording', 'prediction' and 'conclusion'. Teachers are very good at linking the scientific ideas pupils are tackling in the classroom with their everyday lives or other work. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to think about their bathrooms and mirrors when explaining condensation. In Year 6, when pupils were a little slow to offer views on the meaning of 'saturated', the teacher effectively moved them forward by reminding them of work they had previously undertaken in geography when they had looked at a saturated field outside.
111. Pupils listen carefully during these introductions and they are keen to make contributions. They enjoy science and find it interesting. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils can fully participate by asking questions of various levels of difficulty to suit the pupils differing abilities or language levels. Questioning is used well to prompt pupils thinking and to reinforce their knowledge. For example in Year 6,

the teacher's question 'what is a property of a liquid?' brought the response from one more able pupil that 'liquids take the shape of the container'. Questioning was used effectively in Year 3 to ensure that pupils had understood a key learning point as to why molar teeth are the shape they are.

112. Pupils' progress during the activities in lessons is not as good as in the introductions. This is because the activities they undertake and the ways pupils are asked to record are not always closely enough matched to their abilities. In most cases, all pupils in the class undertake the same investigative activity though more may be expected of some than others. Good additional adult support often helps lower achieving pupils and those with lower language skills to undertake the activity and record outcomes but they do not always fully understand what they are learning about. On the other hand, older and more able pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to design and carry out their own investigations from scratch, deciding for themselves what to do rather than following instructions. They miss the experiences from making choices that would help them develop the deeper understanding they need to reach higher levels in the national tests at eleven. Teachers do not have such clear objectives for this part of lessons as for introductions. They would benefit from identifying more clearly what exactly they want each group of pupils to know, understand or be able to do by the end, to help them modify the activity to suit. The range and quality of pupils recording is inconsistent across classes. Sometimes lower attainers are offered worksheets as a framework to help them but higher attainers are not challenged to choose the way they think would be most effective. The range of methods used in Year 5 is broad, with some use of planning boards to help children decide what is variable or constant in their tests, and ICT graphs, tables and accounts used to present results. However, even here there is not enough adaptation for pupils of different abilities. Recording has not improved enough since the previous inspection though pupils are much happier to do it than they were.
113. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has been in post for just over a year during which time the resources have been audited and teachers' plans regularly checked. Plans are in place for the coordinator to observe lessons in the spring term and to look at pupils' work, to identify areas for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Standards in art and design are typical of those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
115. Skills are developed systematically as pupils move through the school. They are given many opportunities to acquire skills using a range of media such as paint, crayons, tissue and charcoal. Year 3 pupils have used paint well to draw portraits of clowns. Pupils learn to observe carefully and sketch details accurately. This was seen in some of the drawings that have been produced following their visits to a local church. In some classes, pupils have an understanding of the materials and methods used by important artists. For example, Year 6 pupils have drawn their own interpretations of 'The Tree of Life' by Gustav Klimt.
116. In a lesson observed in Year 4, the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils were working together in pairs using pencil drawings to illustrate a dream sequence. The class teacher planned the lesson well and provided unusual photographs of the school to help fire the pupils' imaginations before they began their drawings.
117. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has arranged for visiting artists to come to school. Pupils' work is enhanced by these opportunities. All pupils

