

# INSPECTION REPORT

**East Crompton St James' CE Primary School**

Shaw, Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105710

Headteacher: Mrs M.M. Barnett

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Tracey  
20270

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 246518

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St James Street  
Shaw  
Oldham

Postcode: OL2 7TD

Telephone number: 01706 847360

Fax number: 01706 299601

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs L. Lomas

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20270	June Tracey	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Educational inclusion	The school's results and achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
11457	Jane Beattie	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
3191	James Curley	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	
17907	Michael Bowers	Team inspector	Foundation stage History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
7994	Pamela Weston	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St James' School is an average size primary school providing education for 227 pupils in the age range 5-11 years. The school does not have a nursery but there is a purpose-built independent nursery on the same site. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds, mainly from the local area. The school is proud of its long history and distinctly Christian ethos. It is regularly over-subscribed. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the proportion on the register of special educational need. The proportion with formal statements of need is below average. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is average. A relatively small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds; none have languages other than English as their mother tongue.

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

This is an effective school that provides a good quality education for its pupils in a supportive and caring environment. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school in response to good teaching. Overall standards of work in Years 2 and 6 are well above average. The school is well led and managed. It provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils have very good attitudes that, together with the good teaching, result in very good achievement and well above average standards of attainment.
- The school is well led and managed. Pupils strive to meet its expectations.
- The school's Christian ethos permeates its work. Pupils are well cared for in a stimulating learning environment that fosters good personal development and community spirit. Relationships are very good.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents, which aids pupils' learning.
- There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.

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

- Standards of work could be improved in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology in Years 3 to 6.
- In the Foundation Stage, children's knowledge and understanding of the world and work in some aspects of creative and physical development could be extended.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Overall improvement since the previous inspection in December 1997 is very good. Pupils' attainment in national tests has improved; their literacy and numeracy skills have been consolidated. Teaching has improved and is more consistent; varied and interesting methods capture pupils' interest. In addition, better use is made of homework to complement pupils' work in school. Accommodation has improved in that more working spaces have been created close to classrooms to provide more flexibility for group work. There has been a significant improvement in the effectiveness of the governing body, which has led to better understanding of issues affecting the school's work and results. A new computer suite has been provided. Whilst it is of great benefit, its use alone is not sufficient to provide pupils with the breadth of opportunities they need in ICT. There has been some improvement in provision for design and technology in Year 1-2, but not in Years 3-6.

### **STANDARDS**

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

	<b>compared with</b>	
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Performance in:	all schools			Similar schools	Key
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	A*	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A*	B	A	
Science	B	A	A	A	

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and, overall, they reach the expected level for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development by the time they start Year 1.

Standards of work are well above average in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. Overall, pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well throughout the school. Standards of work are above average in art and history in Years 2 and 6 and in geography in Year 2. They are below average in design and technology and ICT in Year 6 and achievement in these subjects is unsatisfactory. Attainment in other subjects and year groups is average.

Pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were in the top five per cent in the country in reading, writing and mathematics. They were equally high when compared with similar schools. The school has maintained a consistently good standard in recent years. Pupils' overall results in the national tests taken in Year 6 were well above average compared with all and similar schools. The school met the challenging target set by governors for mathematics but just missed the one set for English. The trend in results over time is broadly similar to that found nationally. Results improved still further in English, mathematics and science in 2003 but national averages are not yet available for comparison. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are well above average, as are their mental and numerical skills in mathematics. This is due to the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the successful transference of these skills across the whole curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are keen and enthusiastic. Most put maximum effort into their work, which contributes to their very good achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils have respect for the school's disciplinary code and work well within it. There were no exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school. They make a good contribution to the life of the community and take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	<b>Average.</b>

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, receive a good foundation in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers promote the development of these skills well to underpin work throughout the whole curriculum.



Children make steady progress in the Foundation Stage. They learn effectively through praise, encouragement and clear indication of what is, and is not, acceptable. Occasionally, too much of the work is directed by staff. Then, children do not have enough freedom to interpret tasks for themselves and explore their own feelings, particularly in creative activities.

Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics and extra-curricular activities in music. They are good in science, art, history and physical education. Common features of the best teaching are the good preparation and use of information about pupils' progress to set interesting and challenging tasks. Classes are well managed. Teachers intervene at appropriate times during activities but allow plenty of scope for pupils to work independently and find out for themselves. In addition, teachers are flexible in their approach to lessons. They quickly adapt pre-prepared plans to consolidate pupils' understanding or in response to the need for a change in direction.

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in ICT and design and technology in Years 3-6. In ICT, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the skills they learn in specific lessons, or to apply them in other subjects. Teachers are currently involved in training to improve their confidence and expertise in teaching the subject. In design and technology, pupils lack opportunities to develop design skills, make products and test their effectiveness. Planning is not good enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> Provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but more opportunities could be provided for creative and physical development. The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for pupils in Years 1-6 but not enough use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' work in other subjects. The school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for design and technology in Years 3-6. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including choir, orchestra and music groups, and team games.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils' specific needs are clearly identified and they receive good support to help them reach their individual targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Very good.</b> Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. The school conscientiously promotes the principles of good citizenship through the example it sets as a caring and concerned community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well in a supportive environment. They are made to feel secure and valued through working in an orderly and purposeful environment. Assessment procedures are used effectively to check pupils' ongoing attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. This system has not yet been applied to other subjects.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. Teaching and non-teaching staff share a common vision for the school. They work as a committed team to develop the potential of individual pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively. They hold the school to account for its actions and are actively involved in evaluating its work against priorities listed in the development plan.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good analysis of national tests and assessment records enables the school to identify any weaknesses or underachievement and target them for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The budget and specific grants are spent appropriately with due regard for their intended purpose. Governors successfully apply the principles of best value to educational and financial decisions, basing these on consultation with those who will be affected and the potential effect on pupils' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The care and concern for individual pupils.</li> <li>• Discipline is good and pupils behave well.</li> <li>• Teaching is thought to be good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and parents are made to feel welcome.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and give of their best.</li> <li>• The good ethos in the school that permeates the work of the school community and beyond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils could be provided with more opportunities to practise their skills in ICT. More use could be made of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse parents' positive views of the school as an establishment where pupils are valued as individuals within an outward looking community. With regard to ICT, the provision of a computer suite has significantly improved opportunities for pupils to learn the operational skills. Inspectors agree with parents that pupils do not have enough time on the computers to consolidate these skills, nor is there sufficient provision for pupils to extend their work to other studies in the classroom.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is average for children's age. They achieve satisfactorily so that by the time they start in Year 1 most have reached the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development. Some aspects of children's knowledge and understanding of the world are not as good as usually found.
2. Overall standards of work are well above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because of their very good attitudes and positive response to good teaching. However, in Year 1, progress is slightly slower in some lessons where more classroom support is needed for pupils who need more individual attention. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well above average because they are taught well, not only in English and mathematics but throughout the whole curriculum.
3. Standards of work are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve very well in these subjects. Standards of work are above average in art and history throughout the school and in geography in Year 2. They are average in ICT and design and technology in Year 2, and in physical education throughout the school. Standards are below average in ICT and design and technology in Year 6. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about standards in class music lessons.
4. In 2002, pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were in the top five per cent of the country in reading, writing and mathematics. They were equally high when compared with all schools. The proportion exceeding the level expected for their age was well above average in reading and very high in writing and mathematics. In recent years the trend in results has been higher than that found nationally in reading and mathematics. Pupils' overall results in the national tests taken in Year 6 were well above average compared with all and similar schools. They were also well above average based on pupils' prior attainment in Year 2. However, results were not as good as usual in English and mathematics because the proportions exceeding the level expected for their age were below the national average. Nevertheless, results met the challenging targets set by governors in mathematics and only just missed them in English. Results were carefully analysed to identify the questions pupils found most difficult and action was taken to give pupils more practice in specific areas of work. In 2003, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 exceeding the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science were higher, significantly so in mathematics. National averages are not yet available for comparison. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Most achieve national averages or just below. They make very good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual educational programmes because learning is broken down into small, achievable steps.
6. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress because teachers are sensitive to the need for them to listen, talk and refine their language. This enables pupils in the older year groups to speak with confidence when arguing their opinions in class discussions in preparation for more formal debate. Pupils make equally good progress with their reading and writing. They read fluently and use a wide range of vocabulary in their written work. Teachers reinforce the importance of punctuation and grammar in work across the whole curriculum, which encourages pupils to produce work of a consistent quality in all subjects. By Year 6, pupils' written work is well structured and imaginative. Pupils know how to adjust what they write to the task in hand.
7. Pupils' numerical and computational skills are well above average. Teachers focus on developing pupils' mental agility, which is very good. They ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of the

fundamental concepts underpinning number work. by encouraging the correct use of mathematical language in other subjects as well as mathematics. Teachers build up pupils' confidence and help them to realise the importance of the subject in everyday life.

8. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in science is well above average because they learn for themselves through investigations. As a result, pupils are better able to apply their knowledge when working in unfamiliar situations.

