

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ordsall, Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105965

Headteacher: Miss M Ambrose

Reporting inspector: Mr C D Taylor  
23004

Dates of inspection: 29 April - 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 244567

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Joseph's Drive  
Ordsall  
Salford  
Lancashire

Postcode: M5 3JP

Telephone number: 0161 872 1062

Fax number: 0161 872 0145

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev.Fr.P.Kinsella

Date of previous inspection: 3 - 6 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23004	Christopher Taylor	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Science Art and design Music	What the school should do to improve How high standards are How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
9652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents / carers
22881	George Halliday	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Design and technology Geography	How good curricular and other opportunities are
31012	Ann Welch	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology History Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School caters for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. The school is smaller than most primary schools with 115 full-time pupils of compulsory school age and 15 children who attend full-time in the nursery. The school serves an area mainly of local authority housing in the Ordsall district of Salford. This is an inner-city area with high levels of social disadvantage. Numbers have declined steadily since 1997 as families have moved out of the area. Most pupils join the nursery class with levels of attainment well below those typical for their age, and many have poorly developed communication and language skills. Sixty seven per cent of pupils - well above the national average - are known to be eligible for free school meals. Twenty four per cent of pupils - close to the national average - are on the special educational needs register. No pupils have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Only four pupils are from ethnic minorities and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is in the Salford and Trafford Education Action Zone (EAZ) and is an associate member of the Salford East EAZ.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St Joseph's is a good school that serves its community very well. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour and relationships are very good. Attendance has improved markedly, though it is still well below the national average. Standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6, but they are above standards in similar schools in English and mathematics. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and standards are improving in English and mathematics faster than the national trends. The school benefits from good leadership and a committed staff. Although expenditure per pupil is well above the national average, the school uses its resources effectively and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and underlies the distinctive Christian ethos of this very caring school.
- Pupils' extremely positive attitudes, supportive relationships and very good behaviour help to create a good atmosphere for learning.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
- Personal, social and health education and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good, and play an important role in assisting pupils' personal development.

#### **What could be improved**

- There is not enough individual and small group investigative work carried out by pupils during science lessons, and this hinders the development of their practical skills and understanding.
- Not enough time is spent on information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 and 2, and too little geography, history and design technology is taught throughout the school.
- There is no teaching of control technology in ICT in Years 3 to 6 and not enough use of ICT by pupils to assist their learning across other subjects of the curriculum.
- The management role of subject co-ordinators is not yet developed well enough to raise standards of teaching and learning effectively in all subjects.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in November 1997, the school has made good progress, overall, in improving the areas identified in the last inspection report. It has made good progress in implementing new schemes of work with clear learning objectives in the half-termly plans and in creating an assessment programme that enables teachers to set work appropriate to pupils' abilities. It has begun to develop the role of subject co-ordinators, but needs to extend their role further to enable them to improve standards. It has made good progress in upgrading the classroom accommodation for the reception and Year 1 pupils, and has implemented the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively across both classes with nursery and reception children. In addition, teaching and learning have improved and standards in English and mathematics have risen, though they are still below the national average. Provision for extra-curricular activities has improved and is now good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have remained very good, and attendance has improved markedly, although it is still well below the national average. Procedures for pupils' welfare have improved, and the good provision for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained. The school has identified suitable areas for development and has a good shared commitment and a sound capacity to make further improvements.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	D	B
Mathematics	B	A	E	B
science	E	D	E	D

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

In English, standards in 2001 were below the national average. In mathematics and science, the school's results were well below the national average. However, in English and mathematics, standards were above the average in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In science, standards were below those in similar schools. Results in 2001 were not as good as in the previous two years because the class had a significant proportion of pupils who found learning very difficult. In comparison with their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, however, they achieved well above the national average in English, above the average in mathematics and in line with expectations in science. In addition, this was a small year group of only 14 pupils, and some more able pupils had left this year group as the class progressed through the school. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics, based on the pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2. Inspection findings show that attainment in the current Year 6 is still below the national average in all three subjects, but pupils are making good progress and standards are improving steadily in English and mathematics. Standards are not as high in science, as pupils do not spend enough time learning for themselves through their own investigative work. Standards are close to national expectations in ICT, music and physical education and they are higher than usual in art. Standards are below what is expected in geography, history and design and technology as pupils do not spend as much time on these subjects as in most schools. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, but is above the standard in similar schools in reading and writing, and well above in mathematics. It is below the standards expected nationally in all other subjects except in art and music, where standards are typical for pupils' ages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the helpful support they receive from classroom assistants. Appropriate targets have been set to improve standards in English and mathematics in the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002. To meet these

targets, the school has focused its attention on daily phonics and reading lessons, re-drafting of pupils' written work, and increased emphasis on calculations and mental arithmetic.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen to learn and are well motivated. They are very interested and involved in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in class and around school. They are polite and helpful. There were no exclusions in the last school year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and with members of staff are very good. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take initiative and to carry out responsibilities.
Attendance	Attendance has improved markedly, but is still well below the national average. Most pupils are punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. The teaching of English, including reading and writing skills, and the teaching of mathematics, including numeracy skills, is good in all year groups. Strengths of teaching include very good management of pupils, high expectations and good use of support staff and resources. The school generally meets the needs of pupils of different abilities well. As a result, pupils make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils, however, are not given enough opportunities to develop their investigative skills in science, and do not use ICT enough to assist their learning across other subjects of the curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory, overall. The curriculum has a very strong emphasis on English and mathematics. As a result, the time allocated to geography, history and design and technology is insufficient in most classes, and there is not enough teaching of ICT in Years 1 and 2. The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in most subjects, but there is no teaching of control technology in ICT in Years 3 to 6 and not enough use of ICT by pupils to assist their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to broaden pupils' interests.
Provision for pupils with	Good. Pupils receive plenty of help and assistance and make good



Aspect	Comment
special educational needs	progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, with clear teaching of right and wrong. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good, overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for children's welfare are very good. Action taken to improve attendance has been very effective. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory elsewhere. Teachers generally use assessments well to ensure that work set is appropriate for pupils of different ability. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher provides good leadership of the school. With the effective support of an experienced deputy headteacher, she ensures that the school is moving forward with a clear sense of educational direction. Subject co-ordinators play an important role in checking teachers' planning and pupils' work, but they are not involved enough in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, planning future developments and sharing in the management of their own budgets.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors carry out all their statutory duties well with the exception of several omissions in the annual report. They play an effective role in helping to shape the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate the school's performance well and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school supports educational priorities well through its financial planning. Specific grants, including funding through Education Action Zones, are used effectively. The school applies the principles of best value well by consulting widely, comparing itself with other schools, and ensuring competition when tendering.

There is a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. The classroom assistants are well trained and give good support to pupils. The accommodation is attractive and well maintained, and there are stimulating displays to help pupils learn effectively. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good, but require improvement in design and technology.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children enjoy school.</li><li>• They make good progress in their work.</li><li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li><li>• Children get the right amount of homework.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li><li>• The school helps children become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An eighth of the parents who responded felt the school does not work closely enough with parents.</li></ul>

The inspection findings support the parents' very positive views. It is the inspectors' judgement that the school works hard to involve all parents closely in the education of their children.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. When children join the school, most have levels of attainment well below the average for their age. Their communication and language skills and their numeracy skills are particularly poorly developed. Children join the nursery and reception class when they are aged three, and older children move into the reception and Year 1 class at the beginning of the autumn term in which they become five. They make good progress towards the early learning goals during their time in the nursery and reception classes. By the end of the reception year, most pupils achieve the early learning goals in physical development, creative development and personal and social development. The attainment of most pupils, however, is below what is typical in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children who are identified as having special educational needs also make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.
2. By the end of Year 2, inspection findings show that the overall attainment of pupils is below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but above standards in similar schools in reading and writing, and well above similar schools in mathematics. Attainment is close to the standards expected nationally in music and in art and design, but below national expectations in geography, history, design and technology and ICT. Standards have fallen in history, design and technology and ICT since the previous inspection. No judgement was possible in physical education. Most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress, however, bearing in mind that their skills and knowledge are limited when they join Year 1. There are no significant variations in attainment by gender or by ethnic background.
3. In English, inspection findings indicate that attainment in the current Year 2 is below the national average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below those expected for their age, although most pupils make good progress in developing confidence when speaking. Teachers make a point of providing many opportunities to practise and consolidate pupils' language skills. In reading and in writing, standards are below those of most seven-year-olds, although pupils make good progress. Most read simple texts with sound understanding and with some expression. In writing, most pupils use simple punctuation in their sentences, and spelling is improving as a result of the daily phonics sessions. Standards in handwriting are good, and most letters are formed correctly. Extra support provided for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress.
4. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that attainment in Year 2 is below the national average, though pupils make good progress. There is a good focus on developing basic numeracy skills, and mental mathematics skills have improved since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. In science, inspection findings indicate that attainment by the end of Year 2 is below national expectations. Pupils have a sound understanding of the properties of different materials, but are not always given enough opportunities to carry out their own investigations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics, but, in common with other pupils, make unsatisfactory progress in science.
5. Pupils' attainment in ICT is below the standard expected nationally for seven-year-olds. Pupils lack confidence using the keyboard and the mouse because they are not given enough time to develop their computer skills.

