

INSPECTION REPORT

Bridge Hall Primary School

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106032

Headteacher: Mrs J C Hackney

Reporting inspector: Mr J G F Parsons
22546

Dates of inspection: 17th-20th June 2002

Inspection number: 245906

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Siddington Avenue Bridgehall Stockport Cheshire
Postcode:	SK8 8NR
Telephone number:	0161 480 7889
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Trafford
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J G F Parsons 22546	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Physical education	What sort of school is it? School's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs G Marsland 13706	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Kerrane 23261	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English Design and technology Music Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
Mrs B Richmond 32142	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bridge Hall is a community primary school for the 3 to 11 age group. It is situated at the entrance to the Bridge Hall Estate that is mostly council-owned property and has the highest levels of social deprivation in Stockport borough. Most of the pupils come from this estate. There is high unemployment, significant poverty and social stress. At approximately 82 per cent, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is exceptionally high and has increased since the previous inspection. Attainment on entry is very low; children's speaking and listening skills in particular are extremely weak. There are 176 pupils on roll, including 15 full-time and 9 part-time children in Nursery. There are very few pupils (one per cent) from minority ethnic groups and none has English as an additional language. At 51.3 per cent, the proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs is extremely high. The majority of these are on the early stages of the Code of Practice¹ but 2.8 per cent have Statements of Special Educational Need. This is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school. After a difficult period in the previous two years with many staff absences and several temporary, sometimes inadequate, teachers, standards are beginning to rise. This is because of:

- the good management systems introduced throughout the school;
- the very strong support of the local education authority;
- the employment of a core of well qualified and experienced teachers;
- the teaching and learning policy, which has improved teachers' planning and led to the high quality of teaching;
- an effective policy to improve pupils' behaviour;
- the strong vision of the headteacher and governing body for the future, giving the school a clear sense of direction and the motivation to succeed.

The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">? The good quality of teaching and learning across the school enables pupils to make good progress.? Pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. They review their work and co-operate well.? The links with parents have improved and have contributed to their children's learning and improved behaviour.? The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future. The school has developed good management systems and has a strong core of dedicated and committed teachers who are beginning to raise standards.? The governing body plays a full part in the life of the school and hold both it and headteacher to account.? The strong support for pupils with special educational needs has had a positive impact on their overall progress.? The caring atmosphere and high morale are having a strong impact on standards. |
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What could be improved

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">? The overall improvement of standards remains slow because of absent staff and the past severe shortage of teachers. The quality of speaking and listening skills generally, and in particular for boys, is very low across the school.? Attendance is very low and well below the national average.? Responsibilities within the school have not been properly distributed; the shortage of staff means there are not enough subject leaders.? Assessment procedures have been introduced but are not used by all teachers across the school.• There are not enough resources in some subjects. |
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The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in May 1998. Since then, because of the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher and a severe shortage of teachers, the school has only very recently started to improve. Standards remain low in most subjects. Pupils have made good progress recently because of the improved staffing and quality of teaching. Planning now makes the objectives of lessons clear so that pupils know how well they are learning. The staff's intensive literacy and numeracy training has improved the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Science has also improved greatly. The monitoring and promotion of good attendance are effective features, but attendance nevertheless remains well below the national average. Great efforts have been made to develop links with parents, who now consider it a good school. The standards in religious education have also improved. There were no incidents of aggressive or challenging behaviour because the whole-school policy is starting to have a positive impact. Assessment procedures have been significantly improved and systems are in place to track the progress of individuals, but these are not consistently applied. The procedures for identifying and developing pupils with special educational needs have improved significantly and are good.

STANDARDS

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

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

By Year 6, standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science are very low and in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. Standards are well below the standards of similar schools in English, but are in line with standards in similar schools in mathematics and science. Science in particular has made great gains; the number of pupils who achieved the national average rose by 70 per cent, from 2000 to 2001. In the national tests in Year 2, standards were also in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. There are four main reasons for this, particularly where English is concerned. Attainment on entry is very low. Pupils have very restricted speaking and listening skills and, even in the later school years, few speak in complete sentences. Since the previous inspection, the school has had a severe shortage of staff, including the long term absence of the deputy headteacher. Over 50 per cent of pupils across the school are on the register of special educational needs and a significant proportion of these were in the groups that sat the tests. High mobility of pupils is another factor in the low standards achieved in the school.

The inspection found that, by Years 2 and 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are still below the national average but are improving significantly. This improvement is especially marked for the few pupils who are not on the register for special educational needs. Improvements have been caused by recent advances in the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics; the effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; a better practical approach in science; and good teaching of basic skills. During the period of staff shortages, the school's concentration on basic English, mathematics and science came at the expense of some other subjects. By Year 6 standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age in history and geography. By Years 2 and 6 they are in line in information and communication technology and physical education. However in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education across the school they are below. The weaknesses in these subjects are beginning to be addressed; the school is aware that a richer practical curriculum will benefit overall progress. The level of work set in lessons ensures that pupils achieve their full potential. The inspection found that there are few higher attaining pupils, so that overall standards are inevitably low. Progress is generally good across the school, but the new systems and improved quality of teaching have not been in place long enough to raise standards to the expected level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils are keen to go to school and motivated to learn. There are a few who are still not engaged fully during lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Behaviour is improving as the staff is now more settled and the school is implementing the new behaviour management policy.
Personal development and relationships	Good. There are positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility.
Attendance	Poor. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance is well below the national average, although the record of unauthorised absence is improving.

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.

The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good across the school, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where there was unsatisfactory teaching. It is important to point out that two teachers had only just joined the staff at the time of the inspection and were on loan from elsewhere to cover absence. Teachers manage their pupils well and plan challenging lessons effectively. The techniques from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted in other subjects and have resulted in better standards. The clear statement of objectives ensures pupils understand what the lesson is trying to achieve and what is expected of them. In lessons, teachers use an effective range of behaviour-management strategies. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve to a suitable standard. Generally, good teaching is producing good progress, although the high quality teaching found during the inspection is relatively recent. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons, although a number are not given enough training or guidance from teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The range of learning opportunities in English, mathematics, science, the Foundation Stage and physical education are well developed. The range is more limited in most other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils make up more than half the school and are fully included in all subjects. The refinement of procedures to ensure the movement of pupils on and off the register of special educational needs has been particularly successful.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Effective teaching has a very positive effect on social and moral development and promotes good spiritual development. Pupils are aware of the beliefs and traditions of their own culture but know little about the multi-cultural nature of modern British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. This is a caring school. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance and good arrangements for child protection and health and safety. The school has not yet implemented effective ways of assessing pupils throughout their school career.

How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good. The majority of parents support the school, which has improved links through regular communication including meetings, newsletters, curriculum information and reports on pupils' progress.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher and senior staff have a strong vision for the future of the school and a commitment to ensure that it succeeds. However, there is no deputy headteacher and, because of staff shortages, many subjects are not fully managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is much more involved in the life of the school and more effective in raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Through intensive monitoring, the school has a clear picture of where it is now and what it needs to do to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses available finance carefully. The principles of best value are observed. The planned carry forward of finance is to develop the school's facilities further.
The adequacy of staffing accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. The staffing of the school has improved but there is still a shortage of permanent teachers. Accommodation has improved and is now good, following the introduction of a new computer suite. Resources are generally adequate, but there are shortages in some subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There were 171 questionnaires sent out and 37 returned (21.6 per cent). There were two parents at the meeting held for parents and carers.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>? All parents and carers agree that the teaching is good and the school has high expectations.</p> <p>? Most agree that their children are making good progress. They are kept well informed and would be comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. They also agree that the school helps their children to mature.</p> <p>? The majority consider that their children like school, that behaviour is good, the school is well led and managed and it offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>? A few parents consider that there are not enough extra-curricular activities.</p>

The inspectors agree with the positive views most parents expressed. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter school at three. The standard is generally very low. The majority come from an estate that has significant social stress and the highest levels of deprivation in Stockport. Most entrants, but boys in particular, have very low speaking and listening skills, poor social skills and low self-esteem. Over 60 per cent of pupils on roll are boys. Their lack of skills, and that of a number of girls, has a marked impact on their future development. It at least partly accounts for more than half of all pupils being on the register for special educational needs.
2. Good progress is made in Nursery and Reception (Foundation Stage). Much of this early period is spent teaching social awareness and extending their, very limited, vocabulary so they are at least able to function within the school environment. The school does this well, using the recommended early learning goals² to develop children's global learning, and good progress is made. However, despite this significant improvement, when pupils start Year 1, standards are still well below those expected for their age and, until recently, the gains made in Nursery and Reception have not been continued in Years 1 and 2. This was largely due to frequent staff absences and a shortage of teachers and has now been remedied. The inspection found, therefore, that pupils were making good progress in lessons whilst still having some severe difficulties because of low-level speaking and listening skills.
3. In the national tests of 2001, pupils in Year 2 achieved very low results in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are in the lowest 5 per cent of those tested nationally. Even compared with similar schools they are below the national average and have been so over the past four years. Besides the very low standards on entry, the staff absences, the shortage of teachers and high mobility of pupils are significant factors in these results. Children with special educational needs account for more than 50 per cent of all pupils. This situation has at least partially been resolved. The school now has a core of well-qualified and effective teachers and the good teaching seen during the inspection is having a significant impact on improving progress in Years 1 and 2. The teachers' concentration on raising language skills and vocabulary through the techniques of the National Literacy Strategy was particularly noticeable. There was evidence of the development of mathematical skills through the National Numeracy Strategy and the use of relevant language during practical science work.
4. National tests of 2001 for Year 6 resulted in low standards. When compared with the national average, particularly in English, they are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally and are well below average when compared with similar schools, though it is important to point out that this comparison may not be a fair one. The yardstick used for levels of deprivation that might affect standards is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Here, at 82 per cent, it is well above most schools in the country. However, there has been an improvement in the mathematics and science results in the 2001 national tests. In both these subjects, standards are in line with similar schools, although well below average in mathematics and below average in science when compared with national figures. The progress can be ascribed to the stability of the teaching staff and the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is a major factor in improving standards in mathematics and lessons

² Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class.

in mental agility and the approach to problem solving have been successful. In science, a more practical approach to the subject, linked to developing basic skills, has raised standards significantly in recent years. Pupils jumped from 8 per cent achieving the national average to 78 per cent in one year from 2000 to 2001. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy Strategy in Years 3 to 6. The highly structured lessons, with their concentration on vocabulary and basic skills, present an ideal approach for pupils with low-level language skills. This is beginning to improve standards in English by Year 6. As in Years 1 and 2, the lack of higher attainers is noticeable in Years 3 to 6. Many pupils who have the potential to attain good standards are restricted by their low speaking and listening skills and this in turn depresses their achievement in most subjects.

