

INSPECTION REPORT

CORPUS CHRISTI RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105718

Headteacher: Mr A J Sowerby

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Date of inspection: 16 – 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 246520

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Stanley Road Chadderton Oldham |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Rev J J Rawson |
| Date of previous inspection: | November 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|--|---|
| 3108 | E Jackson | Registered inspector | Science Information and communication technology Physical education | What sort of school is it How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 9952 | L Brock | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 32073 | J Barnes | Team inspector | English Design and technology | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 10526 | M Roe | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design Music Special educational needs Educational inclusion | |
| 22644 | B Hill | Team Inspector | Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Geography History | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Corpus Christi RC Primary is a larger than average sized primary school, with a nursery, in Chadderton, Oldham, situated close to its parish church. It serves an area of mixed rented and privately owned housing, and a number of pupils travel from outside the immediate locality. The school policy permits only the admission of baptised Catholic pupils, but this is under review currently. There are 281 pupils on roll, 131 girls and 150 boys, but some classes have an imbalance of boys and girls. There is a small number of pupils of mixed ethnic heritage, and a small group of Traveller pupils. None of the pupils is learning English as an additional language. There is an average number of pupils with special educational needs, but none have statements of need. These pupils' needs range from moderate learning difficulties to emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. At entry to the nursery, children's attainment is below average, but is broadly average by the time they enter Year 1. The school is involved in a number of local and national educational initiatives, including the local 'Unity in the Community' project.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Corpus Christi is held in high regard by parents, and offers its pupils a sound education. The pupils are well-cared for and relationships in the school are generally very good. The pupils achieve results by 11 which are close to the national average in most subjects, and above those in schools in similar circumstances. However, results in national tests vary year-on-year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features, and the pupils respond by behaving very well, and showing very good attitudes to their work. Most pupils make sound progress in their learning. Those pupils with special educational needs often make good progress, including those Traveller pupils with special needs. Pupils in the reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 classes make good progress in their learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although strategic planning is not fully effective. Given the average funding received per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve results in national tests in English, mathematics that are above those in schools in similar circumstances, and in line with national averages.
- The headteacher and staff create a positive atmosphere for learning, highly regarded by parents, that promotes very good behaviour and attitudes to learning for the pupils.
- Teaching is strong for five to seven year old and 11 year old pupils, accelerating their learning well.
- The pupils' moral and social development are very good, and spiritual development is good, founded in the high quality of relationships.
- There are high standards of care for the pupils, and the school provides a welcoming environment.

What could be improved

- Aspects of strategic management.
- The use of assessment information to guide future learning for the pupils.
- The further development of pupils' understanding of Britain as a diverse and multicultural society.
- Pupils' opportunities to follow the full range of learning in music in Years 5 and 6, and in art and design and design technology across the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. These issues already feature in the school's long-term improvement plans.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Sound and occasionally good improvements have been made in a number of areas of the school's work. Importantly, the quality of teaching and learning have improved significantly, and standards in English by seven are now in line with national averages in tests. The teaching of geography and the standards attained are now satisfactory. Art and design has improved for the younger pupils, but is still unsatisfactory for the older pupils. The governing body has reorganised its committee structure, and this is now more effective in keeping track of information. The vice-chair of governors also fulfils a very important monitoring and evaluation role, checking the progress of the school improvement plan with the headteacher and reporting back regularly to other governors. However, further work is required to ensure that strategic planning is fully effective, and that the information gathered from tests and other assessment is used to help raise pupils' standards of attainment. A new computer suite has been fitted recently, and the staff are undergoing training in its use. The accommodation has been improved by internal remodelling, and active plans are in place to create better outdoor play facilities for the children in the nursery and reception classes.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | C | D | D | B |
| mathematics | C | D | C | A |
| science | C | E | D | C |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

The school received an achievement award for the rise in standards of attainment for 11-year-olds in national tests last year. The table shows that after a fall in 2000, standards rose in mathematics and science in 2001. The trend in the school's results is in line with the national improvement over five years. Unusually, pupils attained higher results in writing tests than they did in reading tests at both seven and 11. Last year, the school achieved standards above those in schools in similar circumstances, based on eligibility for free school meals. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and good progress in the reception class and enter Year 1 achieving average levels for their age, although this covers a wide range. By the age of seven, pupils attained below average levels in the 2001 national tests in reading and science, and average levels in mathematics. This was a slight fall on results in 2000, but much better than in 1999. These results were well above those in similar schools in writing, and in line with them in reading and mathematics. At both seven and 11 in the 2001 tests, more pupils achieved the level expected than was the case nationally. However, far fewer achieved above expected levels than pupils nationally. The school responded well to this by setting higher targets for the national tests in 2002, and these show good improvement in the number of 11 year olds achieving higher levels. Targets for 2003 are also high, and will be challenging to achieve in view of the poor progress made by many of the current 11 year old pupils in 2001/2. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, although this is variable from class to class. Currently, rapid progress is being made in Years 1, 2 and 6, in response to good and sometimes very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress up to the age of seven, and satisfactory progress

thereafter. Traveller pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, but their progress is affected by lower attendance than their peers. In general, the school ensures that fewer pupils achieve below average results in national tests than in most schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Good: the pupils' positive attitudes make a good contribution to their learning and the calm atmosphere in the school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good: teachers and other staff manage the pupils well, and the pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of them. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships between pupils, and between them and adults, are generally very good. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their personal initiative and independence. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory: most pupils' attendance is good, but a small group has very poor attendance. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good and occasionally very good features. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection, when almost one in four lessons was unsatisfactory or poor. There is only a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching now. Teaching is strongest in the Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 classes, leading to good and sometimes very good progress in pupils' learning. There was considerable disruption in learning and progress last year for the current Year 2 and some of the Year 6 pupils. The teachers taking these classes are working hard to help the pupils make accelerated progress. The school follows the guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies for the teaching of English and mathematics. This is effective in helping the pupils to learn basic skills, but all staff do not use information gathered about pupils' achievements effectively enough in planning new work for them, particularly but not exclusively in reading. Children starting school in the nursery settle quickly to the routines, and make steady progress. Pupils with special needs generally receive good support, which is particularly effective for younger pupils in a class formed from Year 1 to Year 6 pupils in the morning, taken by the special needs coordinator. Older pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress. A number of the Traveller pupils had not returned to school since the summer holiday, but those who were in school received good support during the inspection from school staff. Traveller pupils generally make satisfactory progress, although erratic attendance makes this variable for some of them. In lessons, the pupils generally concentrate well, follow the staff's instructions carefully, and work hard. When asked to make their own decisions, most of the pupils do so sensibly, but the staff do not take full advantage of the pupils' competence in this aspect of their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Sound: generally broad and balanced, and enriched by visits and extra-curricular activities. Provision for art and design, design technology and music for older pupils needs to be improved. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The school makes good provision for pupils with special needs, especially in the withdrawal group. There is good balance of teaching and learning to meet individual pupils' needs in relation to targets set for them, and to provide a supportive environment. In-class provision is broadly satisfactory. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good: moral and social development are very good, and spiritual development is good. Pupils grow as members of a supportive community, learning to relate well to others. There are insufficient opportunities for independent learning, or to learn about Britain as a diverse society. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Care and welfare are good, and the pupils enjoy the positive and welcoming atmosphere. The staff assess the pupils' progress regularly, but do not always use the information gained effectively to set targets, or plan new work. |

Parents have a very good view of the school, and appreciate the hard work of all the staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Sound: the recently appointed headteacher has introduced a number of successful developments, and the staff team is well equipped to implement further improvements. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory: all statutory requirements are fulfilled, and the governors know the school well; strategic planning is not fully effective. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | A key governor works closely with the headteacher to monitor developments, and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Evaluation using the information gained is being developed, but is not yet focused sharply enough on standards of attainment and the overall quality of education.. |
| The strategic use of resources | Finances and other resources are appropriately deployed to the areas allocated; some recent spending decisions have not taken full account of all relevant information. Teaching staff deployment this year has created difficulties for new staff with very large classes. |

Teaching staffing is generous, and support staffing has been increased so that it is now good. The accommodation is satisfactory, although some areas are difficult of access for pupils with impaired mobility. Learning resources are satisfactory in most areas, and very good in science. The outdoor play area for the nursery and reception is rightly planned to be

improved. The governors are aware of the principles of best value, and are currently developing systems to check how well the school follows them.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school, and are expected to work hard • That the values taught are in line with the Catholic mission, and that their children learn right from wrong • That the school is well led and managed, and that the teaching is good leading to good progress and good behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about their children's progress • The range of activities outside lessons |

Parents expressed concern about the number of temporary staff some classes had last year, but were generally in strong support of the school. The inspection supports most of the parents' expressed views, but finds that the information for parents and the range of activities outside lessons are satisfactory. Some aspects of strategic management are not fully effective, however.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment have improved satisfactorily since the last inspection, keeping pace with the national improvement. Seven-year-olds attain higher standards in English than reported then, and standards in geography and design technology have improved by the age of 11. Progress in learning is more even across the school this year after a difficult period last year, when there was a succession of temporary teachers in one class, and weak teaching in another. In some classes, progress in learning is accelerating well.
2. In the Foundation Stage children are provided with early support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of learning. Their attainment at entry to the nursery is below average, but by the time they move into Year 1 after the reception class, they attain similar levels to other children of their age in other schools. This good progress is because the staff organise learning activities in the nursery that allow the children to explore and talk about what they are learning so that they make steady progress in all areas of learning. In the reception class, their progress accelerates. Although they start the year below average, the good teaching they receive helps them to be in line with the levels expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1.
3. The children begin school with fairly well-developed social skills, and the staff build well on these in the nursery and reception classes. For example, the establishment of learned routines such as collecting a badge and name card helps them to feel a sense of belonging. There is a wide range of attainment in communication and language skills, and the staff use books well to promote children's interest in reading. Children are encouraged well to discuss their feelings and ideas, and in the reception class role-play extends the range of situations for them to improve their speaking and listening skills. Because the staff organise a good variety of writing opportunities, the children make good progress in both forming letters and writing for themselves. Skilled help from support staff, and the use of imaginative ideas such as writing messages and letters about a travelling bear, gives purpose to this for the children. This is also the case in developing early mathematical understanding. There is an effective concentration on number, but children also learn about shapes, measuring and weighing, and are on track to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1.
4. The school's results in English in the 2001 national tests for seven and 11 year olds show an improvement on the previous year in the overall percentage of pupils reaching the level expected for their age group. Indeed, more pupils reached the level expected by seven than the national average. However, too few pupils achieved the higher levels, especially in writing by the age of seven. By the age of 11 in reading, the test results are below most schools nationally but about the same as results in schools in similar circumstances. In writing, the results are about the same as the national figures and compare well with similar schools. Differences between the attainment of boys and girls vary over time but generally reflect the national figures.
5. The unconfirmed national tests results in English for 2002 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the level expected for their age groups has fallen, particularly in reading for seven year olds. This is partly due to the number of pupils in this year group who have special educational needs. The school's results for 11 year olds are

also lower than the previous year, although they remain close to the national figures for that year. However, almost one in three pupils attained the higher Level 5, which is a substantial improvement.