6. By the end of Year 6, inspection findings show that standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. They are above standards in similar schools in English and mathematics, but below them in science. Attainment is close to the standards expected nationally in ICT, music and physical education, and below national expectations in geography, history and design and technology. Standards are above those typical for 11-year-olds in art and design. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress compared with their prior attainment at the age of seven, and there are no significant variations in attainment by gender or by ethnic background.
7. Inspection findings indicate that, in English, pupils make good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills as teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to join in discussions and interviews. Pupils make good use of the school library and this contributes towards the good progress in their reading. Standards in writing are rising as pupils are encouraged to re-draft and improve their written work. Handwriting is given a high profile and the quality of handwriting and presentation is a strength of the school.
8. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that attainment in Year 6 is below what is expected nationally. Pupils make good progress, however, and benefit from being taught to think in different mathematical ways. In science, standards are below national expectations. Pupils' understanding of life processes and physical processes is broadly typical of most pupils, but their standard of scientific enquiry is below what is expected nationally as they are not given enough opportunities to carry out their own investigations.
9. Pupils' attainment in ICT is broadly in line with the standard expected for 11-year-olds. Pupils make sound progress in developing computing skills, but do not know how to use sensory equipment to collect data or how to make models move using control technology. In addition, they do not make enough use of ICT to assist their learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
10. Realistic targets have been set for English and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002. To achieve these targets, the school has focused on daily phonics and reading sessions, re-drafting of pupils' written work, and increased emphasis on calculations and mental arithmetic.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. The attitude of pupils to school and their behaviour in and around school are very good. Relationships between all members of the school community are also very good. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This continuing strength of the school is a direct result of the very good provision for both moral and social development provided by all staff. The school offers a haven of calm and tranquillity to its pupils and the school motto, 'this is a fair share school', is fully implemented. Parents share this view and almost all who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting reflected this positive aspect of school life.

12. In the classroom, the attitude and behaviour of pupils were good or better in 95 per cent of lessons and very good in nearly half of all lessons. Standards of behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime are also very good. There were no exclusions during the last year.
13. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and always show respect towards all members of the school community and to visitors. There is no graffiti, litter or vandalism in or around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they talk about it enthusiastically. They are very keen to participate in school activities. For example, in a Year 4/5 numeracy lesson pupils were excited about 'beating the clock' during the mental maths session. Additionally, in a Year 5/6 ICT lesson, the pupils were very attentive as they worked with spreadsheet software to calculate the average number of goals scored during each match by Manchester United FC.
14. One of the many strengths of the school is the quality of relationships that have been developed between pupils and all adults in the school community. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, provide excellent role models for the pupils and know each one of them very well. Pupils have very good relationships with each other, collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working and playing together. Boys and girls play football happily in the playground and there was no evidence of any racist behaviour during the inspection period. At lunchtimes, pupils spoke confidently with visitors about their support of Manchester United. The very good quality of these relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning and their development as young people in the local community.
15. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are good, overall, and their contributions to school life are valued by staff. For example, pupils in all classes act as class monitors and, in Years 5/6, they are given the responsibility to be prefects and act as role models when they provide help to younger children. The Year 6 forum provides a very good opportunity for older pupils to discuss aspects of school life. Some of these discussions have resulted in improvements to the playground area such as the provision of wooden seats, which are now a popular feature with pupils. The school also provides the opportunity for pupils to reflect on their own actions and to consider those who are less fortunate than themselves. In addition, the pupils work hard during Lent to collect money for various charities such as CAFOD, Mission Together and the Rainbow trust in Didsbury. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils to take initiative for their own learning are more limited and there is an element of over direction in some lessons when pupils are not always given the chance to carry out personal research, for example, in science.
16. Levels of attendance have increased considerably since the last inspection but they still remain well below the national average. However, when compared with other local schools, the rates at St Joseph's are higher. The rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. The punctuality of most pupils is good.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

17. Teaching is good, overall, throughout the school. It was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, and unsatisfactory in five per cent (two lessons out of 38). Teaching was good or better in nearly two-thirds of the lessons. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was good or better in less than half of all lessons and was unsatisfactory in 13 per cent of lessons. Where teaching is good or better, this often involves very good class management, high expectations and good use of support staff and resources. Where teaching is very occasionally unsatisfactory, this is because work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs, or pupils spend too long

waiting to practise newly acquired sporting skills. Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

18. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes, with good or very good teaching in five out of six lessons. The teachers and support staff have a good understanding of how young children learn, and make learning enjoyable. They have high expectations and consistently encourage the children in order to build their confidence. They place a strong emphasis on developing children's social skills, and help them to make choices and to take decisions. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Planning for lessons is good and includes a wide range of interesting activities for children at different stages of learning. Children are very well managed and activities are changed frequently so children do not have time to get bored. Teachers pay particular attention to developing children's speaking and communication skills as these are often poorly developed when they enter the school.
19. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 to 6. It is good in English and mathematics throughout the age range. In science, teaching is satisfactory, overall, for all age groups, although there is not enough emphasis on developing pupil's investigative skills, especially in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory in art and design and history for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and is good in music. It is satisfactory, overall, in history, ICT and physical education for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and good in art and design and in music. No teaching was seen in design and technology and geography in Years 1 to 6, and in physical education and ICT in Years 1 and 2. Teaching that is good or better (63 per cent of all lessons) is a major factor in ensuring that pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
20. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good throughout the school. This ensures that pupils acquire sound techniques and accurate information. In certain subjects such as music and physical education, teachers often have specialised subject knowledge which benefits pupils' learning. The teaching of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills is good throughout the school, and ensuring high standards of handwriting and presentation is a strength of the school.
21. Teachers' good lesson planning benefits from following the guidelines in the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. In other subjects, planning generally follows national guidelines and usually shows a clear progression of knowledge and understanding. An exception is in geography where there is insufficient planning, and coverage remains incomplete and patchy. Work planned for pupils of different ability usually matches their individual needs well, but occasionally, previous assessment of pupils' understanding is not used sufficiently well to achieve a good match. As a result, lower-attaining pupils occasionally struggle to cope with the work, and do not always learn as fast as they could.
22. Teachers employ a good variety of teaching methods. They often commence lessons by referring to the previous lesson to reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers usually make the learning objectives clear at the start of lessons, and review what pupils have learned at the end. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning. Teachers make good use of open-ended questions to make pupils think, and develop pupils' vocabulary by using the correct mathematical, scientific or musical terms. In history and art, teachers make good use of visitors and educational visits to places of historical or cultural interest. In science, however, not enough time is spent on enabling pupils to carry out their own investigations, and, consequently, pupils do not learn from their own first-hand experiences.
23. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils produce a pleasant and hard-working environment. Very effective class management is reflected in pupils' very good

behaviour and very positive attitudes to work. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well.

24. Teachers use time and resources well. They usually time activities carefully and keep lessons moving at a brisk pace so pupils work hard and maintain a good pace of learning. Teachers and support staff work closely together and provide good assistance to pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Teachers make good use of the latest technology such as interactive whiteboards and flexi-cameras, together with a wide variety of other teaching resources, and this helps to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers produce attractive displays in classrooms and along corridors to stimulate pupils' thinking. The care they take when displaying pupils' work reflects the appreciation they show for their efforts.
25. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and generally use the results well to ensure that work is matched closely to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. As a result, teachers generally cater well for both the younger and older pupils in the mixed-age classes. The day-to-day use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is effective, and pupils with limited opportunities to study at home are encouraged to do their homework at the after-school homework club. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and praise is used extensively to encourage and motivate pupils. The best marking also includes helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work.
26. Funds provided by the Salford and Trafford EAZ and the Salford East EAZ enable the school to provide specialist teachers in physical education, music, history and geography. This not only enhances the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects, but also reduces the workload on class teachers and enables them to raise standards by devoting more time to preparation and marking in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

27. The school has improved the way the curriculum is planned since the last inspection. Teachers use national guidelines when planning lessons and this provides them with the opportunity to teach pupils in progressive stages. However, the school gives such heavy weighting to literacy and numeracy that some other subjects receive much less time than in most schools. This results in a curriculum which is not balanced satisfactorily. For instance, there is not enough time to teach history, geography or design and technology to an acceptable standard. Because control technology is not taught to older pupils, the ICT curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.
28. A strength of the school is the very good curriculum for personal, social and health education. This has helped to maintain high standards of pupils' behaviour and very good attitudes to learning and to one another. Care for the individual is implicit in the ethos of the school and the way teachers teach. Each child is valued and as a result, every pupil grows in self-esteem and self-knowledge. Pupils give their opinions in lessons and think about the impact of their actions on others. They are taught about the misuse of drugs, sexual development and family relationships and how to have a healthy lifestyle.
29. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to make progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection and is now generally good. Teachers ensure that pupils receive as much help as possible from either themselves or classroom assistants, and

as a result they learn at a good rate. Occasionally, however, work is not sufficiently modified to suit particular pupils' needs and then they do not progress as quickly. Teachers make good use of the expertise of agencies such as social services, educational psychologists and speech therapists to help pupils overcome their difficulties. All of this ensures that pupils with special educational needs get a good deal from the school.

