

INSPECTION REPORT

RUSHCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105659

Headteacher: Ms C Windle

Reporting inspector: Mrs C E Waine
23081

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 246511

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Trent Road Shaw Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	OL2 7YL
Telephone number:	(01706) 846804
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor A Wingate
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23081	Mrs C E Waine	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9974	Mr D Singh	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
6282	Mrs P Raja	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15 - 16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17 - 19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20 - 24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25 - 38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rushcroft Primary School is situated in an area of average social and economic background, reflected in the average numbers of pupils receiving free school meals. The school is of average size, with 191 pupils, of whom 24 are in the Reception class. Most pupils are of white British heritage, with ten representing other ethnic origins, mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. All pupils speak English and no additional support is provided. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are wide ranging but are a little below average overall, although similar to many schools in Oldham. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average at 12.5 per cent and an average proportion have statements of their needs. Pupils' special needs are mainly related to moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Most pupils entering the Reception class remain until the end of Year 6. The school is involved in local initiatives to unite the Oldham community and through this has a close link with another local school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This very effective school achieves its aims of educating the whole child. Pupils achieve well throughout their time at school and attain good academic and personal standards by the time they leave. There is an extremely good atmosphere for learning in a very happy and supportive environment, as exemplified in the school motto, "Love to live to learn". This promotes pupils' development very well. Pupils are all fully included in the whole range of school lessons and activities. The school makes a strong contribution to community racial harmony. The exceptional leadership and management skills of the headteacher are at the heart of its success and the good quality of teaching inspires pupils to learn. Given the good quality of teaching, the standards it promotes and pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and helps all groups of pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher's leadership and management of the school are excellent. Leadership and management are very good overall.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal development, in a very caring and supportive community, which results in very good attitudes, values and behaviour.
- There is a very productive working partnership between parents, staff and the governing body.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology in Year 6.
- The time allowance for art and design, design and technology and music.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998 and has made very good improvement to the issues identified then:

- There are now policies and programmes of work in place for all subjects.
- Curriculum planning is now good and teachers' planning for lessons is very good.
- Standards of work in information and communication technology are now average at the end of Year 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress, although standards are still below average in Year 6.
- Assessment procedures are now good overall and very good in the Reception class, English and mathematics.
- The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well.
- The governing body publishes all information required by law.

- The building is much improved and very well maintained.

There have been many other very good improvements, including:

- An impressive range of management strategies has been put into place.
- Standards have been maintained, and indeed are improving.
- The quality of teaching has improved.
- Provision for pupils with special education needs is now very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, particularly in their understanding of modern multicultural Britain, is much improved.
- Day-to day administration is much improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	C	B
mathematics	D	C	E	D
science	C	C	C	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in English, mathematics and science are now above average at the end of Year 6, which is an improvement on the test results of 2002. In 2002, pupils achieved average results in English and science when compared with all school nationally and better results than pupils in similar schools¹. They did not perform as well in mathematics; results were well below the national average and below those for similar schools. The school recognises that, partly because of an extended period of unsettled staffing and illness, together with an influx of pupils with behavioural difficulties in upper juniors, some pupils did not then achieve the standards of which they were capable. This is now resolved, pupils are achieving well and standards are rising. The current Year 6 pupils attained average standards in their Year 2 national tests but have faced a disrupted pattern of teaching in previous years. It is a great credit to the school that they are achieving well. Standards are now similar to those noted at the previous inspection, which was an unusually good year group for the school. The school's targets in English and mathematics were not met in 2002 but this year's challenging targets are likely to be met, with a rise in the numbers of pupils exceeding the level expected.

During the Reception Year, children make good progress and most reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1, although few attain at a higher level. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2, in 2002, were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, but much better in all three subjects than those for pupils in similar schools. Whilst pupils in the current Year 2 class are making good progress, there is a high proportion of pupils who are lower attainers or who have special educational needs, which has slowed the rise in standards this year. However, standards in reading are now above average. In 2002, teacher assessments in science were below average but standards are now average. Whilst standards in information and communication technology are average at the end of Year 2, they are below average by the end of Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on standards in art and design, design and technology and music at the end of Years 2 and 6 but standards in geography, history, physical education and religious education are average.

¹ Similar schools are those with a similar number of pupil receiving free school meals.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and join in activities eagerly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils form very good relationships with staff and other pupils and enjoy their responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are punctual at the start of day and the start of lessons.

Attendance is average but is affected by the fact that some families can only take their holidays in the annual Wakes Weeks holidays, which fall in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good	good	good

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

Teaching is good throughout the school and often very good in lessons. Almost all teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and most was good or very good. Evidence from pupils' work confirms that good teaching is typical for the school. Teaching in English is very good overall and basic literacy skills are taught very well. Teaching in mathematics is good and the basic skills of numeracy are taught well. Teachers' planning is now very good and much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers use assessment information very well to match work to the needs of all their pupils. Lessons are interesting and are conducted at a very good pace so that pupils are very well motivated and keen to learn. Teachers set group and individual learning targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy so that they know what is needed to improve their work. Pupils develop very good attitudes to work, taking responsibility for their own learning when investigating and researching for themselves. Pupils are given sound opportunities to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy in other subjects, which consolidates their learning well. Classroom support staff are used extremely well and make a very strong contribution to teaching and pupils' learning. The very good quality of support for pupils with special educational needs, or who are lower attainers, promotes very good progress in lessons where they have such support. Pupils with English as an additional language require no additional support and are taught alongside other pupils. A rigorous programme of checking the quality of teaching and learning has been effective in maintaining a good standard of teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils. It is much enriched by extra-curricular activities, links with the local community and schools. However, too little time is allowed for art and design, design and technology and music in some classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils have clear learning programmes and are very well supported in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who have English as an additional language all speak and understand English and do not require particular support. They work alongside other pupils, making the same rate of progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and	Very good. All aspects have improved since the previous inspection and multicultural education is greatly improved. It is enhanced significantly by links

cultural, development	with the community and a local school with pupils of Asian heritage.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. It provides a safe and secure environment. Pupils' academic and personal development is closely checked to ensure they make the progress of which they are capable. The school promotes racial equality and harmony very effectively.
Partnership with parents	Very good. Parents are kept very well informed and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning in class and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher. High quality teamwork and excellent relationships between all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are very well informed and fulfil all their statutory responsibilities efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school makes a detailed analysis of its assessment information and has a very clear picture of what is needed to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school directs resources to identified priorities effectively, with a rigorous focus on raising standards. There is a clear understanding of how to achieve best value for money and the school applies these principles very well.

All groups connected with the school such as parents and governors pay respect to the exceptional leadership and management qualities of the headteacher and cite her as the major factor in the very good improvements made. They appreciate greatly the way she has developed their own skills and levels of involvement in school life. There is a good level of staffing to meet the needs of the pupils. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, overall and much improved since the previous inspection.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are well cared for and are happy. • They feel that their children make good progress. • Behaviour is very good. • Their children develop very good attitudes to work and to others. • Teaching is good and teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. • The school is very well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no significant areas of concern, although a few parents expressed reservations about homework.

The inspection team endorses all the positive points made by parents. In respect of the few concerns expressed about homework, the team finds that the school uses homework well. There is a regular pattern of homework and parents are informed what to expect, when to expect it and when it should be returned. Pupils' homework books show that the consistency of homework is good. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and Year 6 pupils spoken to during the inspection confirmed that this is the case.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards in literacy and numeracy are sound. At the end of Year 6, they are above average in English, mathematics and science and standards in literacy and numeracy are good. This shows improvement at the end of Year 6, on the test results of 2002, when the school recognised that there was some underachievement because of instability in staffing and changes to the year group during Years 5 and 6. The improvement in mathematics has been particularly good. The staffing issue is now resolved and the current Year 6 has had few changes to its make up. Standards are now similar to those noted at the time of the previous inspection.

Strengths in this area are:

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and very good progress in many lessons.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils who are gifted or who have particular talents make good progress.

Areas for development are:

- Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6.

2. Children enter school with a wide range of attainment levels, which are a little below average, overall, particular in early communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development. They make good progress in the Reception class and when they enter Year 1, standards are close to the average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Whilst most children reach the levels expected for their age, only a small proportion exceeds them. Standards are above average in personal, social and emotional development.
3. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2, in 2002, were pleasing for the school, particularly when compared with similar schools. However, whilst an above average proportion of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age, an above average proportion did not achieve the level expected. Current standards are similar, overall, with more pupils working at the level expected because of the very good use of assessment information and the very good quality of support provided for the significant group of pupils who are lower attainers or who have special educational needs. Test results are likely to be affected by this group, particularly so because this year group is much smaller than usual and each pupil has a bigger impact on average scores and percentages. Over the five years since the previous inspection, when the year group was a particularly academically strong group, standards in reading and writing initially fell to a more representative level but then rose again to match the level of 1998. In mathematics, test results are now considerably higher than at that time and were particularly so in 2002. This reflects the significant impact made on the subject by the school's recent focus on the subject. Standards in speaking and listening were below average in teacher assessments in 2002, but are now average. Whilst pupils listen attentively to staff and each other and are confident in speaking aloud, many do not use the good range of descriptive vocabulary that they use in their writing or employ sufficiently the vocabulary specific to each subject. This is also the case in Years 3 to 6. Teacher assessments in science in 2002 were also below average but standards are now average. In national tests, boys usually attain better standards than girls. The school has analysed results and checked teaching and pupils' work to find out why. Neither they nor the inspection team can pinpoint any specific cause. However, the school is targeting girls in class to ensure that they are as fully involved as the boys in such aspects as answering questions. Both groups currently attain at similar levels in their classwork.