5. Analysis of results in national tests for the past three years indicate that boys achieve consistently lower than girls in all subjects. The school is aware of this and the inspection found that pupils were treated equally within lessons and reluctant boys were encouraged by teachers to respond. Assessment procedures are implemented inconsistently. This sometimes leads to pupils who are higher attainers not being identified and work not challenging them enough. Class teachers set homework regularly and most parents consider that the school gives an adequate amount.
6. In recent years, many of the factors that have conspired to thwart the school's considerable efforts to raise standards have been outside its control. For example, the school has had no control over the shortage of teachers. The inspection found that overall progress was good and standards should continue to rise if the high quality of teaching and staffing levels are maintained.
7. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve well and at a suitable level for their age and prior attainment. The process of selecting them for the register and the way they graduate from special help into the mainstream have both been considerably and successfully revised. Only those who would benefit from such support are identified and, therefore, the approach to them is focused and effective. The standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are often well below those expected for their age but are nevertheless satisfactory in relation to their identified needs and targets. These targets are clear, specific, achievable and suitably challenging; most make good progress towards them, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills and in behaviour. Teachers' tracking of progress is satisfactory and this contributes to the pupils' opportunities to succeed. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils' work is always valued and this encourages them to try harder. They receive additional input from dedicated support staff. Good progress is made because of referral to individual targets when planning work. There is a focus on the development of language skills.
8. In history and geography by Year 6, and across the school in information and communication technology and physical education, standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils' age; in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education they are below. There has been a good effort to raise the standards in information and communication technology with staff training, increased resources and the introduction of a computer suite. Unfortunately, the theft of computers after two burglaries this year has led to a shortage of computers. Despite this, standards in information and communication technology are fast improving. In physical education, the school has realised that, given the restricted lives led by many, exercise serves as a good outlet and pupils are motivated to do well. History and geography is approached in an effective, practical way. Given its more stable staffing situation and improved quality of teaching, the school has realised the time has come to improve standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. It is well prepared to do this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection in 1998. Parents have confirmed that their children enjoy coming to school. Most pupils are enthusiastic, interested, involved in most activities and listen well to their teachers. There were good examples of this in a Year 5 religious education lesson, where the class discussed the community, and in a Year 6 information communication technology lesson on searching a database. Pupils particularly enjoy classroom discussions and practical activities. However, some pupils are slow to settle down to their work and, when tasks become more difficult, lack concentration and perseverance. This was seen in a Year 4 design technology lesson where the design of a security alarm was discussed, but the pupils' interest was lost when they were asked to record their ideas. Teaching staff are patient and use suitable praise and encouragement. After-school activities, such as the football club, rhythmic gymnastics and lunchtime clubs, are well supported. Positive attitudes contribute well to successful learning and support attempts to raise standards.
10. Behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. It is beginning to improve now that the staffing difficulties are being resolved and the new behaviour management policy is becoming established. Parents support the policy and have confirmed that it has led to improvement. Although some pupils can be challenging, as reported in the last inspection, the number of fixed-term exclusions is falling. Teaching staff have received training in positive behaviour management and are now managing incidents more effectively. Most pupils now know what is expected of them; they understand the difference between right and wrong and the impact their actions could have on others. When there is a problem, targets are set for improvement and, if necessary, the support services are involved. All pupils are now encouraged to co-operate with staff in resolving difficulties and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. There were no bullying or racially motivated incidents during the inspection. The generally positive attitude has a good effect on the quality of learning in lessons.
11. Relationships within the school are good. They are caring and friendly, both among the pupils themselves and between the pupils and the permanent staff. There is an overall mutual respect, which acts as a key factor in securing good behaviour. At lunchtime, the pupils talk sociably with each other and with the supervising staff. They support each other's learning, working and playing well together in pairs and groups, regardless of gender. Good relationships are a strong feature of this school. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding. They are well behaved and respond well to the encouragement they receive. This helps to boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements.
12. The school is successful in promoting personal development. The pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident in a Year 6 religious education lesson, where, without fear or embarrassment, they discussed feelings and emotions. They take responsibility for tasks around the school and are reliable and trustworthy. They act as monitors in assembly, in class, in the library and office and for litter. A group of '*playground pals*' has been established to support younger pupils. Its members are easily recognisable, wearing their red baseball caps, and they ensure everyone has a friend to talk to or play with during breaks and lunchtime. Children in Year 6 also run lunchtime art, dance and games clubs for Years 1 and 2. Later in the year, the headteacher intends to develop a school council that will ensure pupils' views are taken into consideration. These responsibilities have a good effect on personal development.
13. Despite the rigorous efforts of the headteacher, the teaching staff and the educational welfare officer, the overall attendance rate is poor and is well below the average for

primary schools. Raising these levels has already been made a priority and a thorough analysis of attendance is being undertaken. The parents of some absentees are difficult to contact by telephone, but the school's insistence on letters of excuse has reduced unauthorised absence. There are a high number of unavoidable, authorised, medical absences. Registration meets legal requirements and is undertaken efficiently, but there are still frequent latecomers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was good overall. In about 80 per cent of lessons it was good or better and it was very good in about 30 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, an improvement on the previous inspection when there was some. Because of staff shortages and absence, half the teachers during the inspection were temporary.
15. The quality of teaching is good for the Foundation Stage, with some very good teaching in Reception. Most of the very good teaching in the rest of the school was concentrated in Years 5 and 6.
16. The adoption of the Foundation Stage curriculum (for Nursery and Reception) has enabled the teacher to develop children's basic skills, particularly of the early learning goal of *communication, language and literacy*, which are very low on entry. For example, in a shared reading lesson, the Reception teacher asked simple questions in an interesting way that made the children look for the animals and notice differences, helping to develop children's reading skills. The Nursery nurses check that, in lessons, the children are able to say what they think and feel clearly. This helps the early learning goal of *personal, social and emotional development* and so addresses another deficiency at this stage. In all other learning goals good teaching ensures children make satisfactory progress at least.
17. Because of the good or very good teaching in Nursery and Reception, pupils develop a positive attitude to school and to learning. The Reception teacher is careful to develop pupils' vocabulary and understanding, constantly reinforcing them through probing questioning. This teaching is frequently very good and it noticeably accelerates progress towards the achievement of all six areas of learning. In *mathematical development*, practical activities, such as weighing and measuring using trays filled water and sawdust, result in quick progress. They use a good range of bricks and practical apparatus carefully selected by the teacher. In both year groups, the teachers show an interest in what the children have to say, encouraging and welcoming ideas and views. This fosters confident speech. In the Reception class, politeness and good manners are reinforced as children learn to wait their turn and to listen to others.
18. Extra support is given to those with particularly low basic skills. The careful use of everyday items, such as cardboard boxes representing the buses to Blackpool, adds quality to the learning environment. In Reception, children learn to use language to express their thoughts about what they are doing. The teacher uses comments and skilful questioning to focus attention and gives sensitive support to those with special educational needs.
19. Teaching across the school has improved since the 1998 inspection when occasional unsatisfactory teaching was identified. Positive features have been sustained. All the teachers manage their pupils firmly and fairly. As a result pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and are aware when they do not meet expectations. They are kept attentive and focused by reminders to listen, to give their full attention and remember what they hear; for example, in a Year 5 music lesson in which the whole class actively participates. They often work at a better pace when the lesson is broken into several, shorter sessions. Throughout the school, the management of behaviour is generally

good as the policy is carefully followed and pupils know what to expect. Praise and encouragement reinforce good work habits.

20. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall and pupils progress well. The pace of many lessons is good, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6 where teachers' expectations are high and pupils are motivated to greater efforts. Whiteboards are used effectively throughout Years 3 to 6 to make sure all the class is involved in mental activities. Effective questioning encourages pupils to notice and think. At the end of lessons, teachers review what has been covered, as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on multiplication.
21. There are several reasons why the teaching is good and very good. One is that learning objectives are made clear at the start of lessons, as in Year 1 where there is good progress in movement skills because of the teacher's carefully explained instructions. Other positive examples are:
 - in a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher's good relationship with the class allowed her to offer positive criticism of work;
 - in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm were passed on so the pupils worked hard, remained on task and enjoyed what they are doing;
 - in a Year 5 history lesson, the teacher skilfully used a good range of historical artefacts from the 1950s.
22. Effective teaching of basic skills in reading, spelling, punctuation, handwriting and number work is building a solid foundation for improving standards. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared. The teachers' good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies shows in the quality of planning, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The teachers have specific learning intentions for the pupils and precise teaching points for groups. Planning is not always as clear in other classes, especially for group reading and writing sessions. Sometimes teachers' handwriting is not a good example of letter formation or presentation. Standards of marking vary. At its best, it is informative and helps pupils to learn, but too often it simply consists of a tick, a cross or nothing at all. There are few instances where the marking is used to prompt a response or where targets are referred to in English and mathematics. However, in Years 5 and 6, there are some very good examples of pupils discussing what they must do to improve, such as in a Year 6 handwriting lesson.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because they have been assessed accurately, using outside agency support if necessary, and their individual education plans are carefully targeted to help them learn. Most teachers use a wide range of challenging strategies to motivate and involve. Progress towards targets is monitored regularly. Most records are now well maintained and are regularly updated so it can be carefully tracked. Diaries for teaching assistants have been introduced and further training is planned to ensure notes are detailed enough. Information and communication technology is used to support teaching: for instance, by using word-processing packages and the Internet. Pupils use a range of software, for example *clicker*, *easy peasy maths*, *textease*, to support their learning.
24. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning across the school. However, on occasions they are not always fully briefed about the lesson and are less effective as a result. Some spend too much time listening to the teacher rather than supporting pupils. In the most effective literacy lessons, assistants check that pupils understand what the teacher is explaining, but this practice is rare. Assistants give valuable support to those with special educational needs. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, a small group of boys was carefully supported in their understanding. Teachers work in partnership with classroom assistants and the special educational needs co-

ordinator. Though lesson plans do not always clearly identify what different pupils are to learn, teachers are generally alert to the needs of the different groups in the class.

25. In mathematics, all the teachers are sharpening the pupils' use of number through daily sessions of mental problems. Small whiteboards are used effectively to show individual's responses and the methods they used. A strength of the teaching in science is the way practical experiences are used to encourage pupils to predict and to draw on their previous knowledge. In the more effective lessons, pupils are encouraged to explain and to extend their thinking. As a result, they benefit from *seeing and doing* as well as listening to the teacher. Year 6 make sensible comments on the way compost breaks down as they discover which material in their modified plastic bottles will rot first. In a very good information and communication technology lesson, using homemade record cards, the teacher explains the concept of a database and the importance of organising information to make it more usable. A Year 5 religious education lesson provides interesting challenges such as writing in Arabic, making illustrated booklets and giving opinions. Even though these experiences are very worthwhile, teachers sometimes neglect to promote presentation and punctuation skills. Self-discipline and learning skills are fostered by the insistence on good behaviour and adherence to class rules.
26. The teachers set homework, which is often related to lesson content. Reading books are expected to be taken home and spellings learned, but motivation is frequently weak and is difficult to establish because of lack of parental help.
27. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning and her monitoring has had a significant impact across the school. The development of teaching has been well supported by the local education authority through in-service training, planning advice and monitoring.

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

28. Overall, the school provides a curriculum for children who are under five years old and for those in Years 1 to 6 that has a suitable range of subjects appropriate to the needs of the pupils. This meets statutory requirements. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In addition, religious education follows the agreed syllabus and the daily act of collective worship fully meets statutory requirements. Some subjects, such as history, geography, design and technology and information and communication technology, are not given sufficient priority. Whilst they have improved since the last inspection, they still do not ensure work builds on previous learning. The provision for sex and drugs education has not been fully implemented. In some subjects, there are good opportunities for clear and confident speaking and for attentive listening, which are contributing to personal development as well as learning.
29. The quality of the curriculum and the range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good for the under-fives and satisfactory for the rest of the school. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good and contribute to improving standards in these subjects by the end of Year 6. A more methodical approach to planning focuses on the importance of developing speaking, listening, writing and number skills within English and mathematics. At present, temporary and supply staff teach some classes. Consequently, not all curriculum areas have a subject leader.
30. A very good number of clubs and activities appeal to the interests of pupils. These aim to improve skills and understanding in a variety of sporting and artistic subjects and encourage personal development. They include football, netball and rhythmic gymnastics, as well as a performance club, a library club, Bridge Hall Kids' Club,

cheerleading, information and communication technology at Stockport County Study Support Centre and Year 6 lunchtime club.

31. The school actively promotes equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum for all and this intention is reflected in its vision, documentation and practice. It aims to be fully inclusive, and the evidence gained during the inspection showed this to be the case in all aspects.
32. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good and, within this, the provision for personal development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and work together as well as to respect both themselves and others. All year groups follow a relevant curriculum, geared to a gradual building of understanding about self and society. All are taught about healthy living. Healthy eating is actively promoted through the Drinks and Snacks Policy, which is clearly described in the school brochure. Self-esteem is continually built up throughout the school and the importance of persistence and confidence is reinforced. Pupils are taught citizenship and advised how they might prepare to play an active role in society.
33. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Parents and community groups are involved in supporting after-school activities. Year 6 have a link to White Watch of the local Fire Service and volunteers from Age Concern make regular visits.
34. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The school is part of the local education authority's school improvement network and from September 2002 will be included in the Stockport excellence cluster. There is a link with a beacon school and, during the time of the inspection, pupils and staff from both establishments worked together on curriculum enrichment activities, drawing and painting on panels destined for the library. A transition project is in place to support pupils with special educational needs in their successful graduation to secondary school.
35. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are good. Provision for spiritual development is good and for moral and social development it is very good whereas for cultural development it is only satisfactory. The school meets the statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.
36. Spiritual development is well promoted. As pupils progress through the school, they are given good opportunities to explore values and beliefs and to see the way they impact on people's lives. They celebrate their own beliefs, are taught to respect and appreciate the faiths and convictions of others and to understand how their actions can affect their fellows. The school actively promotes an atmosphere of courtesy and consideration where pupils are taught to respect themselves, their colleagues and the environment they live in. A range of posters around the school reinforces requirements of good behaviour: *'Bully Free Classroom'* for instance. Teaching styles that value pupils' questions and give them time for their own thoughts and ideas are promoted.
37. The provision for moral development is very good and the steady growth of respectful, responsible attitudes is central to the school's vision of *'Striving Towards Achievement Reaching For Success'*. *'The Golden Approach to Behaviour Management'* is a clear moral code and a basis for good behaviour, and is promoted in all classes. Staff, parents and pupils have a shared understanding of expectations. Staff are good role models and apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils are expected to understand the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Codes for behaviour are prominently displayed throughout the building. There are whole-school systems in place to reward good conduct and to deal with unsatisfactory behaviour. Examples are provided through assemblies. For instance, an assembly uses

old and new teddy bears to convey the idea that every person is important and capable of being loved, whatever their age or appearance. Assembly themes are furthered in class.

38. Provision for social development is very good and is linked in many ways to the provision for their moral development. The school aims to try to foster a sense of community and common, inclusive values and actively promotes the equality of all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively with each other whenever possible. Most pupils are polite and friendly and eager to be of assistance. Assemblies, team activities, residential experiences and school productions provide positive corporate experiences for pupils. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take responsibility. Year 6 are involved in running lunchtime clubs for younger pupils.
39. Provision for cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. There are opportunities to participate in school productions and other after-school activities. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits. For instance, Year 6 is visiting the Lowry Centre this year, Year 5 the Liverpool Planetarium and Years 1 and 2 Knowsley Safari Park. The teacher in Reception used the story *Handa's Surprise* to teach the children about the lives of people in other countries and pupils in a Year 4 geography lesson found out about the similarities and differences between their lives and those of people who live in India. However, pupils are not fully aware of the multi-cultural society of Britain today

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This is a caring and supportive school in which the well-being of the pupils is a priority and a feature of the drive to raise standards. This area is a strength. The school has established a *Breakfast Club*. The pupils arrive at school early, enjoy the food provided and are given a good start to the day. This enables parents to know that their children are safe, secure and well looked after before school starts.
41. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school follows the procedures in the local authority's health and safety policy and a whole-school risk assessment has recently been carried out. The school is working toward the *Healthy Schools* Award and encourages healthy eating with the sale of fruit and milk at break time. Staff and midday organisers supervise pupils carefully at breaks and lunchtimes and have been trained in behaviour management and care procedures. There are good arrangements for dealing with accidents and three members of staff have been trained in first-aid procedures. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection and 'looked after' children. Staff are aware of procedures, but the headteacher acknowledges the need for regular training in child protection due to staff changes.
42. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and are more rigorous than at the time of the last inspection. Parents are informed, in the school prospectus and a local authority newsletter, of the school's expectation regarding good attendance. The headteacher, educational welfare officer and staff take a firm line and attendance information is analysed. However, although there has been some improvement, the school does have difficulties in contacting some homes to discover the reason for absence and obtaining the necessary absence notes. The educational welfare officer provides very good support by monitoring attendance each week and visiting the homes of pupils who are absent or frequently late for school. Certificates are awarded for good attendance and the school has taken part in the 'Every Day Counts' project to raise attendance levels. The Breakfast Club is also successful in encouraging the pupils to come to school and arrive on time.
43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Behaviour is beginning to improve now that the staffing difficulties are being resolved and the new behaviour management policy is becoming established. The pupils' self-esteem and

confidence has improved and staff, including midday supervisors, are applying the behaviour policy more consistently. The pupils have agreed to the school rules and class routines and this has established a positive working environment in the classrooms.

