

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWER KERSAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105886

Headteacher: Mrs A M Shanley

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 3 April 2003

Inspection number: 246534

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Aidan's Grove Salford Manchester
Postcode:	M7 3TN
Telephone number:	0161 792 2726
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor P Connor
Date of previous inspection:	12 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Registered inspector	<p>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>School's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13459	Mrs E Mills	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
22482	Mr B Potter	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
20038	Mr G B Watson	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>Music</p>	

23698	Mrs J Schaffer	Team inspector	English History Religious Education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	
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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lower Kersal Primary School is about the same size as most schools, having 203 pupils on roll plus 22 children in the Nursery. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups but they all require support because they are learning through English as an additional language. Thirty-three pupils (18 per cent) have special educational needs, which is above average. The majority of these pupils have a specific learning difficulty. No pupils have a formal Statement of Need. Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The area served by the school is socially and economically very disadvantaged. This is recognised nationally and the school benefits from belonging to an Education Action Zone and a New Deals for Communities initiative.¹

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which enables pupils to overcome many barriers and grow in maturity. From a very low starting point, achievement is good although current standards are below average in English and mathematics in Year 6. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning and pupils try hard in lessons. Leadership and management are strong and the school has a clear plan of action for the future. Academic progress is carefully balanced with providing a secure and happy community in which all are included. This represents good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are above average in Year 6 and pupils enjoy the practical aspects of the subject.
- Teaching is good and effectively boosts learning and achievement.
- Leadership from the headteacher, key staff and governors is good and all work together well as a team.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this leads to a happy school.
- The school gives great attention to developing pupils' personal and social skills and as a result relationships are very good and pupils care for each other.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics could be further improved.
- Accommodation, especially the dining room and the corridors, which are in poor condition.
- Attendance, which is below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in January 1998. On appointment the headteacher recognised the need to look closely at standards. Many initiatives have been put in place to raise standards. These are now starting to have a positive effect although standards remain below average in English and mathematics in Year 6. The school recognises the issue from the last inspection to raise standards in English is an on-going areas for development. Improvement in science has been very good. In response to better teaching and more detailed planning, standards are now above average in Year 6. Investment in resources and teacher training in information and communication technology has paid off and pupils now reach the level expected for their age. Other issues raised in the previous inspection have all received attention. Assessment information is used effectively to track pupils' progress and tasks are more closely matched to pupils' ability. In literacy and

¹ These initiatives provide support for schools to drive up standards by working together with other schools, the local education authority and business and community organisations.

numeracy, teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn. This good practice is not always followed in other subjects. Nevertheless, in response to close monitoring, teaching has improved and more very good teaching was seen during this inspection than in the last.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	E	E	B
Mathematics	E*	E	E*	E
Science	E*	C	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

These results show that the school did not do very well overall compared with the national average, and results in mathematics were in the lowest 5 per cent in the country. However, compared with similar schools, the school is doing well in English and very well in science where standards were also above the national average. This was achieved despite the many difficulties the school faces, including the high number of pupils with special educational needs. In both subjects, a high number of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and this raised the overall performance of the school. This was not the case in mathematics, and pupils as a whole did not make as much progress as they should have. Very few reached high standards and this held down the school's results. Despite the low results in mathematics, the strengths in the other subjects meant that the school's rate of improvement was better than the national trend. This was recognised nationally and the school received an Achievement Award. Current standards in Year 6 show a slight improvement on the most recent test results, although they remain below average in English and mathematics. Considering that nearly half of the pupils in the present Year 6 are identified as having special educational needs and attained well below average in their tests at age seven, their achievement in the intervening years has been good. Because of the focus on practical activities standards in science are much better than in the other subjects and are above average. This represents very good achievement for many, especially those who are working at levels higher than expected for their age. Targets in literacy and numeracy are challenging and, in response to good teaching, the school is close to achieving them.

National test results in 2002 at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and mathematics but above average in writing. Compared with similar schools, a much better picture emerges and the results were well above average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were below average. In response to improved planning, more support in lessons and better assessment, results in all subjects improved last year. This has been further built on this year so that current standards are average. From a below average starting point in Year 1, this reflects good achievement for many pupils.