30. The school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. These include football, Irish dancing, an art and design club and a homework club. The clubs are popular with pupils and are well attended. The school provides a good range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' learning and older pupils have an annual residential visit to London. Pupils particularly enjoyed visiting 10 Downing Street and the London Eye.
31. The school continues to have good links with its immediate community and very good links with St Joseph's Church. Pupils make numerous visits to local places of interest such as Ordsall Hall and museums in Manchester. Additionally, older pupils have recently been to see *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Harry Potter*. Community visitors include representatives from the Hallé orchestra, a 'Roman soldier' and sports coaches from the 'Sparky' initiative. All these activities are linked very carefully into the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and their social and cultural development. They provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world outside the immediate Ordsall community. Funding from the local EAZs has helped to broaden the curriculum by providing specialist teachers and by enabling the school to develop an attractive nursery playground and garden to enhance learning out of doors. The school has also developed effective business links with a number of local companies through the EAZ initiative, and these firms provide very generous support. One company, for example, donates the income it receives from car parking during matches at Manchester United FC. Very strong and effective links have been developed with All Hallows RC High School, to which most pupils transfer at 11.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be very good, overall, and remains a strength of the school. The school's character embodies clear Christian values and a strong commitment to the care and wellbeing of its pupils. Spiritual development is very good. Collective worship takes place in an atmosphere of heightened spiritual awareness. The lighting of a candle creates an appropriate sense of occasion and quiet reflection. Whole school assemblies are taken by the headteacher and are of a very high quality. Christian values are both implicit and explained clearly through reference to events such as the current war in the Middle East. The beliefs of other world faiths are recognised and respected. Prayer plays an important part in developing pupils' spirituality. At mealtimes and at the close of each day, teachers share prayers with their classes.
33. There is very good provision for pupils' moral development. The school promotes a very strong moral code and emphasises the care and respect which pupils should have for each other. The school motto *This is a fair share school* is reflected in every aspect of school life. There are many opportunities in assemblies and lessons for staff to promote moral values by emphasising the importance of listening to others, abiding by the rules, playing fairly and taking responsible decisions. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and learn the benefits of positive values such as justice, honesty and fairness.
34. The school has maintained its very good provision for pupils' social development. The caring relationships in the school contribute strongly to pupils' very good attitudes towards helping others and self-discipline. Pupils look forward to the weekly assemblies when their achievements are celebrated and they are made to feel very



special. They are proud to add another *brick* to the *target wall* in the entrance hall. The school prepares pupils for good citizenship by encouraging them to raise money for charities such as CAFOD and the Heart Foundation. Pupils in Year 6 hold a forum where decisions, such as how to spend donations to the school, are made. They also act as prefects to help in the nursery and reception classes, and as librarians. These responsibilities are taken very seriously and pupils often give a *little bit extra*. Librarians, for example, not only keep the library running smoothly but also help pupils to choose books. However, an aspect of social development that requires attention is that there are few opportunities provided within the curriculum for independent study or for pupils to co-operate together during investigations.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development remains good. In subjects such as history, geography, music and art, teachers plan work to enable pupils to learn about other cultures and traditions. Fieldwork in geography at Pennington Flash Country Park, for example, provides pupils from an inner city area with an insight into other environments. Visits to museums and places of historical interest, such as the Lowry Centre and Ordsall Hall, develop pupils' knowledge of their own local culture. They study famous artists from a number of cultures and appreciate the richness of the techniques used by native Australian artists. Pupils take part in music workshops organised by the National Youth Symphony Orchestra and enjoy visits by the Hallé singers and musicians. The school's Irish dancers take part in the annual schools festival. Twelve pupils will be taking part in the forthcoming opera to mark the opening of the National War Museum at Salford Quays. There is an anti-racist ethos within the school and the beliefs of other world faiths are recognised and respected. One pupil in Year 6, for example, when discussing Hitler's treatment of the Jews, remarked that it was unacceptable because *we are all the same*. However, as at the previous inspection, pupils have only limited opportunities to learn about the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school makes very good provision for the welfare of its pupils and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. The ethos of the school is to provide *tender loving care* to all its pupils and to give them opportunities to raise their self-esteem in a supportive environment. Suitable procedures and policies for health and safety are in place. Records are well maintained for fire drills, first aid, the recording of accidents and emergency contact of families or friends. Risk assessments are completed before every visit outside school and very good use is made of the recently published local education authority code of practice. Very effective first day contact procedures are in place for pupils who have not arrived at school. Procedures for child protection are detailed and the designated teacher ensures that all members of staff have a thorough understanding of them. Non-teaching staff supervise pupils very well at lunch time. All members of the school community, including the learning mentor, school secretary, midday supervisors, and the caretaker, provide very high levels of support and care to the pupils. They are all appreciated as important members of the school family.
37. The school is doing all it can to promote and encourage regular attendance, and the learning mentor plays an important role in the tracking and follow up of any absences. As a result, there has been a considerable improvement in attendance since the last inspection. The school promotes and monitors pupils' behaviour very well through social and moral development and the way that teachers manage behaviour in the classroom and around school.

38. The school has improved its procedures for assessing pupils' learning. Assessment is now very good in mathematics, good in English and satisfactory in science. Assessment is not as good, however, in most other subjects. At its best, assessment helps teachers to set targets for pupils and to provide suitable work and resources. While teachers generally make satisfactory use of assessments, this is not always done effectively. In mathematics, for instance, work is sometimes too hard for less able pupils and for those with special educational needs, and too easy for the more able pupils. Procedures for assessing the work of pupils in the nursery and reception classes are good.
39. The school has taken suitable action to strengthen procedures for the way it monitors and supports pupils' academic progress and personal development. As a result, procedures are very good and provide teachers with a valuable and precise picture of the annual academic progress and personal development of each pupil. Teachers and classroom assistants know pupils very well and this enables them to promote pupils' personal growth very effectively.
40. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to give these pupils good help during lessons. The school makes good use of support services, such as an educational psychologist and a speech therapist, to promote pupils' learning and wellbeing. Teachers use assessments of personal progress to update pupils' individual education plans and to set new targets for their learning. Occasionally, guidance on how pupils are to reach their targets is not specific enough. When this occurs, teachers do not always set work that is matched closely to pupils' needs, and this hinders their progress in these lessons.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. The school promotes itself very well, and the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting expressed very supportive views. Parents hold the school in very high esteem. However, few parents or carers help out in class on a regular basis, although the school is doing all it can to encourage their participation. When parents help out, particularly in the nursery, the school values their support. Parents provide very good help when there are class visits, and there is never any shortage of helpers. Parents and carers are also keen to respond to opportunities to learn new skills, and many have attended ICT courses or courses about developing parenting skills. A number of mothers and young children enjoy the opportunity to meet on a weekly basis in school. This provides a very good opportunity for the children to get used to the school environment before they start attending the nursery. There is no formal parent-teacher association but parents provide good support to events such as the Christmas Fair. This parental support has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
42. The information produced by the school for its parents and carers is good. This includes an informative and well designed newsletter that often has contributions from pupils. Additionally, parents and friends of the school can access the very informative web site and read about school activities such as the visit to the police helicopter or the arrival of the *Easter bunny*. Reports on pupils' progress are informative and contain clear targets for pupils to improve their learning. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted regularly and kept fully informed of their progress.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

43. The headteacher continues to provide good leadership of the school. She has clear aims and appropriate plans for the future, and is committed to meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities and those with special educational needs. She has good relationships with parents and has gained the respect of her pupils and staff. She is committed to raising standards and supporting the development of teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher has the effective support and assistance of an experienced deputy headteacher who has given excellent service to the school over many years and has helped to move the school forward in numerous directions, including the successful introduction of the new numeracy scheme. As a result, the school is moving forward with clear educational direction.
44. The school has very good aims and values that are clearly reflected in all its work. The school has a distinctive Christian ethos and aims to develop children's spiritual life, guided by the Catholic Church. It aims to be a caring community where all are aware of the needs of others and close links are established with parents and families. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school has high expectations of all pupils and aims to provide the best possible education for each child, with maximum support given to those with special educational needs. It is largely successful in all these aims.
45. The management of the school has improved in several respects since the previous inspection, but there are still areas of weakness that remain to be resolved. The balance of time spent on different subjects is very heavily weighted towards English and mathematics and, as a result, there is not enough teaching time allocated to design and technology, geography and history throughout the school and to ICT in Years 1 and 2. The headteacher still spends too much time on administrative duties that could be delegated to others. She monitors teachers' planning and has identified areas for improvement such as more precise learning objectives in half-termly plans. She visits classrooms regularly and feeds back her observations to individual teachers, making suggestions to raise pupils' attainment. Some of these visits form part of the performance management programme that is operating successfully in the school. Together with the deputy headteacher, she checks the standard of pupils' work by evaluating samples of written work, and analyses National Curriculum test results in order to identify and address weaker areas of the curriculum. All these tasks could be shared more effectively with other senior staff to reduce the current heavy workload of the headteacher. Since the previous inspection, subject co-ordinators have been given more responsibility, have received detailed job descriptions and have been allocated some non-teaching time to monitor teachers' planning and to evaluate pupils' work. There is still insufficient delegation, however, and this limits the co-ordinators' effectiveness in raising standards in their subject areas. Most co-ordinators still do not prepare action plans or manage their own budgets, and are not yet raising standards by monitoring and evaluating teaching in their subject areas. In some subjects, such as geography and design and technology, the role of the subject co-ordinator has become ineffective and needs to be re-established.
46. Good leadership by the special educational needs co-ordinator ensures an effective level of provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator keeps teachers up-to-date with the code of practice and is on target in implementing the new code. She has developed good procedures for identifying pupils' needs and for ensuring that individual education plans have clear targets that meet pupils' specific requirements.
47. The governors provide good support for the headteacher. They have a good working knowledge of the school and have a realistic understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are kept up-to-date by detailed reports from the headteacher. Several governors help in school on a regular basis, observe pupils at work and talk to

teachers and parents. One governor, for example, provides regular support in the school library, while another frequently assists in class, and helps to organise and supervise the annual residential trip to London. The full governing body meets termly and committees meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and finance. Governors debate standards, staffing and budget issues, and play an important role in helping to determine the priorities facing the school. The governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well, but a number of items required by law are still omitted from the governors' annual report to parents.