are given the opportunity to visit the local art gallery and occasionally work from the school is displayed there. The subject is well resourced and the staff are using the nationally recommended guidelines which offers support in planning the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. Standards across the school are typical of those seen in most primary schools and similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Whilst there was little completed work to be observed, most groups of pupils made satisfactory or better progress during the lessons observed. An aspect of the subject that has been improved is the adoption of a nationally recommended framework against which to plan activities. This has helped teachers to plan a well-balanced range of experiences, so that the pupils build their skills progressively as they move through the school.
119. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn the basic skills of cutting accurately and gluing neatly as they design and make rangoli patterns. These skills are developed further in plans for Year 2 to design and construct puppets, using a wider range of materials. After Year 1 pupils have learned simple rules for food hygiene, as they make fruit and vegetable dishes for Year 2 to taste, this experience is extended in Year 3. Here, during a food technology lesson, pupils are taught the scientific reasons behind rules such as observing cooking time recommendations to avoid harmful bacteria. In Key Stage 2, the curriculum offers good coverage of all the main elements of the subject. For example, as Year 6 undertake a project on 'slippers', their planned experiences include researching types of slippers and the materials they are made from, taking them to pieces to study their construction, discussing function and purpose, drawing individual designs, developing making skills and finally evaluating the quality of their products. Much of the programme for junior pupils encourages them to consider how well a design meets the purposes for which the product is to be produced. This skill is at the heart of good design and is a strength of the curriculum in the subject.
120. An additional boost to children's skills comes from occasional practical making tasks such as producing a glove puppet in the 'After School Club'. Children showed imagination and individualism, together with great enjoyment, as they selected their materials to make a character of their choice and used various techniques to join them all together.
121. Teaching in the lessons seen was mostly satisfactory. Clear explanations supported by good use of demonstration was a strong feature. For example in Year 3, the teacher showed the children how to cut soft fruit safely with a knife, all the time stressing simple rules such as 'always cut away from your fingers'. In Year 5, the teacher used a model to demonstrate how cams can be used to translate rotary movement into linear movement. This visual support helps pupils understand what it is they are trying to achieve in the following activity. Teachers are usually good at offering support to children who find design concepts difficult. However, on one occasion an explanation was too complex for a pupil with little English, who found the task bewildering and thus made insufficient progress.
122. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject has had little time spent on its development over the period since the last inspection as subjects like English and mathematics have taken priority. There has been no monitoring of completed work or of teachers' design and technology teaching. However, the coordinator has ensured that there is a coherent plan to what skills and knowledge are taught and has also sought out decent resources in the form of topic kits for each major aspect of the programme. Future plans, such as implementing an assessment system to judge and track pupils' achievements, are sensible priorities.

GEOGRAPHY

123. Standards in geography are typical of those seen in most schools at the ages of seven and eleven. These standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
124. National subject guidelines are used to support teachers' planning, so that over time pupils gain the appropriate knowledge and skills for their age. No lessons were seen but an analysis of pupils' work indicates that progress is steady and pupils achievement satisfactory from year to year.
125. By the age of seven, pupils gain an understanding of the different features of town and country, by linking their geography to Katie Morag stories about life on the Isle of Struay. Younger pupils look at the features such as types of building, recreation areas or shops that are in close proximity to the school.
126. By the age of eleven pupils can use co-ordinates to find features on a map. They carry out investigations in the local area to identify where improvements might be made. Year 4 pupils, for example, are currently finding out about recycling materials linking this to a 'rubbish survey'. Older pupils can recognise the main features on a world map such as deserts and major rivers. They can identify the main climate regions and say how the presence or absence of water has a significant effect. In Year 6, pupils are currently studying the features of a river from source to mouth.
127. The subject is managed soundly by the deputy headteacher, pending the appointment of a new coordinator. Since the last inspection there has been some revision of the curriculum and some resources such as maps have been enhanced. Nevertheless there are still some outdated resources amongst the reference books in the library and the globes in classrooms. These do not support good development of research skills.

HISTORY

128. Standards were judged to be average at the time of the last inspection. This is still the case and pupils reach standards by seven and eleven which are typical for their age.
129. No history lessons were seen. However teachers' planning indicates that the curriculum is adequately covered and the work in pupils' books shows that progress and achievement over time are satisfactory.
130. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about how things change over time. Year 1 pupils look at photographs of themselves as infants, talk to parents and grandparents and compare old and new toys. In Year 2, pupils learn about lifestyles of bygone ages. For example, they compare modern seaside holidays with those of Victorian times, and learn about significant events and people such as the Gunpowder Plot and Florence Nightingale.
131. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of history. In the junior classes pupils learn about ancient Egyptian and Greek civilizations and investigate the influences of those civilizations on the world today. They learn about invaders and settlers in Britain and how the discoveries of Sutton Hoo provide particular insights into Anglo-Saxon life. Older pupils study Victorian history and the contrasting lifestyles of rich and poor, as well as life in war-time Britain.
132. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms show that there is satisfactory depth to their studies. There is good interactive display about ancient Egypt in Year 3, where pupils linked historical research with mathematical skills when making square based pyramids to represent the ancient tombs. In Year 6, a poem by Wilfred Owen

established a link between literacy and World War One history. Overall, pupils' levels of knowledge are better developed than their research skills.