Children in the Nursery and Reception class enjoy school and make good progress. They reach the level expected for their age in their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. They do not reach this level in their literacy and numeracy skills. From a very low starting point, the achievement of many is good, although the higher attaining children could be more challenged and make better progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning through English as an additional language make good progress. This is because staff offer good support so that their needs are fully met.

Throughout the school standards in information and communication technology and all other subjects are wholly satisfactory. In Year 2, standards are above average in history because of the extensive range of planned experiences.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being part of this community. They work hard in lessons and complete work neatly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is generally good in lessons but pupils' attention wanes quickly if teaching does not hold their interest. Behaviour in the playground is good because of the imaginative range of resources and interaction with adults. In assemblies, pupils listen with rapt attention.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good and many firm friendships are established. Pupils appreciate the trust they are given to carry out duties around the school. Membership of the School Council is taken very seriously.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. At the time of the inspection, the school had two temporary teachers because of long term absence through ill health. A review of pupils' work suggests teaching is usually better than that seen during the inspection. A small amount of teaching seen was unsatisfactory and this was linked to lack of subject knowledge, low expectations and management of pupils not being as firm as usually seen in the school. The best teaching seen was in Years 2, 5 and 6 where expectations are higher, the pace brisker and this boosts pupils' achievement.

Teaching in the Nursery and Reception class is good overall. Children enjoy coming to school because of the stimulating activities planned for them that make learning exciting. Higher attaining children are not always given hard enough work in writing and numeracy, and this does not encourage effective learning.

The overall teaching of English and mathematics is good and contributes to the good progress pupils make. Pupils learn their letters and sounds well because they are taught through interesting games activities. Writing is promoted in other subjects but opportunities to write in a range of styles and at length are not carefully planned. The openings of numeracy lessons are lively and enhance pupils' problem solving skills. Occasionally, teachers miss the chance to extend learning by asking pupils to explain the methods they use in their calculations.

Teachers fully meet the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language. Tasks are set to suit their needs and sensitive support enables these pupils to be fully involved in lessons.

A strength in most lessons is the warm and caring relationships and positive management of pupils. As a result, pupils learn in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers' good knowledge means they are confident in advising pupils as they work. Pupils learn well in science because teachers are

enthusiastic and specific in their teaching. In most lessons pupils work hard and presentation is good because they know teachers value their efforts and are concerned about the progress they are making. Teachers mark work regularly but do not always refer to pupils' targets or monitor progress towards them. As a result, pupils are not always clear how to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The focus on learning through practical experiences enhances learning. Visits, visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities stimulate interest and accelerate learning. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual education plans are good and provide challenging targets. These plans include detailed information to improve literacy but this is not available for pupils with difficulties in numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers are aware of the needs of these pupils and check that work suits their ability and interests. When required additional advice is sought to check on the pupils' specific language requirements.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good. Spiritual development is very good and is evident in the focus on valuing all and building up self-esteem. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Teachers set clear moral standards and organise many opportunities to enhance social skills. Teachers plan good experiences to extend pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff provide a very good level of care and know and guide their pupils sensitively. Good assessment systems are yielding information which the school is using to monitor performance and track pupils' progress.

The school tries hard to work in close partnership with parents but few parents are willing to respond. This can be seen in the number of parents who do not fulfil their duty to ensure their children attend school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The commitment of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff provides a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all who work in it. It has enabled the school to overcome some difficult times.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Committees deal efficiently with school matters and ensure all statutory duties are met. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carefully analyses its performance through detailed review of the data about pupils' progress, and comparative information about the school's performance in national tests.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Governors have very good systems to oversee the budget and apply the principles of best value. Money is spent wisely in the best

	interest of the pupils and standards achieved.
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There is a good number of teachers and trained support staff to meet the needs of the school. Resources are adequate although the stock of library books needs replenishing. The library is under-used for independent research. The accommodation has several weaknesses. The dining room is totally inadequate, and corridors are very cold and suffer from leaking roofs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard and behaviour is good. • The good teaching ensures their children make good progress. • Their children like school and it helps them become mature. • They feel welcome in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The condition of the dining room. • A few parents consider the system to allow pupils to opt to do homework is unsatisfactory.