44. The school's procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour such as bullying and racism are good. No bullying was seen during the inspection but when it occasionally does occur, it is dealt with by the headteacher who discusses the situation with the pupils and parents involved. All incidents are recorded in the '*blue box*' and action taken where necessary. An appropriate scheme of sanctions is in place for challenging behaviour, but pupils are encouraged to resolve difficulties by taking '*time out*' in another classroom and returning to their class with an apology for the teacher. This procedure was used effectively during the inspection.
45. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. They are founded on the good relationships between the staff and pupils. The teachers know their pupils well and although many procedures are informal, they are nevertheless effective. Personal and social education is taught within assemblies and lessons such as religious education. The school also uses group discussion periods known as '*circle time*' for raising awareness of issues such as behaviour. This makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. However, drugs awareness and sex education are not taught at present because of the recent staffing difficulties and the need to train permanent staff. The success that the school achieves in the support and guidance of the pupils has a good effect on attitudes, behaviour and learning and contributes to the school's efforts to raise standards.
46. The school has produced a thorough and comprehensive document that outlines assessment policy and guidelines. Teachers make judgements on work during and after lessons and at longer intervals, such as termly. Some teachers, in some subjects, are using the outcomes of these assessments effectively, but this practice varies. Results of tests that take account of age differences are analysed. This leads to specific developments such as grouping pupils according to ability and has been successful in matching teaching to their requirements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have begun to be involved in the setting of their own targets.
47. There is a lack of consistency in the standards of marking. Though some marking is constructive and gives guidance on how to improve, elsewhere it is brief and does not provide support or encouragement. Too much work in books is left unmarked and standards deteriorate as a result. This is sometimes because classes have had lots of teachers, but this is not always a valid explanation. The school has established assessment procedures. However, not all teachers follow this policy well enough, usually because they are new to the school or are temporary. The lack of some subject leaders means that assessment procedures are not monitored, but plans are in place to do this once appointments are made.
48. There has been improvement in assessment procedures since the last inspection. Some pockets of good practice are now established, but there is still a great degree of inconsistency across the whole school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The majority of parents have expressed good support for the school. They have confirmed that they are worked with closely and kept well informed of their children's progress. The school's partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection and is having a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes to the school.

50. The school has worked hard to ensure very good links with parents, who agree that they have improved. An *'open door'* policy is in operation and there are frequent newsletters to inform about events and achievements. The headteacher and staff are accessible when there are concerns. A suitable home/school agreement has been distributed and the majority of parents have signed and returned it. Golden assemblies, open days, parents' meetings, sports days and school productions, such as the 2001 *'Rock around Christmas'*, are well attended. A parent and toddler group provides a weekly opportunity for mothers and fathers to come into school. Those who have children with special educational needs are informed at an early stage in the process of identification. Letters for parents have been re-written in a more user-friendly way in order to further improve communication. Children's progress towards targets in their individual education plans will be discussed at the autumn parents' evening. Links between home and school are regular and constructive and help pupils to receive good support and make good progress.
51. Parental involvement has a satisfactory effect on the school life. Although the prospectus encourages involvement, only a small number mothers and fathers have responded. A small, supportive group organise fund-raising events such as jumble sales, raffles and sponsored walks; they assist at concerts, fairs and parents' meetings. One parent supervises the after-school football club and a grandparent runs the gymnastics club. The headteacher acknowledges this as an area for development. All the money raised is used to benefit the pupils through the purchase of equipment such as CD players and display stands. A recent penalty shoot-out provided funds for new equipment for physical education lessons.
52. The quality of information for parents is good. The school hosts *'welcome meetings'* at the start of each year at which the parents receive curriculum information and homework timetables. Parents have the opportunity to consult the staff formally each term to discuss their child's progress. If necessary a more convenient time can be arranged for those who cannot attend on the day. Pupils are also welcome to attend with their parents. The pupils' progress reports are good; they include all the required information and indicate what the pupils can do to improve their work. There is also a section in which the parents and pupils can make written comments. The school prospectus and governors' report are informative. However, the prospectus lacks details regarding special educational needs and the governors' report has no information on the admission and inclusion of disabled pupils.
53. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. A number of them help their children with homework and listen to them read. All have been informed about the school's expectations in the prospectus regarding homework. The home/school books are a valuable channel of communication; some parents use them well. The school runs the *Family Learning Project* for pupils and their parents in Reception and Year 1. Around six parents attend and are involved in two sessions each week based on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. One, potentially helpful, additional session is held where pupils and parents can work together.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher has a strong vision for the future of the school and the school is well led and managed. She has been in post for three years. She is an experienced manager and since her arrival has started a number of initiatives to raise standards and set priorities for the future. The past three years have been difficult ones, mostly because of general staff shortages and long-term absences, particularly that of the deputy headteacher. The school has frequently had to rely on short-term appointments, some of dubious quality, and the headteacher has herself had to fulfil a major teaching role.

Because of this, it is only recently that carefully and effectively planned management systems are being fully implemented and standards are starting to rise. The most effective action has been the effective implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum for Nursery and Reception classes and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These last two have been important factors in improving progress. The adoption of the whole-class teaching approach with clear objectives from the strategies has also been effective. Careful planning, the analysis of information about pupils' achievement and progress in the development of assessment, and the monitoring of teaching and learning have also played major parts in the improvements of standards. The headteacher has also been instrumental in developing a policy that relies on positive reinforcement of behaviour rather than the negative approach used previously. Parents consider this to be a significant improvement and the inspection found that behaviour was at least satisfactory, frequently good, with few pupils showing unsuitable or challenging conduct.

55. The governing body provides active support that, together with the positive intervention of the local education authority, has enabled the headteacher to manage the extremely difficult period prior to the inspection. She has recently established a core of committed and enthusiastic teachers who work closely as a team and are determined to raise standards. Although staffing is not complete, the governing body, local education authority and headteacher are confident it will be in the new school year.
56. The deputy headteacher has been absent for a significant period because of illness. The open team approach adopted by the headteacher has minimised the impact of this and all permanent teachers take on elements of the deputy's responsibilities. However, apart from English and mathematics, the lack of leaders means that subjects are underdeveloped. Documentation is in place for all subjects but this lack of personnel has led to slow development. English and mathematics are an exception where standards are beginning to improve, because of the effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
57. The previous inspection took place in May 1998. There were a number of issues related to improving schemes of work, raising teachers' expectations in Years 3 to 6 and developing assessment procedures. The schemes of work are certainly much improved following national guidance, as are expectations in Years 3 to 6, especially in the later years with the employment of new dynamic staff. Appropriate assessment procedures have been introduced. However, staffing difficulties have slowed development.
58. The management of special educational needs is good. Regular contact is maintained with outside agencies to ensure suitable provision and learning support. Procedures for identifying special learning needs have been much improved and there is now a clear distinction between lower attainers and those who have special educational needs. This enables the special educational needs supervisor to focus closely on where support is necessary. The individual education plans are effective, but breaking the targets into more manageable parts would enable faster achievements.
59. Resources are carefully husbanded with a planned financial carry forward for future developments of the school. The result is that expenditure is closely allied to the school's plan for improvement, which itself is linked to the improvement of standards. Principles of best value are used when purchasing goods and services as when costing the development of facilities. Suitable induction procedures are provided for new staff, including those who are newly qualified. In tribute to these procedures, the majority of permanent staff were originally temporary members who worked at the school and were monitored by the headteacher. This having been said, only strong candidates went forward. The school is keen to have student teachers but in recent years the high turnover of staff has made this impossible.

60. There is an adequate number of teaching and support staff. Teachers have a suitable range of qualifications and experience. During the inspection week, however, only four of the eight teachers present were permanent members of staff. The school is confident that this situation will be fully addressed in the coming year and appointments are about to be made.
61. Accommodation is good. Classrooms are of a suitable size and the refurbishment of the library, entrance and the addition of a computer suite have improved the facilities. The caretaker and cleaner keep the building clean and tidy. Outside, there are a couple of hard play-areas marked for games and a large playing field. However, some fencing has been damaged and requires attention. At present there are no facilities for disabled pupils.
62. Resources are inadequate for some areas of the curriculum. However, literacy, numeracy, physical education and science are suitably provided for. There is a particular lack of resources for art and design and design technology and a shortage of instruments for teaching music. The range and quality of the books in the library are limited, particularly for supporting geography and history, although the support of the local education authority's Schools Library Service enables specific topics to be taught and includes artefacts for development of lessons. There are not enough artefacts to assist in the teaching of religious education. There are not enough computers, particularly in the classrooms; this is because of frequent theft and vandalism outside of school hours.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. The headteacher and governing body should raise standards in all subjects by:
 - ? improving pupils' literacy skills, especially the level of spoken and written language, by ensuring good practice identified within the school is used consistently throughout it;
(paragraphs: 3-4, 7, 16, 22, 24, 29, 54, 56, 62, 73, 75, 78-79, 81, 94, 95 and 130)
 - ? building on the effective systems to encourage good attendance by implementing further strategies to encourage parents to fulfil their responsibilities for their children's attendance;
(paragraphs: 13 and 42)
 - ? increasing the strong team of teachers and delegating responsibilities to ensure that all subjects are managed effectively;
(paragraphs: 29, 47-48, 56, 80-81, 90, 96, 99, 105, 109, 113-114, 121 and 125)
 - ? consistently implementing the assessment procedures that have been introduced;
(paragraphs: 5, 41, 46-47, 48, 57, 97, 109 and 125)
 - reviewing and increasing the resources in the subjects that require them.
(paragraphs: 8, 62, 90, 99, 105, 107, 109, 115, 121 and 131)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

36

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

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	19	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	53	22	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost three 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)	19.5 FTE	152
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	86

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		17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving		30

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%		%
School data	7.7	School data	1.9
National comparative data	6.1	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	11	12	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	7
	Girls	9	10	9
	Total	13	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	57 (46)	65 (67)	70 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	4	9	4
	Girls	11	9	7
	Total	15	18	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	65 (46)	78 (96)	48 (63)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	12	11	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	0	5	8
	Girls	5	8	10
	Total	5	13	18
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	22 (27)	57 (23)	78 (28)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	2	4	8
	Girls	7	8	10
	Total	9	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	39 (31)	52 (50)	74 (27)
	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			Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0		Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0		Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2		Black – other	0	0
Indian	0		Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0		Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0		Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0		Chinese	0	0
White	133		White	93	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0		Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	18
Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.9.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	462,358
Total expenditure	449,186
Expenditure per pupil	2,337
Balance brought forward from previous year	-10,987
Balance carried forward to next year	49,948

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	157
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	19	0	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	24	5	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	38	0	3	2
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	16	5	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	19	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	19	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	22	5	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	16	8	8	17

Other issues raised by parents

Parents consider the school has made great improvements in pupils' behaviour in recent years.