48. The school supports educational priorities well through its financial planning. The outline development plan identifies appropriate targets and ensures that resources are directed towards raising pupils' attainment. The personnel, resources and timings are identified in more detailed action plans for each target, and there are criteria by which the impact of these developments can be evaluated. New developments are linked appropriately to the annual budget. The large carry-over projected for the current financial year is earmarked to protect staffing in the event of a further decline in pupil numbers. The headteacher has been particularly successful in securing additional funding for specified projects, and the school makes very good use of the resources allocated to support initiatives such as the use of new technology or specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs. Governors monitor the school's budget regularly and satisfactory financial controls are in place. The principles of best value are applied well. The school seeks competitive tenders for all major spending decisions to ensure it receives sound value for money. It assesses its performance in comparison with other schools, and regularly seeks the opinions of parents and pupils. Day-to-day administration is efficient and computers are used effectively for placing orders and for keeping pupils' records. A number of recommendations made in the recent internal audit report are currently being implemented.
49. The school is part of the Salford and Trafford Education Action Zone (EAZ), and is also an associate member of the Salford East EAZ. Funds provided by these initiatives have been used very effectively by the school to provide specialist teachers in physical education, music, history and geography, additional literacy support in Years 5 and 6, more classroom assistants and technical support for ICT. A part-time learning mentor is funded by the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative to promote good attendance, to provide a homework club and to help children catch up when they are behind in their reading. Effective co-operation with All Hallows RC High School and other local schools in the Salford East EAZ ensures a smooth transition from primary to secondary education.
50. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and ensure that all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Staff and governors have a good commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning and the school has a sound capacity to succeed. Appropriate targets have been set for raising standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002.
51. The school employs a good number of teachers and classroom assistants. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching staff are all suitably qualified and there is a reasonable balance of experience and expertise. Teachers work together closely as a team, but the management of all subjects places a heavy workload on the core of full-time teachers. The employment of specialist teachers through EAZ funding provides pupils with good learning opportunities in some subjects and releases full-time staff for other duties. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed in classrooms. Their time and expertise are used efficiently and they provide good help for pupils. This has a positive effect on the good progress made by pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Mid-day supervisory staff make a positive contribution to the wellbeing and good behaviour of pupils at lunchtime.

52. The quality of the school's accommodation has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Improvements include better provision for children in the nursery and reception classes, outdoor provision for all pupils, a new art room and a learning mentor's room. Improved security measures have increased pupils' safety in school.
53. The amount and the quality of the school's learning resources have improved and are good in most subjects. In design and technology, however, tools remain in short supply and this restricts opportunities to improve pupils' attainment.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should

- (1) Raise standards in science by ensuring that pupils spend more time on their own investigative and practical work.

*(see paragraphs 4, 8, 22, 86)*

- (2) Improve standards in a range of subjects by spending more time teaching ICT at Key Stage 1 and more time on geography, history and design and technology at both key stages.

*(see paragraphs 5, 27, 45, 95, 99, 105, 110)*

- (3) Ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met by teaching control technology at Key Stage 2, and ensure that pupils make more use of ICT to assist their learning across other subjects of the curriculum.

*(see paragraphs 9, 27, 112, 114)*

- (4) Develop the role of subject co-ordinators to include development planning, managing their own budgets, and monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in their subjects.

*(see paragraphs 45, 89, 98, 100, 109, 115, 124)*

In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider including the following minor issue in its action plan:

- (1) The school should ensure that the governors' annual report to parents includes all the information required by law.

*(see paragraph 47)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	18	12	2	0	0
Percentage	0%	16%	47%	32%	5%	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)	15	115
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	28

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	11	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	13	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (81)	68 (81)	100 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (81)	100 (81)	95 (88)
	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	6	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (73)	64 (80)	79 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	N/a	N/a	N/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/a (80)	N/a (87)	N/a (87)
	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	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	21

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

#### **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	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	414,414
Total expenditure	394,269
Expenditure per pupil	2,952
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,318
Balance carried forward to next year	23,463

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	130
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	0	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	15	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	18	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	70	27	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	23	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	17	3	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	17	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	17	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	20	7	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	80	10	3	5	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	20	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	72	20	2	2	5

## **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**

55. The school has continued to make good provision for children of nursery age since the previous inspection, and provision for reception age children has improved considerably. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, and is often good or very good in both the nursery and reception class and in the reception and Year 1 class. This is better than at the previous inspection. Together with the broad curriculum, this has a very positive effect on children's learning.
56. Children join the nursery and reception class when they are aged three, and older children move into the reception and Year 1 class at the beginning of the autumn term in which they become five. During the inspection, there were 18 children of reception age and 15 children of nursery age, all attending full-time. When children join the nursery, their skills are much less well developed than is usual for their age, especially in the key areas of language development and mathematical understanding. All children, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress in both classes. By the time they join Year 1, most achieve the levels expected for their age in physical development, creative development and personal and social development. Their communication, language and literacy skills, their mathematical understanding and their knowledge and understanding of the world have increased considerably, but they are not yet up to the standards expected of most children of their age.
57. Children enjoy being in the nursery and reception classes. They are happy and enthusiastic, are well behaved and listen carefully to their teachers. They work well together and co-operate sensibly when using construction toys or when playing in the *vet surgery*. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good because teachers manage the children very well and provide a wide range of interesting activities. Teachers frequently assess children's skills and understanding, and use this information to provide suitable tasks and to monitor children's progress. Lessons have clear learning objectives, teachers' expectations are high, and work is well matched to the needs of individual children. All staff provide excellent role models and have very good relationships with the children. This helps to develop children's confidence and social skills. Those with special educational needs receive helpful guidance, and make good progress as a result. Few parents or carers help in class, but those who listen to their children reading at home play an important role in consolidating their learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

58. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing children's social skills. Children enter the nursery and reception classroom eagerly in the mornings and quickly locate their name card to hang on their peg to show they are present. They are keen to share their 'news' and to listen to their teacher and other children. In both classes, the teachers provide a range of 'free-choice' activities so children are helped to make decisions. This helps children organise their own time and builds their confidence. In one session in the nursery and reception class, several children chose to 'write' in wet cornflower, while others acted out an adventure with model dinosaurs in the water tray, filled containers with wet sand, or made helicopters and planes using construction toys. Teaching of social skills is good in both classes. Most soon learn to put their hand up to answer questions and know they have to take turns when using equipment. Children sit quietly while they eat their morning snack, and drink their milk sensibly. They eat their lunch

politely and treat staff and other children with respect. Teachers encourage children to be kind and considerate, and to care for each other. The atmosphere in both classes is very positive and children respond well to this by being enthusiastic and helpful. As a result, most children make good progress in developing their social skills and reach the level of personal, social and emotional development expected nationally by the end of the reception year.