6. Standards in mathematics for both 7 and 11 year olds are broadly in line with what is expected for these year groups. A significant percentage of pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are working at a higher level in number operations. After the last inspection attainment dipped but due to the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and some good teaching and learning it has risen to at least match the levels of attainment found then. In the 2001 tests for 7-year-olds performance in mathematics was below average when compared to schools nationally but broadly average when compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was well below average. However, the improvement in performance over the three years from 1998 to 2001 was in line with the national trend. In the tests for 11 year olds, attainment was in line with the national average and well above average compared to similar schools. Performance at level 4 was above average and at level 5 was close to the national average. Provisional results for 2002 tests indicate that 7 year olds have improved their performance particularly at level 3 and 11 year olds have substantially improved with a higher percentage of pupils gaining a level 5.
7. Standards of attainment in science are below average currently but speedily accelerating towards the average for the age in Year 2. They are also below average but accelerating well in Year 6. This is because key staff with good subject knowledge and good teaching skills have been deployed in these classes at the end of key stages. These teachers set high expectations for the pupils who respond by working hard, taking part enthusiastically in experimental work, and thinking carefully about what they are doing.
8. Boys and girls make progress at similar rates. Traveller pupils make sound progress over time in spite of gaps in attendance. Progress for gifted and talented pupils in most subjects is satisfactory with an increasing percentage of those pupils identified gaining the higher levels of attainment in end of key stage tests. However some of the more gifted pupils are not sufficiently challenged in mathematics and English. In music talented pupils are attaining well in instrumental music and in singing.
9. In Years 1 and 2, pupils with special needs make good progress, including those in the special support group, particularly in literacy. In Years 3 to 6, pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress but progress varies according to how well the tasks they are given meet their identified needs directly. Progress also varies according to the level of support these pupils receive.
10. In other subjects, attainment and progress is as expected at 7 and 11. Attainment in information and communication technology is at average levels in those aspects of the subject taught, but below average overall. The staff are currently involved in training to equip them to take full advantage of the school's recently acquired computer suite. This has the potential to accelerate pupils' learning in this subject, and to give them access to the full subject range, and raise standards quickly.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and their behaviour is very good. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection, and the personal development of pupils remains satisfactory. Relationships with each other and with all adults who work in the school are very good. The pupils' positive attitudes, promoted well by the staff, make a good contribution to learning and help to create a calm atmosphere in the school.

12. The welcoming and pleasant atmosphere in the nursery and reception classes helps less confident children to overcome their reticence and they are soon involved in the activities prepared for them. They learn to share equipment, take their turn and develop good relationships with other children and adults. These good attitudes to learning were seen when children in the nursery proudly brought in and added their contribution to a display of autumn leaves.
13. From the youngest upwards, pupils like attending school and arrive happily each day. They are keen to chat with staff about events that are important to them and are also enthusiastic about taking part in the variety of extra-curricular activities available. They proudly show off any work on display and are pleased to receive rewards for effort and achievement. Most pupils settle well and show interest at the beginning of lessons, setting to work with a will. Pupils from Traveller families are fully involved in all the school provides and their unique contribution to the life of the school is valued. Pupils with special educational needs relate well to each other and to all adults in the school. Most contribute readily in lessons and enjoy being involved in activities with other pupils in an inclusive learning environment.
14. There is a civilised and orderly environment in the school and this reflects the very good standards of behaviour which are found there. Most pupils behave very well and respond positively to the school's high expectations. They move around the building in an orderly manner and behave well in assemblies, entering the hall very quietly and waiting patiently for others to arrive. In the playground, pupils generally play well together. They are polite and helpful to adults, including when they go on visits out of school. The orderly behaviour which predominates makes a good contribution to learning in the classroom. For example, Year 6 pupils behaved very well in a mathematics lesson when they learned how to multiply using non-standard methods. Ideas flowed between the teacher and pupils and, as a result, they made very good progress. Any incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour are dealt with well by staff when reported to them, and there have been no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.
15. Relationships are very good throughout the school, between pupils of different ages and ability and also between pupils and staff. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and to recognise that their actions affect others. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for duties within the school community for example when older pupils help younger children with their reading. Year 6 pupils confirm that they consider this to be a privilege and would welcome the opportunity to have a "voice" in the school by forming a school council. As noted at the time of the last inspection, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are still not a consistent feature of lessons. Pupils have shown by their good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour that they can work independently when given the opportunity.
16. Overall attendance at the school is satisfactory but has shown a decline over the last three years. The attendance of many pupils is good but this only compensates for the very poor attendance of a few pupils. Holidays taken in term time account for some of the authorised absence. Unauthorised absence is low. Pupils enjoy school because teachers make lessons interesting and they want to learn. Most pupils arrive at school on time ensuring that lessons get off to a good start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good and occasionally very good features. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection, when almost one in four lessons was unsatisfactory or poor. There is only a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching now. There was considerable disruption in learning and progress last year for the current Year 2 and some of the Year 6 pupils due to staff absence. The teachers taking these classes are working hard to help the pupils make accelerated progress. Over half of the lessons seen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were good or better. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in science in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, and another in art and design in Year 3.
18. The governors decided to maintain single age-group classes for Years 3 to 6, so that the two Year 6 classes have respectively only 22 and 24 pupils, whilst the Year 3 class has 38, and the Year 4 class has 36. The latter classes do have support assistants for some of the time, but are taught by the least experienced members of staff, one of whom is in her first year of teaching. This deployment was intended to boost the attainment of the Year 6 pupils as they have had a bumpy ride since Year 3. It is certainly having the desired effect for these pupils, as the two skilled and experienced teachers have high expectations and teach the pupils well. However, whilst the teaching for Years 3 and 4 is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good, these pupils are not making the same progress as the oldest because the teachers cannot give them sufficient one-to-one attention, and because the teaching spaces used are cramped for the numbers involved.
19. Teaching is strongest in the Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 classes, leading to good and sometimes very good progress in pupils' learning. This teaching is founded on effective planning of lessons based on good knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work-rate, and good relationships between the staff and the pupils leading to efficient use of time, and good progress in pupils' learning. In the reception class, teaching builds well on the progress the children have made in the nursery towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals.¹ The teacher gives them clear guidance to help them understand what they are expected to do. This enables them to try new ideas and initiate activities secure in the framework of responsibility and personal development that the teacher and support staff have created. During a good numeracy session, for example, the children worked independently in groups using dice and beads for counting, and completing simple worksheets following a whole class counting session where they also practised forming the figures to help the recording of their work. The continuation of these expectations is evident in Year 6, where pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own actions and learning again, after a difficult period in their schooling last year. For example, in a very good lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to analyse the clues in a mystery story and take notes prior to writing a report. This enabled all the pupils to make a contribution in discussion to create a flip-chart list, and then to improve their writing skills individually in independent work.
20. The unsatisfactory teaching observed resulted from inappropriate behaviour management and a lack of pace leading to insufficient progress for the pupils. These are not general features of the teaching throughout the school, however. In a science lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher found it difficult to maintain pupils' attention

¹ The Early Learning Goals are the targets for children's achievement by the end of the reception year in the six nationally designated areas of learning.

during a demonstration of light sources, as they were cramped into a small space. The teacher had kindly volunteered to take the class for the duration of the inspection, even though she was not trained for the age group. This was to support the school until an appointed teacher could take the class over the following week. In the event, the teacher found it difficult in this lesson to maintain control and attention. In the other lesson with significant weaknesses, the teacher asked the pupils to improve a portrait they had made the week before. This is a very large class of 38 pupils, the teacher is new to the school, and there was no extra adult support. She had clearly misjudged the pupils' mood, as many found the task tedious, not having sufficient skill to execute discussed changes, so becoming frustrated and losing concentration.

21. The school follows the guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies for the teaching of English and mathematics. This is effective in helping the pupils to learn basic skills, but all staff do not use information gathered about pupils' achievements effectively enough in planning new work for them, particularly but not only in reading. Too often, pupils sit on the carpet for a long time listening to lesson content which is either above their heads or too simple for them. The work provided for the few pupils identified as gifted is sometimes not sufficiently challenging.
22. Literacy is generally taught well, although this varies unacceptably from class to class. The best lessons occur when teachers and support staff prepare interesting resources, have good knowledge of the subject, and manage the specific small group teaching well. Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress in improving their speaking and listening, and reading and writing skills. However, as at the last inspection, insufficient time is allowed in most lessons for pupils to discuss their work in order to improve it, and develop their speaking and listening skills further. Where teachers give the pupils opportunities to answer questions at length using the subject vocabulary learned, they develop the required fluency in using standard English. The regular teaching of how to sound out words has helped pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop an adequate knowledge of letters and sounds. Good strides have also been made in improving writing skills across the school, as part of the whole school development plan. The staff are not yet sufficiently creative and flexible in deploying their time to different groups, or in using the teaching areas to best effect.
23. The teaching and learning of numeracy are satisfactory, and often good. Teachers understand the National Numeracy Framework which helps them to plan well-structured lessons in the main. Staff have followed training recently in posing effective questions, and where this happened, the pupils were challenged successfully to explain their thinking, and the mathematical strategies they had used. Teachers constantly help the pupils effectively to reinforce and consolidate their learning of basic number facts and operations. The pupils know what they are supposed to learn, because the teachers share the learning objectives of the lesson with them. Teaching was less effective when some pupils did not take a full part in whole class sessions, or when the work set was either too hard for those with special needs, or too easy for higher attaining pupils.
24. A key development has been to improve teachers' questioning skills in science, to help pupils to learn how to investigate and pose their own questions. In Years 2 and 6 there are currently good examples of this training having a positive effect on pupils' learning. In Year 6 lessons to test the differences in the rate of dissolving of sugar depending on its characteristics, the teachers spent a long time in helping the groups of pupils to decide for themselves how to make the tests fair and how to record their results. This demonstrated very effectively the importance of posing questions that open the pupils' minds to the possibilities inherent in their own decisions at the

planning stage of an investigation, and how effective the training for the staff has been.