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

64. This is a strong area. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage are good and their progress is good. This good quality continues the work found at the previous inspection, which was also good. The introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum has been effective in keeping the good provision for the Nursery and Reception age groups up to date. The high staff absence and the number of temporary teachers have not affected this stage of education to the same extent as the rest of the school.
65. Children are admitted to the nursery in the term after which they are three and attend part-time at first, with full-time places available from the first half term. They are assessed on entry to see what their general abilities are. The results are used to evaluate progress, determine whether they have special educational needs and ensure their progress towards the early learning goals (which are the expected outcomes for children by the end of Reception). Most have very low skills on entry and find expressing their ideas difficult. This very often means they find it difficult to mix socially with others. Even at this late stage of the year, some children in the nursery play alone and do not mix. All make good progress but, whilst a few achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception, many do not. They have a good attitude to the work they are expected to do, are attentive and try hard. Despite the good arrangements, many children have not reached the expected standard when they reach Year 1 because of their very low skills on entry and the fact that teachers have to compensate for the children's restricted backgrounds. Higher attainers are fully prepared for starting Year 1 but there are few of them.
66. The Foundation Stage is well managed and the head of department has organised the unit efficiently and effectively. When the department moves into an Early Years Unit in the new school year the teachers in Nursery and Reception will be able to work together even more closely to the benefit of the children. At this stage, the very few children identified with special educational needs are well integrated and supported.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Nursery and Reception classes work hard to integrate pupils in school life and make expectations clear. The good teaching encourages independence and choice when children use the different activity areas. For example, in the nursery they play in trays filled with water or with sawdust. They settle quickly, show interest in what they are doing and listen carefully to the teacher. During play sessions, most children in Reception play well together. However, in the nursery children frequently play as if they are alone. The good teaching recognises that children do not always relate easily to each other. To help the children learn to socialise, teachers and assistants encourage constant discussion, frequently using one-to-one questioning and showing how much they value the children's contributions. Good relationships have been established by all members of staff and this shows in the trust given to them by children and the effort children put into their work. By the time they have completed Reception, the majority are well adjusted and ready for Year 1. However, the inability of some children to express themselves frustrates them and means that they are not fully developed, both intellectually and socially. The few higher attainers are well adjusted and mature and by the end of Reception are ready for Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

68. At this stage of the school year, children are not speaking as well as expected. However, there are indications of good progress. They are not shy and willingly take part in discussions with the teacher, though they often give one-word answers. For example, in a Nursery lesson, a Nursery nurse uses a glove puppet and a dolls' house with furniture to illustrate a version of *The Three Little Pigs*. This serves to develop language, as the class identify words such as *bed*, *bath* and *cupboard*. They have more difficulty deciding whether the puppet is *below the bed*, *above the cupboard* or *in front of the furniture*. By the time they are in Reception, many children know that words in books give meaning and writing goes from left to right. Higher attaining children read simple story books and compare them to other tales they have heard or read. Although the legibility of their handwriting varies, quite a few pupils can write their names by the end of Reception. At this point, some children try to record in writing but only higher attainers achieve expected standards. In a good Reception lesson, a *feely bag* is sent round the circle, so that the object can be felt but not seen. The class describe their findings as '*round*', '*hairy*' and '*soft*', but usually not more than one word is given in answer. In the nursery, many children remember nursery rhymes and are frequently seen mouthing the words as a tape recorder plays in the background during other activities. They are introduced to books at a very early stage and frequently work with assistants on a one-to-one basis. For example, in the Nursery class, one child took great pleasure in enjoying the pictures and pretending to read a book about summer. The teaching in these small Nursery and Reception groups is good with much one-to-one work. The assistant carefully monitors progress as the teacher takes the lesson. This ensures that all staff have a good awareness of achievements and progress. A particularly good feature of the Reception's very good teaching is the constant development of vocabulary and the introduction of new words. This is done carefully so that children are always clear about their meaning. Even so, many do not achieve the standard expected for their age. Higher attainers are fully prepared by the end of Reception and have the necessary language skills.

Mathematical development

69. Children make good progress, but their poor language skills and very restricted previous experiences limit their understanding. By Reception, standards achieved are below expectations, though the teaching of basic skills is good. During one Reception lesson, children learnt how to take a smaller number from a larger by counting back. They enjoy expressing their thoughts and both the teacher and her assistant constantly reinforce language. To enable children to complete the task, good use is made of 100 number squares and number track to 15. Children know that four from seven is three and six take away two is four. Through playing in trays of water or wood shavings, younger ones learn about weighing and measuring. For example, they start to understand the relationship between the size of their measuring pot and the amount of water it will hold. A good range of bricks and various construction materials give children an informal understanding of measurement. Teachers take care to use mathematical language such as *in front*, *behind*, *bigger than*, *smaller than*, as in a game in the nursery when the Three Little Pigs' hiding place had to be guessed at. Good progress prepares children well for Year 1 and ensures they have at least some limited basic mathematical skills. By the end of Reception, higher attainers with their full range of skills are suitably prepared for mathematics in Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Many children have a very narrow view of the world. They rarely venture outside their immediate area. During their time in Nursery, they will often be taken for walks to familiarise them with their surroundings. In Reception, they explore their senses with the *feely bag*, identifying the shape and size of an unseen article by feeling alone. This experience helps them understand the importance of touch and to appreciate the five senses. In another Reception lesson, they appreciate their sense of smell and attempt to

identify different fruits. There are some successful attempts by higher attainers to record their findings in writing, but most children are more comfortable recording by drawing. Children in Reception learn how facts can be obtained from non-fiction books. They identify different fruits, such as *purple passion fruit*, and appreciate the alliteration. The teacher reinforces the book work by using real fruits, which are discussed, cooked and eaten. Some fruits, like the mango, are new to the children who talk about how England is too cold to produce it and it therefore grows in a hot country. Shortly afterwards, however, only the higher attainers could recall the name. Overall, the teaching is imaginative and good. It provides pupils with a wide range of experience and develops their rather restricted view of the world. It is, however, only the higher attainers who achieve the expected standards by the time they reach Year 1.

Physical development

71. Standards in physical development are broadly in line with those expected for the pupils' age. In a Nursery and Reception lesson, they are quite dextrous as they hold paintbrushes and pencils correctly and manipulate building bricks and construction equipment confidently. There is an outside play area and the housing estate has open spaces and playgrounds, which pupils use outside school hours. Because of the risk of vandalism or theft there is no fixed apparatus on which children can develop their upper body strength. There is a good range of smaller equipment, which is stored in a locked shed: cars, scooter and tricycles. These are frequently used in imaginary games, as when a Nursery child says to another, '*Go Blackpool*'. There is a slide and a tent, which children enjoy using, and all the equipment is used confidently. No direct teaching of physical development was seen and it appears to be mostly incidental. However, physical skills are improved during play periods with teachers giving suitable instructions and individual guidance. Together with good resources, both inside and outside the school, these develop children's skills so that they are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They are suitably prepared for Year 1.

Creative development

72. Standards are broadly in line with those expected for the children's age. They learn to paint and manipulate crayons and pencils. They are given many opportunities to express themselves through drawing and painting and use bricks and construction equipment to build. When they draw self-portraits or pictures of other people, the results are usually recognisable, although they do not always have details such as ears, hair and noses. Teachers make a feature of displaying work so that children feel pride and a sense of achievement and they are encouraged to appreciate each other's work. They use modelling materials to press, pull and manipulate. In singing or music sessions, they sing in time and take part in action songs, which some of them can remember later. The well-planned and well-resourced teaching enables children to make good progress. They achieve the expected standard, which prepares them for the National Curriculum in Year 1.

ENGLISH

73. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and remain so by the end of Year 6. Boys in particular have very low level speaking and listening skills. Standards in reading are higher than in writing. By Year 6, writing is affected by errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In response to a key issue from the 1998 inspection, the school has worked hard to try to raise standards in all aspects of English and especially for boys. Pupils in all year groups have experienced a wide range of written work, including stories and letters. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 experience different styles, such as biography, persuasive writing and official language. This has strengthened their knowledge and helped them to organise their writing more effectively, but it has only partly compensated

for poor learning in previous years. Although standards have improved, they remain low. Across the age range, achievement is also better than it was in 1998. In this year's national tests by Year 6, the school is unlikely to reach its '*challenging target*' of 54 per cent attainment at Level 4, but it should achieve its '*comfortable target*' of 41 per cent. The standards of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs are not significantly below their peers as they are mostly on the early stages of the Code of Practice. They achieve at a similar level but require more assistance with the work set. This low level of literacy across the school is a fundamental reason for standards being low in other subjects of the curriculum.