### Communication, Language and Literacy

59. Most children have poorly developed speech and language when they join the nursery class. Many are hesitant to speak, and find it difficult to describe clearly what they are doing. Teachers and other adults encourage the children to develop their vocabulary by continually talking with them, and this helps them to develop confidence and reinforces their speaking. Teaching of language and literacy skills is good in both classes. Children are encouraged to speak confidently about themselves, and to discuss the books they have been reading together. In a lesson in the reception and Year 1 class, for instance, children talked about the monsters they had read about, and suggested that, in *their* house, the monster *ate the books* or *smashed a window*. Teachers use role play well to encourage language and speech development. In the *surgeries* in the nursery, boys talked about their *poorly toys*, while others acted out a drama dressed up as firemen. Constant questioning by the teachers and the classroom assistants helps children to develop their vocabulary and speech. While they make good progress, however, most will not reach the level of language development that is usually expected by the end of the reception year.
60. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Several children in the nursery and reception class, for example, enjoyed sitting in a *cave* and joined in the actions as the nursery nurse read the story of the *Bear Hunt*. The whole class listened attentively as she read *Pass the jam, Jim*, following the pictures and the text in the *big book* well, and later talking enthusiastically about the illustrations. Teachers encourage children to take reading books home regularly and to share the stories with their parents or carers. Children in both classes listen independently to interactive stories on the computer and look through books in the reading corner, holding the books correctly and turning the pages with care. Children of reception age are taught the sounds and the names of letters, and begin to identify the initial sounds of common words. Most pupils recognise some simple words that occur frequently, and a few higher-attaining children read simple texts confidently. Children make good progress, but the majority will not reach the standard of reading expected nationally by the end of the reception year.
61. Teachers in both classes give children plenty of opportunities to develop their writing skills. Children of nursery age make early attempts at writing, while children of reception age learn to identify and write the letters of the alphabet correctly. There is a strong emphasis on learning to recognise the sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet. During a lesson in the nursery and reception class, for example, the teacher made good use of a large-text storybook to introduce the *kicking k* sound. The teacher went on to encourage the children to identify illustrations of a *key*, a *kettle* and a *king* in a picture book, before reinforcing their learning further by sharing a short poem called *Do kangaroos kick koalas?* The teacher then asked the children to use their *magic fingers* to write *k* in the air, before overwriting *k* using a pencil, and attempting to write *k* freehand. A few older children write most letters reasonably accurately without assistance and copy simple words and short phrases correctly by the end of the reception year. Most children write their own name unaided, while some higher-attaining children write complete sentences. Overall, children make good progress, although standards of writing are generally below those expected nationally for children of their age.

## Mathematical Development

62. Good teaching in both classes ensures that children are given many opportunities to recall numbers and to understand shape and size. Children sing a range of counting songs such as *One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive* and some nursery children can count to five accurately. In one lesson, good use was made of a television programme to reinforce counting to ten. Nursery children count the number of dots on the faces of dice, while reception age children play *snakes and ladders* and make good use of a number line to order numbers correctly to ten, then count to ten and back in the correct sequence. Some older children can use a counting stick to name numbers *more* or *less* than a given number and can identify the *biggest* and *smallest* accurately. In one lesson in the nursery and reception class, children used weighing scales sensibly, but few could identify which objects were *heavier* or *lighter*. During one lesson with the younger reception children, the teacher made good use of small plastic animals to demonstrate *one more* and *one less*, and used a game effectively to help the children work out how many were left if one or two were hidden. Children sort objects by size and colour. In the nursery and reception class, they sorted model bears into *Mummy* and *Baby* bears, and drew sets of three similar objects. Some younger reception children were able to name the primary colours, but got muddled when trying to sort models into sets of *yellow, blue and red*. Teachers and classroom assistants help children with special educational needs effectively to ensure that all children are fully involved and make good progress. By the end of the reception year, some older children can use numbers up to ten confidently, but most will not achieve the level of skills and knowledge expected for their age.

## Knowledge and Understanding of the World

63. Children's knowledge and understanding are very limited when they start in the nursery. Many children have little experience of common objects and can only recognise things that they have seen on television. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn about everyday items in the classroom, during outdoor activities and on visits in the local area. In a nursery and reception class session, for example, the nursery nurse took a group of children to plant seeds and bulbs in rubber tyres in the outdoor play area. She explained carefully how the seeds needed light and water to grow, and made certain that the children understood the new vocabulary such as *seeds, bulbs* and *compost*. Children examine a range of materials and begin to recognise objects made from *metal, wood* and *plastic*. They develop their understanding of historical time by sorting an *old* teddy bear, a *new* teddy bear, and the *oldest* bear into the correct order. In one lesson, the older reception age children examined household objects from the past, and enjoyed using a *dolly tub* to wash a pair of socks. Children learn to use a computer mouse to click onto the correct icons on the computer screen. Due to the very good teaching in both classes, children make very good progress, but most will not reach the levels of knowledge and understanding expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

## Physical Development

64. When children join the nursery, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are not as well developed as many children of their age. The children make satisfactory progress, however, and, due to sound teaching, their physical development is broadly in line with what is expected nationally by the end of the reception year. Teachers provide many opportunities in both classes for children to handle construction equipment, to play in the sand and water trays and to use scissors, crayons and paintbrushes. Children fill pots with compost, assemble a wooden train set, put jigsaws together and learn how to use scissors correctly. As a result, they develop better control and co-ordination. There is a strong emphasis on outdoor activities, and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. During a session in the outdoor play area, children played on the slide, seesaw and roundabout, kicked a football to each other and rode two-seater tricycles round the playground, taking care not to collide with other children. When it began to get chilly, the nursery nurse led a vigorous chorus of *Heads, shoulders, knees and toes* with suitable actions to warm up the children. At all times, children co-operate sensibly, take turns and share equipment fairly.

## Creative Development

65. Children make good progress in developing their creative skills due to good teaching in both classes. Teachers provide access to a wide range of resources and materials, and children work diligently, concentrate well and use the equipment sensibly. They make handprints in paint, and learn how to hold a paintbrush correctly to draw circles and faces. They stick felt and wool onto paper plates to create the faces of *Old McDonald's animals* and use polystyrene blocks dipped in paint to print *k* patterns onto model kites. In one lesson, they used scissors to cut *petals* out of sugar paper and foil, and created attractive flowers by sticking these onto paper using a glue stick. They mix chocolate flavoured *Angel Delight* to look like soil, and break off pieces of *Strawberry Laces* to resemble a *wormery*. During one lesson in the nursery, children used construction toys to make monsters and spaceships. The school makes good use of additional funding from the Salford and Trafford EAZ to provide a specialist music teacher. During a good music lesson, children clapped their hands and tapped their feet in time to the rhythm of the music, followed the *conductor's* instructions when playing percussion instruments, and altered the dynamics of the music by playing loud or soft. Children frequently sing nursery rhymes and join in the actions that accompany the songs. As a result of good teaching in both classes, most children achieve skills broadly in line with those expected for their age at the end of the reception year.

## ENGLISH

66. Standards in the tests for 11-year-olds in 2001 were below the national average but better than those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils made very good progress to reach this level from their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in 2001 were well below the national average but were better than those in similar schools. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen at a faster rate than the national trend.

67. Inspection findings indicate that standards have been maintained in Years 3 to 6 and are rising in Years 1 and 2. This follows the school's decision to introduce daily phonics lessons in Years 1, 2 and 3. Pupils work in small groups every day and are given intensive help to develop their knowledge of letter sounds. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are still dependent on reading words from memory and this reduces their dependence on recognising words they have memorised. This more structured approach to phonics is successful not only in helping pupils to learn a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words but also in improving their spelling. The quality of teaching in English is good overall, a picture similar to that found in the previous inspection.
68. Most pupils come into the reception class with such low skills in speaking and listening that they do well to reach standards at a level below that expected nationally, by the time they are 11. This is because teachers put considerable effort into encouraging pupils to express themselves clearly with an increasingly interesting and varied vocabulary. This encouragement forms the basis of the very good relationships between teachers and pupils and gives pupils the impetus to make contributions to discussions. Their self-esteem is boosted by teachers' carefully chosen words of praise. Teachers have good strategies for improving pupils' spoken language in different situations. These are as varied as learning to be an interviewer or an interviewee in Years 4 and 5, and, in Year 2, describing the Fire of London as seen through the eyes of Samuel Pepys.
69. As with speaking and listening, pupils do well to reach standards at a level below that expected nationally, by the time they are 11. A strength of teaching is how the basic skills of reading are taught. This is demonstrated in the daily reading sessions in Years 3 to 6 when pupils are encouraged to use all the strategies they have been taught, not only to read books but to make sense of what they are reading. These sessions are particularly beneficial because all staff are employed, and this enables pupils to be part of a small group with similar reading skills and thereby to receive the support necessary for their individual needs. These sessions also ensure that pupils practise their reading skills every day and this compensates for the lack of opportunities they have to read at home. Teachers are good at getting pupils to read 'between the lines' to help them to gain an insight into characters and their feelings. The teacher in Years 5 and 6, for example, by asking questions such as *Why didn't the boy show the bug to his friend?* and *How did he feel when the science teacher laughed at his bug?* helped pupils to understand the boy's actions later in the story.
70. Pupils have very good attitudes to reading and this is due partly to the success of the junior library. Pupils were originally attracted to the library because of the novelty of having their thumb print scanned after choosing a book, but now they use it because they enjoy reading. Pupils in Year 6 make good library monitors and use their computer skills to ensure that the library runs smoothly and efficiently. By the time pupils leave Year 2, they use a range of techniques to tackle unfamiliar words when reading and realise when they have made a mistake. As they leave Year 6, most pupils discuss their preferences in reading and make comparisons between authors. A higher-attaining reader described Jacqueline Wilson's books as *Not as magical as J. K. Rowling's, but I can relate to the characters in her books.* Teachers use their good range of resources effectively to teach how books are organised. As a result, from Year 2 onwards, most pupils can find and use the contents, index and glossary pages in a non-fiction book.
71. All pupils are given a satisfactory variety of opportunities to develop their writing and they make a good effort to complete this, whether it be, for example, an extended story, a playscript or a newspaper report. A recent initiative by the school to focus on re-writing and improving work with pupils in Years 3 to 6 is proving successful in



developing the use of interesting words and phrases to enliven stories. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to take careful note of their teacher's comments on their first draft, and their second draft shows reference to his remarks. In a good lesson in Years 4 and 5, the teacher used pupils' first drafts of a newspaper report effectively to help them to make their second draft more interesting. By encouraging them to include more relevant information and stressing the importance of engaging the interest of the *reader*, their second drafts were made much more interesting and gained the attention of the class as they read them out.