9. The school is working on improving pupils' skills in ICT, but, as yet, they are not up to the standard required by Year 6. Although pupils learn specific operational skills in ICT lessons they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise them and employ them to benefit work in other subjects. In Years 3-6, pupils' achievement in design and technology and ICT is unsatisfactory.

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

10. Pupils' very good attitudes to every aspect of school life, and their high standards of behaviour, are great strengths of the school. Pupils respond very well to the family atmosphere and they know what is expected of them in and out of class and throughout the day. In their turn, pupils have developed a strong sense of community and are developing good attitudes of citizenship. The older pupils say that the school is a community which provides for the individual needs of each one of its members, that no-one has to struggle without help, or ever feels left out of school life and activities.

11. In class, pupils' very good attitudes to work contribute to their very good achievement. In a lesson on mental subtraction, every pupil in the Year 3 class tried hard, even when they found the work challenging. They all concentrated well, asking for help if they needed to, and persevered with their work so that all made progress in developing their skills. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work and make very good gains in self-confidence.

12. A large number of pupils take an enthusiastic part in the extra-curricular activities. Consequently, they develop good personal proficiency and team skills in activities such as sport, music and dance. Pupils who have special learning needs play a full part in school life; they take responsibilities in and out of class and take part in all activities.

13. Behaviour in and out of class is very good. No pupil has been excluded, temporarily or permanently, during the past year. The school has had no racist incident in recent years and does not tolerate bullying. Pupils work and play very well together, showing good awareness of each other's needs. In the playground they play imaginatively and happily and make good use of the equipment provided, taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Some of the older pupils play with children in the Reception class, particularly in the Autumn term when they are still new to school life. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who completed the questionnaire are unanimous in the opinion that behaviour in school is good.

14. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils feel confident that they are valued by all the adults in school. They listen carefully to other pupils and respect their views. Opportunities to learn about beliefs, views and cultures which may be different from their own are not as prolific as in some schools but relationships between pupils in the school from different ethnic backgrounds are harmonious. Pupils are positively supportive and interested in each other's lifestyles and experiences. They have a strong level of trust in the school management and all the school staff who care for them in the classroom, at lunchtime and in the playground. Pupils willingly take responsibility for helping about the school, for example, they prepare the hall for assembly and help with the serving of lunches and the tidiness of the hall at lunch-time. Pupils show a good sense of ownership and care for the school, for instance, by trying to keep the playgrounds and adjacent areas free of litter. They carry out their duties conscientiously.

15. The school and families work well together to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance and punctuality. The school day starts punctually, lessons begin on time and no time is wasted during the day.

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

16. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection when, although teaching was satisfactory overall, 13 per cent of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. The proportion of very good lessons observed was higher than in the previous inspection. The overall improvement is due to changes in staffing, higher expectations and a sharper focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Ninety-eight per cent of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, 55 per cent were good and 25 per cent were very good or better. Two lessons were outstanding.

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Development of communication and mathematical skills is given high priority; planning is systematic and sets out a clear programme for learning. Steady progress is maintained in these areas. Relationships between children and staff are good. Children's behaviour and progress is managed effectively through praise, encouragement and clear indication of what is, and is not, acceptable. This works well. The quality of learning could be improved further if children were given more freedom to interpret tasks for themselves and explore their own feelings, particularly in creative and physical activities. Sometimes, too much of the work is directed by staff. More could be done to make the classroom environment more exciting and stimulating for young children.

18. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 1-6. Pupils receive particularly good support in preparation for national tests in Years 2 and 6. The consistently good quality of the teaching for pupils of all ages, combined with teachers' formal and informal interaction with each other, promotes the continuity of learning from one year group to the next. Planning is good in almost all subjects and teachers positively promote the transference of skills from one subject to another. However, pupils make far too little use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils' achieve very well overall because of their very good attitudes in response to the good quality of teaching. Progress in the current Year 1 is not quite as good as in other classes because there are times when not enough additional adult support is available to meet pupils' specific needs. The school has this situation in hand - it is exceptional to this one year group

19. Teachers and adult helpers provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Support assistants are very well deployed and have a very good understanding of individual pupils' learning needs, which they meet effectively. They are familiar with their groups and work well with them, often making a significant difference to pupils' learning during lessons by, for example, reinforcing work previously taught by the teacher. Great care is taken by staff to ensure that work is well matched to individual needs and that pupils build on their previous learning. Staff take account of the need to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged, recognising strengths as well as weaknesses.

20. Techniques for introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been very effective, as is evident from pupils' results. Emphasis on the consolidation of factual knowledge, followed with learning through investigation and application, is paying dividends and escalating pupils' progress. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of National Curriculum subjects, although in design and technology and ICT they are not put into practice effectively enough in Years 3-6. In design and technology, teachers lack the knowledge and expertise to provide an appropriate range and variety of activities to develop pupils' design skills. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to make products and to evaluate the extent to which they fulfil their intended purpose. In ICT, pupils do not have enough scope to practise the skills they learn in specific ICT lessons, nor do they make sufficient use of these important skills in other subjects.

21. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching in class music because no lessons were observed and there was no written work to scrutinise. Teaching in religious education is reported on in a

separate inspection. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good in mathematics. It is satisfactory in design and technology and ICT and good in all other subjects. In Years 3-6, teaching is very good in English and mathematics, good in science, art, history and physical education, and satisfactory in geography. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology and ICT for the reasons described above. Pupils express themselves confidently in oral work and their mental agility improves through constant practice of mental arithmetic. They progressively learn to express themselves equally well in writing, both in creative work and when reporting on practical experiences. Teachers' planning and practices clearly indicate a conscious effort to encourage pupils to think for themselves. In this, they meet with substantial success.

22. Teachers manage pupils well throughout the school. They promote good discipline through respect and consideration for others. The best teaching is characterised by thorough preparation and good use of information about pupils' previous progress to set interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers are flexible in the interpretation of lesson plans, for example, when they were modified in a mathematics lesson because pupils had not really grasped the concept underlying an earlier topic. In this subject, and others, it is clear that pupils learn best through the 'step-by-step' approach to learning; they gain in confidence and self-esteem through achieving recognisable success at each stage. Pupils benefit from having individual written targets in some subjects. This practice could usefully be extended across the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the information gained is used well to adapt plans for future lessons where necessary. Occasionally however, the marking does not point out to pupils how the work could be improved further.

23. Common features of the two outstanding lessons observed, both in English, were the pupils' empathy with the content of the work and the teachers' ability to absorb pupils in it to the extent that they mobilised the pace. In one, in Year 3, the teacher's graphic recount of an historical story held pupils spellbound. It made them think deeply before suggesting explanations for the tragic situation. In the other, in Year 5, pupils demonstrated their ability to present persuasive arguments to an audience in a manner that caused other pupils to question their own opinions, and sometimes change them. Pupils had been prepared well for this approach to debate, particularly in their understanding of how effective arguments are constructed and followed through.

24. Some parents expressed concern about homework at the time of the previous inspection. Currently, inspectors consider that the quality and quantity of homework is good. It is sensitively constructed and marked so as to complement and extend the work completed in school.

25. Teachers and adult helpers have wide-ranging expertise that supports a variety of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and sport. They give generously of their time to enrich pupils' experience by providing numerous opportunities for them to extend their work within the local community and with other institutions.

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

26. The school provides a wide range of experiences and opportunities that cater well for the interests, aptitudes and needs of its pupils. All National Curriculum subjects, religious education and areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are included but the school does not fully meet the requirements for design and technology. The school has understandably given priority to the teaching of English and mathematics in recent years. This has meant that much of the timetable has been devoted to these two subjects. Careful planning has ensured that the time given to other subjects, with the exception of design and technology in Years 3-6, is used effectively. The availability of only one computer in each classroom makes it difficult for ICT to be incorporated into many subjects and be available to all pupils on a regular basis. The skills learned by pupils in the ICT suite are not systematically consolidated in classrooms.

27. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactorily planned to support the children's learning towards the nationally agreed goals in all areas of learning. Significant emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy. However, the planning does not identify sufficient opportunities to engage children in role-play or to explore and experiment with materials. Children are not given enough opportunities to learn through their senses and to develop their own ideas. These weaknesses are mainly evident in the development of 'knowledge and understanding of the world' and in 'creative development'. The school does not have a specified outdoor play area for this age range and this restricts children's physical development.

28. Provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Teachers teach basic skills well in English and mathematics and this underpins work in other subjects. The school has introduced a good range of support to help pupils who lag behind in their work and those who need a little extra help to reach expected levels in the national tests. There are some good examples of teachers planning their lessons to incorporate transference of skills across subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 improved their factual writing when they wrote about life in The United Kingdom during the blitz. Pupils develop their skills in data handling in science and geography when they create tables of results and analyse matrices of information to produce bar charts. However, teachers do not promote ICT enough in other subjects, such as when drawing graphs in science or word processing information in history. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has improved standards in English and mathematics since the previous inspection, because teaching is supported by a clear structure that identifies what the pupils need to learn next. Many pupils show very good mental ability in solving number problems. The school has identified some gifted and talented pupils and caters well for their needs in English and mathematics. Pupils with special gifts in music and games also receive the relevant support.