25. Pupils with special educational needs in the Nursery and Reception classes are taught well within the context of the curriculum for under-sixes. They are given suitable activities and provided with support in line with their Early Years plans. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of literacy and numeracy for pupils in line with the revised Code of Practice is good and sometimes very good. Teaching is sensitive to the range of needs of the children and ensures that pupils move forward in their learning. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes and sustain concentration. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory for most pupils who receive specific support related to targets in their individual learning plans. For some other pupils the teaching is less effective especially when tasks are not sufficiently well matched to their needs and when tasks are not practical enough. For example, in a maths lesson pupils found difficulty in coping with money problems and had no access to coins or counting materials which would have supported them in their calculations.
26. In lessons, the pupils generally concentrate well, follow the staff's instructions carefully, and work hard. When asked to make their own decisions, most of the pupils do so sensibly, but the staff do not take full advantage of the pupils' competence in this aspect of their learning to allow the pupils greater independence in choosing their own resources, or deciding how they will tackle a problem.
27. The teachers' planning does not always show good subject knowledge in aspects of art and design and design technology for lessons in the juniors. Learning objectives are not clear in relation to the development of the skills appropriate to each subject. In music, the good quality specialist teaching available for instrumental tuition and for the choir enables talented pupils to make good progress and attain well for their age. However, whilst most of the Year 5 and 6 pupils sing in the choir for an hour, the other 16 pupils have a music lesson taken by the deputy headteacher. The teaching in both of these sessions is effective in different ways in developing the pupils' musical skills. The two groups receive quite different programmes of work, and the school should consider how it might offer all pupils in these classes equivalent experiences. Physical education is well taught, and the pupils respond well to the staff's enthusiastic approach. The staff are currently undergoing detailed training in the use of newly-acquired computer and information technology equipment and programs. This has the potential to raise standards of teaching, learning and pupils' attainment quickly.

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

28. The school's curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils' learning and encourages positive attitudes. All relevant subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned and provided. Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is clearly linked to the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Adequate time is given to each subject, with suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy which are taught in accordance with the national strategies. Other than English, mathematics and science, the arrangement for subjects to be taught as topics or separate subjects at the discretion of the teacher is causing some confusion and does not ensure that pupils systematically develop the skills appropriate to each subject. The school's guidance on topic work is not sufficiently clear, and this is particularly evident in art and design, and design and technology. The skills in these

subjects are not sufficiently separated in teaching. There are also insufficient opportunities for the development of speaking skills in many lessons.

29. This broad curriculum is generally well balanced. Health and social education is timetabled regularly, and includes teaching about drug misuse. The governing body have agreed that sex education is not a subject on its own in the curriculum but is dealt with as questions arise; direct teaching of sex education is mainly in science. The provision of music for the older pupils is good, but they do not all have access to the full range of the curriculum. The basic curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest, the involvement of visitors with particular skills or insights, and a residential opportunity for Years 5 and 6 at an outdoor education centre. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are enthusiastic about the successful sport, music and drama activities that take place after school.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory, and often good when pupils are withdrawn for work in literacy and numeracy, or have the benefit of additional teaching. The particular needs of Traveller pupils are taken into account, both in class lessons and in small group work and most of these pupils make good progress. However, the school does not yet have clear plans to ensure that pupils with unusual patterns of attendance have suitable access to the full curriculum. Provision in a withdrawal class formed from across the school each morning meets the needs of the younger children best. This provision includes a good balance of teaching and learning which is well matched to teach basic skills, to meet individual needs in relation to learning targets and to provide a supportive environment. Individual education plans include appropriate and achievable targets, these are not always so well met in whole class sessions.
31. Pupils generally have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities. However, the guidance provided by the school to ensure that teachers have a clear view of how the curriculum is to be organised, taught and assessed, is currently being reviewed. Several subjects do not have up to date guidance available and, although teachers generally ensure that pupils have a suitable range of experiences, this leads to some inequalities in provision. Teacher' general planning does not always ensure that the older higher attaining pupils have suitably challenging provision.
32. Provision for spiritual development is good, in line with its mission statement and its Catholic ethos. The school successfully provides opportunities for personal prayer and reflection, for example, in the school worship. Assemblies are carefully linked to a series of topics such as new beginnings, reconciliation and caring for others. Opportunities are provided for quiet reflection on the main messages of the assemblies. Displays around the school show that teachers are determined to raise the self worth and self esteem of pupils. There are opportunities within religious education for pupils to reflect on the deeper meaning of spirituality, for example, when Year 4 pupils write their own simple prayers. Year 1 pupils explored the meaning of the five senses in a science lesson and expressed delight and wonder as they tasted a variety of fruits and identified a range of liquids. A music lesson for reception and Year 1 children provided an opportunity for both quiet reflection on the message within a song "We are all God's Children" to a rousing rendition of "Jesus is My Friend".
33. Provision for social and moral education is very good. This confirms the views of most parents that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There is a well-understood, whole school approach to behaviour management and a unity of purpose in everything the school stands for. Class rules are negotiated and displayed in classrooms. Effective incentive rewards are in place and success is recognised and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are provided with opportunities to

help others, for example, in helping younger children to read or by befriending anyone who is feeling lonely or left out in the playground. Pupils have a social conscience and are members of Junior Amnesty as well as supporting a wide range of charities. The successes achieved through the "Unity in the Community" racial understanding project are proudly displayed in school. The skills and knowledge gained in personal and social education are raising pupils' awareness of what it is to be a good citizen.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but the multi-cultural aspect is under-emphasised. Music plays an important part in pupils' cultural development and they have an excellent attitude to singing. This was seen in a choir session for Year 5 and 6 pupils who made very good progress in singing a range of new songs. Pupils explore their own locality in geography and history and displays around the school show that they have studied the lives of people in other lands. Whilst there are opportunities in religious education to discuss other faiths, there are insufficient planned opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to learn about and experience the diversity and richness of cultures other than their own, particularly in their own locality of Oldham.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The provision for child protection and for the welfare of pupils is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. The staff and governing body work together well to create a caring school where the personal needs of pupils are well met. The headteacher leads well here by providing a strong and supportive role model for the pupils, staff and parents. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers know their pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
36. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good, although some of the policies need updating. The designated teacher for child protection is well-trained and shares his expertise with staff. He liaises with a range of support agencies on behalf of pupils. Adults working in school are alert to the medical needs of pupils and three members of staff are fully qualified to administer first aid. The school follows local authority guidelines for health and safety but the school policy needs updating. Risk assessments of the premises and equipment are undertaken by the co-ordinator and the procedures for documenting risks are currently being refined. The site manager is vigilant on a daily basis and ensures that the site is safe and clean, and free from debris. Pupils are well-supervised at lunchtime but there has been no improvement in the situation noted at the time of the last inspection when pupils carry trays of food from the kitchen up a small flight of stairs to the dining hall. There is always a supervisor present, but some of the younger pupils find negotiating the steps difficult whilst carrying a tray of food.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting behaviour are good and their success can be seen in the very good behaviour of pupils. The school has been concerned to involve pupils in setting their own rules of conduct and this has successfully fostered a good atmosphere in lessons. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and parents are involved at an early stage if there are problems. Good behaviour is rewarded and there are special assemblies when pupils celebrate each other's achievements. The anti-bullying policy provides a framework for staff and pupils to follow and there are only a few occasions when it is necessary to implement it. Year 6 pupils confirm that any instances of unkind behaviour are dealt with well by the school.