4. At the end of Year 6, the results of national tests in 2002 were a disappointment to the school, although in English and science they remained better than those in similar schools. They reflected the effect of instability in staffing and the influx of a group of pupils towards the end of the juniors, some of whom had behavioural difficulties. These factors had an adverse influence on the attitudes, work ethic and confidence of some other pupils, despite the strong measures that the school had in place to manage the situation. Whilst these management systems were successful in maintaining standards at an average level, overall, the school recognises that there was some underachievement and that progress had not been consistently satisfactory since pupils entered the junior section of the school. Results in mathematics were particularly disappointing but the school took immediate action. The co-ordinator, together with the school's specialist mathematics teacher, has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning and there has been rapid improvement, resulting in the current above average standards. Pupils now have a good understanding of the four rules of number (addition, subtraction, division and multiplication) and apply these well in solving problems. Whilst standards in reading are good, pupils do not develop the more advanced skills of using classification systems in a library to locate their information. Writing is not as strong as reading but it has improved rapidly over the past year as the school has focused on its development. Much time is spent on teaching the basic skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation and standards in these aspects are good. Ongoing staff training in improving the content of pupils' writing is having a good impact on work. Pupils' use of language in stories and accounts shows good improvement and is making their work more interesting to readers. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of science and know how to organise an investigation and record their findings in a scientific manner. In English and mathematics, specific targets are set for groups and individuals so that they know what has to be done to improve and this is also beginning to have an impact on standards. The school is highly committed to raising standards and sets itself challenging targets in English and mathematics. These were not met in 2002, although almost so in English, but those for 2003 are likely to be met, with an increased proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected.
5. All groups of pupils make good progress through the school in these subjects because the school makes very good use of its information to match work well to their needs. Staff provide very good support for groups of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Those pupils who have English as an additional language all speak English to a sound standard. They are taught in groups alongside other pupils and require no additional support. As with other pupils, they make good progress in their work. The progress of individuals is carefully checked and action taken if pupils do not appear to be achieving as well as they could. The highest attaining pupils have extra voluntary support from a qualified teacher each week to offer them the extra challenge they require.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are average at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6. A good new programme of work, supported by effective teacher training and improved resources, is producing sound progress throughout the school, but Year 6 pupils have gaps in their experience, particularly in the use of data and measuring and controlling events through computers. This is partly because of the lack of reliable equipment in the past.
7. Standards in other subjects are displayed in the following table.

Subject	Standards at the end of Year 2	Standards at the end of Year 6
Art and design	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Design and technology	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Geography	Average	Average
History	Average	Average
Music	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Physical education	Average	Average
Religious education	In line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus	In line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus

Where no overall judgements have been made, this is because of timetabling arrangements and a lack of sufficient evidence in these practical subjects. In art and design, examples of good work are displayed

attractively around the public areas of the school and in several classrooms. However, little evidence was available in Years 2 and 6, because of the current focus on revision of work in English, mathematics and science. In music, good standards were apparent in instrumental performances. Progress in these subjects is satisfactory overall and often good in lessons. On occasion, the impact of good teaching is limited by the shortness of some lessons and the lack of time allocated to some subjects, particularly design and technology. This means that although pupils usually produce work of at least satisfactory standard, they do not develop their skills in a progressive manner. Pupils who have particular talents in music make very good progress in learning instruments and those who have sporting and artistic talents are supported well through the programme of clubs and community links.

8. The full impact of the school's measures to raise standards has yet to be felt. Because of previous disruption to their teaching, current Year 6 pupils have not always made the consistently good progress that is evident throughout the school now and which is raising standards still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school has successfully maintained the very good standards of behaviour, pupils' very good attitudes to school and the very positive relationships, which make a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour, such as sexism, racism and bullying.

Strengths in this area are:

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning.
- They behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships with fellow pupils are very good.
- Pupils willingly accept responsibility.

There are no significant areas for development identified in this aspect.

10. The personal, social and emotional development of the children in the Reception class is good. They are confident, happy and secure and enjoy very good relationships with each other and with adults. Children play and work together co-operatively in different activities, share with others and take turns. They listen attentively and are keen to learn. They behave well at all times. Children develop independence when given the opportunities to choose and they accept responsibilities happily, such as giving out milk and helping with tidying up at the end of sessions. Reception children demonstrated exemplary behaviour during their 'Bear Hunt' at the local park.
11. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and share and co-operate well with one another. Most pupils show very good levels of effort and concentration in lessons. They listen to instructions and explanations and participate enthusiastically in discussions. Pupils treat school property and resources with care. They are courteous, trustworthy and respectful of others. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and treated with respect.
12. Standards of behaviour are very good and have a positive impact on learning. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Behaviour in and around school is invariably very good. Pupils play well together at break and lunchtimes even though the play area for the juniors is fairly small. In the dining room pupils behave very well and talk openly to each other and adults.
13. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular activities and visits. Most willingly accept increasing responsibility for independent study, including their homework. They are encouraged to undertake responsibilities in classrooms and in school, which greatly assists their personal development. The school council is well established and all pupils conduct their roles and responsibilities with maturity and confidence. It makes a very good contribution to their personal development. Relationships throughout the school are a strength and are effective in establishing the values of the school.
14. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with schools nationally, but has fallen since the previous inspection. This decline is because of the taking of family holidays by a significant minority of parents, particularly those who work for local firms and have to take the traditional "Wakes Weeks" holidays. This

inevitably affects overall levels of attendance. The school is aware of this problem and continues to work with parents to raise levels of attendance. Most parents ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. Registration is efficient and parents are questioned about all absences. All regular attendance and punctuality is rewarded; this is valued by pupils and their parents, who receive a half-termly report.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good in lessons. This confirms the opinions of almost all parents. In English, it is very good throughout the school and in mathematics it is good. There has been good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection because of the effective management systems in place, supported by a strong programme of professional development.

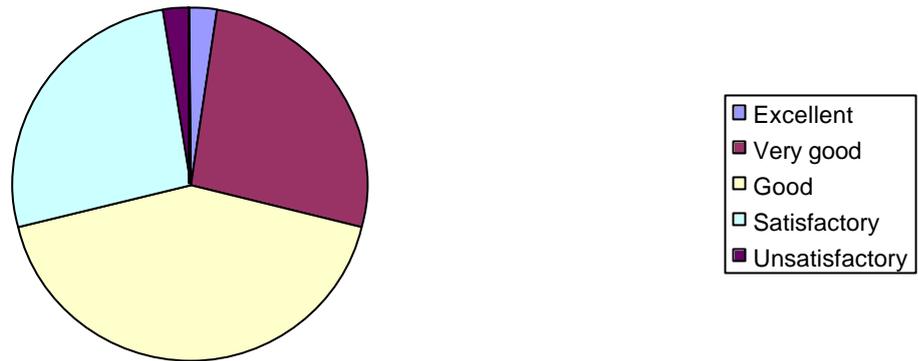
Strengths in teaching are:

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils.
- Planning is very good, particularly in English and mathematics, where teachers use their assessment information very well to match work to the needs and interests of pupils.
- Basic skills of literacy are taught very well.
- Basic skills of numeracy are taught well.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes positively.
- Support staff make a very strong contribution to teaching.
- Time in lessons is used very well to promote a sense of urgency.
- Marking and verbal feedback to pupils is very good.
- Teachers promote very good attitudes to learning and pupils are inspired to work hard.

Areas for improvement are:

- The use of time in the mental session of mathematics lessons.
 - The use of information and communication technology across the whole curriculum.
 - The use of specific vocabulary in each subject.
16. Since the last inspection, the school has faced a period of unsettled staffing, particularly in Years 3 to 6, caused by staff illness and movement of staff out of the school. This resulted in underachievement for the oldest pupils but is now resolved. The quality of new staffing appointments made enhances the good teaching noted at the last inspection. As can be seen from the chart below, the great majority of teaching is at least good and it is often very good. Teaching in English is very good overall and in the Reception class, mathematics and science teaching is good. In art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in individual lessons. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching in design and technology or music because of timetabling arrangements.

Quality of teaching in lessons observed



17. Teaching for the children in the Reception class is good. Work is very well planned to build on what children already know and can do and lessons are imaginative and interesting. The quality of teamwork between the teacher and classroom support assistants is very good and they manage the pupils very well in a caring and positive manner, giving them confidence in trying out new experiences and encouraging them to work hard. Whilst direct teaching is good, often very good, pupils do not always have as many opportunities to choose their own activities so that they develop greater independence in their learning.
18. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons meticulously, using their ongoing assessment information very well, so that work is relevant to pupils' needs and builds on what they know and can do. This is particularly effective in English and mathematics, where teachers also match their plans carefully to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and progress has improved considerably in the past year. In most lessons, teachers make efficient use of time to provide a good balance of direct teaching and pupil tasks and impart a sense of urgency. It means that pupils maintain interest and have enough time to complete their work and that teachers have time to discuss what has been learned at the end of the lesson. A very good programme of staff development has improved the knowledge of teachers and classroom support staff, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and has led to significant improvements in teaching in these subjects. For example, a training course on writing has led to improved expertise in teaching pupils how to gain their readers' attention quickly by their use of language in their opening paragraphs. Lessons are interesting and teachers do not rely too heavily on commercially produced worksheets and workbooks, as some did at the previous inspection. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and very high expectations of their behaviour and work. Pupils understand what is expected of them and respond well by working hard, behaving very well and showing pride in the presentation of work. This is also reflected in their homework books. Teachers make good use of homework to support learning in lessons and most parents contribute effectively to learning by their support.
19. Teachers have a very clear focus on teaching the basic skills for learning and devote much time to this, particularly in English. This is sometimes to the detriment of the time available for other subjects. They provide sound opportunities for pupils to apply and develop these skills in meaningful situations in other subjects, although occasionally there is too much focus on the writing and insufficient on the subject itself. This was the case in the only unsatisfactory lesson observed, which was in religious education. Pupils spent some time retelling a faith story in their own words without many understanding that it is of religious significance to faith believers. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy is very good and teaching of basic numeracy skills is good. Whilst direct teaching of numeracy is strong, teachers do not all use the opening mental sessions of lessons as well as they could to improve the rapid recall skills that pupils need to apply in their other work. The pace is sometimes too slow for pupils to make increasingly quick decisions based on their knowledge and understanding of the number system.
20. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology has much improved through a good programme of training. Some teachers make good use of computers in lessons, such as in Years 3 and 4, where pupils use computer programs in literacy and numeracy lessons to support their work. Some good samples of work in other subjects, such as history, were

observed, particularly in Years 3 to 5. However, other teachers do not always use computers as an everyday learning tool so that pupils understand their usefulness in research and recording. This is an area that the school recognises needs further development now that computers are more reliable and staff expertise is now sound.