29. The school makes very good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are clearly identified at an early stage. The school takes steps to ensure that all pupils, whatever their needs, have access to a full and challenging curriculum and teachers make sure that the curriculum is adapted to make it accessible at an appropriate level for each pupil.

30. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of interesting activities. There are frequent visits to places of interest linked to subjects being taught in school. During the inspection pupils visited Samuel Gregg's cotton mill at Styal, where they were taken aback by the stories of punishments handed out to apprentices who were late to work or who ran away. A poet visits the school on an annual basis. This stimulates pupils to develop their competence in writing by incorporating emotions and feelings and adding depth to expression..

31. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. Teachers work from a well-planned scheme of work and structure lessons so that pupils can discuss personal feelings and contemporary issues. Much of the health education is dealt with in the science curriculum but there are separate lessons to guide the older pupils about sex education. Pupils are made aware of the danger of misuse of drugs.

32. The school has very good links with the community and the parish. This aspect of its work is of particular significance and is one of the reasons given by parents for the choice of the school. They believe that it encourages pupils to grow up with loyalty, consideration and understanding for their peers and people with whom they come into regular contact. The choir sings at many local concerts and there are football workshops with Oldham Athletic and Manchester United.

33. The school also has good links with other schools. There are regular visits by children from the nearby nursery who mostly transfer into the Reception class. Links with local secondary schools successfully engage teachers in working together to prepare pupils for the transfer at 11+.

34. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided including choir, orchestra, team games, clubs and a French club for the Infant children. A substantial number of pupils participate in these

activities. Teachers, other adults and parents give generously of their time, including weekends, to make the exciting range of activities available to boys and girls.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

35. Provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very good. It contributes to the well-being of the school as a whole and of individual pupils in particular. Collectively, they help to create a very pleasant atmosphere in which pupils can work and grow in maturity.

36. Provision for spiritual development is good. The creative and spiritual atmosphere is enhanced by the high quality of artwork displayed around the school; the appreciation of the works of great artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Lowry is uplifting. The positive ethos in lessons enables pupils to grow in self-esteem. They think and talk about their experiences and appreciate the time provided in lessons and assemblies to pause and consider their own circumstances. These assemblies follow themes that are key elements in pupils' lives such as trust, honesty and friendship. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on religious stories and relate their messages to their own lives. Hymns are sung with dignity and prayers are said regularly with feeling. These are often followed by moments of reflective silence.

37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable in school and in the community at large. The great majority of pupils abide by the rules and can determine right from wrong. The rules are well known by pupils because they are discussed on a regular basis. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and appreciate that all staff try to apply rules fairly and that rewards have to be justly earned. The values of honesty, fairness and justice are well promoted.

38. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Adults in the school are very good role-models for pupils and relationships between them are positive. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions, such as helping in and around school or working the overhead projector during assemblies. Very many pupils appreciate the principle of 'fair competition' and play chess and organise team games within the rules. The school is heavily involved in local charity work and pupils use their initiative to raise money for worthy causes such as charities supporting the disabled. The impact of very good relationships is reflected in the social order and climate of the school. The attitude of older pupils towards the care of younger ones is very good, particularly at lunchtimes when they sit with and help them. The annual residential visit for Years 5 and 6 pupils makes a very good contribution to the development of their self-responsibility and helps them become aware of the needs of others.

39. There has been an improvement in the provision for cultural development, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Provision is now good. Through studies in history and geography, and involvement in the local community, pupils are very aware of their cultural traditions. Religious studies help pupils to understand something of the culture of non-Christian world religions, for example, Judaism and Islam. However, more could still be done to provide pupils with a wider understanding of the culturally diverse society that Britain has become. The school provides very good enriching cultural experiences for its pupils in art, music and history lessons. Work with a poet helps pupils to understand the richness and quality of language. Pupils listen regularly to classical music, visit the theatre and learn the dances of non-western cultures.

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

40. The school has very good procedures, which are used effectively, to provide a very high level of care for all pupils. The caretaker, school management and staff are constantly vigilant for safety in school. The written risk assessments provide guidelines for safe practice in school and on visits, and pupils are aware of the need for personal safety. The very good PSHE programme includes appropriate drugs and sex education.



41. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Lunchtimes and playtimes are very well supervised and the minor injuries that occur are infrequent. The friendly supervision and the play equipment contribute to playtimes that are free from stress and enjoyable for all pupils. The attractive litter bins, the softer playground surface for the younger pupils and the playground markings help to provide a pleasant play environment. Good arrangements are made for pupils who need additional facilities before and after school hours.

42. The school has relevant and sensible rules that are well displayed. They are effective in promoting high standards of behaviour throughout the day. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and have confidence that alleged incidents will be suitably dealt with if reported. Procedures to encourage good attendance are very good. The pupil welfare service works closely with the school to support families in situations where pupils' attendance levels give cause for concern.

43. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well by the class teacher and with very good support from the head teacher. Classroom assistants play a valuable part in supporting pupils' academic and personal progress and in raising their achievements. Parents say that the response to individual needs is a particular strength of the school and that problems and concerns are dealt with at an early stage before they grow.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational need is well thought out through clear plans, adapted tasks and extra support. Support is well planned to take very good account of the targets outlined in the pupils' individual programmes of work. Pupils with potential special learning needs are identified early in their school life and appropriate steps are taken quickly. There are effective and consistent procedures for reviewing the progress of these pupils, which are implemented well by the co-ordinator in collaboration with class teachers. Careful and detailed records are kept, pupils' targets are reviewed regularly and, when necessary, further advice is sought from the relevant agencies. All pupils have equal access to the wide range of opportunities provided.

45. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' ongoing attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. They provide a comprehensive bank of information through which the school checks that individual pupils and whole classes are meeting the targets set for them. They are used well to identify underachievement and the headteacher and staff are quick to take action and inform parents where remedial action is required. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are sound. Assessments are carried out regularly and recorded conscientiously. The system is currently in a stage of transition. The information gained is used satisfactorily in planning that meets the needs of most pupils. It is not always used as effectively to identify specific targets for individual pupils, especially those who are ready for greater challenge.

46. The school analyses its results in national tests in English, mathematics and science well to compare its performance against similar schools and measure the progress that pupils have made. There are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' work in other subjects so teachers are not in a position to track pupils' progress to the same extent. However, teachers have a good sense of pupils' attainment levels and set work accordingly. The basis of an assessment system is in place in ICT which, over time, should enable teachers to move pupils on at a pace that is appropriate to their existing knowledge.

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

47. Parents' response to the pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire indicates that they have an outstandingly good opinion of the school. They are unanimous and strong in their opinion that the school is well managed and that teaching is good. Parents consider that their children are being helped to become mature and responsible, and that they make good progress because they are expected to work hard and give of their best. The great majority of parents say that their children like school and get the right amount of homework. They feel that they are well informed about their children's progress and that the school works closely with them. Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school.

48. The school works very well with individual families to meet concerns and to help their children through any difficulties; this is a particular strength. Parents say that they always feel welcome in school and can contact staff whenever necessary. A significant number of parents attend the Governors' Annual Meeting which includes, with the presentation of the Annual Report, a further focus on a particular aspect which the governors consider would be of interest. Parents are invited to lunch in school with their children on a rota basis, which reinforces the community spirit and enables them to experience social time in the school day. Parents contribute generously to the school funds during the PTA fundraising events and to the charities supported by their children. Parents' views are very well represented on the school governing body.

49. Parents of pupils new to the school have very good opportunities to meet staff and to learn about the school and the work their children will be doing. The school provides regular, relevant information about the curriculum and any special events. Parents and pupils have completed surveys, which are analysed to judge their views on particular issues. These form part of the consultation process leading to decisions about future developments. During the Autumn and Spring terms, parents are invited to school to discuss their child's progress. In addition, written reports provide a good evaluation of what pupils have achieved, how well they have worked and what targets they need to aim for in the future.

50. Several parents provide regular help in school and many help at fund-raising events. Their efforts have enabled the school to provide valuable extra resources. The large majority of parents are very supportive of their children's work at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs work very closely with the school and contribute well to the good progress their children make.

51. Some parents express the view that the school is like an extended family. They feel that they are taking an active part in their children's education. The school and parents work together so that there are no boundaries to obstruct mutual understanding and their joint efforts to do the best for each individual child. This partnership is a great strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' achievements and well-being.

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

52. The school is well led and managed. It successfully meets its aim to nurture pupils' development in a Christian environment where pupils feel valued. They gain respect for themselves and others in the school and wider communities. The school is self-critical in evaluation of its work and uses the outcomes well in development planning. It emanates a warmth that fosters an effective learning environment in which pupils of all abilities, backgrounds, race or creed feel safe and respected for their individuality.

53. The headteacher has a commanding presence in the school. She is ably supported by a committed team of teachers and other staff who work closely together to provide pupils with a wealth of opportunities both in the main curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Teachers are encouraged to pursue their own professional development, and do, although external provision for developing their expertise in ICT has been slow in arriving. The headteacher and staff know pupils very well. This provides them with first hand information and early warning of potential difficulties so that action can be taken quickly. Parents and pupils feel confident that any concerns will be dealt with sensitively and without fuss.