38. The school fulfils the requirements of the revised national Code of Practice in relation to provision for pupils with special educational needs. There are no pupils currently with a statement of educational need. The school has put a suitable emphasis on the early identification of needs from entry into the nursery. The staff use information gained from assessing and working with the pupils to recognise those children requiring particular help and support. Individual learning plans for all identified pupils are regularly rewritten and reviewed in consultation with parents, and sometimes with pupils. Documentation and pupils' files are well managed and there is appropriate involvement of external agencies. Children's progress towards their targets is followed using a small step approach, which helps the school recognise and acknowledge the progress pupils make. The school puts a great emphasis on the provision of a caring and supportive learning environment for pupils with special educational needs and all staff demonstrate that care.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory but not yet sufficiently active to halt the downward trend in attendance over the last 3 years. Whilst unauthorised absence is low, there has been an increase in authorised absence. The intermittent attendance of a particular group of pupils has a significant impact on the school's attendance figures. The number of pupils taking holidays taken in term time also affects overall attendance. Punctuality is well-monitored and records kept of persistent latecomers. Teachers ensure that registration periods are calm and orderly and that lessons get off to a prompt start.
40. There is wide range of assessment information collected from the nursery onwards through a range of testing. Some of this information is not used effectively to plan specific tasks or activities to enable pupils to move on in their learning. There were a few instances of work being specially planned by teachers during the inspection after identifying that pupils had not fully understood a topic, for example in mathematics. When this happens the learning is good and pupils make good progress. In many lessons, teachers are skilled in assessing pupils' progress as lessons proceed and can adapt what they are teaching through questioning or specific tasks. Marking is completed but not always well used to point to the next steps in learning or to prompt pupils to think further about their work.
41. Systems are being developed currently to track children's progress and to set targets to improve performance in English and mathematics. These systems are in the early stages of development and will need to be further developed to ensure that past performance is correctly assessed and that predictions for future performance are realistically challenging.
42. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The school provides a range of experiences which help pupils to mature into responsible and caring individuals. These include visits out of school to places of interest and the residential experience for older pupils. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings with others. This work is done through personal, social and health education lessons, assemblies and class discussions. There is a comprehensive programme for PSHE which is currently being reviewed and evaluated. Sex education is delivered through the general curriculum and by the school nurse to Year 6 pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents view the school as a good school where their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. They consider that the school promotes the attitudes and values that they expect and develops an understanding of moral and social issues as set out in the mission statement. Some parents are not happy with the amount of information they receive on children's progress or about the amount of work that children do at home. Inspection findings are that the information they receive is satisfactory and the amount of work that children do at home is similar to that found in most schools. A few parents disagree that the school provides an interesting range of extra curricular activities but these are found to be satisfactory. The timing of the parents' consultation evenings is being reviewed by the school to enable parents to gain earlier information on the progress their children are making.
44. The quantity of information that parents receive is satisfactory. The prospectus is easy to read though bland in appearance, although it does not yet contain all the required information. The annual report of the governing body fulfils all legal requirements but the presentation of the attendance information is not helpful to parents. End-of-year reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory. Some comments by teachers give specific information on achievement in subjects but others are not quite so detailed. Targets for future development are set out but some of these are too general to be of help. Many letters go home informing parents about events and activities taking place within the school. There is an induction meeting for parents of children due to enter nursery or reception and the nursery teacher gives parents information on the activities which children will engage in. Parents of children in both key stages are invited to a meeting in the autumn term to receive information on what their children will be learning. Parents of children in the infants are shown how to help children with reading and how to use the home/school diary. Meetings are held to explain the tests that pupils take in Year 2 and Year 6. Parents confirm how useful they find these meetings.
45. Parental involvement in the life of the school is satisfactory. The school reaches out to parents, including through parish links, but not always with the success it would like. The headteacher sent out a questionnaire to seek the views of parents and has acted upon some of their suggestions. A small number of parents help regularly in school and most parents support their children with the work they do at home. The school offers two formal consultation evenings each year in the spring and summer terms but parents consider the summer meeting too late to take action if pupils need extra support. Teachers are a visible presence each morning and evening and parents were observed sharing their concerns on an informal basis. There is no parent teacher association in the school but parents do support any concerts or other events which are held in school. Parents expressed their pleasure at being invited to class assemblies. All these initiatives have yet to have an impact on children's learning because not all parents realise that they can take advantage of them. The headteacher is considering new ways of involving parents in order to make the links with them more effective.
46. The level of involvement of parents of pupils with special educational needs varies but the school recognises that it could be further strengthened. Learning targets are shared at parents' consultation evenings, but some of these targets need to be more specific and shared more frequently. Communication with individual parents/carers is good but there is no specific information prepared for them about how systems actually work. Parental help is used regularly to support pupils with special needs, especially within the withdrawal class. The school is sensitive to the Traveller way of

life and works hard to build up good relations with the families, supported by the local authority Traveller Education Service.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The last inspection found that leadership was sound, but that there was little examination of the quality of teaching and learning to raise standards. The quality of leadership remains sound. The recently appointed headteacher has already established himself in the school as a pastoral leader of strength and sensitivity. For example, in leading school assemblies, he sets the tone of high expectations of good behaviour and of pupils' commitment to their work. He has put in place an effective monitoring system of the staff's work that gives them clear understanding of both its quality and how it might be improved. He has also opened up the governors' involvement in checking that planned developments are proceeding as they should, and meets the vice-chair of governors regularly to monitor the progress of the school improvement plan. These are key improvements since the last inspection. During a difficult year for staff absences, he managed to ensure that there were sufficient staff available, but parents whose children were in a class that had a number of temporary teachers were unhappy with the lack of information they received, and with their children's progress. There are more settled arrangements this year to help those pupils to catch up, and inspection evidence confirms that their progress currently is good.
48. The headteacher has also promoted well the need for all staff to engage in helping the school to move forward. Everyone is clear about their role, and subject leaders take responsibility in the main for overseeing standards and the quality of teachers' planning in their areas. The school's capacity to improve is good, and the staff clearly work together effectively as a team. Statutory performance management is in place, and is beginning to influence teachers' work in classrooms, and the standards attained by the pupils. This process has been complicated because the deputy headteacher has been on long-term sick leave, and there has been an acting deputy in place. He has supported the head well, and oversees the work of the Year 3 to Year 6 classes effectively. He is relatively inexperienced at this level of management, however. Indeed, the involvement of all staff in school improvement planning is not yet fully established. The headteacher is aware of this, and as the permanent deputy has recently been granted early retirement on health grounds intends to make progress with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher as soon as possible.
49. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection, and the governors' recent staff appointees have made a reasonable start to their work in the school. However, the governors decided to maintain year group classes from Years 3 to 6 this year, resulting in two small Year 6 classes, and large classes of 38 and 36 in Years 3 and 4. This is working well for the Year 6 pupils, who are accelerating well in their learning. Whilst the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is sound, and occasionally good, there are two teachers new to the school here, one of whom is a newly qualified teacher. The governors agreed to fund extra classroom assistance for these classes, which helps to ensure that the pupils make satisfactory progress. It is difficult for these teachers, however, to monitor and assess the attainment and progress of all the pupils, given the range of different needs represented in each class. This inevitably has an effect on how well they are able to plan new work that is precisely targeted to groups and individuals to accelerate their progress. In planning the staff deployment this year, the headteacher and governors did not give sufficient weight to the need to balance the ratio of pupils to teachers, as they were keen to maintain separate year group classes.

50. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are fulfilled, and the governors know the school well. The chair of governors, who is also the parish priest, is well known by pupils, parents and staff, and is supportive of, and well-respected by, everyone. He has a broad overview of the school's needs, and works closely with the vice-chair who has adopted the role of monitoring the school improvement plan with the headteacher. This is a good development, and is already helping the headteacher and governors to clarify major issues earlier. There are governors with links to the coordinators of literacy, numeracy and special needs, who also keep other governors informed of developments in these areas. There is a range of committees to aid the governing body in carrying out its work. They ensure that the school proceeds effectively on a day-to-day basis, and that general management of the work of the school is efficient. The issue from the last inspection to have clear criteria by which to monitor and evaluate the work of the school has been partly addressed, but in the key area of strategic planning of the use of the school's financial and other resources, there is still work to do. The current development plan, for example, does not set out clearly enough for governors the criteria by which they will judge the success of its implementation. The draft Racial Equality policy needs to be further developed to ensure it meets the statutory requirements, and an action plan for its implementation included in the school improvement plan.
51. Whilst the school's financial administration is secure, long-term planning of the budget has recently used up a healthy surplus of over £50,000 to maintain a ratio of staff to pupils that is not sustainable. This has reduced the budget surplus to almost nothing, apart from a contingency fund as insurance against the risk of problems with the school's heating. This has reduced the governors' opportunities to plan effectively how they will use the appointment of a new deputy headteacher to focus their long-term planning on the school's development needs, with surplus funds to enable a range of options to be considered. They have recognised that the falling numbers of pupils require serious consideration, and have invited the local authority and the diocese to discuss the position with them. However, this funding situation was foreseeable when the last budget was set, and points to strategic planning not taking all relevant factors into account when plans are being drawn up.
52. Statutory requirements in relation to provision for pupils with special needs are currently being satisfactorily met but the policy does not yet reflect the requirements of the New Code of Practice. The coordinator has a clear philosophy and vision for special educational needs and is very well supported by the governing body. The governors publish information about provision both in the school prospectus and in the annual report to parents but there is limited analysis of patterns in the identification of pupils or of overall progress made. The funding for special needs is effectively allocated but there is limited systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of this funding in providing for these children.
53. Staffing is good for the numbers of pupils, but as described earlier the deployment of teachers in Years 3 and 4 does not take sufficient account of the needs of the relatively large group of Year 3 and 4 pupils. Similarly, the deployment of the Special Needs coordinator with a small group of pupils each morning is effective in promoting their learning, particularly the younger ones. It is also helpful in building the self-esteem of some of those pupils, including some Traveller pupils, who do not attend school regularly. However, this provision is probably unsustainable in the school's current financial position. Support staffing is satisfactory, and these staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning across the school, particularly those with special needs. Occasionally, they do not involve themselves sufficiently with individual pupils

or groups when the teacher is working with the whole class in literacy or numeracy. The accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils, and there are large grounds. Some of the shared areas outside classrooms are not fully utilised, however. Active plans, conceived with the pupils' help, are to be implemented imminently for a needed revamp of the nursery outdoor play area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve further the pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of education offered, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Address the following management issues:
 - a. ensure that the key areas to be covered by those staff with leadership and management roles meet the changing needs of the school;
 - b. provide effective training so that all these staff develop a knowledge of good practice and the skills needed to lead the necessary changes in the school;
 - c. include in this the improvement of development planning skills, including the strategic deployment of financial and staff resources;
 - d. determine the level of staffing affordable based on strategic planning of the budget based on the pupils' needs expressed in school improvement plans.
(Paragraphs 28, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 81, 99)
- (2) Raise standards of attainment by critically considering the available test and assessment information and using the results to improve the teaching and learning of year groups, individual pupils, and specific groups, for example boys, girls, Traveller pupils, pupils with special needs, and gifted or talented pupils. (Paragraphs 8, 9, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 40, 41, 75, 80, 83, 87, 88)
- (3) Develop and extend recent initiatives to improve racial harmony by furthering the pupils' understanding of Britain as a diverse and multicultural society.
(Paragraphs 34)
- (4) Ensure that all pupils have access to the full curriculum:
 - a. in music, by reorganising the timetable for the subject for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils;
 - b. in art and design, and design technology, by clarifying the specific content of the subjects to ensure that the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding are taught.
(Paragraphs 27, 28, 29, 94, 96, 98, 103, 124)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

66

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

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 12 | 29 | 23 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 18 | 44 | 35 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

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

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) | 24 | 257 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | NA | 54 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR-Y6 |
|---|---------|-------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 5 | 50 |

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

7

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

13

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data

5.5

Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0.1

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.5 |
|---------------------------|-----|

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 17 | 20 | 37 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| | Girls | 19 | 20 | 19 |
| | Total | 34 | 36 | 36 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 92 (74) | 97 (84) | 97 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 16 | 16 |
| | Girls | 18 | 15 | 18 |
| | Total | 32 | 31 | 34 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 86 (84) | 84 (94) | 92 (97) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 15 | 21 | 36 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 12 | 14 |
| | Girls | 18 | 17 | 19 |
| | Total | 30 | 29 | 33 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 83 (67) | 81 (72) | 92 (67) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | Girls | 17 | 14 | 18 |
| | Total | 27 | 25 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 75 (58) | 69 (72) | 83 (72) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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 | 219 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6]