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views. The school works closely with parents, who have confidence in the education their children receive. The inspectors agree the dining room is in poor condition. The amount of homework that pupils are offered is satisfactory, but some do not take it even though parents have requested it.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start in the Nursery, most show knowledge, skill and understanding well below that expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage² in all areas of learning and meet the level expected for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. On entry to the Nursery, children's numeracy and literacy skills are especially low and although progress is good, children do not reach the early learning goal³ in these areas of learning. Higher attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged to apply their skills and this does not encourage effective learning. The emphasis on developing children's social and emotional skills is good and enables the children to settle happily in school and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
2. The school has been working hard to improve standards and help pupils to overcome their low level of attainment as they start school. In the infants positive changes include:
 - more classroom assistants are available to support in class and this enables pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language to make good progress;
 - higher attaining pupils are being spotted earlier and given more challenging work in Year 2;
 - the structure of literacy and numeracy lessons has been improved;
 - teachers are more confident because of extra training;
 - more revision for pupils in mathematics enhances knowledge of number patterns and multiplication tables;
 - literacy and numeracy skills are promoted in other subjects.
3. Inspection evidence shows the success of these initiatives and standards in Year 2 are in line with the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Most are reaching the level expected for their age and an increasing number are doing better than expected. This represents good achievement for many pupils. Teaching is best in Year 2 and the rate of learning accelerates in this year.
4. Standards in Year 2 are better than the results of the 2002 national tests in reading and mathematics, which were well below the national average. Too many pupils did not reach the level expected for their age and few reached high standards. This was not the case in writing, where results were above the national average because a quarter of pupils reached high standards. Compared with schools with a similar intake, a more favourable picture emerges. Standards were above average in reading and average in mathematics. Pupils did very well in writing and standards

² Foundation Stage – this begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the Reception year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative and physical development.

³ Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception year.

were well above the average for similar schools. In the teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science, standards were below average and few pupils were judged to be doing better than expected. Test results suggest girls are doing much better than boys. Through close analysis of data the school spotted this concern and checked that resources appeal to boys as well as girls. There was no significant difference noted during the inspection. Since the last inspection, standards have fluctuated but improved in 2002 and this has been built on in the current year.

5. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are aware that standards in Year 6 are low compared with the national average and have put in place many initiatives to boost standards in Years 3 to 6. These include:
 - more rigorous assessment systems so teachers have a clearer picture of pupils' current needs;
 - teaching pupils in groups according to their ability in Years 5 and 6 making it easier to match work to the pupils' ability;
 - booster classes to help those lagging behind the level expected;
 - accelerating the learning of the higher attaining pupils (the school does not currently identify any pupils as especially gifted academically but these sessions ensure the needs of the higher attaining pupils are met);
 - more adult help in lessons and during the national tests;
 - the use of information and communication technology to motivate pupils;
 - dove-tailing mathematics and science to encourage pupils in the skills of investigation and finding out for themselves.

6. These changes have not been in place long enough to have a significant effect on current standards in Year 6. However, they are starting to reap benefits, and standards seen in Year 5 show the school is rapidly closing the gap to reach the level expected for this age range.

7. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Few read for pleasure and are not always gaining full understanding from what they read. Handwriting is not as neat as it could be and pupils find it difficult to develop their ideas in writing. Pupils lack confidence in explaining their calculations in mathematics. Standards in science are so much better because pupils' literacy skills are not hampering progress and also the focus on learning through practical activities encourages more effective learning. This group of pupils did not have a good start to their education, with weaker teaching that has now been resolved. Their results in national tests at the age of seven were well below average though the achievement of many in the intervening years has been good and in science it has been very good. Almost half of these pupils are identified as having special educational needs and with effective support from classroom assistants these pupils are achieving well because of the detailed individual educational plans they have been given. However, the lack of numeracy targets in these plans is not helping these pupils to achieve as well as they could in mathematics. Very few pupils for whom English is an additional language need extra help, but staff check that tasks suit their needs and they fully understand what they have to do. As a result, they make good progress.