54. Subject co-ordinators play a key role in the organisation of their subjects, particularly in policy making and planning. Much of the monitoring of teaching and evaluation of pupils' work and progress is undertaken by the headteacher but subject co-ordinators are involved in working through the outcomes and planning subsequent action. The extent to which this occurs is variable, the highest priority being given to English, mathematics and science. Good analysis of pupils' results in various school and national tests, and ongoing checks on progress from year to year, assist the school in evaluating whether individual pupils are making sufficient progress from their starting point. If not, corrective action is taken. More attention needs to be directed to design and technology and ICT where standards are below those in other

subjects. Both were issues at the time of the previous inspection. Resources for ICT took some time to acquire so progress has not been fast enough to keep up with the rising standards in ICT seen in many schools.

55. Management of special educational needs is very good. The work of classroom assistants is very carefully scheduled and provides for consistently good support for individuals or groups of pupils. However, more help is needed in some lessons in Year 1.

56. The needs of the higher-attaining pupils and those with gifts and talents are catered for well in many cases through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and music. Some pupils have attended 'master classes' at the local high school whilst others have been coached by experts in football.

57. At the time of the previous inspection there was a recommendation that the governing body should review its overall responsibility and effectiveness in governance. Since then, almost the whole of the governing body has changed. There is a good balance of interests and expertise and an expectation that every governor will take an active part in the governors' work. Governors have undertaken training to extend their understanding of issues in their particular areas of responsibility. They visit the school regularly, but not obtrusively, and have a clear understanding of the boundaries between leadership, management and governance. Overall, there has been a significant improvement in the work and impact of the governing body since the previous inspection. It now effectively fulfils its responsibilities and holds the school accountable for its work. Statutory requirements are met, except for provision for design and technology. Work on the racial policy and monitoring of its impact are still in need of some improvement.

58. Financial planning, control and day-to-day management of accounts are very good. Prudent planning ensures that funds are available at the appropriate time to resource the priorities the school has identified. Specific grants are used satisfactorily for their intended purpose. The headteacher and governors maintain a good oversight of finances with a view to ensuring that decisions about the educational direction of the school and the spending of finances are in accordance with the principles of best practice.

59. Overall, the school has sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning resources are satisfactory, being good in most subjects apart from design and technology and ICT. In the former, there is not enough equipment to enable pupils to cover the work in the National Curriculum, especially in Years 3-6. In the latter, there are not enough up-to-date computers in the classrooms for pupils to regularly put into practice the skills they learn in the ICT lessons in the computer suite.

60. Taking into account the standards achieved, the quality of teaching and care for the individual and the very good improvement since the previous inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

61. In order to sustain and further improve the current standards, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in ICT by:
  - improving teachers' expertise in the subject,
  - providing more opportunities for pupils in Years 3 - 6 to practise and use ICT skills across the whole curriculum.

*(Paragraphs 3, 9, 18, 21, 26, 54, 83-84, 89-90, 96, 115, 121-125, 130 )*
- (2) Improve standards of work in design and technology in Years 3-6 by:

- improving planning for the subject so that pupils progressively develop the necessary skills in all aspects of the National Curriculum,
- introducing new teaching strategies so that pupils learn how to design and make products to fulfil a specific purpose,
- providing a wider range of resources.

*(Paragraphs 3, 9, 21, 26, 54, 57, 107-108 )*

(3) In the Reception class, improve children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and some aspects of creative and physical development by;

- providing time and opportunities for children to explore their own ideas and plan their own activities,
- providing a wider range of tools and materials in order to extend children's techniques in artistic activities,
- identifying opportunities for children to be fully involved in role-play where they can experiment with language and practise skills,
- providing regular outdoor opportunities for children to use large equipment to develop their skills of control and co-ordination..

*(Paragraphs 1, 17, 27, 64, 66, 72-74 )*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	24	8	1	0	0
Percentage	5	20	55	18	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	Na	227
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Na	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Na	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Na	48

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(100)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	84(84)	86(86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(100)	100(100)	100(100)
	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	19	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	16	19	19
	Total	27	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79(100)	88(100)	94(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	18	19	19
	Total	29	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88(97)	88(97)	91(100)
	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	211	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

*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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	32

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	434,213
Total expenditure	450,900
Expenditure per pupil	
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,313
Balance carried forward to next year	18,626

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

227

Number of questionnaires returned

91

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	26	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	20	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	31	0	6	0
The teaching is good.	87	12	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	28	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	36	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	88	12	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	19	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	29	8	1	10



## **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**

62. Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. Currently 29 children attend full time in the Reception class. The school has sound links with the newly established nursery on site although this is not managed by the school. Parents and children are invited to school on more than one occasion during the summer term prior to them starting at the school. These arrangements enable children to settle quickly and confidently into school life.

63. The school uses the early learning goals and the national guidelines for children in the Foundation Stage. These consist of six areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development; communication; language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or 'stepping-stones' from which progress and standards can be measured.

64. While standards of attainment vary slightly from year to year, results of the assessments of children soon after they arrive at school confirm that attainment is typical of children of their age. Most children are working securely on the fourth 'stepping stone' with some higher attainers working at the equivalent of the National Curriculum first level, which is appropriate for the age group. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception class. Their attainment in 'knowledge and understanding of the world' is below what is expected because planning is not sufficiently focused on the early learning goals. Attainment in other areas of learning is average although more opportunities could be provided for creative and physical development. Attainment in many aspects of children's physical development is good.

65. The school makes sound provision for children identified as having special educational needs and, as a consequence, they make steady progress.

66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is sound and this ensures that children have a firm foundation in these skills when they move to Year 1. The yearly and termly planning systematically sets out a clear programme of learning. This stresses the activities that children will experience but does not provide sufficient detail of the skills the children will learn. The use of national guidelines for teaching English and number helps children sustain their steady progress. The classroom assistant is fully involved in children's activities and provides good quality help for individuals and those with special educational needs. Relationships between staff and children are good. Children are managed effectively using praise and encouragement. This promotes their self-esteem. Sometimes, activities are directed too much by the teacher, which does not allow children to explore their thoughts and feelings or interpret tasks in their own way.

67. Staff make regular assessments of children at work, which are conscientiously recorded on a monthly basis in children's booklets. This information is used satisfactorily to plan further work for the majority of children but it is not always used effectively to pinpoint specific targets for individuals, for instance to challenge some children in mathematics.

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

68. Classroom routines are well established so children know what is expected of them. They are confident learners and are able to take turns and share even when not under the direct guidance of adults. Children accept responsibilities well, for instance willingly collecting the workbooks for their group. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In some circumstances staff offer too much help and this restricts children's opportunities to show their independence. Most children persevere well at tasks and pay reasonably close attention during quite lengthy sessions of teacher explanations. Staff enforce the

school values well throughout the day as small incidents occur. Praise is used well to motivate children who help willingly with tidying up at the end of a session. Resources and displays are adequate and reasonably well presented around the classroom; however, they do not motivate the children because they are not creative and do not celebrate the best work they can achieve. Children can dress themselves and look after their personal needs.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. Children enjoy listening to stories and ‘reading’ the illustrated books.

70. They communicate with each other and with adults using simple vocabulary. Nearly all are interested in books and handle them respectfully, turning the pages correctly and commenting briefly on the pictures. Most know that print conveys meaning. Higher-attaining children can write quite complex single sentences, finger spacing out the work and using accurate or plausible spellings. The quality of teaching of reading and writing is satisfactory. All children write their name in the cursive script promoted by the school because they have regular opportunities to practise this skill. Many children are confidently building up their vocabulary of words after group reading. However, the development of this aspect could be further supported by enabling children at similar stages of reading to work on a common learning task. Insufficient time is given to the development of speaking and listening skills. Good direct teaching by the learning support staff assists children to create spoken sentences associated with pictures but the development of activities such as role-play and imaginative play are not sufficiently planned to enable children to engage in conversations to practise and extend their vocabulary. Written work is often repetitive and does not support independent and confident use of language. Staff make careful choices of books to read to the class so that children’s interest is stimulated. Children are encouraged to take books home and share them with their parents.

### **Mathematical development**

71. Children join in with number songs and rhyme with great enthusiasm. Most count reliably to ten and higher-attaining children can go up to thirty and beyond. Most children recognise the numbers to nine and write them using worksheets. Many understand the mathematical concept of ‘more than’ and ‘less than’. Higher-attaining children can accurately add numbers to a total of up to ten. They successfully apply their knowledge to solving simple money problems and are beginning to understand the idea of sharing out sums of money equally between two children. They use a number line to subtract accurately a smaller number from a larger one. Knowledge of simple flat shapes is good and higher-attaining children accurately estimate the length of everyday classroom objects before they measure them using cubes of a uniform size. Teaching and learning are good for number and satisfactory for other elements of mathematical development. Staff have a secure knowledge of the subject and present it to the children at a level that is relevant to the pace of their learning. Questions are used effectively to check children’s levels of understanding and assist them in practising a skill or mathematical process. However, the work that children produce is too repetitive in nature. Insufficient opportunities are planned to enable them to be involved in practical mathematical activities, for instance, drawing up shopping lists to purchase goods in the shop, paying for them and giving change.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

72. The lesson planning for this early learning goal is insufficient to build on the enthusiasm and curiosity that children bring into school with them. For instance, they have insufficient opportunities to develop their senses of smell and touch. Their understanding of the location of their classroom and the general orientation of the school is under-developed because they are not challenged to begin to create records of the routes around their classroom and their walks through the school buildings. They are not introduced to the art of simple map-making because they are only required to colour in their table in the classroom or the hall on a photocopied sheet. Occasionally the content of the work is beyond their current level of understanding and experience. The development of ICT skills is good because the teacher has good subject knowledge, works with small groups of children and identifies relevant and achievable learning

tasks. Children use a mouse well to click on icons to choose the style of marking tool and to select colours as they create screen pictures of imaginary animals. They use the keyboard to input accurately a descriptive phrase or sentence. Other activities are over-reliant on the use of printed sheets and copy writing. Independent writing is not developed as well as it could be because all children complete the same tasks, recording their work in the same style and format.