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.9 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Average class size | 28.6 |

Education support staff: YR-Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4.3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 128 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 32 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 12 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 4 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 2 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 2001/2 |
|----------------|--------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 608,701 |
| Total expenditure | 609,390 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,091 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 61,103 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 58,817* |

*The budget for 2002/3 includes plans to reduce this surplus to less than £1000

with a contingency of £10,000 for potential emergency repairs to the heating system

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 281 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 57 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 58 | 38 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 47 | 51 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 47 | 51 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 35 | 45 | 9 | 0 | 11 |
| The teaching is good. | 45 | 49 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 22 | 65 | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 60 | 36 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 60 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 27 | 64 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 58 | 40 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 49 | 47 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 33 | 56 | 9 | 0 | 2 |

Other issues raised by parents

Some concern about the number of temporary teachers last year for Y1, and consequent lack of information and progress; also about the quality of teaching and learning in Year 5; a number of parents would like more activities for children such as parties, discos; some want snacks allowed for morning break, and drinks available during the morning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. The last inspection reported satisfactory progress for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum had general breadth, balance and relevance. Attainment was in line with that expected for children at five years. Teaching and learning were satisfactory and occasionally good. Findings in this inspection show that progress is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. All areas of learning are now well developed. Records of progress in the reception class show that the children are on track to achieve the standards expected of five year olds. Teaching and learning in the Nursery and the reception class are sound overall, with a good proportion of good lessons observed. The teachers, nursery nurse and classroom support assistants know and understand the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals, and plan the curriculum to attain them. Through well-planned classroom organisation and effective methods, children feel secure and are confident in working independently. Sound leadership from the co-ordinator ensures that a very good team spirit exists in the Foundation Stage. Very good support is provided by the nursery nurse and by the classroom assistants.
56. Overall, attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. Children in the reception class take the Oldham Baseline Assessment Test in October. Most children fall below the local education authority average in reading, writing, number and personal and social skills. The children in reception make good progress, so that, by their entry into Year 1, their attainment is in line with that expected for their age.
57. Good provision is made for the children and their parents to visit the nursery before the children start school. Parents are kept well informed in the half-termly news sheets on how they can help their children. There are Parents' Notice Boards in both classes. Parents of the nursery children are welcome to stay and join in the activities until their children are settled.

Personal, social and emotional development.

58. Most children enter the nursery with reasonable social skills. They know to say 'thank you' for the things they are given and are aware of their own needs and sensitive to the needs of others. They show concern when someone is upset. The teacher and nursery nurse set up a good range of learning activities before the children arrive. Children are given opportunities to make choices when they move between these activities confidently and independently. Most children show developing personal skills in relating to other children and adults. The adults listen carefully to what the children have to say so that children know their contributions are valued. Every day routines such as collecting a badge and a name card, encourage a sense of belonging and sharing. The children know the pattern of the day so they feel secure. They look forward to special times, such as story time, when they are able to maintain attention and sit still, through gentle reminders.
59. Personal and social development is good in the reception class. Good teaching builds on these skills by encouraging the children to feel confident about what they can achieve. They are able to try different activities, initiate ideas and speak in a group. Children develop personal skills when they share resources and help each other. Through clear guidelines they understand the need for rules so that adults and

children can work harmoniously together. The children are well on course to reach the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

60. The development of children's language and literacy skills is good in the Nursery and the reception class. Children have a wide range of attainment in speaking and listening on entry into the nursery. Several children are willing communicators with good levels of skill. They can ask questions and pursue answers. Others find communication difficult, and adults work hard to involve children who find it difficult to express themselves clearly. They encourage children to speak at length, by clear explanations and effective questioning. The children's contributions are valued. In the reception class imaginative role-play situations, often linked to stories and themes, provide good opportunities to extend children's speech. For example, in acting the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', the children used language well. The children also enjoy listening to stories and are keen to answer questions. For example, after listening to 'The Lost Teddy', one child commented: "Teddy got lost because mummy shut the window and teddy got pushed out of the window".
61. Children's attainment in reading is below average at this early stage in the school year. Skilful teaching gradually introduces elements of the literacy hour, such as reading and writing together. The children enjoy reading the Big Books and can remember the nursery rhyme from the previous day. They are learning that the illustrations help them to read. The book area is well organised with a good selection of picture books, which the children enjoy choosing for themselves. Books are used well to extend learning in other areas such as creative activities and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In the reception class, the children's knowledge of words, letters of the alphabet and their sounds, is good, given the children's low level of knowledge in September. They are confident in choosing a book, offer opinions and explain why they have chosen it. A higher attaining child commented, "I like this book because it is really funny. She keeps telling mummy she wants to go out".
62. Boys and girl willingly have a go at writing on their own. In the nursery the children make marks as 'writing' in the writing area with pencils, in the playground with chalk and in the painting area with paint. Guided by the teacher, they have written their name beside their picture in an attractive display of star shapes. Above average children in the reception class can draw an illustration and copy a single sentence about a story. For example, one child wrote 'The King needed the treasure' after reading 'Rumpelstiltskin'. Teacher's marking shows appreciation, such as: 'This is wonderful'. Areas for improvement are written in targets to be attained: 'remember to leave spaces between the words'. The children learn to form the letters correctly by writing with their fingers in the air. They are encouraged to write by the large range of pencils, paper, jotters and invitation cards in the writing area. In the resource area, exciting opportunities to write independently are provided by the classroom support assistant. The children write letters to Barnabus the bear and post them in Bernie's Post office. These letters are taken home, answered on the computer, printed out and the replies posted in the children's trays. By the time they enter Year 1, most of the children are likely to have achieved the early learning goals and will be following the National Literacy Strategy.

Mathematical development

63. The provision for children's mathematical development is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. Children in the nursery enjoy using numbers in their

play and the teacher and nursery nurse try to include counting activities in other areas of learning. For example, children know that there should only be four children in the painting area and two in the sand. They are beginning to develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. One child said: "I've got four trucks in my train, so it's longer than yours. You can't have one of mine because yours will be longest then." Most children in the reception class count to ten and some count to 20 and beyond competently. The teacher builds effectively on children's prior knowledge in the whole-class sessions and targets questions to individual children so that there are no 'hiding places'. When the teacher keeps a fast pace, the children show high levels of interest. Most children learn and say number rhymes from memory. In singing 'One little man in a flying saucer' the teacher made the lesson fun by adding the mouth noises. The group work is well matched to the ability of the children. Above average children work independently, throwing large dice, counting the dots and finding the matching numeral or number card. Most children can follow coloured pattern cards in threading beads. They know and understand the use of the terms 'full' and 'empty' and the names of simple shapes. Good support by classroom support assistants helps children with special educational needs to succeed. Most children are likely to attain the expected standards by the end of the year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. This aspect is taught well in both the nursery and the reception class so that the children make good progress in their learning. The good planning of activities helps the children to learn about the world around them through a range of first hand experiences. Adults support the children in investigating objects and materials by encouraging them to look closely. In the reception class, the children were provided with a range of fruits to identify through their senses of smell and taste. After the lesson, the children celebrated by having fruit salad! Children have regular chances to bake and are aware of the need for hygiene and safety.
65. In the nursery the children find out about the past well for their age. They understand about growing up when talking of their families. When a boy brought in a variety of leaves to add to the display on the nature table, he said: "My leaf has gone wrinkly 'cos it's old like my gran." In learning about the environment, the children in the reception class visit the shops and parks. They learn how to follow a route successfully. A display of large digicamera photographs in the resource area shows the children playing in the water. Captions describe the learning: for example. 'See just how much water it takes to make sand stick'.
66. The children use electronic and computer technology with confidence. They enjoy listening to stories in the listening centre and know how to use the tape recorder. On the computer, with help from an adult, they can move the cursor by dragging the mouse and then click on to the icons. Programs with different levels of challenge are loaded into the computer. Most children enjoy the mathematics program when they match shoes to the sizes of teddies. More able children can follow a trail on the 'Jelly Bean Hunt'. In this area of learning the children are well on course to reach the early learning goals.

Physical development

67. In the classrooms, the children develop good skills in moving around confidently and safely, because the teachers organise and provide space for floor and table activities. They go out to play and spend time in the secure area to the side of the classroom. Resources to develop their gross motor skills are limited, as the school has no high,

fixed equipment for climbing, sliding or balancing, nor low equipment for crawling. The children move with imagination on the large wheeled toys, scooters and tricycles. Outdoor play is a recent development and the children are not yet used to working in a large area. They find it difficult to control the toys and are not yet sufficiently aware of safety issues or the recognition of personal space.

68. The children are developing fine motor skills. They handle tools such as pencils, scissors, and brushes with confidence. Teachers plan the use of small world equipment and constructional toys effectively to improve skills in assembling. Modelling with playdough and baking provides opportunities to mix, roll and cut. Most children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in manipulative skills by the end of the reception year, but not in playing with big toys, or general physical activity.

Creative development

69. In this area of learning the children make good progress and they are well on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. They explore colour, texture and space in their paintings, Children in the reception class can mix powder paints to make the colours they need for printing. Paper, cardboard, fabric, foil and glitter are all used for good effect.
70. The children know many songs and rhymes that they sing tunefully, with good rhythm and dynamics. They know the names of different percussion instruments and enjoy playing along to music. In the nursery class the children chose 'rain makers' to accompany the song 'I like thunder' appropriately. Reception children keep the beat well when they perform 'Come and choose an instrument'. They know how sounds can be made louder/quieter, faster/slower, longer/shorter.
71. Teachers encourage the children to use their imagination in drama and general play. In the nursery, the home corner is well resourced which gives the children a wide range of opportunities for creative play. For example, the children in the reception class communicate their feelings and thoughts effectively when they play in the Three Bears' Cottage.