74. Standards in speaking and listening are low. When they enter Year 1, many pupils have only a narrow range of vocabulary and phrases. This serves them well in day-to-day conversations, but they often find it difficult to describe, explain and justify their argument. They make good improvements, because the teachers quickly identify where help is needed. By Year 2, speaking and listening skills are still below expectations for the age group. Many pupils speak fluently, clearly and confidently in conversation and when they respond to straightforward questions, but they don't find it so easy to reply to '*Why?*' and '*How?*' questions. This limits their attainment in all subjects in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Year 2, only the few higher attainers retell stories in detail, talk about their likes and dislikes in a book or give reasons for their opinions.
75. By Year 6, pupils make slow progress in speaking and listening. In all classes, only the higher attaining pupils justify their opinions with the use of well-structured sentences and an interesting choice of words. Not all pupils listen attentively and their responses often show they have only heard part of what has been said. Good teaching at the end of Year 6 addresses this problem by insisting on the pupils' undivided attention. Poor vocabulary and lack of understanding of words and phrases are also related to slow progress and the result is that ideas and opinions remain at a basic level. Teachers in Year 5 and Year 6 are good at widening pupils' vocabulary not only in literacy lessons but also in music, design and technology, religious education and history lessons.
76. Standards in reading are below average, although the systematic teaching of letter sounds and key words is helping progress. For example, a Year 1 pupil blended '*h-i-t*' to make '*hit*', but could not blend '*cr*' to begin '*crab*'. This lack of basic phonic skills is one reason why the school does not achieve higher standards and why many children are still in the early stages of reading when they enter Year 3. By Year 2, average and above average pupils are reading independently and try new texts confidently. However, in Year 2, for example, the large number of lower attainers or those with special educational needs cannot make a sensible guess when they meet a new word; they are unable to talk about characters and they do not understand what they read. Although there are a few exceptions, many parents do not regularly hear their children read at home and there are not enough opportunities in school for pupils to rehearse their reading or to re-read books they know and like.
77. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are generally below those expected for 11-year-olds. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make slow progress. Many continue to read word for word without taking in the overall meaning. They do not take their reading books home often enough. Teachers say this is because books get lost or damaged, but a valuable opportunity to improve standards and for home involvement is lost. Many pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6 but reading remains below average. The teachers' reading records and home/school reading diaries are not detailed enough to identify strengths and weaknesses. Some pupils are moved from the reading scheme too soon and others make erratic progress through it. A key factor in pupils' reading difficulties in other subjects is the poor development of their ability to find information. Because they do not know for certain how the library is organised, most have difficulty finding books

there. The library's shelves are too cramped and there are not enough simple pointers to direct readers to popular subjects, such as pets or science.

78. By Year 2, the majority (and there are very few exceptions) do not attain the level expected for their age in writing. This is because of an unadventurous use of words, lack of detail and inconsistent punctuation. Too many pupils moving into Year 3 are still at the very early stages of independent writing. In all year groups, spelling and grammar skills are encouraged through good teaching of literacy and careful assessment of learned spellings. Handwriting and punctuation skills are not promoted so well because much work is not marked carefully enough. This results in misspellings going uncorrected for long periods: for example, in September, a pupil at the beginning of the Year 6 wrote 'i' for 'I' and was still making the same mistake in March. Marking in Year 2 is too simple and does not give guidance for improvement. Throughout Years 3 to 6 it is also infrequent and leads to a deterioration in handwriting. Many make significant progress over the year, mainly in the way they set out what they write so it shows logical development, but, despite this, standards remain below average. Information and communication technology is being used effectively, especially in the later years, and pupils sometimes word-process their work.
79. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. It was good overall. Teaching is strong enough to raise standards, but it has not been of high quality for long enough to improve national test results. In key areas such as the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6, basic skills in literacy are taught very well. Planning is much improved throughout the school and is consistent. The National Literacy Strategy is well established, even though it has not been used for as long as in most schools. Literacy hours have pace and vitality. The sessions at the end of the lesson where the class and teacher summarise what has been learned are used well and help pupils realise what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, frequently achieving levels close to their peers with extra help.
80. The best teaching refers to the pupils' targets and says what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers use probing questioning to develop pupils' understanding. Some do not present the best examples of handwriting and presentation. It is only in the better marking that good pointers are given on how to improve and the pupils are told how close they are to meeting their targets. There are some weaknesses in the teachers' knowledge that were observed during lessons or in pupils' books, such as mistaking a noun for a verb and lack of knowledge about the use of apostrophes. The lack of subject monitoring and leadership is a major factor in these weaknesses not being addressed. Good teachers keep attention and set high, but realistic, expectations of pupils' conduct. In Year 5, probing questions on the key features of persuasive writing stimulate memory. A confident '*three, two, one*' brings the class to order when a few pupils get too noisy. The good teachers use effective questions that make children take notice
81. The subject leader's absence has slowed improvement, especially in checking teachers' lessons and pupils' books. The school is using the National Literacy Strategy as the backbone of English teaching. Although it is well taught, it has not been amended to take account of the gaps in learning. Too little is done to promote listening and speaking in some classes where this is a problem. Apart from reading, progress is being effectively tracked.

MATHEMATICS

82. By Year 2, standards in mathematics are very low. However, taking into consideration the very low standards on entry, pupils, including those with special education needs who make up a large proportion of the school, are beginning to make progress in their learning. Inspection findings are that standards are beginning to improve as a result of

the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and good quality teaching.

83. By Year 6, standards are well below the national average. Over the past few years, boys have consistently achieved below girls. Pupils in the current Year 6 have in the past suffered from unsatisfactory teaching and behaviour problems, which have resulted in their standards being significantly below those expected. However, rapid improvements are beginning to take place as the result of the very good teaching of the current Year 6 teacher. Boys in particular make good progress with the good teaching. Inspection findings are that standards in the current Year 5 are higher and this will have an impact in future years. The quality of teaching and the positive effect of the National Numeracy Strategy make a strong contribution.
84. The analysis of test results has already identified the need to focus on the application of literacy skills when working in mathematics; for example, in reading and understanding problems. Whilst there is a significant amount of evidence that this is happening for the older pupils, it is something that needs more attention throughout the school. Mathematical skills are applied in other subjects, for instance in creating a *'time line'* in history. The use of mathematics and its application to problem solving and investigations is well below average standard and pupils do not have enough chances to work on this aspect of the subject.
85. Standards in number work are below average. By the end of Year 2, pupils count in steps of one and ten, they know the value of digits in a two-digit number and can partition numbers into tens and units. By the end of Year 4, pupils are working on their two to five and ten times-tables and adding and subtracting two-digit numbers. By the end of Year 6, most mentally add and subtract decimal numbers.
86. Shape, space and measures are aspects of mathematics that the school has identified as needing to be improved. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils used the correct mathematical language to name common two-dimensional shapes and sort them accurately into those with straight sides, those with curved sides and those with both. They knew the correct mathematical language and used it independently in their group work after their teacher had demonstrated it for them. In a Year 5 lesson on reflective symmetry, mathematical language was highlighted, modelled and encouraged by the teacher. The teacher planned work which would help all pupils to succeed and the standard achieved was in line with the expectations.
87. Standards in handling data are well below average. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their understanding and in particular to interpret information from graphs and tables. However, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher successfully used two overlapping hoops on the carpet so pupils could sort shapes in a Venn diagram. Those with special educational needs, frequently a high proportion of classes, are fully integrated in mathematics lessons. The majority make similar progress to their peers, but with greater assistance
88. The teaching of mathematics ranges from satisfactory to very good. In particular, the teaching of the older pupils is very good and supports the inspection findings that standards are improving. The strengths in the teaching of mathematics are:
- ? most teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - ? planning meets the different learning needs of pupils;
 - ? teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and check their understanding of the objectives;
 - ? they share expectations about the amount of work and the time to do that work clearly with the pupils;

- ? the use of the summary period at the end of the lesson to find out what pupils have learnt and understand is good. In some lessons pupils are encouraged to take an active part in this;
- ? teachers are positive and enthusiastic about mathematics and, consequently, the pupils respond well;
- ? mathematical language is highlighted and shared with the pupils, whose understanding is continually checked;
- ? teachers question well, using a range of tactics: quick response; mental calculation, and asking for an explanation of how to do something. Pupils respond in a variety of ways. They answer orally, write an answer on a whiteboard or demonstrate to the rest of the class on the main board.

89. However, some weaknesses in teaching emerged:

- the younger pupils are not able to use some of the quicker ways of calculating and are counting on in ones when there is a more efficient way to work they could use;
- the use of jottings and pupils recording their working out is not evident in the work inspectors analysed;
- the discussion and mental agility questioning which starts lessons is sometimes too brief;
- group work is not always as effective as it could be because teachers do not check that all pupils understand what they are to do before allowing them to work on their own;
- there is a general inconsistency in the quality of marking, especially when showing pupils how to improve;
- calculators are not used properly.

90. The leadership and management of the subject are both good. The subject leader is an experienced mathematics teacher who has a clear vision for the development of the subject. However, because of staffing difficulties, she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or to carry out all the other responsibilities of her role. Instead, monitoring has been carried out by the headteacher and local education authority advisers. There is no policy for mathematics. All targets, for individuals, for groups and for the school as a whole, are set by careful and detailed analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests and the tracking of pupils' progress. Extra time has been allocated to mathematics teaching in order to raise standards. However, the lesson for the younger pupils is longer than the recommended 45 minutes, which slows its pace and effectiveness. The subject leader uses the classroom display effectively. Resources for teaching mathematics have recently been improved with the purchase of a range of practical equipment, such as digit cards and whiteboards. Although information and communication technology is used to support learning, the school recognises that it needs to improve resources in this area. A calculator is available, which can be used on an overhead projector for demonstration, but there is only one complete class set of ordinary calculators. Parents have been informed that mathematics teaching now follows the National Numeracy Strategy approach. This has been followed up with information newsletters and the introduction of a family numeracy group. Training for staff is continuing and focuses on their own needs and the identified needs of the school. Each teacher uses a tracking system to record how pupils are progressing against the key objectives, but the subject leader does not monitor this progress often enough to have a clear idea of standards in all year groups. Homework is linked to class objectives and follows the guidelines in the school's homework policy.

SCIENCE

91. During the inspection, there was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards by the end of Year 2, although the very low results in the national tests would indicate they are probably below average. By the end of Year 6, standards are well

below those expected for the age group, except in the case of higher attainers who are in line with expectations. However, standards are rising: there was a great leap between 2000 and 2001 in the national tests from 8 per cent to 78 per cent of pupils achieving the national average by Year 6. Across the school, recent progress is good because of the overall good teaching and the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.