8. Current standards in Year 6 show a slight improvement on the results of national tests in 2002. In English and mathematics, the test results were well below the national average and those in mathematics fell into the lowest five per cent in the country. The school links the lack of improvement in test results in mathematics to a

weak assessment system which failed to provide teachers with a real picture of pupils' progress. This provides an explanation for the apparent underachievement of both the higher and lower attaining pupils. The school now has good assessment systems and uses the information gained effectively to identify pupils who will benefit from extra support. For example, the highest attaining pupils attended extra sessions in English, mathematics and science. This intervention was successful in English, where a quarter of pupils reached high standards. Compared with similar schools, these pupils performed well, reaching above average standards. The booster classes were less effective in mathematics and only 4 per cent exceeded the level expected for their age, which was well below average and held down the school's overall performance. These pupils had not made enough progress and this was clear in the comparison with schools with a similar intake, which was well below average. Test results in science showed a very positive response to the additional sessions provided for the higher attaining pupils and an impressive 52 per cent of pupils reached high standards. Consequently, overall school performance was above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. This high standard in science improved the school's overall trend in results, which was above the national trend, and the school received an Achievement Award for improvement in national tests.

9. Current targets reflect the level of ability of the current Year 6 and are suitably challenging. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is consistently good and the school is likely to achieve its targets.
10. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in resources and teachers' expertise in information and communication technology. Standards are now in line with the level expected for the pupils' ages. Overall achievement is good.
11. Standards of attainment are typical for this age in all other subjects. They are good in history in Year 2 because of the amount of work taught and enthusiastic teaching which has nurtured a real interest in the past. The school also provides well for any pupils identified as especially talented in sport or creative subjects by linking them with local clubs so that they can extend their skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The school has maintained the strengths in pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships identified at the time of the last inspection. This has a significant and positive effect on their learning. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoy coming to school and that pupils of all ages behave well. This reflects the school's strong ethos of care and concern for one another and the very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
13. In lessons, pupils work hard and listen well to their teachers and to each other. Teachers have high expectations of conduct in class and pupils respond well to this by concentrating hard and behaving well. Pupils settle quickly to their tasks. They are confident in contributing to class discussions and offer each other mutual support when working in small groups. During the inspection, behaviour in class very rarely fell below that which is expected and this was in one lesson when teaching was unsatisfactory and the teacher was unable to hold the interest of the class. Even the youngest children in Nursery quickly adapt to school routines and settle happily into school. Pupils of all ages file in and out of assemblies in an orderly manner and show a high degree of thoughtfulness for others. They give close attention to visiting

speakers and behaviour observed was exemplary. The consistently courteous conduct between adults and towards pupils develops similar responses between the pupils themselves.