ENGLISH

72. The unconfirmed national tests results in English for 2002 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the level expected for their age groups has fallen compare to those in 2001, particularly in reading for seven year olds. This is partly due to the number of pupils in this year group who have special educational needs. The school's results for eleven year olds are also lower than the previous year, although they remain close to the national figures for that year. However, almost one in three pupils attained the higher Level 5, which is a substantial improvement. The 2001 results compare well to those in schools in similar circumstances. Attainment is higher than that described in the last inspection report, because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.
73. Almost all pupils have a sound grasp of the basic spoken language they need in their daily activities. They are willing and able to communicate with adults. They describe their work and other incidents confidently, and many explain their points of view with reasonable clarity. Their conversations with friends during break-times are typical of their ages, with much enthusiasm and use of popular language. Most pupils know the language of good manners, and when they should use these courtesies. They are patient with younger pupils and adapt their language to give reassurance and encouragement. The further development of their spoken language is restricted

because there is too little time allowed in most lessons for pupils to speak more than a few words, and the school does not have a clear view of how pupils' speaking skills are to be extended. This was also noted in the last inspection report. There are good examples, in a minority of lessons, of teachers asking questions in a way that encourages pupils to answer at length, raise their own questions, or discuss their work in small groups before presenting their results to the class. Where this happens, pupils use the terminology that has been introduced in the lesson and are developing the fluency of language needed for formal occasions. These examples are too rare to ensure that speaking skills, especially the use of standard English, are systematically developed through the school.

74. Pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from their classes for much of their work in English have good experiences that help to develop their speaking skills. The small number of pupils in the withdrawal class enables them to take an active part in lessons, and they are expected to speak frequently, with extended explanations of their ideas or how they arrived at the answer to a question. This works well and, although standards are below those expected for their age, the pupils are alert, make good progress and most have the confidence to ask questions.
75. Almost all pupils in both key stages have reasonable listening skills, even when expected to listen for overlong periods. They follow oral instructions well, and maintain their concentration, especially when they have the support of visual resources, such as pictures, diagrams or video. Most of the older pupils listen attentively to others, and in Years 5 and 6 there are examples of pupils modifying their own ideas well as class discussions reveal other possibilities for them to consider. In lessons involving drama, pupils are particularly well focused as they listen for the tone of speech, the language used, the emotional state of the characters, and clues to what might be going to happen as the scenario develops. This focused attention is helping pupils to develop more perceptive listening skills, which take the pupils beyond listening to instructions and factual information. The school does not yet have clear expectations and guidance for developing good listening skills through the school and, although some teachers work well with their own classes, there is opportunity for higher standards by the age of 11.
76. Standards of reading are satisfactory overall but vary unacceptably across year groups and between individual pupils. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' enjoyment of books and stories is clearly evident and almost all pupils are able to retell familiar stories in their own words and describe what parts or characters they like most. Almost all pupils have responded well to the regular teaching of how to sound out written English so have an adequate knowledge of letters and sounds. They can read simple sentences and stories with reasonable understanding. Many are beginning to recognise how certain words, such as adjectives, are used to create different feelings and provide more information to enhance the story. A few pupils are very competent readers using their knowledge and skills to read unfamiliar words and to change their tone and expression in response to the punctuation and other clues in the text. They show a good understanding of the texts they have read, and are becoming familiar with techniques used in books and posters to help readers, such as contents, chapters and large bold print.
77. However, some pupils have not made a secure start in learning to read and, although they have acquired some knowledge of sounds and letters, this is not sufficient to enable them to read with confidence. The school generally makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs, but there is no consistent approach to identifying the needs and accelerating the learning of those pupils whose

progress is too slow. The result is that a significant minority of pupils remain hesitant readers throughout Key Stage 2.

78. In contrast, the most capable pupils in each year group read very well for their age. They have good technical knowledge, such as use of an index and the grammatical structure of sentences, and are also able to read and understand stories and instructions. They read aloud fluently and with appropriate expression, and appreciate the humour of situations and characters. However, they are much less confident about the broader aspects of reading, such as the ability to retrieve information from a library, to discuss different authors they have read, or to recognise the techniques used by authors to maintain interest or to set scenes. Although most pupils conscientiously read the books and material set by the school, little appears to be known about the extent of their other reading interests. There is some encouragement for pupils to read a larger volume and range of books, for example, through book fairs and library visits. These are not sufficient to move the most competent pupils towards extending their vocabulary sufficiently, and increasing their experience of a wider range of good literature.
79. Pupils' writing has recently been a focus for improvement and this has worked well in both key stages. Most pupils reach the standards expected for their age and a significant number occasionally produce work of above average quality. Handwriting and presentation are consistently good, the technical aspects of grammar and punctuation are sound and the amount of written work undertaken is at least adequate. There are fewer worksheets evident than reported in the last inspection, but the amount of written comprehension exercises is still high compared with writing for the pupils' own purposes. The staff have developed portfolios of literacy work across the curriculum, but have still to agree how to further promote different styles of writing in other subjects. Spelling is generally accurate but is mainly based on the sound of a word. Where words are not spelt as they sound, many pupils throughout the school have difficulty. There remains room for improvement in the content of written work, particularly in the development of a wider vocabulary to express feelings and create mood.
80. The quality of teaching is good. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, and good or very good in over half. The strengths are in the preparation of lessons, especially where teachers have used stimulating resources that maintain pupils' interest; teachers' knowledge of the subject, and the management of lessons to enable adults to teach small groups of pupils for a sustained period of time. The shortcomings are linked to matching teaching to the needs of individual pupils. For example, although different work is provided for the most and least competent pupils, the teaching is rarely planned to ensure these pupils make good progress. Too often, pupils with very different needs have to sit on the carpet for half an hour and listen to a lesson which is mainly too hard or too easy for them. The teachers' weekly planning clearly shows what activities both the teacher and pupils are to undertake, but not what learning is expected from different groups of pupils. This makes it difficult to assess pupils' learning accurately and to provide additional support or challenge. The school is well placed to organise and plan the teaching of English more effectively, especially as most teachers have good knowledge of the subject and the building allows for flexibility in grouping pupils and deploying adults.
81. The school recognises that its policies and guidelines for English are in need of review and intends to do this within the near future. This is a sound decision, as test results have already identified a large number of pupils who need to make brisker progress, many of whom need a higher level of challenge in their reading. A generous

amount of curriculum time is already allocated to English and could be used more effectively to ensure all pupils make suitable progress. The curriculum co-ordinator is knowledgeable and works steadily to manage the subject through the school. However, without clear guidance about the school's approach to organising learning in English, the main leadership has been linked to developing the use of the National Literacy Strategy, including building resources to an adequate level, and improving teaching in the literacy hour. This has worked well, but now needs to extend to promoting suitable strategies to ensure consistently brisk progress is made by pupils of all abilities.

MATHEMATICS

82. There is continuing improvement in standards in both key stages with standards now matching and, for some pupils, exceeding the national average and the standards found in the previous inspection. This is due to better progress throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now make more consistently good progress than in the last inspection but progress in Years 3 to 6 is more patchy, with good progress only being observed in Year 6. The majority of pupils with special educational needs who receive extra support make good progress. The small percentage of pupils from Traveller families make satisfactory progress in spite of breaks in their attendance. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Some of the higher attaining pupils, including a few identified as gifted and talented, make insufficient progress in some classes due to lack of challenging work.
83. By Year 2, most seven-year-olds count well and know how to compute addition and subtraction facts to 10. They develop an understanding of place value and order numbers up to 100 accurately. They choose the appropriate strategy when solving addition and subtraction problems. They know that subtraction is the inverse of addition and use this understanding in doubling and halving numbers. They use mental calculation strategies well to solve number problems involving money and measures and are beginning to use non-standard and standard units to measure length and mass. They have good knowledge of a range of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and understand their characteristics. For example, they describe different shapes using specific language so that other pupils can recognise the shape from the description. They use simple lists, tables and block graphs effectively to record information. Consistent and steady progress is evident across the key stage for the majority of pupils. The scheme of work and the consistent use of workbooks ensure this, as they provide content that covers the numeracy strategy well. However, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the range of tasks set. There are limited opportunities to work independently and this affects their capacity to extend their skills or apply them in new situations. Some of the lower attaining pupils find some topics in shape and space and accurate measurement more difficult.
84. Most pupils in Year 6 handle numbers well, understand fractions and decimals, measure accurately and use range of diagrams and charts appropriately. Most are developing an understanding of place value involving large numbers. However, knowledge of multiplication tables is not secure for many children. Other pupils use their understanding of multiplication tables well within written calculations. The higher attaining pupils take a step-by-step approach to solving problems and use both mental strategies and written calculations, including standard methods, to help them find answers. Most pupils are confident in discussing and describing their methods. The lower attaining pupils develop similar strategies in solving problems but work with smaller numbers and less complex calculations. Pupils apply their skills in data-

handling in other subjects, for example in science. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 demonstrate good skills in recalling and using basic number facts and in developing a range of strategies to solve problems. This is apparent during the rapid oral mental work at the beginning of lessons and within group tasks. Work is well planned within the scheme of work and this ensures sound coverage and steady progress for most pupils in Year 3 to Year 5. Progress is enhanced where the scheme of work is extended and supplemented by other activities. Work becomes increasingly more challenging especially in Year 6 and progress accelerates within this year group. In most year groups work is suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils but their progress in Years 3 and 4 is sometimes hampered by limited access to suitable practical apparatus which would support them in their calculations. This is compounded by the size of the classes in relatively small classrooms where movement is restricted.

85. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is at least satisfactory and often good. It is mainly good in Years 1 and 2, and sound in Years 3 to 6, with some good and very good teaching being observed in Year 6. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy framework. This results in well structured and well planned lessons, and sound learning and good attitudes and behaviour for the pupils.
86. In good lessons throughout the school, teachers' enthusiasm and their communication of what they want pupils to learn results in the pupils being keen and eager to learn, to answer questions and be fully involved in whole class sessions. In many of these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils understood this and were kept on their toes by knowing that they may be called upon unexpectedly to answer a question or demonstrate how they had solved a problem. As a result they were confident in demonstrating and appraising different methods of multiplying large numbers. Many teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved in whole group sessions and use games, counting resources and white boards to ensure this active participation. In Year 2, this active involvement took the form of role-play using a telephone. This enabled the pupils to develop their mathematical language to describe the properties of shapes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned, especially in the withdrawal class and pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem as their skills grow.
87. In some lessons, particularly in Years 3 and 4, the pupils' learning was not so effective, especially when they were less actively involved in whole class sessions and where the space was limited. The learning of some pupils was limited in some classes by a lack of direct support, especially when they were unclear about the nature of their task. It was also limited by lack of access to mathematical equipment that would help them with their calculations, such as having coins when working with simple money problems. Although group tasks are planned for different levels of attainment, imprecision in teacher assessment means that pupils' work is not always at the right level of difficulty. Some pupils with special educational needs found some tasks too challenging without support and some higher attaining pupils were not always sufficiently challenged or extended.
88. There has been substantial development in mathematics since the last inspection. It has been well managed and as a result the numeracy strategy is having a very positive impact on teaching and learning, and pupils' standards of attainment. The school is now collecting a great deal of assessment information. However, this is not always effectively analysed to provide useful information about the performance of the

differing groups, classes or year groups or to set specific targets in order to raise individual performance. Although monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has taken place on a regular basis and has helped to improve practice, this now needs to be more focussed on further raising standards.