133. The overall leadership and management by the headteacher is satisfactory. The curriculum is monitored and standards are maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are much improved since the time of the last inspection and are now in line with what is expected for pupils at age seven and eleven. This improvement is a result of three main factors. The subject has been very well led over recent years, resources have been considerably improved, and teachers have built up their expertise and confidence.
135. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is best in the area of word processing. In Year 2, for example, pupils develop their skills in editing written work as they learn to delete mistakes and insert new text. They produce interesting and well-presented pieces of writing about their feelings, which are combined with images drawn on an art program. Younger pupils in Year 1 learn how to programme a floor robot to respond to commands, as part of their work on control technology. This is an aspect that was missing from the curriculum at the last inspection. The teacher planned the activity around the characters from the pupils' current literacy work 'Owl Babies', which were used to mark the positions on the floor for the robot to reach. Counting out the spaces covered by the robot also helped reinforce number concepts for the lower attaining pupils in the group. Links with other curriculum areas are a strength of the ICT curriculum as they enable pupils to cover more ground in their learning. Satisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1, combined with an enthusiastic attitude on the part of pupils, enables all groups to make steady progress.
136. In Key Stage 2, pupils are making good headway in developing their skills across all aspects of the subject. Again, much of their computer work has useful links with the rest of the curriculum. For example, they research information on science topics such as the 'Earth in Space' through both CD-ROMs and the Internet. They learn to communicate using e-mail, for example when Year 6 pupils write to a publisher with views on the latest 'Goosebumps' book. They also use data handling programs and spreadsheets to present the results of surveys into topics such as behaviour or children's reading tastes. Teaching is good in this key stage and all groups of pupils are well supported in making good progress. For example, those pupils with special educational needs or those who are lower attainers are given easier versions of the work provided for more able pupils. The number of adults brought in to assist in lessons in the computer suite enables immediate support to be given to anyone who is struggling or unclear about their task. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also well supported. One reason is that teachers have been taught by the coordinator to use careful seating plans in the suite, and this helps them to pair up pupils to help each other. Thus those who are good readers or more skilled in the subject are able to support their peers who might otherwise find it hard to gain full access to the learning opportunities. All teaching in the key stage is strong but the best teaching is towards the end, where the coordinator undertakes some specialist teaching for Years 5 and 6. The hallmarks are clear explanations, good preparation and highly focused aims that make it very clear to the pupils what they are expected to achieve.
137. Assessment is used well in the subject, particularly for junior pupils. Teachers record whether pupils found work easy or too difficult without help, and this information is drawn upon as future experiences are planned. Those who have exceeded expectations are set more challenging work or additional tasks to stretch them. For example in Year 3, some pupils had the extra job of writing a paragraph containing

their own more interesting alternatives to the word 'nice' which all agreed was a boring word.

138. The subject is very well led and has a clear direction to its development. Resources have been vastly improved and whilst the coordinator's class spends more time than others in the computer suite, all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 now receive adequate time to practise their skills, which was not the case four years ago. All teachers have been observed teaching by the coordinator and well-considered feedback given on their performance. This has helped them improve their skills; for example, they now include a plenary session at the end of each lesson to summarise what has been achieved. Good technical support by a school governor has contributed much to the smooth running of the computer suite and enables the coordinator to make full use of the resources. As the amount of software is increasing and teachers' skills are developing, the subject has good potential for further improvement. A portfolio of exemplar material would assist in continuing to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.

MUSIC

139. The last time the school was inspected, standards were average. Pupils' skills in singing and playing music were better than their skills in composing. This picture is unchanged and standards have been maintained. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
140. One class lesson was seen in each key stage. In the Year 2 lesson, most pupils showed they could repeat short rhythmic patterns accurately when clapping. Some could clap their names rhythmically. They were able to follow simple instructions and hold the shape of a melody when singing. They made interesting choices of instruments to represent particular sounds; for example, one chose castanets to represent 'the clicking sound of this toy'. Year 5 pupils showed good improvisation skills when asked to pass 'messages' around their groups, varying the tempo and pitch. They enjoyed the opportunity to experiment with the range of their voices. They achieved well in improving the quality of their singing with better posture, clearer words and reflection of mood as the lesson progressed. They made similarly good progress in keeping two lines going to a regular beat as they practised. The younger children showed a good knowledge of the names of instruments such as 'maracas' and 'Indian bells'; the older pupils were not so confident, with less than half able to name a 'xylophone'.
141. Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen in Key Stage 1 and very good in the lesson seen in Key Stage 2, taken by the music coordinator. The teachers in Years 5 and 6 swap classes for ICT and music to make best use of their particular expertise. This is beneficial to the pupils. In the Year 2 lesson, the teacher effectively led the children towards playing instruments softly by asking them to 'imagine there is a baby asleep in the room'. In the Year 5 lesson, the teacher gave good attention to teaching musical vocabulary such as checking pupils understanding of 'pitch' and 'dynamics'. She identified weaknesses in their singing such as a tendency to sing louder when asked to sing faster and improved on them. Before setting pupils up to compose rhythmic patterns in groups, the teacher ensured pupils were clear about the values of different notes. This steer helped them effectively put together sequences of rhythms, which they then performed and evaluated as a class.
142. Pupils sing very well, particularly when they come together in the hall for hymn and song practice. Singing unaccompanied, the children sustained their line and pitch very well indeed. They showed sensitivity to the mood of what they were singing, varying from joyful vigour to reflective quiet. The teacher gave full attention to improving the quality of their singing; for example, ensuring pupils were clear about more difficult rhythms.