21. Teachers do not always make sufficient use of specific vocabulary to help pupils develop their understanding, either orally or in supportive displays. For example, there are many displays in literacy to support pupils in their writing, such as on story starters, but there are less in mathematics and few in other subjects.
22. Marking is very good; teachers reward success well and provide detailed information on how pupils could improve their work. They note progress towards pupils' targets in English and mathematics so that pupils know how well they are achieving. During lessons, teachers discuss pupils' progress and success with them as they work. They celebrate pupils' work in many attractive displays around the school, which raises pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
23. The use of classroom support staff and support teachers for those pupils who are lower attainers or who have special educational needs is very good. Support staff are tightly timetabled to support targeted individuals and groups in certain lessons. Strong teamwork between teachers and support staff enables all to focus on their groups and help them make very good progress in these lessons.

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

24. The quality and range of the curriculum is good, with all pupils fully involved in a variety of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. As at the time of the previous inspection, all statutory requirements are met, as are the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There has been very good improvement in producing new policies and schemes of work for all subjects, so that teachers are now clearer about planning to build on skills and knowledge progressively.

Strengths in the curriculum are:

- There are good amounts of time for English and mathematics.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visitors enriches the curriculum.
- Very good links with the community and other schools enrich learning.

Areas for development are:

- Insufficient time is allocated to some subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, and music, which limits the opportunities for pupils to express themselves creatively.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in all subjects.
- Outdoor play activities for the children in the Reception class.

25. The good provision in the Reception class enables children to quickly settle into everyday school routines and to make good progress in most of the areas of learning expected for this age range. Progress in the area of physical development is hindered by the lack of sufficient large outdoor play equipment. There is good emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills and their literacy and numeracy skills. Visits to places of interest, such as going on a 'Bear Hunt' to Dunwood Park enrich the curriculum and contribute very well to the children's knowledge and understanding of their world.
26. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is broad and relevant but lacks appropriate balance. The school has correctly placed a great deal of emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection and time allocations for these subjects are generous. This strategy has been an important factor in the standards that pupils now attain, but it has meant that some other subjects do not have sufficient time allocated. This is particularly the case in art and design, design and technology and music and has led to pupils not having enough time to develop their skills progressively or express themselves creatively. This was evident in a music lesson, when the length of the lesson was too short;

two groups were unable to do full justice to their compositions because they had to rush their performance. The school has acknowledged this and has begun to review time allocations, in order to provide better opportunities for pupils' creative experiences. The school is also aware of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills to support their work in other subjects.

27. The way that the curriculum is planned has been greatly improved since the last inspection. The planning procedures incorporate national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the knowledge and skills to be taught. This enables them to set work that builds on previous learning and which effectively challenges pupils of different abilities, so that they make the progress of which they are capable.
28. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, with activities being carefully planned to help them to learn to respect the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults and to develop their self-esteem. They learn about healthy lifestyles and debate issues that affect their lives. Pupils are helped effectively to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating, relationships and sex education and are made aware of the harmful effects of drugs.
29. The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their individual programmes of work have specific and attainable targets, which they work on both in class and in small groups. Teachers plan carefully for their needs and classroom assistants are used very well to support their learning. This enables them to make good progress and achieve well.
30. The curriculum is much enriched by educational visits, both locally and further afield, such as the visit of pupils in Year 5 to Manchester Museum to bring alive their learning about ancient Greece. There are many clubs for pupils of all ages to join, including Bookworms, art clubs for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, infant games club, football, cricket, art, recorders and rounders. Some are so popular that numbers have to be limited and pupils take turns at being included in them. For example, the lunchtime running club had over 80 applicants. A very good range of expert visitors inspire pupils with their work, as is evident in the high quality masks they have created after working with a mask maker on a cultural topic of "Carnival". Very good links with the community and local schools enrich learning. This is exemplified by the involvement in the Oldham Link Schools Project, which pairs schools reflecting different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Rushcroft is linked with a school with a 100 per cent Asian intake; this has been successful in deepening pupils' understanding of the traditions and beliefs of pupils in that school. Very good opportunities are provided by Oldham's Unity in the Community project for pupils to take part in a range of sports and events with other schools and carry out challenges, producing some very good work across the whole curriculum. A local Beacon secondary school provides specialist teachers in science, information and communication technology, German and French, to widen pupils' learning experiences further. Classroom support staff, students on work placement and volunteers make a significant contribution to the quality and breadth of the curriculum by sharing their expertise.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, which is an improvement on the good provision at the time of the previous inspection. It supports pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development very well.

Strength in this aspect are:

- The school promotes very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
- The provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- The provision for cultural development is very good.
- Links with a local primary school promote multicultural awareness and racial harmony very well.

There are no significant areas for development.

32. Significant improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual development have been made since the previous inspection. A strong community and family ethos of shared values and respect underpins the daily routines of school life. Assemblies are purposeful opportunities for pupils to offer prayer and thoughts in response to a story or theme, as well as to recognise the contribution of a higher being. This was illustrated in an assembly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, when a teacher from the link high school spoke

eloquently about family and community ties, making very constructive links between the schools, community and pupils and highlighting the importance of respecting and valuing others. Pupils have many opportunities, in and out of classrooms, to show initiative and take responsibility. This work is built on well in class and school council meetings, where pupils begin to understand their roles and responsibilities in the school and the wider community. Teaching and learning in most subjects, for example, music and art and design promotes a feeling of spirituality, evident in the illuminating displays celebrating pupils' work.

33. Moral development is a strength and pupils respond well to teachers' very high expectations of behaviour. The school discipline policy focuses on justice and fairness. Pupils respect this and teachers apply the procedures rigorously and consistently. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own behaviour from an early age and even the youngest have a clear understanding about what is acceptable in their school. This was evident in the Reception class where the teacher used a class discussion time (Circle Time) to consider inappropriate behaviour and develop relationships through activities, giving children the chance to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, which they did very effectively. Teachers take time to talk through difficulties with pupils, so that they begin to appreciate others' points of view. Older pupils consider how the way people behave affects the lives of others and are encouraged to consider global issues and the needs of others. They raise funds for worthwhile causes.
34. All staff provide very positive role models; their constructive and purposeful interaction with pupils contributes significantly to pupils' social development. The class and school councils enable pupils to play a very active role in the school's decision-making process and so become responsible citizens. All pupils are encouraged to express their views about school issues and gain in confidence when their points of view are listened to with respect by teachers and other pupils. They learn that others' views must also be considered. For example, when Year 6 pupils considered a problem of classroom chairs and tried to resolve the issue, they understood that others, such as the school's premises manager and the class teacher, also had an important part to play in making democratic decisions. Older pupils are given many opportunities to accept responsibilities, such as by:
- supporting staff in assemblies by controlling the music and helping with the overhead projector;
 - caring for younger pupils, such as through the "Buddy System" to support new entrants to school; and
 - staffing the school office at lunchtime, answering the telephone and welcoming visitors.

Pupils work together well in lessons, sharing ideas, information and resources. Their relationships with staff and with each other are a strength of the school. Social development is supported effectively by an extensive range of visits, including a residential camp for pupils in Years 5 and 6, during which they learn a variety of social skills, such as working together and caring for others. The links between the school and the wider community contribute significantly to pupils' social understanding and development. For example, very good social links are made through the Unity in the Community and Link School projects.

35. Work in many subjects, such as religious education, English, music, and art makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures represented in modern Britain. Attractive displays of photographs and pupils' writing celebrate the social and cultural links made in the weekly visits between Rushcroft and its partner primary school. This work is particularly beneficial in raising pupils' awareness of the beliefs and customs of other faith groups and promotes better race and community relations by helping them to recognise and celebrate diversity in the local multiracial society. The works of eminent painters and composers are studied and raise pupils' appreciation of their European heritage and that of the wider world. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of their local heritage through regular visits to museums and other places of interest and the school band allows pupils to enjoy an active role in local culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The provision for pupils' care, support and guidance and welfare is very good. There are very good procedures and policies for ensuring consistent good practice. The provision ensures pupils continue to learn in a safe and secure environment and parents rightly value this. This level of care has been sustained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the provision are:

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- Health and safety procedures are very good.
- The school's aim of providing a warm, caring and secure environment is met in full.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and behaviour.
- Assessment procedures are very good in English and mathematics and information is very well used.