72. The quality of handwriting reflects the strength of teaching throughout the school. Younger pupils are taught the correct formation and orientation of letters and all pupils are given regular opportunities to practise their handwriting skills. This ensures that pupils' writing is of a joined, fluent style. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, not only in their handwriting books but in all their books and folders. The quality of handwriting is given a high profile within the school and examples of pupils' work are attractively displayed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work and refuse to accept any that is untidy or slipshod.
73. The daily phonics practice is beginning to eliminate some of pupils' weaknesses in spelling in Years 1 to 3. As they put into practice what they have learnt during these sessions, higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 make few spelling mistakes when using one syllable words and use common suffixes such as *ed* and *ing*. Teachers in Years 4, 5 and 6 help pupils to improve their spelling by teaching spelling patterns and rules. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils readily volunteered spelling rules, for example, *The last letter is doubled when adding 'ing' if the next to the last letter is a vowel*. One pupil offered *beginning* as an example of the rule. Homework is set regularly to ensure frequent practice of spellings. By Years 5 and 6, the spelling and punctuation of higher-attaining pupils is usually sound, but average and lower-attaining pupils still make unnecessary errors such as *whent*.
74. Teachers give the right amount of help to pupils with special educational needs. They plan work that matches pupils' targets and enables them to complete the same range of work as other pupils but at a suitable level. Strong teaching and supportive guidance from classroom assistants ensure that they make the same good progress as other pupils in the school, albeit from a different starting point. Teachers make sure that pupils understand how to improve their work by discussing their targets with them and their parents. All work is marked and pupils are generally made aware of their strengths by the positive comments in their books. However, with the exception of Years 5 and 6, marking is not sufficiently constructive to move pupils on.
75. Teachers do not make enough use of other subjects to develop and reinforce pupils' reading and writing skills. There are some examples of written work in science, geography and history but too often, excessive emphasis is placed on pupils using worksheets where they have to write only one word or a sentence. This limits opportunities for extended writing in other subjects, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teachers do not use pupils' ICT skills well enough to develop and extend their writing, particularly in the infant classes. Initial drafts and final versions of pupils' writing are usually by hand, without using computers to draft, edit and re-draft work. More often than not, computers are used only for pupils to improve the presentation of the final draft.

76. Strong leadership for English has had a marked impact on standards, which have risen at a faster rate than the national trend since the previous inspection. Procedures to assess pupils' progress have improved and are used well to predict the levels pupils will attain by the time they leave school and to determine individual targets for them to achieve. The additional time allocated daily to English pays off by providing pupils with opportunities to read with adults each day. It has helped to raise standards in reading and has almost closed the gap between the attainment of boys and girls now that boys are receiving daily reading practice. The subject leader monitors the quality of planning, teaching and learning and all staff receive oral feedback. Through the monitoring of teaching, the concluding discussion sessions at the end of lessons have improved, and are used well to assess what pupils have learned during the lesson. Resources for English are good.

## MATHEMATICS

77. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Although attainment is below national expectations, most pupils do as well as they can and make good progress. This is because teaching is good, overall. Teachers are proficient in the way they use the National Numeracy Strategy to teach pupils how to think and explain themselves in mathematical terms. The school is consistent in its approach to teaching mathematics. Teachers concentrate on the basic skills of numeracy. As a result, many pupils calculate accurately and show a rapid response in mental arithmetic.
78. The school's consistent approach is the consequence of strong leadership and management of the subject. This has led to improvements in provision. The way the school checks pupils' understanding of what they learn and the way it monitors their progress as they get older have improved, and are now very good. This gives teachers an accurate picture of what pupils know and can do, and enables them to plan lessons aimed effectively at average attainment levels.
79. Teachers motivate pupils with interesting and lively discussions, and pose questions to make pupils think in different mathematical ways. For instance, in a good lesson in Years 5 and 6 the teacher introduced pupils to the concept of the *mean*, showing them ways of finding a rough average price of five items between £1.10 and £1.90. Pupils were adept at looking for quick and easy ways to add, for example, by doubling or looking for pence to make a pound. As a result, they worked quickly and reasonably accurately. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher required all pupils to explain their mathematical thinking, to check they knew which operation to use, addition or subtraction, in solving one-step and two-step problems. By insisting on specific replies and telling pupils *You're the teacher, you tell me*, she tested their powers of thinking and explaining in mathematical terms. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher set pupils real-life shopping problems in a practical situation. By asking pupils, *What kind of sum is it?* she got them to think carefully about finding the cost of two articles and giving change from 20p.
80. A weakness in teaching, found on occasions throughout the school, is the failure to use the school's very good information about what individual pupils understand to set challenging work for more able pupils and suitable work to meet the needs of the less able. When all pupils do the same work, some find it too easy and others too hard. This influences how quickly they learn. This led to unsatisfactory teaching and learning in one lesson. Pupils spent valuable time copying down the same problems from a worksheet into their exercise books instead of simply working them out. Less able pupils struggled with work which was too difficult, and made little progress. The more

able pupils got through more work than others, but did not learn anything more challenging.

81. A strength of teaching is the help given by teachers and classroom assistants to pupils with special educational needs. For instance, in a lesson in Year 2, the teacher planned one-step problems for pupils with special educational needs, while more able pupils tackled two-step problems. By spending a suitable amount of time with pupils with special educational needs, the teacher enabled them to learn at the same very good rate as others. However, the good effort involved in classroom assistants' help is wasted when the work set is too hard. In a lesson in Year 3, the hard work of both pupil and assistant came to nothing because the task, of adding nine to two-digit numbers using the same strategy as other pupils, was a step beyond the pupil's understanding.
82. The school's policy of placing emphasis on calculations and mental arithmetic makes a positive impact on how well pupils learn these important aspects of mathematics. Teachers' approach to mental arithmetic is a particularly strong feature and was seen at its best in a lesson in Years 4 and 5. In a fast-moving session that promoted quick thinking, pupils showed very rapid recall of facts, such as *one-sixth of 54*. However, the emphasis on those aspects of mathematics results in the neglect of other aspects, such as *shape and space* and *handling data*. Consequently, pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about them and this affects their overall attainment in mathematics. For instance, there are few examples of the use of computers to assist pupils' learning. The one lesson seen was an example of good practice. This was in Years 5 and 6, where the teacher showed pupils how to calculate the *mean* of a set of data by using computers. Although some pupils were confused about the concept of the *mean*, they were all very aware of the benefit of using a computer to learn and made good progress.
83. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject and the enthusiasm they show in lessons motivates pupils highly. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils underpins an ethos of mutual respect and an eagerness to listen, take part in discussions and work hard in activities. Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes make a positive impact on how well they learn.
84. The school has a good plan of action in place to keep the subject moving ahead. However, the school's system for monitoring teaching and learning has not yet addressed some weaknesses that need attention. Nevertheless, the leadership and management of the subject are strong enough to give the school the capacity to improve standards.

## SCIENCE

85. Standards in science are below those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6, and are below standards in similar schools. Scientific enquiry is particularly weak as there is often insufficient time for pupils to carry out their own investigations, especially in Years 3 to 6. This is a similar situation to the previous inspection, when pupils were performing below the national average because of the limited work undertaken in the time available. This lack of adequate time was also reflected in the results of the national tests in 2001 when standards achieved by 11-year-olds were well below the national average, and overall standards achieved by seven-year-olds were also below average.
86. The quality of teaching, as at the previous inspection, is satisfactory, overall, but there is not enough emphasis on pupils carrying out their own practical and investigative

work. This hinders pupils' ability to explore scientific processes for themselves, and to record scientific findings clearly. Teachers, especially of older pupils, do not place enough emphasis on showing pupils how to predict, how to plan their own investigations and how to carry out a fair test. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, for example, where pupils were revising the properties of different materials, the teacher effectively demonstrated a variety of reversible and irreversible changes such as melting chocolate and burning a candle. Pupils, however, were not able to plan and carry out their own investigations of the processes chosen for study. In a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, pupils observed the teacher carrying out a fair test on the strength of magnets. While pupils predicted the outcome of the experiment and explained why it was a fair test, they did not gain first-hand experience of using a variety of magnets themselves and adapting the investigation to extend their own understanding.