143. The coordinator's leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Resources are adequate and supplemented by loan schemes. The coordinator has recently attended a course on teaching composition skills and this element needs to be given more attention in lessons across the school. There are no children who learn to play instruments in school but there is a choir to which all the Year 6 pupils currently belong. This meets out of school time and provides pupils with social and cultural opportunities as well as enhancing their performance skills; for example when they travel by public transport to the centre of Manchester to appear in a concert with a children's choir more than five thousand strong.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Standards in physical education are broadly typical of those found in most schools. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils take part in gymnastics, dance and games activities during the year. They undertake swimming tuition in Year 5. By the time they leave the school, the vast majority achieve the national standard of being able to swim 25 metres.
145. Pupils achieve steadily throughout the school. They enjoy the lessons and take part enthusiastically. Younger pupils show good control of their bodies and have a good awareness of space. For example, they can stop and change direction without bumping into each other. By Key Stage 2, pupils understand the effect that exercise has on their muscles and they are aware of the importance of warming up prior to starting skill practices. For example in Year 6, the pupils' stretching exercises followed by dodging and weaving activities prepared them well for the ball handling skills in the main part of the lesson.
146. Two satisfactory and one good lesson were seen. Teachers have good control and manage the pupils well. Lessons are well planned with varied activities to improve skills. These factors ensure that pupils behave well and follow instructions promptly. Opportunities are given for pupils to evaluate their own performance and that of others. All groups of pupils are fully included in the lessons. For example in Year 3, a child who could speak very little English gave a wonderful demonstration in movement to show how a tree could grow. Teachers present themselves as good role models when teaching the subject. They are suitably dressed and pay attention to safe working practices. A good example was seen in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were helping each other to set up the large apparatus, carrying equipment correctly.
147. The coordinator has only been in post a comparatively short time so has not yet been able to make an impact on standards. A scheme of work is in place that helps teachers to plan lessons and ensures that pupils are able to build on their previous learning. Resources are of good quality. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities available to both boys and girls which helps to enhance the learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. At the time of the last inspection, religious education was rarely taught and pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages was below the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Since that time there has been a significant improvement and standards are now in line with those expected and pupils make good progress throughout the school.
149. The headteacher's leadership of the subject is very effective. She has been instrumental in providing detailed advice and guidance for teachers, based on the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching has been monitored and the subject is now taught

regularly in every class. A wide and varied selection of good quality resources and artefacts has been provided to supplement learning. Pupils are given the opportunity to visit local churches and a synagogue. The curriculum is enhanced by practical activities and this makes it more meaningful for the pupils. For example, a visitor from the Jewish faith has been into school and organised a pretend Jewish wedding for Year 3 pupils. This provides a good example of the use of role-play. In Key Stage 1, pupils have participated in a Christening service. Such occasions help to promote pupils' personal development, and their study of other faiths contributes to their spiritual and cultural development.

150. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the life of Jesus and how Christian principles influence others. They know that Jesus' friends were called disciples and that Jesus was a friend to and helped many people. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 know about the different features of a church following a recent local visit. They understand the symbolism of some of the furniture and that the candle represents Jesus as the Light of the World. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop a deeper understanding of features of Christianity and other faiths such as Judaism and Islam. They understand some of the main events in Jesus' life and ministry. Year 5 pupils show a good understanding of the Islamic faith and the visit to the synagogue by pupils in Year 6 has helped to further their understanding of Judaism. Pupils throughout the school learn about characters and stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

151. In the lessons seen the teaching was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources very well in lessons to make the learning meaningful. For example, in Year 2 pupils were given first-hand experience of the Holy Communion service when the teacher dressed up in his lay preacher's cassock and brought examples of the altar vessels used in the service for the pupils to look at. Introductions to lessons help fuel the pupils' imaginations and motivate them to work hard in their written tasks. In Year 3, the teacher told the story of Moses and the Burning Bush with great expression and this helped to begin the discussion on trust that followed. Teachers plan the lessons well with varied activities. They manage the pupils well and this ensures that they are on tasks throughout the lessons and are well behaved. A good example of this was seen in Year 6, when the pupils were adding their own ideas and beliefs to the prayer of St. Francis.