Areas for improvement are:

- Assessment procedures in foundation subjects².
37. The designated teacher for child protection is well informed and provides good co-ordination and leadership for staff. Arrangements are clear and are consistently implemented. The school makes effective use of specialists and specialist agencies. Health and safety procedures are very effective and provide for a safe and secure environment. There is a good policy for the safe use of the Internet and e-mail that protects pupils effectively.
 38. The welfare and the well-being of the school community are very effectively supported by caring, sensitive and professional staff. They implement the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development constructively. Staff make very good use of their time with pupils to achieve the warm, friendly and secure environment, which is central to the school's work. Effective strategies are used to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem, such as by acknowledging and rewarding their achievements. Staff build trusting relationships with pupils, who develop confidence in sharing any concerns with them. Pupils' achievements are monitored and reported regularly to parents.
 39. The implementation of the strong personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils are provided with appropriate information, support and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their lives. The procedures for monitoring good behaviour are used consistently and effectively by staff to monitor, acknowledge and reward pupils for their efforts. Pupils recognise and respect the school's expectation of high standards of behaviour and adopt a very positive attitude to school. This is reinforced by the very effective procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour and promoting racial harmony. School documents indicate that all reported incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including racism, are rigorously challenged, investigated, reported and monitored. The wide range of strategies implemented enable the school community to learn in a harmonious environment.
 40. There are good strategies for recording and monitoring pupils' attendance and time keeping. The information is used efficiently to investigate, record, monitor and report all absences and reward good and improved attendance and punctuality. The impact of this programme is limited by a very small minority of parents who do not consistently support the school's efforts to raise existing levels of attendance.
 41. There are very good systems for checking and recording individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make in the Reception class, in English and in mathematics, which show much improvement since the last inspection. The school checks pupils' progress in English and mathematics effectively and uses the information very well to highlight pupils for additional support and to set targets for improvement, for both groups and individuals. This is having a positive effect on standards. Test and other assessment information is analysed meticulously and very good use is made of the information to highlight areas for development and improve curriculum planning. Assessment procedures are good in science but are not yet used as well to target improvement. Procedures are not as extensive in other subjects, showing mainly coverage of the National Curriculum rather than the progress made by individual pupils. Assessment information for pupils with special educational needs is used very effectively to plan future work. Systems for the assessment of pupils when they start school are in place and the information from these is used well to plan subsequent learning experiences. The on-going assessment of children in the Reception class is very good and gives a clear picture of children's progress. The school has good procedures in place to monitor the achievements of different groups of

² These are subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

pupils and information is used effectively to meet the needs of all, by providing support for target groups of pupils, including lower and higher attainers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has sustained and built upon the very constructive relationships with parents that were reported in the previous inspection. Parents speak very highly of the school and reported a significant number of strengths, which were evident throughout the inspection.

Strengths in this area are:

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- Parents receive very good information from the school.
- There is an effective partnership with parents that supports pupils' learning in school and at home.

There are no significant areas for development.

43. Parents value the very positive ethos of the school, the good teaching, very good behaviour and the very caring support pupils receive from staff. These help their children to become responsible and mature members of the school community, which pleases parents very much. Parents rightly place a high value on the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and the very good levels of communication with the headteacher, staff and governors. Inspectors support the very constructive comments of parents.
44. The quality of information provided to parents is very effective and purposeful. Parents are actively encouraged to attend consultation evenings and annual reviews; special arrangements are made for those who are unable to attend. Most parents bring their child to school and take this opportunity to meet and talk to class teachers. This offers them the chance to visit the classroom, acknowledge their child's achievements and understand the topics being taught.
45. Parents receive good written information, produced in a user-friendly style. Both the school prospectus and the annual report from governors meet with statutory requirements and are well received by most parents. Regular newsletters provide information about what is taught in the classroom and events in the school and the community. Pupils' annual reports are also very informative, as are the very well attended parents' consultation evenings. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to all meetings and fully informed of the support their children receive and the progress they are making. These arrangements enable both parents and pupils to understand the progress made and provide an efficient means of communication between school and home.
46. Parents are actively encouraged to support learning in the classroom and at home and most support the home/school agreement effectively by their involvement. Although a few parents expressed concerns about the amount and consistency of homework, the vast majority agree that it is consistent and appropriate in quantity and quality. That examined during the inspection was regular and of good quality. A number of parents were observed assisting teachers during the inspection, which helps to raise standards and contributes constructively to pupils' personal and social development. The Parent Support Group organises numerous social and recreational activities, including the summer fair and discos, which help raise significant funds to support learning by purchasing educational resources. These events further enhance the productive and purposeful links between the school and home and have a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management are very good overall and are major strengths of the school. They are instrumental in the good achievement of pupils and the very good improvements made since the previous inspection.

Strengths in this area are:

- The headteacher's leadership and management skills are exceptional and inspire staff, governors and parents, who hold her in high regard.

- There is a very strong senior management team.
- There is a true partnership amongst all groups connected with the school and communication between them is excellent.
- Management systems are of high quality.
- The governing body is very effective in its management role.
- There is a very clear view of where the school is now and what is needed for it to improve further.
- Planning for the school's development is very good and resources are used very well in the quest for excellence.
- Day-to-day administration is of high quality.

Areas for development

- There is no school library, although one is being constructed.
- There is a shortage of outdoor play equipment for the Reception class.

48. The headteacher is an inspirational leader with a sharp focus on developing excellence in all that the school provides, whilst maintaining the caring, family community atmosphere that is so supportive to pupils. She has managed the considerable changes over the past few years in a positive manner and staff morale and expertise have risen. She has built a very effective team of highly motivated staff, who are keen to take on their share of responsibility for improving standards. Senior managers lead by example; they are very good teachers and subject leaders whose enthusiasm permeates all aspects of school life and encourages others to develop the same levels of commitment and expertise. The role of subject co-ordinators is much improved, although because of staff changes some are only just beginning to take these on fully. Staff enjoy sharing their skills, which is demonstrated by the amount of time they devote to the school, such as by operating lunchtime and after-school clubs and attending events organised by the Parent Support Group. All staff feel valued and self-esteem is high.
49. The headteacher has introduced a high quality range of management and support systems, which are firmly established. These were invaluable over the period of staff turbulence. Records show the sustained effort that was put into maintaining the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements during that period. For example, records of classroom observations show a rigorous, focused approach on quality, with improvement targets set and followed up to ensure that they are met. Teachers' plans and work in pupils' books are checked systematically to ensure that subjects are being taught well. Whilst this has been effective in most subjects, it has not been as effective in the more practical and creative subjects, where the shortage of time has only recently been recognised. However, action to improve provision is now being planned. The programme of performance management for teachers is very strong and is closely tied to an equally strong programme of professional development. A similar system applies to non-teaching staff, who are enthusiastic about their full involvement in school life and about the responsibilities they are encouraged to develop. The management of special educational needs is very good; staff are targeted very effectively at groups and individuals. Teamwork between the special educational needs manager, the headteacher and the support staff is extremely good and is responsible for the strong provision for these pupils. There has been a very good emphasis on improving access to the school and the playgrounds for pupils with disabilities.
50. The role of the governing body is much improved since the previous inspection and it now fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well. Governors are highly committed and are involved in school life in the following areas:
- They each have a class link.
 - All are fully informed about the findings of the school's thorough analysis of its assessment information.
 - They take a part in observing lessons and examining pupils' work, with a given focus.

This leads to them having a very clear view of the strengths of the school and areas where it could improve.

51. All staff and governors are involved in strategic planning for the school and the school's development plan is a good working document. At the time of the previous inspection, the governors had very limited influence over the school budget and funds were very low. Their role has developed very well since then. In close co-operation with the headteacher, stringent savings have been made, such as through energy

saving measures and using the headteacher for supply cover and the budget is now healthy. This has been a very heavy workload for the headteacher but it has allowed her to demonstrate the high standards expected in the classroom and the school to make substantial savings. These have been directed effectively at the school's priorities. For example:

- the level and expertise of both teaching and non-teaching staff are now good;
- resources are much improved; and
- the building is much improved and is no longer recognisable as that which was reported at the last inspection when replacement of window frames was an issue for the school because "Many of them are badly rotted and allow water and wind penetration into the classroom, making the environment uncomfortable for pupils working in the vicinity".

The building is now very well maintained and provides a comfortable and attractive working environment, with safe playground areas. The current funds are now being used to create a multi-purpose area for a before and after school club, whole school library and information and communication technology area. Resources also have been improved to a sound level overall, although more large outdoor play equipment is needed for the children in the Reception class.

52. The daily administration systems of the school are of exceptionally high quality and computers are used very well to manage the school data and communications. An adverse audit report led to the appointment of a school administrator who relieves much of the burden of day-to-day paperwork, communication and financial management for the headteacher and staff. This allows them to concentrate fully on educational aspects of the school. There is a very good understanding of the principles of obtaining best value for the school's financial resources. The school:

- consults its parents, pupils and staff on their views;
- compares its standards with other schools;
- challenges its own practices through its management systems; and
- is very competitive on prices, comparing and obtaining discounts where possible.

Grants and specific funds, such as those for pupils with special educational needs are directed effectively towards their purpose. The school also seeks sponsorship from various sources, such as for the band and sport teams.

53. School improvement has been very good since the previous inspection because of the very good leadership and management. Standards are rising in response to all that the school is providing. Taking into account the good quality of teaching, the very good and effective provision for pupils' personal development, the academic and personal standards achieved and the cost per pupil, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve further the school should:

- i. Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- consistently implementing the new policy and scheme of work;
- introducing a system of assessing and recording pupils' achievements so that teachers can build on what pupils know and can do; and
- providing more opportunities to use computers in lessons across the whole curriculum.

(paragraphs 6, 15, 20, 24, 26, 65, 70, 72, 75, 77, 79, 94 - 100, 114)

- ii. Provide enough time for all subjects, with lessons of adequate length, so that:

- pupils can build on their knowledge, skills and understanding progressively; and
- pupils have more opportunities to express themselves practically and creatively.

(paragraphs 7, 24, 26, 49, 81, 82, 87, 101 - 103)

In addition to the issues above, the governing body may wish to consider including the following points in their action plan.

- Assessment procedures are not well developed in the foundation subjects.

(paragraphs 36, 41, 93, 100, 110, 115)

- There are insufficient outdoor play resources for the Reception class.

(paragraphs 24, 25, 55, 58)

- There is no whole school library.