### **Physical development**

73. Children have good skills with pencils and small tools such as scissors and glue sticks. They are usually held correctly. In physical education lessons the children show good control of their bodies when they move over the large apparatus. They are adventurous and have good co-ordination, being keen to show their abilities. Many join movements together as they create their own repertoire of running, jumping, rolling and stretching as they travel across mats and over benches. More advanced children carefully climb ladders then traverse across the top of climbing equipment to make a controlled descent down a pole. Others hold a balance before they jump off a tower to land softly on a mat. Teaching and learning are good and children make good progress. The teacher has good knowledge of the subject and uses the equipment well to provide stimulating activities for the children. Careful attention is given to safety and chosen children are challenged to demonstrate their repertoires, thus giving their classmates further ideas. Reception children do not have a separate outside play area and so they have little opportunity to extend their co-ordination through peddling vehicles and using large equipment.

### **Creative development**

74. Opportunities to take part in role-play are unsatisfactory. This restricts children's ability to collaborate with each other, be involved in conversational language, explore the adult roles they observe in the world around them and practise the language and mathematical skills they have acquired in other activities. Children are involved in art activities. However, much of the work is related, for example, to the colouring in of outlined shapes of houses, animals and shells. Children do not have the opportunities for instance, to observe the shape and texture and shading of a seashell, then choose from a range of crayons, pastels or paints to create a sketch of it. They are not challenged to be imaginative or original. Creative activities are planned but they are limited in scope and the desire to produce an end product often over-rides the need to allow the children to experiment and explore for themselves. Children sing songs with enthusiasm and style, successfully combining the words with actions. They confidently identify the rhythm of words, such as elephant and alligator, by beating drums and striking triangles.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Standards in English are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Their results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were very high compared with all and similar schools, maintaining the consistently well above average standard of previous years. In Year 6, attainment was similar to the national average but was above average compared with schools of similar background. Attainment was not as high as in previous years, when it was consistently well above average. It accurately reflected the overall ability range of that particular year group. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing in the current Year 6 are well above those expected for pupils at the age of eleven.

76. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards were then judged to be average in Years 2 and 6. Teaching was satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the junior classes although there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching has improved considerably. It is now very good overall, with examples of some excellent practice. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school because teachers plan work to meet their needs. The school provides very good additional support for these pupils.

77. Speaking skills are developed through very effective teaching and the opportunities created to enable the pupils to develop these skills. Pupils start Year 1 with average speaking and listening skills. Teachers encourage pupils to answer questions and to talk about their learning, giving ideas and suggestions. They provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to work in pairs, to talk and discuss their work. This is consistent practice throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are very confidently expressing their ideas in well-formed sentences, using appropriate vocabulary. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to extend their use of interesting and descriptive language, for example, in the writing of Haiku poetry in Year 6. In this lesson, lower-attaining pupils suggested lines such as 'hedgerows fired with beech' whilst the higher attainers came up with 'a twig bearing lifeless crunching leaves'. Teachers encourage all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to speak clearly and to contribute to class discussion by expressing their opinions. The very good links with other subjects, particularly history, enable pupils to enhance their speaking and listening skills. A very good example was seen during a citizenship lesson in Year 6. Here, role-play was extremely effective; pupils portrayed members of the various political parties as they are perceived today. Pupils presented the various opinions well, adding that of 'Mr Apathy'. Encouraged by the teacher this lesson generated very good debate leading to the conclusion that everyone should use his or her vote.

78. Standards in reading are well above those expected of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. They talk about the books they read and really enjoy reading. For example, one young pupil quickly flicked the pages over in a book saying to the inspector "you'll like this bit especially, I do". Pupils take their books home and share them with parents or other adults. Reading diaries provide the means for constructive dialogue between home and school, which benefits the pupils. In Year 2, pupils talk confidently about the books they are reading; they use an appropriate range of strategies to help them read. Higher-attaining pupils have favourite authors and can say why they prefer particular books, for example, "they are about animals". When challenged to explain the word 'toxic' one pupil replied "I think that it means dangerous, I'll look it up in the dictionary", which she proceeded to do showing very good alphabetical knowledge. Average-attaining pupils read with expression and understanding as when one pupil broke off reading to quietly inform the inspector "that's the author speaking, it's not part of the story". Lower-attaining pupils often use illustrations to explain what is happening in a story. They talk about what is likely to happen next and what the character might be feeling. By Year 6, pupils speak about their favourite books and authors. They find particular enjoyment in books such as the Silver Sword, which they are reading in conjunction with their history topic about World War II. Most read fluently with very good levels of expression and understanding. They read a wide range of books and make good use of information books to help them with their topic work.

79. Throughout the school, standards in writing are well above average. Pupils write for a range of audiences and purposes, expressing their ideas and thoughts very well. They write, for example, poetry, play scripts and newspaper reports. There is, however, very little use of information technology to present the pupils' work and this is a weakness. Handwriting and spelling are very good aspects of the pupils' writing. Pupils usually take great care in the presentation of their work. Year 2 pupils' handwriting is generally very neat with a clear print. A good number of pupils use joined writing very well at this stage although it is not generally transferred until Year 3. Higher-attaining pupils produce high quality work that is well structured and imaginative. Sentences are well sequenced, extending ideas logically. Speech marks are used well and pupils progressively develop the introduction of paragraphs, and sometimes chapters, into their writing. By Year 6, pupils' creative writing is developing well. They draft and redraft their work to improve on its quality. The written work shows very good understanding of how effective arguments are constructed with the main points well linked.

80. Teaching and learning in English are very good overall, and sometimes excellent. In an outstanding lesson in Year 5, pupils presented persuasive arguments in formal debate because they had been well prepared to construct short, sharp speeches that make impact on an audience. Pupils pre-empted possible objections and made valid evaluations of each other's presentations. The lesson was fast moving, lively and soul-searching. Teachers have very good levels of knowledge and understanding in the subject and teach basic skills very well. Very good planning means that the work is well matched to the pupils' needs and to extending their learning at the correct level. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and

manage them very well. The aims of the lesson are usually shared with the pupils at the beginning and reviewed at the end to enable pupils to reflect on what they have learned. A particularly innovative method is used in Year 3. A facial picture of WALT, who represents 'what we are learning today', attracts pupils' attention to the caricature and immediately involves them in the planned activities for the lesson. Homework supports learning well in English with pupils taking home written work, spellings and reading. The school's system for keeping a check on the pupils' attainment and achievement enables teachers to monitor progress and target specific help where it is needed. The classroom assistants give valuable assistance to the teachers. They are well trained and very well deployed. As a result, they help the pupils make very good gains in their learning. Teachers conscientiously mark pupils' work in a very supportive manner but do not always point to where the pupils need to improve to make further gains in their learning. The system of providing pupils with individual written targets to encourage knowledge of their own learning works well. It successfully enables them to see how to improve their work further. However, this is not consistent practice throughout the school.

81. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are usually very good. This is demonstrated in the way pupils approach their work, always trying hard during lessons. Relationships are very good, as is pupils' personal development.

82. The subject is managed very well through link co-ordinators in Years 1-2 and Years 3-6. Their roles could be widened even further to enable them to take more responsibility for the development of the subject. Standards are continuing to rise at a similar pace to the national trend and a useful system of checking pupils' attainment and setting targets for further improvements is in place. The school analyses results carefully and has, for example, identified pupils' writing as a continuing area for development. The co-ordinators have been particularly successful, in partnership with the head teacher, in monitoring and evaluating curriculum planning. Resources are very good; they are of very good quantity and quality. The junior library is not in the most accessible position to promote pupils' independent learning but given the restriction of availability of space within the building the school has managed to provide as attractive an area as possible with very good quality books.

83. The quality and range of learning opportunities in English are good but the failure to use ICT to provide more variety in the forms of presentation of written work is a weakness. However, overall, the provision ensures that pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 in a very good position to begin their work in secondary education.