92. Pupils with special educational needs achieve to a suitable standard, frequently at a similar level to their peers but with more assistance, and they make good progress. Good, sometimes very good, teaching and the use of effective support staff who are well briefed enable them to be included in all science lessons.
93. Teaching and learning are good. Work is planned carefully, identifying what is to be learned. Recent development in planning means that the science language and a practical approach is used in the lesson and teachers now have clear learning objectives that they share with their pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils demonstrate good observation skills when they locate different plants and animals in the locality. They are thorough when they write up their findings in their notebooks. Their lack of previous knowledge is shown when a few cannot identify a daisy. Pupils know that tigers and elephants do not live in England, apart from in zoos, and that a cactus cannot flourish outside because of the cold. In Year 3, they identify the characteristics of materials and realise there are some you can look through and some you cannot, although they did not know the words 'transparent' or 'opaque' without prompting. They chart their findings, but their standard of recording is low. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils recall from a previous lesson what organisms and micro-organisms are. They use words like 'decomposition' and some know that organisms decay when exposed to air and that this does not happen when air is excluded.
94. A good feature of the recent developments in science is the emphasis on practical work and the realisation that a practical approach in this subject and others is the most effective way of motivating and sustaining interest. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about organisms and decay, pupils make their own compost containers, using plastic bottles and they record the rate of decay over a period of time. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils observe the natural world in the grounds of the school and record their findings in personal notebooks. These notebooks are highly prized and a great effort is made to record findings neatly, mostly in single words. The notes do not mention location or habitat.
95. In this subject the quality of teaching is good and the management of pupils effective. They enjoy science and teachers work hard to prepare interesting and stimulating practical lessons. However, the quality and presentation of written work vary across the school and the quantity of work produced is often low. The use of information and communication technology to collect and interpret data or process reports is at an early stage of development and has not had any major impact on this subject. There was little evidence of word processing in the work analysed and other forms of recording data are not used. Similarly, the use of science in other subjects is underdeveloped and cross-curricular links are missed. For example, there is little use of science as a means of developing vocabulary and literacy skills.
96. Because of staff shortages, there is no subject leader for science and it is managed by a core group of permanent staff. Whilst some improvement has taken place, this lack of leadership has had an impact on the overall development of the subject, particularly in the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure a consistent approach. The school is aware of this and intends to appoint a subject leader once staffing shortages are fully resolved. Another aspect of this lack of development is that the subject is under-resourced, particularly in terms of small individual apparatus. For example, there were not enough magnifying glasses in one lesson and because the pupils have to share, they

did not learn as quickly as they could. Permanent teachers know individuals well, but the considerable staff changes mean assessment procedures have been used inconsistently across the school.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Standards overall are below those expected for pupils' age by Years 2 and 6. Standards are similar to the previous inspection by Year 2, but the many changes in staffing have caused a deterioration by Year 6. There is not enough time spent on this subject to allow skills to be improved or enable pupils to use a full range of media. Another reason for the low standards is that more than half of the pupils in the school have special educational needs and their development is slowed because of the lack of skills development. A few higher attainers achieve the standards expected by the time they reach Years 2 and 6. There are no examples of work in the style of famous artists and the general display of artwork around the school is limited, though what is there is good. Analysis of sketchbooks shows a range of faces and figures, but drawing skills are quite immature and, by Year 2, there is still a lack of detail
98. There is evidence that standards are improving. In the only lesson seen in Year 2, good development skills are shown. Pupils are asked to observe sunflowers and sketch a bunch of artificial ones, comparing the two examples. They show good observational skills when, for example, reproducing the head of the flower on a clay tile, overlapping the petals as in reality. The good teaching in this lesson, the very good instructions and careful introduction of tools improved skills progressively. Although there was some challenging behaviour, the teacher and her assistant managed the situation well. There is some evidence of pupils using the computer to draw houses and people. There are other effective techniques being used such as Year 2 leaf prints using polystyrene tiles and, in Year 6, good prints of the Loch Ness Monster to illustrate stories and pastel drawings of plants and animals as part of a science display. During the inspection, a group of Year 6 pupils from a local beacon primary school joined with a group from this school to produce decorative panels for the library. Pupils co-operated well and the quality of work using the stories of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' as a basis for their picture was of high quality. A visiting artist provided guidance and teaching expertise. The project was a great success and, with good co-operation between both groups of pupils, it was enjoyed by both schools.
99. The subject is managed by a group of permanent staff. As a result, neither the curriculum nor the resources have been developed as quickly as they would with a subject leader. The school is aware of this problem and has plans to address it in the coming year.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. By Year 2, standards of attainment meet those expected for the pupils' age, but are below expectations by Year 6. Findings were similar at the last inspection. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, recent improvements in teaching have increased the rate of progress but have not had enough time to raise standards significantly. Higher attainers do not advance according to their capabilities, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where skills are underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
101. By the end of Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing skills in the use of scissors, saws and other basic tools and have had experience of fastening and joining. They work with a range of materials including papier-mâché, fabric, card, clay and food. Year 1 pupils examine pop-up books and lever-arch files closely to find out how levers work. They demonstrate their understanding with diagrams showing the movement of parts in a pair of scissors.

102. By the end of Year 6, pupils' making skills are satisfactory. Evaluating skills are less well developed because pupils struggle to articulate their thoughts. Planning is also below expectations because the school has not emphasised it enough in previous years. Year 4 pupils use their knowledge of circuits to plan an alarm system. Most struggle when asked to explain how it will work. They avoid written descriptions, opting instead for diagrams that do not really show what their intentions are. In Year 6, progress in constructing a wooden chassis is hampered because skills in sawing have not been mastered in previous years.
103. Pupils' response is good across the age range. In Years 1 and 2, they show keen interest and behave well. This is maintained throughout Years 3 to 6, by the end of which they are beginning to know how well they have done and want to improve. Year 1 pupils eagerly suggest screwdrivers when opening paint cans and seesaws in the park as types of levers. Year 4 boys settle down quickly at the start of their lesson. Year 6 pupils work co-operatively in discussions and help each other to cut wood carefully.
104. The quality of teaching is good across the school. Skills in handling materials and equipment are taught well. Teachers use effective questioning to challenge pupils to think and justify their ideas. Lessons are well planned. For example, the Year 6 teacher brings a strong sense of purpose and organisation so that pupils know just what they have to do and how to do it. Pupils are attentive as they become absorbed in their work, their interest is sustained and they check on how well they are doing. The teacher is aware of each group and her helpful prompting extends their learning.
105. The school follows national guidelines for the teaching of design technology. It cannot check whether every part of the work is being taught because there is no subject leader. Other teachers try to monitor but they already have enough responsibility. The governors and headteacher are aware of this problem. They are confident that things will improve when the school has more stable staffing. Resources are adequate for now but will need to be extended as pupils' work improves.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards in history and geography are broadly in line with those expected for pupils' age by Year 6, but there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standards by the end of Year 2.
107. The quality of teaching in history was very good and in geography it was satisfactory. The teacher in the lesson seen carefully explained historical words and made sure during the course of the lesson that all pupils understood. Interest was stimulated and maintained through the use of role-play as the teacher mimed how a cup of tea would be made about 100 years ago and a pupil mimed how it is done today. A range of objects to illustrate the period, such as smoothing irons, hats and caps, newspapers and scales, were handed out so that they could be looked at carefully, discussed in groups and information about them could be systematically recorded. In the Year 4 geography lesson, there was some good questioning by the teacher and very clear instructions that made the pupils think. However, the resources used did not really stimulate interest and work was not planned to take account of the varying levels of attainment within the class.
108. The evidence from inspection is that skills are in line with expectations in both subjects but knowledge is below this level. This is because the school has taken the decision to allocate more time to English, mathematics and science and, consequently, there has been less time for history and geography. This problem needs to be addressed, especially for the younger pupils. Information and communication technology was seen to be used for Internet research in history and geography and to create timelines in

history. Pupils with special educational needs, frequently a high proportion of the class, make good progress and achieve similar standards to their peers with additional help.

109. Medium-term planning for history and geography is based on national schemes of work. Leadership and management of these subjects are unsatisfactory. There are no subject leaders, but the senior management team has developed curriculum files to guide a subject leader upon appointment. In order to ensure the school keeps up to date, and in the absence of a subject leader, a member of staff has attended relevant training. Assessment procedures are in place but currently the subjects are not being monitored. The school itself does not have sufficient resources for history and geography. The local education authority's School Library Service supplies suitable books and the local education authority provides topic boxes. The school library has a limited range of books to support investigative research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. The school has made significant progress in information and communication technology since the last inspection. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards are broadly in line with expectations. The reasons for this are:
- there has been a high level of investment in both equipment and training and the installation of a purpose-built computer suite;
 - teachers have recently completed information and communication training and their skills and confidence have consequently improved;
 - the school has prioritised development of information and communication technology in recent years.
111. During the inspection the new information and communication technology suite was not fully functional due to a recent break-in. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils show that they understand terms used in information and communication technology; they know about files, record cards and fields and use these words in discussion. In Year 4, most pupils create sequences of instructions when writing their names using a specific program that enables them to trace this on the computer screen. In Year 6, pupils are involved in work on databases and respond well to the lively and enthusiastic teaching. At the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils are using the more advanced information and communication technology facilities at Stockport County Study Support Centre each Wednesday to improve their skills after school. For example, they are preparing work using *PowerPoint* which enables them to use illustrated text to make a class presentation using a computer projector. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in information and communication lessons because they are fully integrated into lessons and frequently achieve at a level similar to their peers, but with additional help.
112. Information and communication technology is used across the curriculum. For example, in religious education older pupils take a virtual tour of a mosque to reinforce their work on Islaam. There are examples of word processing used in most subjects. Encyclopaedias are used for research by different year groups and in subjects like geography and history. There are various commercial programs such as *Table Road* and *1,2,3* to support the mathematics curriculum. The school is building up a range of programs to further develop the use of information technology in other subjects.
113. The headteacher has made information and communication technology a priority and, as such, development of this subject has been better than some others. However, the lack of a specific subject leader is slowing the further development of the subject. In preparation for the appointment of a subject leader, the senior management team has prepared a curriculum file to enable the appointee to be fully aware of work already done in this subject and speed his or her induction into the post. The school uses a national

scheme of work for medium term planning, which has ensured that all aspects of the subject have been suitably covered.