(paragraphs 4, 55, 65, 67, 71)

The school has already recognised the issues above and has outline plans for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	10	16	10	1	0	0
Percentage	3	26	42	26	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 2.5 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (90)	80 (100)	87 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	25	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (93)	83 (100)	83 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	14	12	17
	Total	24	21	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (80)	64 (80)	88 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	15	13	17
	Total	26	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (77)	73 (80)	88 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	156	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	431,422
Total expenditure	385,425
Expenditure per pupil	1,987
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,350
Balance carried forward to next year	45,997

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	191
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	2	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	34	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	63	35	0	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	47	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	48	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	38	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	30	11	2	2

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. Children enter the Reception class at the start of the year in which they are five and most have had some pre-school experience at nursery or playgroup when they begin. On entry to the Reception class, attainment for the current year group of 24 children was just below the levels expected for this age. This varies from the previous inspection, when it was judged to be average. A significant minority have average oral communication, early literacy and mathematical skills, but very few exceed the levels expected. This is confirmed by the assessments that the school makes. Provision for the Reception Year continues to be a strong feature of the school.

Strengths in the provision are:

- Teaching and learning are good and children make good progress.
- Good imaginative and stimulating activities are provided for development in language, literacy and communication and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The support staff make very effective contribution to children's learning.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good.
- Parents are involved well in their children's learning.
- Resources are good in most areas of learning.

Areas for development are:

- The provision for outdoor play, particularly resources.

56. Teaching is very good in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development and pupils make very good progress in these areas. Teaching and learning are good in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory in creative development. When they enter Year 1, children's attainment is average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It is above average in personal, social and emotional development. It was not possible to see the physical education lessons because of timetable arrangements, so no overall judgement is made on standards in this area of learning.

57. A secure and stimulating environment is provided where children learn to express themselves and relate well to adults and other children. The curriculum is well balanced, appropriate to the needs of the children and reflects the required areas of learning for this age group. A good range of activities is imaginatively planned and supported by a good range of resources, although those for outdoor play are too limited. Lessons provide good opportunities for directly taught activities but there is scope for more independence in the choice of other activities. Activities are assessed very well on an ongoing basis and good records help staff to plan effectively for the next steps in learning. Support staff work very effectively with the teacher to promote learning. Children with special educational needs are integrated well, taking a full part in activities. They have clear learning targets, are supported very effectively and make good progress. Progress in lessons where they have extra support is often very good.

58. There are good procedures to introduce children to the school, through visits and the "Buddy" system, where Year 6 pupils partner reception children. They introduce them to others in assembly and support them at lunchtime and in the playground to help them settle into daily routines. Reception Year staff establish very good relationships with parents and encourage them to be actively involved in supporting their children's learning. For example, they are encouraged to work in school with their children for part of two mornings each week and children take home reading books and simple homework on a regular basis. A few parents also help regularly in class. Leadership and management are good and are providing for improvements in provision. The accommodation is good and there is now a safe, easily accessible area for outdoor play. The school has made a good start in developing the use of this facility through parents' donations of large toys but resources are not yet sufficient.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Staff provide a calm, stable learning environment and actively encourage children to co-operate with each other. The effective systems of links between home and school help children to settle quickly into the daily routines. These are well planned and clear and children know what is expected of them. They select their own resources and accept responsibility for tidying-up at the end of sessions. Children develop sound levels of independence through sharing responsibilities for simple tasks such as giving out milk, taking the register to the office and tidying the cloakroom area. They make directed choices from a range of structured play activities but have fewer opportunities to review these choices. Children develop very good attitudes to learning and listen with sustained concentration well. They develop a sound understanding of right and wrong and behave very well both in the classroom and out of school, such as when visiting the local park on a 'Bear Hunt'. Children co-operate together very well when playing games, such as when using a parachute in the outdoor area. Through lessons in religious education and their link with another school, children develop respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are likely to reach the level expected for their age, with many exceeding them.

Communication, language and literacy

60. The teaching of basic literacy skills is very good and children make very good progress. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, discussing key events in stories and enjoying the humour in them. The teacher increases children's participation and holds their interest by reading stories with good expression and using additional resources well. Children are confident in speaking to adults and to the whole class. Role-play is used very effectively to develop their language skills. For example, enacting the 'We are going on a Bear Hunt' story consolidates their understanding of the different aspects of language development well. Letters and the sounds that they represent (phonics) are taught systematically and children begin to use initial letters and some letter blends in sounding out common words. Most recognise their names and read familiar words with growing accuracy. Children have good opportunities to read for a real purpose, such as by reading print in the environment; for example, they read cereal boxes and other food labels. Many children write their names independently with increasing accuracy in letter formation. Some are beginning to write unaided and are given good opportunities to extend their skills. Most are likely to reach the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

Mathematical development

61. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are average and most children attain the levels expected for their age. Children enjoy playing number games, solving simple numerical problems and singing number rhymes. Higher attaining children count beyond 20 confidently and accurately and add and subtract to ten. Most children solve simple problems with coins up to five pence. Children explore two and three-dimensional shapes in different ways and consolidate their learning of time by learning about days, months and year during registration. Good opportunities are provided for children to experience positional language such as above, below and between, in a variety of practical ways. Lower attaining pupils are provided with work that is well matched to their abilities, are well supported in lessons and make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. An interesting range of activities is provided to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Standards are average and their work lays good foundations for future learning in science, history, geography, design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education. Effective use is made of visits in the locality and around the school. For example, on their 'Bear Hunt' in the local park, children look for footprints and landmarks placed by the teacher. They learn about growth in humans by talking to 'mums' about their babies and they talk to toddlers, observing their features and comparing them with photographs of them as babies. Children learn about different parts of a plant and observe plants growing, in the classroom and the park. They develop their

understanding of forces by pulling and pushing objects. Children listen to Bible stories about Jesus and learn about aspects of other faiths, such as significant festivals. They learn how to operate computers and develop sound skills in using the mouse; higher attainers know how to enter and delete text. Children use various programs to consolidate number and literacy skills and use an art program to create pictures.

Physical development

63. No physical education lessons were seen during the inspection. The one outdoor play session seen provided insufficient evidence to make judgements about the overall standards that children achieve and the quality of teaching in this area of learning. There are good opportunities for children to manipulate simple tools and toys and they make good progress in developing finer control skills, such as cutting, drawing and sticking, as when they make models of 'The Three Bears' house. In the outdoor play session seen, there was more emphasis on language development and geographical awareness than on physical activity. The limited amount of large equipment available means that children have to wait for a turn and have limited opportunity to develop awareness of space and safety in energetic play.

Creative development

64. Children make sound progress and achieve average standards at the end of the Reception Year. They use a variety of materials and a range of techniques such as painting, rubbing, printing and line drawings to create pictures and represent their topic work. Children are introduced to colour mixing but do not have enough opportunities to mix colours independently. Collage work is used well to develop creative use of a good range of materials, such as textiles. Children produce collaborative pieces of art; for example they paint characters from 'Humpty Dumpty' for a large class picture. Children explore music making by using simple instruments and singing songs and rhymes in unison. They enjoy role-play opportunities and act their role confidently.

ENGLISH

65. Standards in Year 2 are close to the average and in Year 6 are a little above average. Pupils make very good progress from their entry into Year 1 because of the very high focus that the school places on the teaching of English. This maintains the standards noted at the end of Years 2 and 6, at the previous inspection, despite the fact that in 1998 both were particularly capable year groups. It also reflects the standards recorded in national tests in Year 2 in 2002 and is an improvement on those recorded at the end of Year 6. In 2002, the school's English target was just missed but pupils in Year 6 are now on target for achieving the school's challenging target for 2003. The improvement is because of improved teacher expertise and use of assessment information, so that work meets the needs of all pupils. It also reflects the very good additional support that lower attainers and those with special educational needs have in lessons and support groups. Despite the fact that boys usually achieve higher standards than girls in national tests at the end of Year 2, there is no evidence that this is the case currently.

Strengths in the subject are:

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Provision for target groups of lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Very good use is made of assessment information.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Areas for development are:

- There is no school library.
- The use of information and communication technology in literacy lessons.

66. Inspection evidence shows that standards in listening are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils show by their actions, comments and answers to questions that they listen carefully to teachers

and each other, which promotes their learning well. Their speaking skills are average; whilst most pupils show confidence in speaking aloud when explaining their ideas to others, they do not often use the wide range of descriptive vocabulary that is evident in their writing. Similarly, in other subjects such as mathematics, they do not always use a wide range of specific vocabulary to help them explain their thoughts. Staff support pupils' learning very well by providing clear models of speaking, checking that pupils understand and encouraging them to speak in group and class activities. For example, in class council meetings they debate issues that affect themselves, the school and the wider community. A small number lack confidence in speaking aloud; they do not volunteer information unless pressed to do so and answer direct questions with a simple sentence. Teachers encourage these pupils and use praise well to reward their successes and build up their confidence. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills further through role-play or drama in other subjects. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are not as high as at the previous inspection because of the natural variation in year groups.

67. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve very well; they read fluently with good expression and develop a love of literature, discussing their books with enthusiasm. For example, one lower attaining pupil described how he read adventure books every night in bed and could not put the books down. Another related a good book to a favourite television soap opera, saying, "Just as you get to an exciting bit you have to put it down, like in Eastenders, when the programme finishes". Pupils in Year 2 have very good knowledge of the letter system (phonics) and its use in learning to read new words. Higher attaining pupils read complex vocabulary confidently, including technical words such as 'cerataurus'. Average and lower attaining pupils use a sound range of strategies to decode new words. Pupils have opportunities to select their own books from a guided selection and learn to discriminate in their choices. They talk eagerly about their favourite books, recalling stories well. They use contents and simple index pages with a confidence promoted by their good phonic skills. Pupils in Year 6 read well, with good understanding of characters and themes in their books. They discuss a good range of favourite authors and books, explaining their preferences. Higher attainers enjoy their studies of Shakespeare's Macbeth and say that they frequently use it as a yardstick of quality when reading other work. They understand what is implied by authors as well as what is actually written. Average and lower attaining pupils have a sound understanding of their books, discussing them with confidence. At the time of the previous inspection, the range of books for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs was poor but this has been remedied. There is now a wide selection of good quality fiction and non-fiction books that inspires pupils to read. Pupils in Year 6 have sound skills in locating information in books and have opportunities to develop these skills further by conducting research in other subjects, in books or on computer, learning to select appropriate information from a range of sources. However, the lack of a school library means that all pupils do not develop advanced skills of using a classification system to locate reference books. This is a major priority identified by the school and a multi-purpose area that will include a school library is currently being constructed. There are some good quality reference books but others are somewhat dated and are to be replaced when the new library is completed. Parents are encouraged to help their children at home with reading and make a strong contribution to their progress. They know their children's targets and how they can help them to improve. The Bookworm Club provides good additional opportunities to encourage a love of reading.
68. Standards in writing are rising after a period of decline, thanks to better teaching of the basic skills that pupils need to learn to write and the very good use of assessment information. This helps teachers identify individual targets for pupils. They share these with them, so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Standards are close to the average in Year 2 and are a little above average in Year 6, because of a high focus on writing and effective training for staff. Most pupils in Year 2 write at sound length in joined script and their standards of spelling are good. Higher attainers use capital letters and full stops accurately to punctuate their sentences and more advanced punctuation, such as speech marks well. They use sentence joiners such as 'and', 'so' or 'because' correctly to create more complex and interesting sentences and employ a good range of descriptive vocabulary to enrich their work. Average attaining pupils structure their work appropriately, use basic sentence punctuation consistently and are beginning to use interesting vocabulary. Lower attainers show an awareness of capital letters and full stops, although they are sometimes applied inaccurately; they do not use a range of descriptive vocabulary to make their work interesting. In Year 6, pupils' handwriting is neat and well formed and standards of spelling and punctuation are good for average and higher attaining pupils. Work is structured well and organised into paragraphs and chapters and pupils draft and redraft their work to

improve it. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and styles to engage their readers' interest and make them want to read on. For example, when writing an adventure story:

- a lower attaining pupil begins, "Have you ever wondered where your worst nightmares come from, well I know. Let me tell you about it.";
- an average attainer writes, "I can't believe that I have ended up in this dirty, deserted house. It has all been such a nightmare."; and
- a higher attainer writes, "Have you ever been so scared that you fear that your next step may be your last? I have!"

Pupils apply their skills well in work in other subjects, such as when Year 6 record their geographical information on volcanoes in note form and write reports on family life in Victorian England.

69. Pupils who are lower attainers or have special educational needs are supported very well to enable them to make very good progress towards their personal targets. Pupils with English as an additional language are competent English speakers and make very good progress also.
70. Teaching is very good overall, particularly in the teaching of basic skills of phonics, reading and handwriting. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and of the National Literacy Strategy and plan interesting lessons. They make very good use of their assessment information to match work to the needs of individual pupils and to set them targets for improvement in reading and writing. Targets are displayed in books or on cards and pupils' progress towards them is regularly reviewed so that pupils understand how well they are achieving. Marking is very informative; it celebrates success and provides clear points for improvement. Teachers organise and manage their classes very well, forming constructive and relaxed relationships with their pupils. They have very high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour, which are amply rewarded by the way that pupils concentrate well and work hard throughout lessons, showing enjoyment and pride in their work. Lessons are well structured, making very good use of time and resources to motivate pupils. Introductory sessions are lively and clear and pupils understand what it is they are going to learn. Their independent tasks are of good quality and pupils have ample opportunities to write in their own words, in many different styles. At the end of lessons, teachers share pupils' work with the rest of the class, congratulate them on success and review progress. Although teachers provide sound opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills to locate information and to record some of their writing on computers, only in Years 3 and 4 were these observed in use during literacy lessons. The excellent quality of the teamwork between teachers and classroom support staff is a strength of teaching. Support staff are used extremely well to support target groups of lower attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs, which helps them take a full part in lessons and enhances their progress and self-esteem considerably. The quality of teaching of target groups of lower attaining Year 6 pupils and special educational needs pupils is also strong and promotes very good progress. Parents also make a very good contribution to learning through a consistent pattern of homework.
71. Strong leadership has provided for very good improvements in the quality of teaching, resources and the use of assessment since the previous inspection, which are now resulting in improved achievement and rising standards. Rigorous management systems are very well established and effective; they are used to check that policies are consistently applied and that the quality of teaching and learning meet the high standards expected. Results of national tests are analysed thoroughly to identify areas of concern and effective action is taken, such as by targeting girls' achievement in Years 1 and 2 and writing throughout the school. A very good system of assessing and recording pupils' learning now provides the school with information to check that pupils make sufficient progress from year to year and across each year group and to target groups and individuals for improvement. Reading resources are much improved, although the library has not yet been completed. The school has a very clear view of what is needed to improve further and a high commitment to achieving it.

MATHEMATICS

72. Standards in Year 2 are average and in Year 6 are above average. This reflects an improvement on the test results of 2002, when standards in Year 6 were well below average. The school's target for mathematics was missed by a long way but pupils are now on line to achieve the even higher target for 2003. The improvement is because of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the consistently good quality of teaching that is to be seen throughout the school. There has been

good improvement in standards, the curriculum, assessment procedures and the leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection.

Strengths in mathematics are:

- The standards that pupils attain.
- The good quality teaching of the basic skills of numeracy.
- The very good attitudes of pupils to their learning.
- Assessment information is used very well to identify areas for improvement, check on pupils' progress and set targets for the school and individuals.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Areas for development are:

- To provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in problem solving activities.
- There are insufficient classroom displays to support pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary.
- Mental introductions to lessons are not used consistently to develop pupils' quick mental recall skills.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject.

73. Pupils make good progress in learning the basic skills of numeracy because these are taught well. Most pupils in Year 2 work confidently with numbers to 100 and higher attainers work with larger numbers. They recognise sequences such as odd and even and use the four rules of number in solving problems. They use halves and quarters in number and area problems and recognise angles, including right angles, as measures of turn. However, there is a large group of lower attainers in the class, who are not confident in working with numbers to 100 and they affect overall standards for the year group. In Year 6, most pupils are very competent in the four rules of number and have a good knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals and use them to solve problems. They have secure mental recall skills and explain their strategies for working out answers to problems proficiently. They check the reasonableness of an answer with or without a calculator and use halving and doubling to aid multiplication. Higher attaining pupils use and interpret first quadrant co-ordinates and use all four methods of calculation to two places of decimals. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, or who are lower attainers, make good progress. They have very effective support in some lessons, when they make very good progress.
74. The quality of teaching is good and pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. These are important factors that help pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Teachers plan and organise their lessons very well and use questioning effectively to challenge the pupils' thinking and develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The way that teachers and classroom assistants work effectively as a team means that pupils receive a high proportion of direct teaching and ensures they have a high work rate. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and use it well to set challenging work for pupils of different abilities. There is a natural integration of mathematics into classroom activities so that pupils develop their skills of recognising and using simple patterns and relationships effectively.
75. Teachers give good explanations and demonstrate techniques well, so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to set about their activities. An excellent example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 5, taught by the headteacher, on developing their skills in using a protractor to measure angles. In this lesson, as in most others, pupils listened attentively during explanations, behaved very well and showed a great deal of interest and enjoyment in their work. They use resources and equipment with care and share them fairly with others. In some classes, the oral mental starter is not sharp enough to effectively develop pupils' rapid recall skills. Teachers make some use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work and the school is keen to further this aspect of the subject. There is insufficient focus on teaching the extensive range of mathematical vocabulary to help pupils' understanding. In some classrooms, such as in Year 3, mathematical displays support this aspect well but in others there is too little evidence of mathematical vocabulary to be found.

76. The curriculum is good and pupils experience a variety of relevant and interesting activities. The school acknowledges the need to improve this further by providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical problem solving activities. The subject is very well led and managed and this has had a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve. The school recognised that it needed to improve its provision for mathematics further, following disappointing test results and took very effective action, improving quality and raising standards. The procedures for checking pupils' attainment and progress are very good and enable the school to set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individuals. Pupils are given opportunity to use their literacy skills effectively to support their work when they read questions and then discuss strategies for finding solutions. They also have opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other subjects, as seen in science in Year 4, when pupils used thermometers to take accurate temperature measurements during their investigations.

SCIENCE

77. Standards in Year 2 are average and in Year 6 are above average. This reflects an improvement in both year groups from the national assessments in 2002, when standards in Year 2 were slightly below average and those in Year 6 were average. There is a very good atmosphere for learning and pupils make effective progress throughout the school. Standards have risen since the last inspection because of improvements in the curriculum and in the quality of teaching.

Strengths in science are:

- The standards that pupils attain.
- The good quality of teaching.
- The good progress that pupils of all abilities make throughout the school.
- The attitudes of pupils to their learning.

Areas for development are:

- The arrangements for checking the pupils' attainment and progress.
- The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in the subject.
- The further development of pupils' investigational skills.