#### *Key skills across the curriculum - Literacy*

84. The school has fully implemented the National Strategy for Literacy. In doing so it has improved on the weaknesses that existed at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in developing language through literature, drama and poetry. Reading is given a high profile throughout the school with guided reading being taught outside the literacy hour. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced in other subjects because teachers seize on opportunities to develop them, for example in history. Teachers capitalise on pupils' interest in the content of the lesson to encourage them to talk and write thoughtfully in sufficient depth. However, in ICT, valuable opportunities are being missed for pupils to further their literacy skills through the regular use of new technology across the whole curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards of work are well above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well throughout the school. Since the previous inspection, when standards were average, the school has demonstrated its commitment to raising standards in mathematics. Pupils' numerical skills have improved because of the greater emphasis on mental arithmetic and agility in manipulating numbers. Teachers' awareness of the need to extend routine learning to problem solving situations where pupils can apply their knowledge is providing them with more opportunities for independent thought and practice.

86. In 2002, pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were in the top five per cent in the country compared with all and similar schools. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was also very high. Results have been consistently well above average over the past three years. Pupils' overall performance in tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was above the national average. Results were not quite as high as in previous years when they were well above average because the proportion exceeding the level expected for their age was smaller than in previous years. The results exceeded the target set by the governors, which was suitably realistic and challenging for the ability range of pupils in the year group. Boys and girls achieve similarly.

87. Pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 2, principally because of the high focus on the development of numerical skills. This provides a sound foundation for other aspects of work in mathematics. Good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) to promote a systematic approach to learning that builds up pupils' confidence. By the age of seven, most pupils have a good understanding of place values in hundreds, tens and units and apply their knowledge correctly in addition and subtraction sums. They know that subtraction is the inverse of addition and can recognise number sequences. Many can recall and apply facts relating to the two, five and ten times tables. There has been an improvement in pupils' work in shape, space and measure since the previous inspection. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils quickly learnt to recognise 90 degree angles and to test them using very simple measuring instruments. Subsequently, their understanding of the meaning of 'acute' and 'obtuse' angles developed naturally from discussion about angles that were more or less than a right angle. Pupils make good use of their language skills when interpreting simple word problems. They have a satisfactory understanding of a range of measures including money, time and length, which they use successfully within the limits of their numerical knowledge and skills.

88. Pupils' skills in all aspects of mathematics continue to develop very well in Years 3 - 6. Teachers successfully integrate and reinforce the various topics so that pupils transfer knowledge and skills across boundaries. For example, pupils in Year 5 drew on their understanding of negative numbers when working out the range of numbers in a problem concerned with different types of averages. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are competent mathematicians working at or beyond the level expected for their age. Work with number is particularly good because pupils often anticipate answers and check them for accuracy using alternative methods. Written work is well presented; it is set out logically to explain the working. This enables teachers to identify where individual pupils need help in specific areas. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because teachers and classroom support assistants work very closely together as a team. The flexibility of this arrangement enables teachers to focus attention on each of the different ability groups at various points during the week. Hence, the higher-attaining pupils are challenged by more thought-provoking work whilst the lower attainers tackle more routine work to consolidate fundamental principles. In Year 6, an additional teaching group operates alongside the main group for those who need extra support. This arrangement works very well. Pupils have gained in confidence and there is a noticeable improvement in their work over the year, so much so that almost all pupils are now working at a level compatible with that expected for their age.

89. Evidence from the inspection, including lesson observations, indicates that, overall, teaching and learning are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was inconsistent. The mental and oral starters at the beginning of lessons are particularly good because they reinforce pupils' understanding of number concepts and encourage accurate use of mathematical language. Teachers also use them well as a lead into the main activity in the lesson, for example, when, in Year 4, the teacher continued to develop the strategies to investigate the properties of a 'magic number square'. The more able pupils quickly realised how to work out the key number and used it to work out the missing numbers. Other pupils found the concept difficult but were given sufficient opportunity to attempt a solution before the teacher intervened with additional guidance. Teachers clearly demonstrate flexibility in their interpretation of lesson plans. On more than one occasion the structure of the lesson was adapted in recognition of pupils' need or insecure knowledge of previous work. Analysis of pupils' work in national tests is used to influence work in earlier year groups. For example, teachers are emphasising the need for pupils to explain how they arrive at solutions in response to the higher focus on applying routine

mathematics to problem solving. Overall, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, pupils took up the teacher's challenge to devise a new money system based on two criteria - no change could be given in a transaction and only one coin of any one face value could be offered. The more able pupils worked the system out for themselves. They found the sequence of the coinage and tested it out to verify its validity. Other pupils required a little help to start them off but then found great satisfaction in finishing the task independently. This style of teaching, which frees pupils to work at their own pace but provides just enough support at the appropriate time, works well. Other effective characteristics of the very good teaching are the class discussion sessions and the strategy of 'step-by-step' learning. In the former, teachers are affirmative in their response to pupils' answers. For example, when an answer is wrong there is a clear "No" but an immediate follow up to redirect pupils' line of thought. Pupils respond to this and are not afraid to have their incorrect answers used to develop the lesson further. Homework is used well to complement classwork or to prepare for future work. The weakness in the teaching at present is the minimal use of ICT. Pupils are not being provided with enough opportunities to use computer skills to further their learning in mathematics. They are missing out on opportunities for related research and investigative work.

90. Leadership and management of the subject are good. They are split between Years 1-2 and Years 3-6. In general, each year group teacher has a good awareness of what is happening in their own class and in those on either side. However, there is scope for a wider understanding of the work of each year group in relation to that of the whole school. Since the previous inspection, teaching has improved and standards of work have risen. Good strategies have been developed for the systematic teaching of numerical skills. Overall, improvement in the subject since the previous inspection is very good. Greater use of ICT would benefit pupils still further.

#### *Key skills across the curriculum - Numeracy*

91. Pupils' numerical skills are well above average. Pupils use calculators well, when appropriate, to estimate and check computational work in mathematics. They successfully extend the use of mathematics to subjects such as science, history and geography through the collection, analysis and display of data. They are confident and accurate in carrying out practical aspects of the work, such as when measuring, weighing and estimating possible outcomes.

## **SCIENCE**

92. Standards of work are well above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because they are positively encouraged to develop an independent approach to practical studies. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was average at the ages of seven and eleven. A contributory factor to the improvement is the change in approach. Most lessons are now based on investigations. Pupils are taught how to prepare and carry out a fair test and present their findings in a clear and scientific way.

93. The teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in Year 2 in 2002 showed that standards were very high when compared with schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well above average. These results were similar to those in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' results in the national tests taken in Year 6 were well above average when compared with all and similar schools. The proportion reaching a higher level than expected for their age was also well above average. Results in science were higher than those in English and mathematics.

94. A significant factor in the achievement of the consistently good standards is that from an early age pupils are taught investigative skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils soon became aware that there must be a complete circuit before electricity will flow and light a bulb. Pupils recorded what they had discovered by drawing the circuit in their books and using the correct symbols for the different components. In a subsequent lesson, pupils made use of their knowledge to incorporate a lighting circuit in a model bedroom made from a shoebox. Pupils cover a wide range of scientific topics matching all areas

of the National Curriculum. They progressively develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about minibeasts such as snails, ants and spiders by observing them in their natural habitat outside school. They record their finding in a simple but representative manner. The study of life processes is extended in Year 2 when pupils compare the growth of plant seeds under varying conditions of warmth, water and light. Teachers promote the development of pupils' language skills by successfully encouraging the use of scientific terms such as 'filament', 'circuit' and 'force'.

95. In Year 6, practically all the lessons are based on scientific investigations. The tasks set are challenging and fire pupils' imagination and curiosity. A typical example was the discussion about the 'bending of light rays' that followed from pupils' amazement at the reappearance of a coin, previously out of sight at the bottom of a container, when water was added. Pupils successfully wrote up the experiment showing understanding of the meaning of reflection and refraction in relation to the passage of light. The experimental work introduced at the lower end of the school is clearly reinforced and developed as the pupils move up the school. This is raising standards in the subject. For example, the work on forces started in Year 1 is extended to the study of the effect of forces on elasticity in Year 4. The school actively ensures that pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, have the same opportunities to enjoy the excitement of science. For example, in a Year 5 class in which food chains were being investigated, pupils of lower ability worked with the classroom assistant and others were grouped so that pupils with less confidence worked with more able pupils. As a result, all made progress at a level appropriate to their ability. Discussion with some of the older pupils revealed that besides learning good investigative skills they also acquire a wide range of scientific knowledge and know how to apply it. For example, they suggested how to set up a fair test to find out which of three tennis balls was the best bouncer. In discussion about healthy living, they made clear the reasons for thinking that smoking, too much alcohol and some drugs were harmful to health. Pupils have strong views about the environment, recycling of materials and promotion of sustainable energy such as the use of windmills and the planting trees.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers have a warm relationship with their pupils so that they co-operate well. This produces an effective climate for learning. Teachers set out to teach the pupils how to think and investigate in a scientific way. They are successful in meeting this aim. Good use of questioning encourages pupils to think logically and scientifically. Suitable questions are directed to the lower-attaining pupils so that they are fully involved in the lesson; more demanding questions are asked of those of higher attainment to extend their knowledge. Lessons are interesting because the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use this to motivate the pupils. Behaviour is very good and pupils concentrate well on their work. Good science displays in the classrooms stimulate further discussion. For example, in Year 6, the display of electrical circuits contains searching questions that sharpen pupils' thoughts and understanding of the topic. Lessons are well planned and the appropriate equipment is readily available. As a result, the work runs smoothly and pupils are able to carry out investigations without unnecessary distractions. Pupils' literacy skills are consolidated and enhanced through insistence on complete, well-presented written work and the use of the correct scientific terminology. Numeracy skills are promoted equally well through their use in calculations, manipulation of formulae and in creating graphs to present findings. However, ICT skills are not used frequently enough to demonstrate their benefit in scientific studies. For instance, there are no sensors, such as temperature probes, to demonstrate the automatic recording of results.