87. Teaching has a number of good features. Lessons are planned well, with appropriate learning objectives based on national guidelines. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson, for example, the teacher repeatedly used scientific terms such as *carnivore*, *decomposers* and *biodegradable* so pupils became familiar with them. Teachers lead discussions well. They ask lots of questions to make pupils think and give them opportunities to explain their ideas. This encourages pupils' scientific thinking and helps them gain confidence in expressing themselves clearly. Regular assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills ensures that teachers are clear about what pupils already know, and assessments are generally used well to ensure that the work planned for pupils matches their individual needs. Teachers make effective use of a good range of resources that stimulate pupils' interest and help to maintain their concentration, and new technology is used imaginatively. In an interesting lesson in Year 4 and 5, for instance, the teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard to display the results of an investigation into habitats. An interactive sequence on dissolving substances, displayed on the whiteboard, and a flexi-camera recording chocolate melting in a microwave oven were used effectively for teaching and learning in a lesson in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do not make enough use of computers, CD ROMs and the Internet themselves, however, to assist individual research and do not use ICT facilities enough to record the results of their own investigations as graphs and charts. This holds back their learning, especially for higher-attaining pupils.
88. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, and, as a result, pupils concentrate well, are keen to answer questions and have very good attitudes towards their work. Attractive displays of pupils' work stimulate further enquiry and show pupils that their efforts are valued. Teachers have a secure understanding and knowledge of science and this helps them to explain scientific ideas in a way that pupils can understand easily. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher made good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding of the properties of different materials. This helped pupils to sort a range of objects into those made from wood, brick, paper and plastic. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants. Children from ethnic minorities are actively involved in all discussions and activities. Good use is made of the school's wildlife garden. During an after-school club activity, for example, a group of children investigated the variety of mini-beasts found in the wetland habitat. Good use is made of occasional visits to the local high school for 'hands-on' science experiments, and children have enjoyed studying the stars inside a visiting inflatable planetarium.
89. The subject co-ordinator has only been appointed this year. She has already begun to monitor pupils' work and teachers' planning, but has not yet taken up opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching in the subject. She is starting to draw up appropriate strategies to raise attainment, but has not yet begun to manage planning and budgeting

for the subject. As a result, the school is currently limiting its capacity to improve standards further.

## ART AND DESIGN

90. Standards in art and design are typical of those found nationally for seven-year-olds, and are above national expectations for 11-year-olds. This is better than the previous inspection when standards were below expectations in Year 2 and in line with expectations in Year 6. By the time they leave school, pupils have been introduced to a wide range of techniques in two and three-dimensional artwork and they are beginning to show some sophistication and attention to detail. They have also developed a sound knowledge of some famous artists and their work.
91. The quality of teaching is better than it was at the previous inspection. This results in good attention to colour, line and tone in pupils' sketchbooks and a good eye for detail in the attractive artwork displayed around the school. The headteacher, who has good subject knowledge and expertise, has had a very positive influence on teaching in Years 3 to 6.
92. Teachers make good use of the work of famous artists to provide inspiration and to explore different techniques. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for instance, used strips of plaster of Paris wrapped round a wire framework to create life-like figures based on the work of Alberto Giacometti, and produced *Surrealistic* paintings in the style of Joan Miró. During the lesson, pupils listened carefully to their teacher's evaluation of their *maquettes*, and after observing the expressions portrayed by Giacometti, were keen to add expressions of anger or surprise to their models. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 used hundreds of colourful dots to produce *Dreamtime* paintings of fish in the style of Aboriginal artist Danny Eastwood, while a large, painted, papier-maché head with thick eyebrows and moustache was clearly inspired by a study of Salvador Dali.
93. A strength of the teaching is the good range of techniques and resources used by teachers to stimulate pupils' imagination. Pupils in Year 2, for example, enjoyed sketching patterns observed on fruit, vegetables, pine cones and leaves using pencil and charcoal. They paid good attention as their teacher showed them how to use a viewfinder to study the line and patterns found in nature, but found it more difficult to pay sufficient attention to detail as they sketched various objects. Pupils in Year 1 use a range of materials including pipe cleaners, feathers and bobbles when decorating papier-maché masks, and use charcoal, oil pastels and block paints when producing a variety of self-portraits. Older pupils use watercolours and wax-resist techniques to create a variety of effects when creating sea scenes, and use junk modelling and tissue-covered plastic bottles to design and create model pigs. They also use computer resources to design pieces of pop art. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use sketchbooks to draw fruits and seeds, to sketch patterns observed on bricks and radiators and to practise smudging techniques, though they could use them more extensively to prepare preliminary sketches and to make regular observational drawings.
94. The headteacher provides good leadership of the subject. She monitors the standard of pupils' work on display and checks the planning of other teachers. As she teaches all the classes in Years 3 to 6 and uses national guidance to assist her planning, continuity and progression of learning for the older pupils is good. There is a well-resourced art room, and this enables teachers to introduce a wide variety of media and techniques. The school grounds are used for inspiration, and good use is made of visits to the Lowry Centre at the nearby Salford Quays. About ten pupils regularly attend the weekly

art club after school. Pupils enjoy producing work of a high standard and are currently busy creating Roman-style mosaic pictures by painting, sorting and glazing square tiles cut from clay. Members of the art club visit the Whitworth Art Gallery and Salford Quays, while all Year 6 pupils see some of the artistic treasures in the British Museum during their annual residential trip to London. The school welcomes visiting artists as part of the Ordsall Arts Project, and there are plans to create outdoor sculptures in the wildlife garden later in the summer term.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Standards have declined since the previous inspection and are now below those typical for pupils aged seven and 11. This is because the school gives low priority to the subject, and does not give enough time for all aspects of the subject to be taught effectively. Teachers lack confidence and expertise because they have few opportunities to gain experience and have not received in-service training.
96. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make an attempt to use the time made available for design and technology to plan a series of lessons making, for instance, pop-up books to tell a story. However, they do not teach pupils to work from a design brief. The effect of this was evident in the only lesson observed. Because pupils did not work to a specific design when preparing a fruit salad, they did not learn to reflect on their ideas or to suggest improvements to the finished product. They worked without thinking carefully about what they were aiming for, and this resulted in a fruit salad of little aesthetic value.
97. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 provide pupils with very few opportunities to make progress in design and technology, and little work is planned. Where work was undertaken, for example, in Years 4 and 5, the pupils achieved little because the teaching offered limited opportunities to prepare original designs or to use anything other than pre-fabricated components.
98. There is a co-ordinator for the subject, but management of design and technology has lapsed and is ineffective.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. Standards in geography have not improved since the previous inspection and remain unsatisfactory. This is because the school gives less time to the subject than most schools and often does not make good use of the time made available.
100. The school's management of geography is not good enough to move the subject forward. The written policy for geography remains out-of-date and has lost its practical value. Although the school has improved the way lessons are planned by using national guidelines for the subject, coverage remains incomplete and is patchy. As a result, the curriculum is not broad and balanced and pupils do not learn enough geography. The school's system for checking on standards in the subject is not good enough to pick up weaknesses in the way geography is taught and learnt. Consequently, in every year group, work planned for pupils is unchallenging and little provision is made to develop their geographical skills.
101. The school makes little use of the local environment to stimulate pupils' interest by learning first-hand. Pupils in Year 2 follow routes using maps of streets in Dublin, but only in Year 1 are pupils given the opportunity to make maps for themselves, by

drawing what they see on a walk around the streets of Salford. While pupils in Year 3 learn about Leeds, they do not make comparisons with the city centre shops and offices in Manchester. By the time they are 11, pupils' skills in mapwork remain underdeveloped, and they colour in pictorial maps of the River Severn. The lack of practical work is exemplified by their weakness in drawing plans of their houses.

102. Much of the work pupils do is closely directed by the teacher, and there is little scope for pupils to learn from their own experiences. For instance, when pupils in Year 6 learned about the *water cycle*, they all coloured in the same worksheet diagram and wrote identical definitions of specialist terms such as *precipitation* and *condensation*. As a result, they did not learn to pose questions about geographical features for themselves or to find and analyse evidence.
103. The school does not have a system for checking and recording how well pupils learn in geography. This leads to lessons being planned without enough thought being given to matching the work to pupils' needs. As a result, much work is unchallenging for the more able and average-attaining pupils and they do not learn at a satisfactory rate. Similarly, much work is not suitable for the less able pupils, and those with special educational needs. Consequently, they do not gain a real understanding of what they do.
104. The school does not plan links with other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, well enough to assist pupils' learning in geography.

## HISTORY

105. Attainment in history is below national expectations and standards have fallen since the last inspection. This is partly because less time is being given to history following the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Although some good and very good teaching was seen during the inspection, weaknesses occur when teaching does not provide sufficient range or depth for pupils to improve their learning. Not enough attention is given to the skills of interpreting and recording historical evidence, and opportunities are missed to use pupils' interest in history to improve their reading and writing.
106. History is taught throughout the school by the subject co-ordinator who is funded by the Salford East EAZ. This ensures good continuity of teaching from one year to the next. The teacher uses her good knowledge of history and resources to motivate and interest pupils. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a wash board, a dolly tub and a bar of soap effectively to help pupils to make comparisons between wash days past and present. Her choice of suitable video material and her good questioning skills enabled pupils in Year 2 to empathise with Samuel Pepys during the Fire of London. A weakness in the teaching for this age group occurs when all pupils are given the same factual worksheet to complete and copy out. This slows the rate at which some groups of pupils work and does not make sufficient use of their reading and writing skills.
107. Most pupils make steady progress in some aspects of the subject. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, on the other hand, made very good progress in their learning during a visit from a *Roman Soldier* from the Deva centre in Chester. As they questioned him about his weapons and clothes, pupils made very fast progress in developing their skills of historical enquiry. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in their learning during the 'soldier's' visit because the work had been planned to match the ability of all pupils. The teacher's effective assistance enabled them to find information about the Romans, from a variety of books. This was not sufficient, however, to bring them into line with

expectations for their age. A weakness in teaching occurs when there is an over-emphasis on copying out factual information, with pupils simply adding missing words.