SCIENCE

89. Standards of attainment are below average currently but speedily accelerating towards the average for the age in Year 2. They are also below average but accelerating well in Year 6. This is because key staff with good subject knowledge and good teaching skills have been deployed in these classes at the end of key stages. These teachers set high expectations for the pupils who respond by working hard, taking part enthusiastically in experimental work, and thinking carefully about what they are doing. The quality of teaching and learning currently ranges from being very good to being unsatisfactory, but is good overall. The status of the subject in the school has improved since the last inspection, and much that was then satisfactory is now good, including teaching, learning, pupils' response, and subject leadership. Standards of attainment are about the same as reported then, however.
90. The current Year 2 pupils have experienced regular changes of teacher in their last year, and consequently have not made the progress that the school would generally expect. The teacher now, who is a permanent member of staff, is both finding out what the pupils already know and understand in the subject, and trying to push them on to acceptable levels. In a lesson on meal planning as part of a healthy eating topic, the teacher skilfully questioned the pupils to determine their levels of understanding. She used good resources in unpacking a lunch-box to remind them of different food groups in a balanced meal. She then gave them the challenging task of describing three meals to provide a balanced diet for a day. This was pitched at a good level to stretch the higher attainers, but was sufficiently open-ended to include pupils at all levels. Here, the pupils worked at good levels for their age, beginning to make up lost ground in the subject. Both in this lesson, and in most others seen, teachers use well the opportunities presented to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
91. A key development in the subject this year has been to improve teachers' questioning skills, as part of a local authority project. In these classes, the fruit of this staff training is ripening in the teachers' determination to help the pupils to think about their work deeply. For example, in both Year 6 classes, the teachers have to begin at a much lower level than they would generally expect with pupils of this age. Consequently, they have determined to build into their lessons the importance of developing the pupils' own understanding of how it is necessary to ask key questions at the beginning of an investigation. In working with the pupils to investigate the differential rates of dissolving of a variety of sugars, both the Year 6 staff spent effective time in helping the pupils to consider carefully the possible implications of their early decisions in planning what to do, what resources they might need, and their initial hypotheses of the likely outcomes. This was teaching of investigative science of a high order for pupils who are at lower levels than expected for their age. Some of these pupils struggled with the added responsibility they had for making their own decisions, but others seized the opportunity willingly, and contributed strongly to the discussions. Overall attainment for the year is below average from this work, but good progress is being made towards the levels expected.
92. Pupils' attitudes to the lessons are generally good, particularly when they have practical activities to pursue. They also behave well in most cases, and when the

lesson is stimulating, as in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6, behaviour is very good. Pupils lost concentration in one lesson when they were cramped in a small space to follow a demonstration, but were surprisingly patient when asked in another lesson to copy a large block of writing about muscles from the board, instead of being able to describe what they had learned for themselves. Year 1 pupils became excited by a 'tasting' lesson using as part of a topic on the senses. The teacher had planned this well, making good use of support staff, and good resources. Good links were drawn here with art and design, as later in the week the pupils would use the fruit used for observational drawing, concentrating on the senses of sight and touch.

93. The coordinator has reorganised the resources for the subject, which are good and well stored,. She has led the focus on active questioning for the staff, which is proving effective in helping the pupils to develop scientific enquiry skills. Further work is needed to help the pupils become more independent in the subject. This should lead to them progressively setting their questions for exploration, and choosing their own resources in order to test them, as the Year 6 pupils are beginning to do.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Standards in art and design for seven-year-olds broadly match what might be expected of pupils of their age. For 11-year-olds standards are below expected levels. This is the reverse of what was found in the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for Years 1 and 2, and unsatisfactory for Years 3 to 6. The school is aware that art and design needs further development.
95. By the age of seven, pupils use different kinds of media for drawing. They use a range of simple techniques including pattern, line and shading to draw simple portraits and to illustrate their writing, for example, the decoration of 'thank you' prayers in religious education. They are beginning to use their drawing techniques in observational drawing of still life including plants and fruit. They work with textiles to create simple puppets and use simple stitching to decorate them. They develop a reasonable range of skills including fine motor skills in working with dough and other malleable materials. Pupils were observed to be making good progress using a range of media for drawing and painting and also in the use of use of textiles. Progress is more limited in three-dimensional work.
96. Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 show some skills in drawing in relation to form, line and pattern. Many have limited skills and do not use observation effectively in drawing from life. Some are able to evaluate their work but they have a limited understanding of what changes they can make to improve it. Even after a whole class discussion led by the teacher regarding possible changes, many could not improve on their original observational drawing. The progress across the key stage is erratic and although some skills in drawing and a range of media are being used, much of the work is at lower standards than could be expected, and the skills developed earlier are not sufficiently built on and extended.
97. The lesson observed in Key Stage 1 was well planned and very well organised and provided good access to all pupils to a wide range of drawing materials with planned opportunities for pupils to further develop and refine their skills within the context of other lessons. The external area was very effectively used to enable pupils have free choice of materials and the expertise of support staff was well utilised. Pupils were given clear guidance on how to use the different drawing materials. Pupils listened, watched and were very interested in experimenting.

98. In Key Stage 2 the planning did not show good subject knowledge and objectives were not clear in relation to the development of artistic skills as lessons were planned to cover aspects of design technology as well as art. In these lessons the poor level of some basic skills in drawing and cutting and the limited choice of media affected the final outcomes of the lessons. Although behaviour was satisfactory and most pupils displayed good attitudes some were not sufficiently well motivated to complete their tasks. The spaces both within and outside classrooms were not effectively used to give pupils more independence and choice.
99. The management of the subject has been inconsistent due to changes in staff. The monitoring of standards and of learning has been limited and the staff have received little guidance on how these might be improved. Although resources are satisfactory they are limited in range. There is limited evidence of art from a wide range of cultures being used to extend pupil's cultural perspective.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Most pupils reach the standards expected for their age and make steady progress through the school in most aspects of the subject. Pupils enjoy their design activities, which are taught regularly across the school. These are improvements since the last inspection. There remains considerable variability in pupils' ability to use simple tools such as scissors and measures, however, and too few opportunities for them to make their own decisions about how they should set about their work.
101. In both key stages pupils are particularly skilful at producing simple, labelled drawings of the objects they want to make. These designs are generally realistic and identify basic materials that the pupils know are available. Most pupils can explain what they are making and what tools they need, although their opportunities to make decisions are often very limited, mainly because teachers tend to set firm expectations about the final product. It is not unusual to see several almost identical outcomes. Where pupils have been given more freedom and discussed the product and its purpose in detail, they have imaginative ideas but often have only limited skills to move from the design to the making process.
102. These limitations were effectively addressed in a Year 4 class where the pupils were considering how to design a secure means of carrying money and other valuables. Various commercial products were examined and discussed, and the design specification emerged. Pupils were confident in drawing their design and most recognised the need for practicality. The pupils were inexperienced at making paper patterns, but were given guidance and allowed to try using newspaper. They then had the opportunity to see if their design was suitable and to make modifications. This was good teaching.
103. The teaching is generally sound and occasionally good, with well-prepared lessons and interesting activities. However, there is a lack of clarity about progressively teaching design and making skills. The subject is not a school priority for review and current guidelines do not fully reflect national expectations for pupils' attainment. Nonetheless, teachers have successfully used the national guidance to help them provide pupils with experience of a wide range of materials, and opportunities to design, to use tools, to model, and to work with food. There are few examples of the use of resistant materials. The co-ordinator does not have a significant role in directly managing the subject at present, but plans are in place to allocate the time and resources to improve this position.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Geography is taught termly, in rotation with history, and one lesson was observed in the infants. Standards for pupils aged seven and 11 are similar to those found nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below expectations. Teachers' planning then was weak and resources were insufficient. Now, schemes of work contain rolling programmes of study and resources are satisfactory. Teaching is now good and sometimes very good so that almost all pupils make good progress.
105. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. When the teacher explains tasks to the whole group, the pupils listen carefully and contribute well in discussions. Subjects chosen appeal to the pupils, such as walking round the locality to study buildings and their uses, so that they are keen to learn. Effective questioning challenges the younger pupils to think about the things they pass on the way to school. Resources are planned that will interest the pupils. Before the lesson seen, for example, the teacher had prepared digi-camera photographs of significant buildings and a large map of the area. Due to the teacher's good subject knowledge the pupils were able to understand the use of the buildings and classify them as domestic or industrial. However, there was a lost opportunity to include multi-cultural aspects, as the area contains mixed ethnic communities to which the teacher did not refer.
106. Pupils in Year 2 match job descriptions to job titles. Good teaching makes the lessons fun, as when a description of a job was displayed on the flip chart, and pupils enjoyed having to guess the job title. The children like the work, concentrate well and help each other. They are confident in reporting back and speaking in a large group. For example, in describing what sort of person would make a good postman, they said, "Someone who can walk, maybe ride a bike and read."
107. Teachers give clear guidelines on the way of working, so that older pupils show a lively interest in the environment. The pupils used information and communication technology to produce bar graphs in their analysis of a survey on traffic in the local community. They debate issues connected with recycling. They are skilful in map drawing and note-taking about Asia. Working independently, they can describe the reasons for journeying to Asia: 'We want to go to Asia because we want better spice for our food and some silk for our clothes.' Younger pupils have been learning about Kenya and writing what it would be like to live there. Links with literacy are evident in the geography note-books: 'I would like it because there are lots of trees and fruit'. Good marking by teachers shows the pupils that their work is valued: 'I am glad that you enjoy fruit', with a 'Healthy Food' award stamp added. Younger pupils understand their local area and are aware of places beyond the immediate locality. They can talk knowledgeably about people in different environments. Older pupils have good knowledge of a range of places in different parts of the world.
108. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and monitors teaching and pupils' work. The profile of the subject has been raised in the school since the last inspection. Working alongside the history co-ordinator, there are exciting plans in place for a Humanities Week.