78. Most pupils in Year 2 make sensible predictions before carrying out experiments, such as when finding out the warmest place in the classroom. They show secure skills in carrying out a simple, fair test with some help from the teacher. They know and understand pushes and pulls as forces that change the shape of some materials when applied to them. Pupils construct simple electrical circuits and understand the dangers associated with electricity. They explain the difference between natural and man-made materials and know the conditions necessary for the healthy growth of plants. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the differences between solids, liquids and gasses. They know that shadows are formed when an object blocks a light source and which materials are good thermal insulators. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the predator and prey relationship and use diagrams to construct a variety of electrical circuits. They identify the need to make a test fair and carry one out independently of the teacher, understanding that only one of the conditions can be changed at a time. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, as a result of the effective extra support that they are given.
79. Good teaching and the very positive attitudes of pupils of all abilities result in good progress and pupils achieve well. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and share the learning targets with pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn. They have secure subject knowledge and ask relevant questions to find out what pupils know and to further develop their scientific understanding. In the best lessons, teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they could do and, consequently, set challenging and interesting work. The activities built well on previous work so that pupils could use prior knowledge to support their learning. This was evident in a good lesson in Year 6 on developing understanding of the structure and function of the human heart. In this lesson, as in all others, pupils maintained their concentration, behaved very well and were interested in the opinions of others. Pupils communicate their findings clearly and use their literacy skills effectively in their report

writing, as well as in their labelled scientific drawings and diagrams. In experiments to show pulse rate before, during and after exercise, pupils use their numeracy skills to take accurate time measurements. The school recognises the need to develop the pupils' investigational skills further, so that the conclusions to their experiments evaluate their findings, using their prior scientific knowledge, rather than just describe what they have done. There is some use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work, but this is an area for further development.

80. The curriculum is good; it is broad and relevant and enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through carefully structured investigative activities. There is secure leadership by a recently appointed co-ordinator, who has developed a useful action plan to improve provision. A good policy and programme of work matched to national guidelines, provides teachers with clear information about the knowledge and skills to be taught. Assessment procedures are good but are not yet fully effective in tracking the progress that pupils make in order to set precise targets for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

81. During the inspection, only one lesson was observed because of the way in which the subject is timetabled through the year. A limited amount of work was available for examination; discussions were held with pupils and the co-ordinator and planning was examined but there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about standards of work at Years 2 and 6 or pupils' overall progress.

Strengths in the subject are:

- Some good examples of work are displayed very attractively around the school.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject.
- The art clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Areas for development:

- The amount of time allocated for the subject, particularly for younger pupils and for the oldest pupils.
- The use of sketchbooks.

82. In some year groups, particularly the younger classes, the time allowed for the subject does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to express themselves practically and creatively or to build up their skills, knowledge and understanding in a progressive way. For example, Year 1 had no art and design lesson during the week of the inspection. The school has recognised this and has already planned to increase the time allowed.
83. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject, shown by the numbers applying to join the art clubs. In discussion, older pupils were enthusiastic and said they wanted to do more art. The school makes very good use of the artistic expertise of two classroom assistants to operate the after-school clubs. These provide opportunities for all pupils who are interested to develop their talents, but because the clubs are very popular, most pupils only attend for half a term in each academic year.
84. Scrutiny of work on display and the work done by pupils in the art club shows that most pupils are developing observational skills to a satisfactory level. They use an appropriate range of media in their artwork and are developing a sound understanding of line, shape and form in art. Scrutiny of Year 4 sketchbooks shows that pupils are taught how to represent work in three-dimensional form and create perspective. Some work of a good standard was seen in displays in Years 3 and 5 and in public areas.
85. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory and pupils' attainment was average. In this lesson, pupils learnt to manipulate clay and create tablets by transferring patterns made by rubbings during a visit to the church. They developed sound understanding of the properties of clay. For example, they understand the need to keep it moist and that it needs to be glazed with water for a smooth finish. Pupils with special educational needs were adequately supported. Sketchbooks have been introduced

but teachers are not all using them consistently to develop pupils' ideas and design skills. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use computer programs to create pictures.

86. There is now a sound policy for art and design and the school has adopted the national programme of work but this is not yet modified to school needs.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. As no lessons were seen and very little other evidence was available, a secure judgement on the standards that pupils attain or the quality of teaching cannot be made. However, by talking to staff and pupils and looking at curriculum time allocations, it is evident that pupils are not given sufficient time to develop their designing and making skills in a progressive manner. The school intends to increase the amount of time for pupils to develop their skills progressively.
88. The curriculum is linked well to other subjects such as science and history. This was seen in the work of pupils in Year 1 who have used their scientific knowledge and understanding to use simple levers to make moving pictures. In this work, they made satisfactory evaluations of their pictures and suggested how they could be improved. Similarly, in Year 4, pupils have used their scientific knowledge and understanding to help them design and make torches that incorporate a simple electrical circuit. In Year 3, pupils have made sandwiches as part of their work in food technology and then used their numeracy skills well to create a tally chart to find out which was the most popular filling. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in the subject. Leadership is now satisfactory, with a new co-ordinator who has only just taken over the role. Planning arrangements are secure, being based on national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about what is to be taught and the skills to be learned.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

89. During the inspection, two geography lessons were seen, in Years 4 and 5, and two history lessons in Years 2 and 3. Additional evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils and the headteacher, examination of pupils' work in books, teachers' planning and displays around the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school and standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- Policies for both subjects are in place.
- National guidance has been implemented in both subjects.
- Effective use is made of visits to historical places of interest.
- Good use is made of the immediate locality to develop geographical knowledge and skills.

Areas for development are:

- The subject specific vocabulary is not developed systematically in both subjects.
- Assessment systems are not fully developed.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

90. Year 2 pupils have satisfactory knowledge of life and events in the past. For example, they know of the life and work of Florence Nightingale and the effect she had on hospital treatment. Pupils compare household items from the past to modern equipment, developing understanding of what it was like then and now. For example, they compare an iron from Victorian times to a modern electric iron. Pupils develop a sound sense of the order of eras and events in time through using timelines. They make good use of sources of evidence such as artefacts, books, the Internet and visits to museums to gather information and employ their literacy skills effectively in doing so. Pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of what life was like in the past, such as in ancient Greece, when they make comparisons between Athens and Sparta. Year 6 pupils talk about the life and significant events in the past and how the past has influenced life today, understanding why some things are different now. For example, they discuss the Victorians' lifestyle and recall the major developments from that era that still have an impact today, such as the railways.

91. Year 2 pupils have sound geographical knowledge and skills. They locate places on a map of the British Isles and relate the key features of where they live, comparing life in Shaw with life on the Scottish Isle of Struay. Pupils build satisfactorily on their skills and knowledge in Years 3 to 6. For example, Year 4 pupils extend their skills in the local area by considering how the nearby park can be improved and made safe; Year 5 develop good knowledge of the local high street, investigating ways of relieving traffic congestion at peak times. They display good awareness of traffic signs and regulations and make good use of one-way signs and traffic lights in their road maps as a way of controlling the flow of traffic. Very little recorded work was seen for Year 6, but in discussions, pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of places and their particular characteristics. For example, they study the effect of climates on where people live and how it affects their lifestyles, particularly in those countries near the Equator, which are hot and those near the Arctic, which are cold. They know why there is day and night and why climates change. Pupils' mapping skills are satisfactory and they locate places on the globe and on maps, using co-ordinates and grid references.
92. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In a very good lesson observed, the teacher's good subject knowledge was evident in effective planning. The use of discussion, the range and quality of well-matched activities and good resources contributed well to increasing interest and sustaining pupils' concentration. The lesson moved at a very brisk pace and pupils made very good progress. Teachers make good links between history and geography and with literacy, although occasionally there is an overemphasis on the literacy aspect of the lesson, as was seen in a satisfactory history lesson observed. Good examples of links with other subjects such as art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and science, were seen in Years 1, 3 and 5, but this is not as well developed in other classes. Teachers provide a range of sources for pupils to investigate and research their information, including the local community and visits to museums and places of historical interest. Studies of the local area enhance the curriculum in both subjects. Displays are attractive and informative; they celebrate pupils' achievements and contribute well to pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers do not always focus sufficiently on the specific language used in both subjects to aid pupils' understanding and their ability to discuss and describe their work. Teachers mark work well, using constructive and evaluative comments, which help improve pupils' work. Work for lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their needs and there is appropriate support in lessons so that they make sound progress. There is occasionally insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils, who work on the same tasks as other pupils at the same level.
93. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in the leadership and management of the subjects. New policies have been developed and national programmes of work implemented. There is now a more structured approach to planning and effective procedures are in place to check the quality of teaching and learning. The school is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures further, as these mainly reflect coverage of topics at the appropriate level.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement on the standards noted at the previous inspection in Year 2 but not in Year 6. This is because reliable resources have not been in place long enough for improvements to have been effective in Year 6, where there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils throughout the school are now making at least satisfactory progress and there is good progress when skills are taught directly.

Strengths in the subject are:

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- Skills in word processing and the use of the Internet are average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make sound use of computers to locate information.
- Good improvement has been made in provision of a programme of work, resources and staff training so that better progress is being made.

Areas for development are:

- Standards in Year 6, particularly in data handling and the monitoring and controlling of events through computers, are below average.
- Assessment procedures.
- There is not enough use of computers across the curriculum in some classes.

95. At the time of the previous inspection, most aspects of information and communication technology were unsatisfactory. For example:

- standards were below average and progress through the school was not good enough;
- teaching was unsatisfactory and teachers lacked confidence and did not plan work well;
- there was no policy for the subject and no whole school programme of work; and
- resources were poor and unreliable.

Since then, the school has made good improvement in all these areas, although standards in Year 6 remain below average.

96. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and attain average standards in all aspects of the subject at the end of Year 2. They operate computers confidently and co-operate very well when working in pairs or small groups. Pupils enter writing onto computers competently and alter the size, style and colour of text. They enter data into simple databases and produce graphs. They learn how to control the movements of a programmable toy to make it go in a direction of their choosing and to control the movement of a 'brush' by entering instructions when drawing pictures on the computer. They understand the use of information and communication technology in everyday life and begin to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, they make their own simple storybooks in literacy.