108. Visitors to the school, and visits to a variety of museums and places of historical interest make history more meaningful for all pupils. An annual residential visit to London gives pupils opportunities to see the Houses of Parliament and Thomas More's cell in the Tower of London.
109. The subject leader uses national guidelines to plan the curriculum, although, as yet, there are no formal procedures to check pupils' progress and what they know and can do. Good use is made of resources available from a local theatre and a museum loan service to supplement the school's existing artefacts. Teachers do not use ICT enough to assist teaching and learning in history throughout the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. Standards in ICT reach the level expected for 11-year-olds nationally. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards for seven-year-olds have fallen since the last inspection and are now below expectations. This is because pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to work with computers.
111. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. No teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. The school has adopted a comprehensive scheme of work based on national guidelines and this ensures that pupils are now learning ICT skills in a logical order. The school does not have a computer suite, although there are sufficient computers in the library to teach half a class at a time. This is managed well when the headteacher takes half of a class for art, leaving the class teacher to teach ICT skills to the other half. This enabled pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, to combine pictures and text in their '*Save Our Environment*' posters. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher used considerable expertise to demonstrate how to use a spreadsheet to find the average of a set of data. Very effective use of the interactive whiteboard enabled all pupils to see and manipulate the screen. Consequently, pupils learned the new skill quickly and understood clearly what they were doing. On this occasion, the teacher taught the whole class, which meant that his attention was divided between the two halves. Those waiting for their turn were kept occupied by performing similar calculations using pencil and paper methods, and were able to see the advantages of using a spreadsheet. The very good relationships between the teacher and pupils, and his high expectations of behaviour, ensured that both groups of pupils worked hard to complete their respective tasks.
112. Older pupils have only a limited understanding of control technology because of a lack of resources. They do not know how to use sensory equipment to collect data or how to make models move using control technology. They do, however, know how to access the Internet, and take great delight in sending e-mails to their e-pals in various parts of the world. They are justifiably proud of the school's website.
113. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are limited to using the two computers in their classrooms. This means that it takes a long time for pupils to practise a skill and, consequently, their progress is slow. They lack confidence using the keyboard and mouse. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 know how to type using the *space bar* to leave gaps, the *Delete* key to correct mistakes and the *Caps Lock* key to type a capital letter. They do not know that the *Enter* key starts a new line, or how to use colour or change the font size. Average and lower-attaining pupils know how to use the *Delete* key. They know that a *floor turtle* can be programmed to move in different directions and enjoy using the



games on a mathematics programme. They can drag a picture across the screen to change its position.

114. Although pupils are now developing a satisfactory level of computing skills during ICT lessons in the library, there is, as yet, little use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers have received some training in basic computer skills, but most lack sufficient expertise to use more advanced ICT skills and to introduce the use of computer programmes across all subjects. Resources have been developed well since the last inspection. There is a wireless network in the library that enables all computers to have an Internet link, and all classrooms have at least two computers in addition to the ten in the library. Teachers make very good use of the three interactive whiteboards to demonstrate new techniques to pupils. This not only speeds up the rate at which they learn, because everyone can see what is happening, but it also increases pupils' enjoyment. Teachers make excellent use of a flexi-camera used in conjunction with the interactive whiteboard. In Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher used both these resources to very good effect when demonstrating the effects of melting chocolate and wax as part of a science lesson.
115. The subject leader has used his expertise to give practical advice to colleagues, but has not yet taken up opportunities to observe the quality of teaching in the classroom. He makes good use of specific grants available to improve resources, and has correctly targeted the development of ICT skills across the curriculum and whole class teaching of ICT as areas for development. At present there are no systematic procedures for assessing and recording what pupils can do or for checking the curriculum for gaps in coverage. As new resources are continuously added to the school's supplies and staff confidence is set to increase through planned training, the school is in a good position to improve standards further.

## MUSIC

116. Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is better than at the previous inspection when standards of seven-year-olds were below national expectations. This improvement is due largely to the introduction of high quality teaching by visiting music teachers. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 are taught by a specialist teacher funded by the Salford and Trafford EAZ, while a peripatetic teacher from the Salford Music Service teaches pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. As a result, teaching is good, and often very good, throughout the school.
117. The visiting music specialists have very good expertise. Their planning has clear learning objectives, and there is a good stress on using correct musical vocabulary. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson, for instance, the teacher explained the terms *harmony*, *accompaniment*, *drone* and *melodic ostinato* carefully, and insisted that the pupils also used the terms. Pupils have fun when singing, and join in clapping and tapping exercises vigorously. Pupils in Year 3, for example, enjoyed identifying the changes in pitch as they sang their *Hello* song, while pupils in Year 1 clapped out the rhythm of *tiger*, *alligator* and *seal* enthusiastically, sang tunefully, and chanted *Jelly on the plate* with a good range of dynamics. Teachers make good use of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. In the Year 4 and 5 lesson, pupils played chime bars with a steady slow pulse to accompany a song, and then developed a *melodic ostinato* accompaniment as the pupils sang the song successfully as a two-part round. Pupils develop their understanding of pulse and rhythm well. In a Year 3 lesson, some pupils tapped out a steady pulse on their knees while others clapped a rhythm which they interpreted correctly from musical notation displayed on a portable whiteboard. Pupils in

Year 1 kept a steady pulse as they chanted *Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?* Pupils with special educational needs joined in well and made good progress.

118. Pupils develop their musical appreciation by listening to a range of music from different times and places. Opportunities to listen to a variety of music when entering and leaving whole-school assemblies, however, are often missed. Pupils sing a varied selection of hymns and modern worship songs during collective worship. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically, with satisfactory diction and rhythm.
119. Most of the music is taught by visiting teachers. Continuity and progression in teaching are maintained satisfactorily, however, as both teachers follow lesson plans based on national guidelines. Most music lessons are now taught in the Parish Room, where the additional space and good acoustics enhance pupils' performances. Four pupils receive lessons on the guitar from a visiting teacher. The school has a satisfactory range of percussion instruments and recorded music, but pupils are not given the opportunity to use computer programs, CD ROMs or the Internet to assist their learning. There are no regular weekly musical activities, but pupils enjoy taking part in concerts at Christmas time and during the summer term.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Most 11-year-olds achieve standards that match the levels expected nationally for their age. This is similar to the last inspection. No teaching was seen during the inspection in Years 1 and 2, and no judgement about attainment was possible for seven-year-olds. Standards in swimming are above those expected by the time pupils leave school. With the exception of Year 1, all pupils have a fortnightly swimming lesson taken by a qualified instructor. As a result, all Year 6 pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres, with many going on to gain all the awards available for distance swimming and personal survival skills. The school sensibly took the decision to increase provision for swimming because of its close proximity to the Salford Quays.
121. Provision for physical education has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but some teaching is very good. Teachers' expertise has increased because they now have the opportunity to work alongside a part-time specialist teacher. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these lessons because they take place at a very fast pace and pupils learn very quickly how to improve their skills. A very good feature of the teaching is the demonstration of techniques and movements to pupils so that they are able to improve their performance. This was evident in a Year 3 and 4 games lesson where a significant number of pupils were missing catches because of the positioning of their hands. Following the teacher's very effective demonstration, they became much more accurate when catching the ball, and rallies were sustained for a longer time. Pupils were delighted to meet the teacher's challenges such as to *move faster, keep the ball off the floor for longer and to beat their own record for hitting the wicket.*
122. Qualified sports instructors also visit the school on a weekly basis. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, strong emphasis was placed on the need for warm-up activities before taking part in vigorous exercise. Pupils enjoyed this part of the lesson and joined in enthusiastically in the good range of interesting exercises. However, during the rest of the lesson, there were no demonstrations of throwing and catching techniques and no opportunities for pupils to improve their performance. Some pupils had to wait a long time for a turn to practise their skills and this was unsatisfactory.

123. The school introduces pupils to the music and dance of cultures such as Ireland, Australia and America and provides opportunities for them to take part in a local dance festival. The Irish Dancing Club is so popular that it has to take place on *two* evenings after school to accommodate the numbers wishing to take part. Here, the Year 1 teacher uses her significant expertise to enable older pupils to make very good progress when devising and performing sequences of Irish dancing in response to music. Older pupils also have opportunities to experience activities such as football and rugby out of school time. Teachers use contacts with other local schools effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to take part in team sports.
124. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The recent introduction of a good scheme of work, provided by the local high school for all primary schools in the Salford East EAZ, ensures a good balance of sports, athletics, gymnastics, dance and swimming. Although some monitoring of teaching in Years 1 and 2 has taken place, the subject leader has not yet used the opportunities available to monitor teaching in Years 3 to 5. There are no formal procedures to check pupils' skills and understanding, so teachers do not have a firm grasp of what pupils can do well or where they need to improve. Resources are satisfactory and the school has good access to sports equipment through the *Top Sports* programme, through which future training for staff is planned.