14. Around school at playtimes and lunchtimes behaviour is also good. Pupils, parents and midday supervisors comment that there are few instances of bullying or unkindness and that when they do occur they are dealt with effectively by staff. Racist comments are extremely rare. Parents are fully involved when pupils' behaviour becomes a cause for concern and, although there have been several short exclusions in the last year, instances of very poor behaviour are not common.
15. The school continues to provide many opportunities for pupils' personal development and their response to these is very positive. Circle Time⁴ is a regular feature on the timetable and allows pupils to share their concerns with their peers. Teachers give pupils responsibility for organising equipment and helping to supervise younger children. Pupils from Year 2 onwards are involved in the School Council, canvassing the views and concerns of classmates and presenting these to staff. Pupils in Year 3 help by setting out resources in the Nursery and others water plants. Older pupils act as monitors, and even in Nursery, children are nominated as 'leader' for the day. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities very seriously and carry them out diligently. In a few lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, such as going to the library to research for facts, and this limits their initiative in class. Staff are very conscious of the need to raise the self-esteem of many of their pupils and they do this well. Pupils take a pride in their work, in their school and in their community. This was evident in an assembly where pupils sang enthusiastically the *Community Song* and a real sense of belonging was experienced. Relationships are very good throughout the school and this is reflected in the way boys and girls work and socialise together and pupils from different age groups get on well. The few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are fully included in lessons and at playtime.
16. Attendance rates at the school are below those achieved nationally and the school is working very hard to improve these by monitoring the reasons for absence, following up unexplained absence and reminding parents of the need for good attendance. Figures for the current year show a slight improvement although a few parents are not fulfilling their statutory duty to ensure their children attend school. Punctuality remains a problem for some families. The school also regards tackling this as a priority and records each instance of lateness, contacting parents where necessary.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is good and this leads to effective learning. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been maintained and the introduction of new planning guidelines and better assessment has led to improvements in teaching and more very good teaching was seen. In the 52 lessons seen, teaching was very good in eight and good in 23 lessons. Teaching was satisfactory in 17 lessons and in three lessons teaching was less than satisfactory. It must be taken into consideration that, during the inspection, two temporary teachers were in place because of the long-term absence of teachers through ill health. This was a contributory factor to the less effective teaching because the temporary staff

⁴ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and so pupils feel confident to talk.

were unsure about the needs of the pupils and their management was not as effective as seen in the rest of the school. A review of pupils' work suggests teaching is usually better than observed during the inspection. The best teaching was in Years 2, 5 and 6 where the pace of lessons is brisker. As a result, learning is good in these classes and is successful in accelerating pupils' progress.

18. The strengths in teaching and learning are:

- teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach;
- the thorough teaching of basic numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills;
- the variety of methods teachers use to make lessons interesting;
- the use of support staff, especially to provide help for pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language;
- the management of pupils.

19. Areas for development in teaching are:

- teachers' expectations are not always high enough;
- marking of work and checking pupils know how to improve;
- consistency in the amount of work set to be done at home.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage

20. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is best in the Reception class where the pace of learning is brisker and lessons are more exciting. A strength in both classes is the use of support staff who have a clear role with a good understanding of the needs of this age group. All staff encourage independence and know when a child needs to try and complete a task unaided and when to step in with extra help. The warm relationships lead to a friendly and caring atmosphere and children come happily to school. The focus on teaching through practical activities is especially relevant to these children, and most sustain attention throughout the day. This is very effective in teaching children about the world in which they live. Teachers organise visits and visitors and a stimulating range of experiences which capture children's interest and make lessons great fun. However, expectations of numeracy and writing are not high enough for higher attaining children. Children are not always encouraged to use their number skills or try writing unaided, and they rely too much on adult support. When letters and sounds are taught, this is effective through games and practical tasks so children learn the focus letter and sound for the week. However, this is not a regular feature of the day and some children need more experience to help them to recall their letters and sounds. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson of physical education because the children were inactive for long spells of time and the tasks did not encourage creativity.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6

21. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This has improved standards especially in science and information and communication technology, and teaching observed was good or better in both of these subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are firmly established and leading to more active lessons and improved teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. These are now taught well and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The openings to numeracy lessons are lively and increase pupils' ability to solve problems. The best

teachers are good at drawing from pupils their method of calculations but this is not always the case and an opportunity is missed for pupils to learn from each other. In Years 1 and 2, practical activities are used effectively to teach pupils their letters and sounds. Teachers effectively promote these skills in other subjects and this enables pupils to practise their skills. This has more effect on progress in reading than writing. Although teachers provide opportunities for writing, they do not always plan for pupils to write at length or in a variety of styles. Numeracy skills are used effectively to support learning in science, geography, design and technology and in information and communication technology when pupils learn how to use spread sheets.