MUSIC

114. At the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations across the age range. Pupils' standards now are below this level by Year 2 and Year 6. Progress towards raising standards has been hindered by frequent staff absences, staff changes, poor temporary teaching and inadequate resources. Recent improvements to teaching and subject leadership are beginning to raise standards. There are some examples of satisfactory attainment, particularly in singing and in understanding musical terms. Pupils' composing skills, their ability to express their own views and their comparisons of different music are weak.
115. By the end of Years 1 and 2, pupils sing for pleasure, learning simple songs by heart. They are beginning to develop an understanding of loud and soft, fast and slow, high and low, but they have not been taught the correct musical vocabulary. In Year 1, pupils learn to use their voices expressively when they sing '*happily*', '*angrily*' and '*questioningly*'. They listen well, try hard and give their views and feelings on music about the weather. Music helps listening skills and clear speech, but lessons do not increase musical vocabulary.
116. By the end of Year 6, pupils are given opportunities to make music, to explore sound and rhythm and to work in collaboration with others. In Year 5, they show greater understanding of musical terms such as pulse, rhythm and pitch. They follow the movements of their conductor, altering pitch and tempo to order. They take delight in musical rounds and show a good awareness of others. They are not taught to play tuned instruments and so do not have many chances to practice, rehearse and give performances for an audience. In Years 3 to 6 singing lessons, they concentrate and eagerly tackle new work. They show effective breath control and phrasing and respond well to the mood of songs.
117. Pupils enjoy making music and their attitudes to the subject are very good. They perform confidently when given the opportunity and take their roles in school productions seriously. Teamwork develops effectively as they realise everyone has to make an effort to create a successful event.
118. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Year 2, the teacher provides good vocal illustrations of different ways of singing. Good behaviour management means distractions are not allowed to interfere with learning.
119. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. In a singing lesson, the headteacher's warmth and sense of enjoyment are infectious and give a boost to pupils' spirits, whilst encouraging their participation. Correct posture is emphasised and deep breaths are taken. The lesson reinforces the religious theme of the week: '*God loves us whoever we are*'. A good variety of songs that match the theme are rehearsed. In Year 5, very good teaching helps pupils to gain a deep and broad understanding of music. Brisk pace, good personal knowledge and a warm, yet challenging manner stimulate interest and performance. Lost ground is made up quickly as musical terms are understood when playing instruments. Some percussion instruments are homemade and this gives an added sense of pride to the performance. Teachers manage pupils very well and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This creates a positive atmosphere throughout these year groups, where there is concentration and hard work. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well and they enjoy success in lessons.

120. The quality of learning is good overall. Pupils respond warmly to opportunities to sing and play instruments, but they do not have opportunities to develop their composition. At the end of Year 6, the use of the karaoke machine to record singing develops technical skills. Pupils are confident users of the tape-recorder and the music centre. Listening to music is an essential part of school life. Background music serves to bring a soothing atmosphere to the classroom; in Years 3 to 6, music also supports topic work. For example, pupils listened to the *Planets Suite* during their study of the universe. They are familiar with the works of Saint-Saens, Gershwin and Vivaldi. They compare composers' work and ponder on sources of inspiration for classical and modern composers.
121. The subject leader is competent and very enthusiastic. She has only recently been appointed. The school has adopted an approved scheme of work that gives adequate guidance. However, it does not provide advice and support that is clear enough for non-specialist teachers. The subject leader has not had enough time so far to implement the systematic monitoring that she has designed to discover where teaching support is needed. She gives advice when asked about any particular area of study. She knows that resources are inadequate, but provision must take its turn.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected for pupils' age and similar to the previous inspection. This is one of the few areas of the curriculum where pupils' lack of speaking and listening skills does not appear to lead to low standards. They listen closely to instructions and show sufficient co-ordination to carry them out. Except in extreme instances where co-ordination is affected, pupils with special educational needs achieve a similar level to their peers. Pupils have an opportunity to participate in a wide range of physical activities including gymnastics, athletics, dance and regular swimming lessons at a local baths.
123. By Year 1 pupils move with confidence. They are well co-ordinated and walk about the hall showing spatial awareness and not colliding with each other. They move in different ways, such as leaping, jumping and crawling. They listen closely to the teacher and follow instructions accurately and quickly. They move well at different levels and move slowly and quickly as requested. In a follow-up lesson to develop their travelling skills, they show definite improvement and build on the movements made previously. They work hard and become aware of their own bodies as their heart rate increases and they breathe more heavily. Their hard work is particularly noticeable in a Year 4 lesson as they embark on a circuit of activities. These are designed to increase personal fitness, develop upper body strength and increase agility. They include bench dips and presses and ball dribbling exercises. Visual skills are developed by throwing beanbags into a hoop. In all instances, pupils warm up, usually with running or stretching exercises, and teachers are careful to make them aware of the importance of this when embarking on vigorous physical exercise. Pupils enjoy physical education and in the main participate fully and enthusiastically. Only occasionally did some show unsuitable behaviour by not paying attention or fidgeting during an introduction. Once the activity had started they took part fully and without exception. By Year 6, pupils practise for athletics and develop the co-ordination skills for baton changes. Higher achievers manage smooth change-overs while running and lower attainers changed over satisfactorily, but only when static.
124. The quality of teaching is good and the progressive teaching of skills is evident across the school. Pupils develop physically, both in terms of strength and stamina as well as in co-ordination. For example, in Year 1, the teacher used good open-ended questioning to develop understanding of how children could travel around the hall in different ways. In Year 4, through encouragement and persuasion, the teacher pushed pupils to greater and greater personal targets in strength-building exercises. In Year 6, skills in baton

changing were progressively developed through careful coaching, good practice and the teacher's own participation.

125. As with other subjects, there is no subject leader. The school realises that physical development is a good way to develop self-esteem and confidence, especially for those children who have deprived backgrounds. There is enough time set aside to develop skills progressively. There are no written assessments, but teachers closely observe pupils' progress during a lesson and modify the work they do as a result of this. Resources are adequate and accommodation is good. The school has a good-sized hall, which, until completion of the Early Years Unit, is rather full of equipment. There is also a playground and playing field, which is used for team games. A good range of extra-curricular games, such as football and netball, enhance skills further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. At the last inspection standards were below those expected in all year groups. Since then they have improved but, by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, they are still below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Knowledge is better, but understanding and written and oral skills bring standards down. Overall, rates of progress have increased because of better teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
127. Pupils' knowledge of names and events has increased, but their poor skills in writing and speech hinder their understanding. Year 6 children say prayers but have not questioned why some go unanswered. They know the names of many of the religions, but have not got a clear understanding of the events in the lives of many of the key people they have studied. They know that Jesus was born on earth, died and came back to life, but some are confused about the sequence of events.
128. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study Judaism and Christianity. They write about Moses and the burning bush. They learn about Hanukkah and draw symbols to remind themselves about events in the festival. They practise writing '*Shalom*' in Hebrew letters. Their knowledge of these religions is increased at the end of the Year 2 as they learn about the books of the Jewish Torah. They consider how to '*love thy neighbour*' and make and illustrate books retelling the story of Easter.
129. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' knowledge of Judaism and Christianity is extended. They compare the beliefs and practices of Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Christians. Year 5 pupils consider forms of worship and how religion affects the daily life of believers. They interpret the Ten Commandments with detailed drawings. They learn about belonging to a community and are taught that a church provides comfort and an opportunity to give thanks for the benefits of life. Year 6 pupils write down how their favourite possession should be looked after, helping them to understand why Muslims have rules for handling the Qu'ran. They compare the ways believers present themselves for worship and look at some religious images.
130. The teaching of religious education was good in both lessons seen. The teaching in assembly makes a very good contribution to moral and spiritual development. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when overall teaching was merely satisfactory. In Year 5, skilful questioning extends pupils' thinking about the many communities to which they belong. The teacher encourages and welcomes contributions and often allows time to give considered responses or urges better communication of thoughts. She makes good use of pupils' own knowledge and experiences. At the start of the lesson, the lesson's learning objective is shared with the class and is often referred to throughout, giving the children an awareness of what they must know and understand. The lively and energetic manner in which the Year 6 teacher proceeds through her lesson on feelings and emotions is returned by her pupils. They enjoy class discussion and strive to think how colours and emotions are connected. In a whole-school assembly, the headteacher explains how she loves her old teddy as much as her new one, leading pupils to an understanding of God's love for each individual. In some lessons the teaching of religious education makes a good contribution to literacy skills. Two examples are when pupils in Year 6 set down questions about a Muslim's beliefs and their virtual visit to a mosque on the Internet. Some written activities are not demanding enough and contribute little to learning. Teachers work hard to keep pupils engaged during lessons and most children listen well and are keen to participate.
131. Some progress has been made in getting more resources to support teaching, but there are still not enough, particularly in the case of religious objects and symbols. Teachers are able to use a range of Big Books and idea books to help in their lessons. Checks on

teaching and learning do not take place. This means the quality of teaching and the improvement in knowledge and understanding are not verified.