97. Management of the subject is effective because the leadership of the school has overseen the development of the subject since the previous inspection. The scheme of work is comprehensive. Planning and pupils' books are checked regularly to ensure the maintenance of standards. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good. Portfolios of work for each pupil show the progression in their work. National test results are analysed question by question to see where weaknesses lie in order that future planning can remedy them. Science makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual development by giving them an insight into the wonderful phenomena of the natural world.

## **ART AND DESIGN**



98. It was not possible to observe lessons in Years 1-2 during the inspection. Judgements in these year groups are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils and staff.

99. Standards or work are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average and progress was satisfactory. The main reason for the improvement in standards is the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of work, as a result of which pupils use a variety of media and techniques. Also, there is much direct teaching of the necessary skills.

100. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn how to mix their own shades of colour. They use this skill to paint attractive self-portraits that form the basis of an attractive display in the Year 2 classroom. Pupils produce interesting paintings in the style of famous artists. For example, they made good attempts to illustrate the effect of light and the sun after looking at the work of Matisse. Art is used well in conjunction with other subjects, such as when pupils in Year 2 illustrated the stories they had written using ICT. Observational drawing is suitably introduced at an early stage. In Year 1, for example, pupils carefully created drawings of daffodils in a vase using pastel crayons to include in their topic work on Spring. Paint and brightly coloured papers were used well to produce collages of beautiful fish and Little Red Hen. Pupils successfully made little story books in the shape of a hen to enhance the large display.

101. In Years 3-6, pupils build well on the skills and techniques they have previously learned. For example, pupils in Year 6 used soft pencils to draw parts of Picasso's famous picture Guernica after being reminded how to produce shade and texture. Pupils satisfactorily compared Picasso's style with that of other artists that they had studied. Teachers regularly incorporate the use of art in their planning for other subjects, such as when pupils in Year 3 practised weaving skills to produce patterned cloth before their visit to Quarry Bank Mill to see a weaving machine in action. Pupils have some experience of three-dimensional work but this is recognised as an area for development, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.. Simple work in this medium was seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils made pendants out of clay and, as they were studying the Vikings, imprinted their initial onto the clay using a Viking letter. Pupils in Year 5 created a most attractive display of reflective portraits after cutting half of a photograph from a magazine and completed the other half themselves using soft pencils. The texture and shading were of good quality. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and benefit from the practical and creative nature of the subject. They make similar progress to other pupils at levels that match their ability.

102. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers have an enthusiastic knowledge of art; they focus on the teaching of skills so that pupils learn good techniques before putting them into practice. However, sketchbooks are not used to make draft drawings from which pictures can be created. Not enough use is made of ICT to support the subject. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, commanding their respect and motivating them well. As a result, pupils co-operate well and enjoy art. Teachers have high expectations and regularly evaluate the work produced with the pupils. All these aspects contribute to the good standards in the subject. Support staff are used effectively to encourage the lower-attaining pupils.

103. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Pupils' work is looked at by the co-ordinator to determine standards but there are no systematic assessment procedures to record the progress of individual pupils or to guide planning. There is a plentiful supply of good quality resources that contribute to the good standards. Art makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development but few opportunities are provided for pupils to talk or work with artists and craftsmen.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection due to the arrangement of the timetable. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with the teachers and pupils.

105. Standards of work are average in Year 2. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards are below average in Year 6, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in Years 3-6 is unsatisfactory. The school has not made sufficient improvement in design and technology. Pupils are not systematically learning effective methods for designing, making and evaluating the quality of products they produce.

106. Pupils experience a satisfactory range of activities in Years 1-2. They often design and make objects that are related to the seasons of the year or a story they know. For example, brightly coloured wooden spoon puppets were designed and decorated to represent Joseph and his dream coat. Pupils learn to make simple mechanisms, such as the delightful flowers that opened up when the garden cane they were attached to was pushed up a tube. Design and technology is sometimes incorporated in work in other subjects. For example, in Year 2, pupils furnished a bedroom, made out of a shoe box, with cut out furniture and, as they were investigating circuits in science, they included a light which they could switch on and off. Pupils learn good principles of design and making from an early age. In Year 1, pupils designed and decorated a pencil case, but not before deciding on how long and deep the case had to be to hold an array of pencils. They used literacy and numeracy skills well to complete the design sheet. Those with special learning needs or who are less confident receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants. They make similar progress to other pupils.

107. There were no design and technology lessons on the timetable in Years 3-6 during the inspection. Discussions with pupils and staff indicate that pupils have had little experience of design and technology this year. It is evident that their skills in this subject are weak and below those expected for their age. For example, older pupils were unable to explain how they would design and make a small box in which to put chocolates as a present. They have little idea of how to strengthen structures, particularly at the joints, or of how to begin to construct objects with moving parts. They were not able to explain how an electric motor could be incorporated into a vehicle with wheels or how such a model could be controlled either through simple gears or through a computer. No examples of previous design plans, finished models or photographs were available to gauge the standards reached.

108. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1-2. There is a well balanced, overall plan that provides pupils with worthwhile experiences of the subject. Pupils learn good methods for designing and making objects and make good use of design sheets to guide them into acquiring effective techniques. Lessons are well planned and adequate resources are available so that practical work runs smoothly. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use this to motivate pupils, with the result that they co-operate and enjoy the work. Teachers ensure that pupils investigate how objects are made before making their own models. Teaching and learning in Years 3-6 are unsatisfactory because the subject is not being taught according to a structured plan, nor are there sufficient resources for the study of all aspects of the National Curriculum. Teachers lack effective guidance as to how to tackle the subject at this stage.

109. Overall, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because pupils are not progressively developing the relevant skills as they move through the school. There are no assessment procedures for recording and tracking pupils' progress. Resources are inadequate because there are no workshop tools in school, such as saws or glue guns, and no rigid materials with which to make structures.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Standards in geography are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well in Year 2 and satisfactorily in Year 6. The level of attainment achieved by Year 2 pupils represents an improvement on that reported at the previous inspection. In Year 6, attainment is similar to that in the previous report.

111. The school has produced a clear and concise programme of study for the subject in the infant classes. This links with the National Curriculum requirements and gives pupils a good range of

geographical topics to study. Subject planning in Years 3-6 is not as comprehensively developed and links with the National Curriculum are not yet fully embedded.

112. Pupils in Year 2 have a good appreciation of the area around the school, including types of housing, shops and amenities. They compare their home environment with village life in Kenya, a seaside resort in England and a Scottish island. They make good use of mathematical techniques to record their research findings by creating a matrix to tabulate the names of the places being studied against their amenities. This enables pupils to come to clear judgements about how locations differ. Pupils satisfactorily draw and interpret simple maps identifying key features and using co-ordinates and symbols.

113. Pupils in Year 6 show a satisfactory knowledge of geographical themes. They are aware of the physical features of the seashore and of mountain environments and have a clear understanding of the effect of these features on the way people live and work. Pupils apply this information to studies of Blackpool and mountainous regions, producing comprehensive written work that is illustrated well by photographs, maps and tables.

114. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, the analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that teaching and learning are good in Years 1-2 and satisfactory in Years 3-6. In the former, good planning ensures that the geographical topics are fully covered and that pupils develop skills of geographical investigation and comparison. In the latter, the planning is not as thorough and pupils' knowledge and skills are not as well developed.

115. Leadership of the subject is relatively new and effective. Policies and practices have been updated to give greater depth to the teaching. The subject is taught alternatively with history and links are being established with some other subjects, including history and mathematics. However, valuable opportunities are being missed to integrate ICT into the planning. Teachers' planning is evaluated well. It is regularly compared with the work pupils produce so that modifications can be made if necessary. As yet, there are no strategies for accurately assessing pupils' progress. The subject is beginning to make a good contribution to the pupils' understanding of different cultures. Resources are suitable and sufficient, although greater use could be made of ICT. Change is being managed well and improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## **HISTORY**

116. There has been a good improvement on the findings of the previous report. Pupils now make good progress, learning the skills and strategies of investigation as they achieve appropriate standards of historical knowledge. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well because teachers communicate their knowledge of the subject with enthusiasm and stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress.

117. By the age of seven, pupils have a confident knowledge and understanding of some events in the past, such as The Great Fire of London. They show good appreciation of the lives, achievements and deeds of a range of personalities including Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. They understand how toys have changed over time and can describe how holidays in Victorian times were in some ways the same, and in other ways different from holidays today.