22. Planning of lessons is good in English and mathematics and teachers make it clear what pupils are to learn in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers share this with pupils so that they know the purpose of their tasks. This is not always the case in other subjects because planning is brief and it is not always clear what the focus of the lesson is. This was the case in the unsatisfactory geography lesson seen in the infants, when the task was inappropriate to the pupils' experiences and did not follow the school's planning guidelines. A strength in planning is the involvement of support staff. They play a significant role in lessons by supporting pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language. Additional sessions on the computers enhance the learning of these pupils. This effective planning ensures that their needs are fully met.
23. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work. This leads to neat presentation and good behaviour. However, teachers do not always challenge pupils by providing tasks to extend their learning. In some lessons, too much support is provided and pupils rely too heavily on this and they are not sufficiently encouraged to work unaided. This is especially evident in Years 1 and 3 when the pace of learning is not brisk enough and tasks are sometimes dull so pupils are not as eager to learn as in other years. In Years 5 and 6, the grouping of pupils by ability in English, mathematics and science is effective in enabling teachers to plan work that closely matches pupils' ability. The additional science lessons for higher attaining pupils are a major reason for the high standards reached.
24. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers make learning enjoyable by including a variety of activities. These include discussion, working in a group or with a partner and the use of different resources. This can be seen in music lessons when pupils enjoy singing, playing instruments and listening to music. In an effective mathematics lesson in Year 5, the conclusion included a competition, which led to much excitement, and pupils were eager to get their answers correct and score points. They were sad when the lesson had to finish. The focus on discussion and collaboration is effective in making up for the weak speaking and social skills that many have when they start school. Pupils enjoy their sessions in the information and communication technology suite because the good level of resources means that all get ample time using the computers. In other lessons, computers are not used as much as they could be to promote learning.
25. As at the time of the last inspection, the management of pupils is very good. Teachers of the older pupils are particularly skilful in gaining their respect, and consequently have few problems in catching and keeping their attention. Only in one lesson in the juniors did the teacher have to work hard to quieten the pupils down and the approach to settling the class did not follow the school's agreed policy for dealing with pupils' behaviour.

26. The marking of pupils' work is up-to-date and often includes positive comments to encourage them. Occasionally, these comments are too positive and give pupils a false impression about the standard of their work. The school has set targets for the pupils for improvement in literacy and numeracy but these are not always sufficiently understood by pupils. The targets are also not as effective as they could be because teachers do not give pupils reminders of what they should do to achieve them.
27. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In Years 1 to 4, teachers are guided by good plans to meet the specific needs of these pupils in literacy lessons. Individual plans do not include numeracy targets and so teachers have less guidance when planning and tracking progress of these pupils in numeracy lessons. However, the school's assessment procedures provide sufficient information for teachers to plan work which is suitably adapted to support their learning. Classroom assistants and teachers work together closely so that pupils' individual needs are well understood. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6 are taught English and mathematics by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the learning mentor. Pupils respond very well to these sessions because there is a good variety in the activities provided and relationships are very good. For example, a literacy lesson started with a 'brain gym' activity that gave pupils the opportunity to be active but was specially devised to improve their concentration. Very good strategies are used to raise these pupils' self-esteem. On occasions, however, work consolidates knowledge and skills rather than providing new learning. For example, practising handwriting when the pupils already have good pencil control.
28. During the inspection, teachers made little reference to homework. The school has conducted a survey and the majority of parents were not in favour of homework. However, as the system stands, the onus to take homework is very much on the pupils even when parents have expressed a desire for their child to be given work to complete at home. Overall the amount of work set is satisfactory but the older pupils are not being fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

29. The curriculum is good. It provides full coverage of the National Curriculum and meets the needs of all its pupils, including the high proportion of children and pupils with special educational needs. The small number of pupils learning through English as an additional language are well integrated into the school. The school has resolved the weaknesses identified in the last inspection and now fully complies with all statutory requirements. Provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
30. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Planning has improved because of the guidance given by the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and the adoption of national guidelines in other subjects to provide better guidance for teachers. This has improved the continuity of learning especially in science and information and communication technology.
31. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is carefully planned to take account of the requirements of the recommended areas of learning. The focus is on learning through practical experiences and this is very relevant for the children's needs and maintains their enthusiasm. Significant attention is given to

promoting children's personal and social development and this enables them to settle happily into school life. As children move into the Reception class, more time is allocated to numeracy and listening skills and this prepares them well for the full literacy and numeracy lessons when they move into Year 1. The improved outdoor facilities have had a positive effect on the variety of experiences offered to the children.

32. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. Good teaching, with the effective use of practical activities and a focus on speaking and listening, are having a positive effect upon pupils' learning. The grouping of pupils of similar ability together in Years 5 and 6 enables teaching to be tightly focused and so meet more closely the needs of the pupils. An additional benefit comes from smaller numbers of pupils which, with the provision of a classroom assistant, enables pupils to be taught in small groups. By such measures, the school is raising standards in literacy and numeracy.
33. Teachers provide some satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use and further develop skills in literacy and numeracy. However, teachers do not always plan to cover a variety of writing or opportunities to write a length in other subjects. A more positive feature is the promotion of speaking and listening skills. For example, within a science lesson in Year 5 and 6, pupils grew in confidence using specialist scientific language because of the teacher's expertise in the subject. In the same lesson there were examples of very good use of mathematics when pupils were required to read the measurements on a thermometer. The period of inspection did not provide sufficient evidence to indicate the regular use of the computer in the classroom to support learning. However, teachers use their lessons in the computer suite well to extend learning in other subjects and this increases the relevance of these sessions for the pupils.
34. High priority is given to ensuring pupils of all abilities have equal access and are included in all aspects of curriculum and school life. A strong feature is the support of well trained classroom assistants who enable pupils to achieve as well as they can. Occasionally, these assistants provide too much support and this restricts pupils' confidence to work unaided. At times, the efforts of the school to provide extra help for an individual or group of pupils by withdrawal for reading with an adult can mean they miss out on other aspects of the curriculum. The school provides sessions to accelerate the learning of higher attaining pupils but does not identify any academically gifted pupils. There is more recognition of pupils with special talents for sport and creative activities. Staff involved in the Education Action Zone offer help and put pupils' names forward to the local football club. The arts co-ordinator from the action zone also visits the school to develop drama, and pupils from the school have performed at the local theatres. Many grow in confidence from attending a Saturday drama club.
35. The provision and support for those pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to keep pace with the progress of their peers. Their individual education plans are drawn up in consultation with parents and learning support assistants. These plans are detailed and of good quality. Teachers and support workers implement these plans effectively. Although the school has given consideration to the inclusion of some targets for numeracy in these plans, this has not been done. This factor is not helping the school in its endeavour to raise standards in mathematics. The learning mentor is very effective in developing pupils' social skills and raising their self-esteem. Specialist staff from the local authority

provide appropriate programmes of work for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Computer programs are used effectively to improve pupils' skills in mathematical calculations. This support is usually in literacy or numeracy lessons so that pupils do not miss these lessons and there is very good emphasis on ensuring that all pupils are included in the school's provision.

36. The promotion of personal, social and health education receives high priority in the school and is very relevant for the needs of the pupils. Staff have been trained and are guided by a detailed scheme of work. The subject co-ordinator offers good leadership and as a result the school is now involved in the Healthy Schools' Project. Personal and social education is promoted in many subjects, such as science, physical education and religious education. There are relevant policies for drug awareness and sex education and they have been recently revised by the governing body. The school deals sensitively with these issues, enlisting the help of the school nurse and the community police. Circle Time sessions successfully promote self-esteem and contribute to the development of a sense of social justice and moral obligation. Areas of citizenship are covered through voting for representatives and participation in the school council. The learning mentor plays a very significant part in all aspects of pupils' personal development, and this results in the caring community to be found within the school.
37. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a good range of extra activities which usually take place both at lunch time and after school. These include football, netball, dance, guitar and drama, providing a good balance with which the large majority of parents are happy. There is further good enrichment to the curriculum through a programme of visits for each year group including theatre, museum and church visits. These are linked closely to the curriculum and help to make learning more relevant and exciting. This can best be illustrated by the visits to Lark Hill Place and Wigan Pier in support of the Victorian topic in history. Following these visits, pupils in Year 6 took *Life in Victorian times* as the focus for the school assembly they led. From their dramatic presentation, it was clear that the visits had made history come to life for them. Residential visits are arranged to give experience of the co-operation and tolerance needed for living together and to extend the physical education curriculum for Year 5. Visitors to the school, such as story tellers, an artist working with stained glass, and a visit of a mum with her baby for Reception children, add variety and novelty to the school day and enhance curricular opportunity and learning.
38. The school has very good links with its community and makes good use of government funding to extend them. It uses its local amenities well, for example the Community Activity Centre that is situated on the school site. The leader of the centre and the learning mentor of the school work together to enhance social opportunities and outlets for the children and parents. One leader attends physical education lessons for Year 6 and this develops the relationship between the centre and the school. Pupils are encouraged to use the facilities provided at the centre. The school has close links with the local church. The school attends for special services and the vicar leads collective worship. Local businesses are supporting the school's fund raising efforts to replace the school's dining room.
39. The school has good links with the local high school, which older pupils visit for lessons, particularly in sports and arts. This ultimately helps to ensure they have a relatively easy transition process between schools. The links with a nearby school, nationally acknowledged for its very good practice, benefit the staff through joint