HISTORY

109. History and geography are taught termly in rotation, and lessons were observed for junior pupils. Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven and 11 are in line with

national expectations, similar to the findings of the last inspection. Then, teaching was good. This has been maintained, so that progress is good across the school.

110. Good teaching leads the pupils to think through social and technological change. Pupils have a very good attitude to work. They listen well, work hard and support each other in group work. When their work is displayed they are proud and keen to show it to visitors. Work in the books of the younger pupils shows that they have been writing about their families and learning that people grow and change with time. They made a Family Tree diagram, labelling grandparents, parents, siblings and self. Moving on, pupils considered the differences in home-life in Victorian times and home-life today. The pupils were challenged to write a letter from a 'magic grandad', describing going to bed. There are very good examples of independent learning: for example, 'Then I went to light the candle. We went to sleep'. Enthusiastic teaching makes the older pupils keen to learn and investigate. In learning about the Blitz in the Second World War, the teacher set the scene well by giving the pupils questions to consider: such as, 'Why did the enemy decide to bomb cities?' A quick pace to the lesson, for example, 30 seconds discussion time in pairs, encouraged the pupils to concentrate and be eager to offer suggestions. They learned that cities had big buildings and factories that produced weapons. Pupils are beginning to give a few reasons for, and the results of, events. They were so interested in the feelings of people about war that they asked their grandparents questions and brought photographs of prisoners of war, a granddad driving a tank and a George Medal into school. Pupils understand that they can learn about the past from primary and secondary sources.
111. The teachers challenge the younger pupils to consider how houses have changed over time. Pupils know the difference between the Victorian scullery and the modern kitchen. They choose subjects that are interesting to the pupils such as seaside holidays. The pupils enjoyed looking at pictures of swimming costumes dated from 1900-1990. Writing independently as a child in the 1900s, a boy wrote; 'I go paddling because we can't afford a bathing machine'. Younger pupils understand some of the ways in which the past is represented. Through very effective teaching, older pupils demonstrate their knowledge of the history of Britain and other countries, including past societies. They can select and combine information from sources. For example, they learnt about Ancient Greece from studying maps, videos, CD-ROMS and the internet. Teachers give clear guidelines on the way of working, such as discussing note-taking skills. Good literacy development was seen in the work on history, when the pupils wrote about Oldham in 1841. The pupils study evidence well. They looked at the 1841 census to find out who lived there and made a tally chart showing the number of children aged one to ten.
112. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, having expertise in history. The policy has been reviewed and the school's individual needs included. Strengths include specialised teaching in Key Stage 2, monitoring medium term plans and sampling work. The subject is enriched through visits to the Oldham Museum, Wigan Pier and making good use of the museum loan service. Areas for development include building up resources, raising the profile of history and celebrating a Humanities Week.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. There have been a number of changes since the last inspection, both to the staff, the curriculum, and to the school's resources. There is a new-to-the-school coordinator, in post for three weeks prior to the inspection, who is developing her understanding of

the subject in the school, and getting to know what systems and equipment are available. Further development of the subject is a current priority in the school improvement plan, but this has been delayed, pending the arrival the coordinator.

114. The last report found that found that standards of attainment met national expectations at seven and 11, and that progress was satisfactory through the school. However, 11-year-olds were not always clear about such as actions as the 'save' function within 'file'. Some teachers did not teach the pupils to be responsible for their own work, opening and closing files for them.
115. The school has only very recently received its updated hardware in the form of new notebook computers to supplement its existing stock. A technician shared between local schools is currently setting these up for the school's use. Staff are undergoing training in the use of this new equipment, and the signs are encouraging that the subject is poised to spring forward from a period of under-development. This has led to standards of attainment being below average at seven and 11, but as the staff implement what they are learning from the course, the potential for faster progress in learning for the pupils is good.
116. Little direct teaching was observed, but a lesson for Year 2 pupils helped them to make satisfactory progress in giving instructions to a floor robot to move in particular directions, for a variety of distances in a 'course' set by the teacher on the classroom floor. This was effective in teaching the pupils the logical process of a set of instructions to control an electronic machine. However, the pupils were confused by a paper task to plot pathways, and needed further practical support to understand this more abstract work.
117. There is evidence that pupils learn to write and edit their work using word-processing packages, and prepare desk-top publishing presentations using text and imported images. Across the school, pupils access information from CD-ROM and the Internet, for which there is good safety protection against inappropriate subject matter. They also enter data from experiments in science, as Year 6 were observed doing during experiments on the rates of dissolving of sugars.
118. Control technology is being developed slowly, but there is as yet little sensing equipment to promote pupils' monitoring of such things as indoor and outdoor temperatures.
119. From discussion with the headteacher and the new subject leader, it is clear that the school's revised action plan and staff training should lead to considerable improvements in the rate of pupils' progress, the full coverage of the subject, and standards of attainment.

MUSIC

120. Standards in music for seven year olds and 11 year olds are broadly in line with expected levels but for some children's progress in some aspects of music are better than in others especially in Key Stage 2. During the inspection most music observed was in large groups at Key Stage 1 with the main emphasis being on singing. In KS2 the music inspected was mostly in specialist instrumental tuition groups, an upper KS2 choir group and a short lesson in each key stage.
121. Seven-year olds demonstrate good skills in singing. They have a repertoire of songs including hymns. They learn quickly and they respond well to the sensitive guitar playing of the classroom assistant, who is a skilled musician. They are able to

modulate their voices singing quietly and with gusto according to the mood of the music. They have a good sense of rhythm and can clap in time to songs sung and played. The development of singing across the key stage is well planned and this results in the pupils making good progress. In other musical activities pupils make satisfactory progress in identifying long and short notes in taped music and in clapping name patterns.

122. A majority of 11 year olds who are chosen for the school choir are very skilled in singing within a large group. They listen and perform well with great enjoyment. Their performance is well above average in terms of diction, posture, pitch and rhythm. They display a sensitive feeling for songs being sung. They learn new songs quickly were able to sing a new song in four parts very well by the end of the session observed. Other 11-year-olds develop skills in playing instruments and are able to compose rhythmic pieces for unturned percussion using word symbols with their attainment being in line with expected levels for their age across all elements of music Pupils who receive specialist instrumental teaching make very good progress and attain levels, which are above those expected. They are able to read musical notation and play a range of simple tunes. There is limited evidence of systematic progress for all children within the key stage across all aspects of music. Some pupils in the upper end of the school do not have equal access to all aspects of performance and composition. All the pupils are auditioned to sing in the choir, and those not chosen have a music lesson taught by one of the Year 6 teachers whilst the choir practise with a specialist teacher from the local authority music service.
123. Teaching and learning for Years 1 and 2 is mainly good but has some weak features. Sensitive playing and enthusiastic singing by all staff provide good examples for the pupils who respond well. Pupils are made aware from an early age of the importance of breathing and posture, which has an impact on the children's performance. The pupils' behaviour was well managed by their complete involvement in singing and by having several adults who take an active part in the singing. In another lesson the children were not sufficiently challenged in a listening activity and the restlessness of some children interrupted the learning and affected the progress made. The teaching and learning for Years 3 to 6 is at least good and sometimes very good. Very competent highly skilled specialist teaching was observed where a good range of teaching skills were used to build well on the pupil's previous learning. These teachers expected a lot of the pupils in singing and playing and the pupils responded and rose to their expectations. Accompaniments were a little loud at times, which sometimes overshadowed the children's singing.
124. Music has changed little since the last inspection either in the range of provision or quality. The commercial scheme of work is now being taught by all teachers and although it provides a good basis for planing for non specialists its effectiveness is in need of review in relation to the latest National Curriculum subject guidance. The current organisation of pupils' access to musical activities prevents some pupils from taking part in the broader range of musical activities. The standards and quality of teaching and learning in music have not been recently monitored. The choice of instruments is limited especially in relation to those that are representative of differing cultural traditions. The provision for extra curricular music and the contribution of music to the life and ethos of the school are good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. At the last inspection, standards of attainment and progress were satisfactory, and teaching was judged to be good. This remains the case, and progress in learning during lessons was good because the teaching was enthusiastic and skilled, based in good knowledge and understanding of the subject. All areas of the subject curriculum are covered, and pupils achieve national standards in swimming. Good use is made of the school's access to good indoor accommodation, including the use of the connected parish hall, and the good playgrounds and grassed field.
126. Year 2 pupils moved around the hall safely and with confidence and imagination during a dance lesson. This was in response to the teacher's sensitive handling of the different elements, prompting them to adapt their movements to the sounds of the wind, such as by swirling, swooping and spinning singly or with a partner. She had high expectations of the pupils' interpretation of the movements, and encourage them to evaluate their own and other pupils' responses in order to identify effective activities, and improve their work. Because the teacher has a good working relationship with the pupils they respond with good control, good behaviour and well thought out coordination.
127. Year 6 pupils benefit from having teachers who are well qualified in teaching football and netball skills. This led to very good technique practices in both sports for mixed groups of boys and girls, supported by the high standards set by the staff. A number of pupils achieve high standards in these aspects, although attainment overall is as expected for the age. Year 4 and 5 pupils also work with coaches from Oldham Athletic Football Club, and here the range of practices and skills training helps both girls and boys make good progress. Boys generally show better football skills than girls, and girls generally excel in netball skills.
128. The coordinator has recently taken on other duties in the school, but she has ensured that the subject is covered well. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities support the work, including some shared with parent volunteers, and the school competes successfully against other schools in a variety of team games. Fifty pupils regularly stay behind for football coaching, for example. The older pupils also take part in an active residential experience, where they encounter a range of outdoor pursuits. The staff have undertaken training recently in the teaching of a number of aspects of the subject, and the school is well-equipped. There are also links with Oldham Rugby League Club.