118. Pupils build on these skills in Years 3 to 6 when they study British and local history and learn about other civilisations. They develop good historical enquiry skills as they draw on both primary and secondary sources, using pictures, text, artefacts, the Internet and other information, such as interviews with older inhabitants of the village of Shaw. For example, pupils in Year 4 use specific web sites relating to the times of The Vikings. They identify the events during the Viking occupation of Britain and begin to realise that their initial hypothesis, that the Vikings were conquerors and pillagers, was only one aspect of their influence. Pupils soon come to realise that the Vikings also brought with them their building skills and trading routes. A strength of the learning is the way the oldest pupils think themselves into the roles of

children at the time of The Second World War. They sensitively imagine the feelings of those who were evacuated from the cities or who witnessed the blitz from the comparative safety of a bomb shelter. By the age of 11, these pupils have a comprehensive knowledge of the events of The Second World War and the effects that it had on the lives of people living at the time.

119. The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Good lesson planning in Years 1-2 ensures that pupils gain a 'sense of history' by studying their own families and drawing up family trees. This technique is successfully transferred to analyse, for example, the history of The Royal Family and to study The Queen's reign from her Coronation to her Golden Jubilee. In the older year groups, teachers actively encourage pupils to develop their own opinions about events in history. In Year 3, for instance, pupils are given good insights into how education has changed and they make sensible judgements about whether they would want to be in school in the 1950s or the present day. Pupils are enthused and intrigued by this topic.

120. The subject is managed effectively, and coverage has been strengthened by the inclusion of new materials. There are good systems of evaluation and review to enable the subject co-ordinator to check the quality of provision in the subject. As yet, there is no formal assessment system to judge the attainment and progress of individual pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Provision for ICT was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Satisfactory improvement has been made since then, but only in very recent years. Standards of work are average for pupils' age in Year 2 but remain below average in Year 6. This is because pupils in the older year groups have missed out on the systematic learning of computer skills in earlier years. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are working in a 'catch up' situation. In Years 3 and 4, they are working to a prescribed scheme of work that is appropriate for their age. Apart from Year 6, pupils have one specific lesson a week in which they learn operational skills in the computer suite. Lessons are less frequent in Year 6. Pupils keep a record of the work completed in ICT lessons. This is mostly satisfactory but it is evident that pupils do not have enough opportunities to put their skills into practice. Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum.

122. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 2 shows that most are confident to access the computer independently. They can use the keyboard and know how to print and save their work. Pupils are aware that the computer provides a means of communicating and altering text. They can produce a simple set of instructions to move a programmable toy and understand the importance of each individual instruction, for example when instructing it to make a 90 degree turn. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3-6, the scheme of work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. However, the school does not yet have the practical resources for pupils to learn how to control events or to model and simulate real situations. Pupils have a reasonable grasp of word-processing skills. Most can access the Internet and know how to search for information. Older pupils understand the advantages of electronic mail although they have had little opportunity to practise using it in school. Pupils in Year 5 are becoming more confident in their ability to manipulate programs that enable them to handle spreadsheets and follow more complicated instructions, such as when drawing regular polygons with varying numbers of sides. Those who have computers at home often work much faster. Pupils tackle similar work in Year 6 but the amount of work completed is insufficient because they spend less time on ICT than other year groups. Pupils' achievement in ICT in Years 3-6 is variable, but, overall, in Year 6, is still unsatisfactory.

123. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to other pupils. The school has some resources to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills at the correct level, but, with only one computer in each classroom, access to this mode of learning is minimal.

124. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. They are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3-6. This is due to insufficient resources, particularly of

computers in the classrooms, and to some teachers' lack of expertise in meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. At its best, for example in the Year 5 lesson observed during the inspection, good use was made of the demonstration board to enable all pupils to see what they were going to do before working through the exercise independently. In this lesson, pupils made good progress because they knew exactly what was expected of them and received the necessary individual support to achieve a recognisable measure of success. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about using the computers. However, older pupils expressed a degree of frustration about not being able to translate work from school to home and vice versa because the school system is not compatible with many of their home computers. Some pupils make very good use of their home computers to aid their learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils used them to work through revision programs for the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science.

125. The management of the subject is satisfactory now that resources are improving and teachers are engaged in ongoing training. Provision is improving from Year 1 upwards but much remains to be done to bring the work of pupils in the older year groups to the standard expected for their age. Teachers are not yet including the use of ICT as an integral part of their lesson planning across the curriculum, nor is there enough encouragement for pupils to work independently on the computer in classrooms. The school needs to give serious thought to how all pupils are to gain the skills they need to make ICT a useful tool in learning across all subjects.

## MUSIC

126. There were no class music lessons on the timetable during the period of the inspection. As the curriculum consists of predominately practical activities it is not possible to make a realistic judgement about standards or teaching. Standards of work in Years 2 and 6 were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and there is no evidence to suggest that these standards have not been maintained. In particular, whole school singing during assemblies shows that pupils can listen, follow the music and sing in time with the piano accompaniment

127. Music has a very high profile in the school in relation to the good opportunities for junior pupils to learn a variety of instruments. This takes place before, during and after school. Pupils receive very good tuition from the peripatetic music service for woodwind, strings and brass. This has resulted in the formation of a large school orchestra. The range of out-of-school activities is extensive; it includes a choir and instrumental groups. These are well supported and pupils enjoy much success in musical performances both in and out of school. There is a very full calendar of events in which the pupils perform in front of others, for example, in church or local festivals. There is also good collaboration with other schools, such as when the school takes part in the Oldham Music Festival.

128. Very good quality music plays an essential part in the life of the school and makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Well-chosen music is used particularly effectively in assemblies, to extend pupils' knowledge of composers and musical styles. Music also makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development when pupils experience live performances from visitors who introduce music of different styles and traditions. Pupils' personal development is enhanced as they gain in confidence, self-esteem and the necessary discipline imposed when performing for others.

129. Leadership of the subject is very good. The policy and planning for class music have recently been reviewed and teachers now feel more comfortable with the planned curriculum. Resources are of good quality and quantity. Provision is enhanced by a recorder club for pupils in Years 2 and 5 and an after-school choir for pupils in Years 4,5 and 6. During the inspection the choir were practising music from the musical 'Annie'. They sang with clear diction, pitch and control with a very good sense of musical expression. Pupils listened attentively to the teacher, focusing on detail, and sang songs in unison and in two parts. They were very familiar with technical terms and used these knowledgeably. This was because the teacher constantly used the correct terminology when speaking to the pupils. Pupils performed well in striving to meet the teacher's high expectations. The extra-curricular musical

curriculum, which includes the orchestra, provides very well for pupils with an interest in music, in particular for those who are gifted and talented.

130. There is little evidence of teachers using ICT to extend or support pupils' learning or of work being recorded for review. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are being developed, but, as yet, the use of these to measure pupils' progress in lessons is unsatisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the period of the inspection. Standards were judged to be average in dance, gymnastics and games, and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Hence, the school has been successful in maintaining satisfactory standards. In Year 6, standards are at least in line with those expected in swimming with many pupils receiving swimming instruction independently of school arrangements.

132. Overall, teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Enthusiastic teaching and the promotion of positive attitudes characterise work in the subject, particularly with out-of-school activities such as football coaching, netball, kwik cricket, dance and rounders. The work is a very good reflection of the school's ethos, which encourages all pupils to engage in physical activities at a level to match their talent and interest. A very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities enhances the school's basic curriculum. These are enthusiastically supported by a large number of pupils and ably run by teachers, support staff and a variety of other helpers.

133. By Year 2, pupils have learned how to exercise in safety. They know the importance of warming up and enjoy the freedom of moving at random around the large hall as they listen carefully and respond to the class teacher. They respond well to taped music and instructions, for example, when miming the activities of preparation for bedtime. Most pupils co-operate well when working within a group. They satisfactorily learn how to control a ball when running, first with their feet and then using a hockey stick. Their ability to control and co-ordinate their actions increases at a suitable rate. However, opportunities for pupils to talk about their performance and ways to improve it are sometimes missed. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons by staff and other pupils.

134. Older pupils in Years 3 - 6 demonstrate an increasing level of skills, particularly in games, for example, when striking a ball in kwik cricket. The most able pupils show precision, accuracy and control when sending the ball in a chosen direction. In gymnastics, pupils perform actions with improving quality and control and greater consistency. They work very well in pairs, developing their ideas in order to improve their effectiveness. Teachers encourage pupils of different abilities to work together, which they do well. Good examples were seen of pupils matching and mirroring a sequence of movements.

135. Extra-curricular activities are very popular and very well attended. In an aerobics session, the pupils responded very well to the routine developed by the teacher because it sustained interest and appropriate challenge for both boys and girls. The session provided the pupils with personal, individual enjoyment rather than developing a sense of performance for others. It effectively engaged their enthusiasm. When practising cricket, pupils cope very well with the hard ball with some good catching and accurate bowling and batting. All are keen to play to a good standard. These sessions are well organised and focused; consequently, pupils make good progress.

136. The subject is effectively led and managed with an obvious commitment to developing physical education as an important part of the school's day-to-day life. Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided as an option during the school's residential visit for Year 6 pupils. Apart from the obvious wide variety of activities that the pupils experience, it is a wonderful team building exercise that greatly enhances pupils' personal and social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. This was inspected in a separate inspection by the diocese.