97. Whilst pupils in Years 3 to 5 build on this work appropriately, pupils in Year 6 have gaps in their knowledge and skills because until recently they have not had enough reliable equipment to develop these systematically. Their skills in word processing and use of the Internet to locate information and send e-mail are sound and they are confident in this work. They use word processing skills appropriately to record work in other subjects, such as when they develop their ideas on designs for new playground areas. Year 6 pupils enter data into databases and produce different types of graph such as block graphs and pie charts but have not had experience of setting up spreadsheets and analysing data or presenting information from these. Pupils use digital cameras to record their practical experiences, such as visits to their link primary school and Unity in the Community events. They do not operate computers to control events, such as switching lights on and off, or to measure such things as temperature changes. Pupils do have satisfactory opportunities to use programs that help them to develop problem-solving skills. Those with special educational needs make sound use of computers to support their learning.

98. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, in Year 1, but observations of the use of computers in other lessons and of pupils' work show that teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers and classroom support staff have undertaken a substantial programme of training to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject and planning is now good. The only direct teaching observed was good and the teacher made very good use of support staff and students to ensure that each group made good progress in learning about controlling movements and directions through information and communication technology. There are some good examples of work planned across the curriculum, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5, but this is not consistently organised across the whole school. Teachers in these classes use computers more regularly than others to practise skills, record work and provide opportunities for pupils to carry out research. For example:

- pupils enter numerical scientific data into a database and produce a block graph in their studies of animals;
- in Years 3 and 4, teachers use literacy and mathematical programs for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills independently; and
- Year 5 pupils write interesting reports of their visit to a museum to study ancient Greeks and enhance their work well by adding borders and text art.

99. Resources have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. The school has invested heavily in computers and laptops over previous years but it is only fairly recently that the laptops have become reliable. There is no room for a computer suite at the moment and classes

use the laptops in daily rotation for direct teaching and practice of information and communication technology skills, which does limit opportunities for ongoing access for pupils. It is planned to develop a more permanent base for them to improve this situation. A technician is employed and this is proving cost-effective because it has improved reliability considerably. A new system for connection to the Internet is currently being installed to provide better access.

100. Leadership is sound, although there have been changes of co-ordinator over recent years. There is a satisfactory policy and good programme of work to support teachers in planning. Assessment procedures are not well developed, relating more to National Curriculum coverage than to the achievement of individual pupils. Staff share a high commitment to improving the subject further and to raise its profile in the school by providing good examples of work in displays. For example, there are many digital photographs taken by staff and pupils to celebrate the life of the school and the school council uses computers to write good minutes and mini-biographies of its members, to display for the information of other pupils.

MUSIC

101. It was only possible to observe two music lessons during the inspection, because of the way in which the timetable is arranged. Therefore, it is not possible to make balanced overall judgements on standards, teaching and learning because of the practical nature of the subject. However, in both lessons observed teaching was good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress. Other evidence from singing in whole school assemblies, band practices and a band performance in an assembly, talking to pupils and examining teachers' planning, supports other judgements.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- Higher attaining and gifted pupils achieve well in playing instruments because teaching is very good.
- Lessons with pupils from another primary school promote understanding of other cultures and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development.

Areas for development:

- The overall time allocated for the subject is too low in some classes.
- Some lessons are too short.

102. The amount of time spent on music varies considerably and in some classes too little time is spent to allow pupils to build up their skills progressively at an appropriate rate. For example, in a well-taught Year 4 lesson, pupils completed their writing of a song and performed it to the class. Whilst the teacher gave good opportunities for pupils to evaluate the success of their classmates' compositions and performances for the first groups, the lesson then ran out of time. The last performances were rushed and there was no time for comments on these groups' success to help them improve their skills. Whilst the teacher decided to complete this another day, if there was time, the moment had passed. The work composed was of a sound standard and pupils collaborated enthusiastically on their work.
103. In some classes, lessons are arranged in blocks of time throughout the year. For example, during the inspection week none was being taught in Year 6, other than that pupils took part in weekly hymn practice. This limits pupils' opportunities to express themselves practically and creatively. Pupils were heard singing in assemblies and hymn practice, where their performance was of a sound standard. They sing words clearly and tunefully. Many pupils learn to play the recorder and incidental observations of them practising for their lunchtime club showed that their standards are at least average.
104. Observations of the brass and woodwind band show that pupils who wish to take up playing an instrument are taught very well. Although some pupils were absolute beginners at the start of the school year, they now perform with confidence, playing such pieces as the "Can-Can" and "The Floral Dance" in public. For example, several Year 3 pupils who play the French horn joined the band this year after a particularly large number of Year 6 pupils moved to high schools. The performance of the older and higher attaining pupils is very good. They read music and follow their conductor competently, playing to a high standard. The programme of instrumental tuition and the band offer very good opportunities for

those pupils who are higher attainers or have a particular talent in music and as at the time of the previous inspection, they share their expertise with others in the class. The band provides a very good opportunity to understand and take part in local culture.

105. Links with another local primary school provide very good opportunities for Year 3 pupils to have lessons with pupils from minority ethnic origins, so that both groups of pupils begin to understand the place of music in each other's cultures. They have established very good working relationships with their partners and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and racial harmony in the community.
106. Music is played as pupils enter and leave assemblies and they learn about the life and style of the "Composer of the Week". The playing of a wide range of music as pupils enter and leave the school, helps create to create atmosphere and adds much to pupils' appreciation of different styles of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Most of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain average standards. Progress is sound overall and often good in lessons because of good quality teaching and pupils' positive attitudes. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths in physical education are:

- The good quality of teaching.
- The good progress that pupils make.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning.

Areas for development are:

- The arrangements for checking the pupils' attainment and progress.
- Assessment procedures.

108. Most pupils in Year 2 have suitable control of their bodies when running, skipping and moving at different levels and different speeds. In gymnastics lessons, they balance carefully on benches and then jump off and land in a controlled manner. They have appropriate awareness of space and of other pupils. They put together a sequence of movements and then improve these by practice. By the end of Year 6, most pupils practise, improve and refine their skills and make evaluations of their own and others' performance, suggesting improvements. They follow instructions correctly and watch others carefully in demonstration, using what they learn to improve their own performance. They know and understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and maintain rigorous activity for suitable periods of time. Most pupils swim the nationally expected 25 metres and have a good knowledge of water safety. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in physical educational activities and they also make good progress.
109. Teaching is good and the attitudes of pupils are very good. The planning of lessons is thorough, with clear learning targets linked to interesting and challenging activities. Pupils display a lot of enjoyment and enthusiasm in their activities and are very well behaved. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that enables them to explain to pupils how to set about their activities and how to improve their performance. They set good examples by dressing appropriately for lessons and ensure that lessons begin with effective warm up activities. They demonstrate techniques in a safe and effective way so that pupils understand the need for safety when using a variety of apparatus.
110. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all pupils, including swimming lessons for those in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5. Leadership of the subject is secure and the management systems, such as the checking of planning and observations of lessons, ensure that the co-ordinator has a clear overview of teaching and standards through the school. The programme of work is successful in ensuring that pupils build up their skills progressively, which was not the case during the last inspection. Assessment arrangements are not well developed enough to help teachers to check progress and build on pupils' achievements. A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to learning. All pupils, including those who have sporting talents, have good opportunities to develop their skills through these clubs and the very good links with the community. For example, there is professional football coaching by Oldham Athletic and Manchester United Football Clubs and many sporting events are included in the Unity in the

Community project, which also makes a positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. The school is keen to develop participation in competitive sports with other schools further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. There has been good improvement in provision for the subject since the previous inspection. The school now has a programme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus. The coordinator checks teachers' planning to ensure that the requirements of the syllabus are met.

Strengths in the subject are:

- The co-ordinator has a clear view of provision and of the areas for further development.
- There are good links with other subjects such as English.
- The school has established strong links with a school serving a different faith community and some pupils take religious education lessons with pupils in that school.

Areas for development are:

- Strengthen the teaching and learning of the major world religions other than Christianity.
- Assessment procedures.

112. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects an improvement in the standards attained by the end of Year 2, as progress at the time of the previous inspection was judged to be unsatisfactory and standards were not in line with expectations. Assemblies make an effective contribution to religious education, as do personal, social and health education lessons.
113. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an understanding of the significance of festivals and days that are special to different faiths, such as 'Mothering Sunday' and understand why people celebrate these days. They understand the idea of belonging to a family and why some people are special. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the topics they study and sound knowledge of Christianity. They are encouraged to respect and care for each other and empathise with the less fortunate. Pupils build on this work satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. They extend their knowledge and understanding of other faiths, such as Hinduism and Islam, appropriately. For example, Year 4 pupils learn about the story of Rama and Sita. Year 6 pupils explore the ideas and beliefs that underpin prayers and through discussion understand the meaning of the 'Lord's Prayer'. Most pupils know the prayer from memory and show good understanding of why Christians pray to God. In the very small sample of work seen in Year 6, pupils learn about the Hindu deities and reflect on personal values. However, there is sometimes a lack of sufficient depth and breadth in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world's leading faiths. Pupils' work contributes well to the development of literacy skills.
114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; that observed during the inspection varied from good to unsatisfactory. When teaching is good, teachers plan activities that support pupils in making links between religious belief and the everyday life of believers. They encourage pupils to share their experiences with sensitivity and this contributes to raising their self-esteem. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, the teacher planned appropriate activities but took too long in giving instructions about the writing. The lesson became too focused on literacy development and pupils did not learn about the underlying religious significance of the faith story they were rewriting in their own words. Teachers establish some sound links with other subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils extend their geographical skills when identifying the countries with the highest and lowest Muslim populations and Year 4 worked on movement linked to their studies of Hinduism, in physical education. However, this aspect of work is underdeveloped; for example, art and design links are not used sufficiently to illustrate work. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology in lessons. Assessment is not sufficiently developed to help teachers check pupils' progress and plan the next steps for learning.
115. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has set high expectations in identifying areas for further development, such as assessment procedures. She has prepared well for the introduction of the new Oldham agreed syllabus, which will provide well for greater depth of knowledge and understanding of world faiths.