training sessions and additional Government funding which comes through the other school. This, for example, funds release time for subject managers, and visiting story tellers and musicians.

40. There are very good arrangements for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement since the previous report.
41. The provision for spiritual development is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' personalities and qualities. There is a 'Special Day' programme during which a pupil in each class is celebrated. Others in the class speak and write about their positive opinions of their selected classmate and these views form part of a display. This has been seen to have a very constructive effect on pupils' self-esteem. In assemblies, pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the lives of others and the circumstances under which they lived. Collective worship presents celebrations and stories from the Christian year in a very accessible way, relating the emotions of events such as the Last Supper to their own lives. Pupils are given opportunities to share their feelings with others. This can be illustrated by the sensitive pieces reflecting on the feeling of loneliness written by pupils in Year 2. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities and support in this area of their personal development. Teachers make effective use of the school gardens to stimulate pupils' interest in the natural world. For example, the squirrels and their young are greeted with great excitement.
42. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. These areas of understanding are carefully planned and often link with themes in collective worship. Pupils' experiences and topics in personal, social and health education are structured in relation to their stages of maturity. As well as contributing to awareness of their individual qualities in a spiritual way, pupils learn about issues that raise questions of right and wrong and how their community functions. For example, in Year 6, pupils shared their opinions of bullying. They considered how it feels to be bullied and what action should be taken to stop it. During classroom opportunities like this, pupils not only make contributions and suggestions about the moral question surrounding the issue but in doing so, they work together very effectively as members of a group, further enhancing their individual social skills. This is often seen in other lessons. Pupils in each class negotiate a set of rules. These are displayed in many classes and are reviewed on a regular basis. Class councillors accept comments and suggestions from pupils, which can be passed on to the school council if they are thought to concern the whole school. The school council is well organised and regularly discusses moral and behavioural issues as well as day-to-day practical matters. It makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social understanding. Pupils in Year 4 have considered the importance of recycling to society and the world. Older pupils regularly take on responsibilities for younger pupils at play and as reading guides. Pupils are concerned about those less fortunate than themselves and have worked together to raise funds for both local and national charities.
43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Recently, *Countries of the Commonwealth* was the title of a whole school theme. Pupils researched information from a wide variety of sources about different member countries. They learned about traditions, food and some of their social conditions. As a culmination to their studies, each class displayed their work so that visiting pupils (who were required to carry a special passport) could learn about a wide range of cultures. In many cases, they tasted traditional food. This approach to teaching and learning of

different cultures effectively engages pupils and improves their level of understanding and knowledge. Pupils in Year 2 have been working for several weeks on a topic about children from different lands. A short discussion with them revealed that they know about the life of children in several, very diverse areas of the world. Older pupils have penpals at another school that has a high proportion of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. They and their teachers have since met their counterparts and a greater level of understanding is developing. They study the work of well-known artists as influences on their own work. Through their visits to see Lowry's work, they gained a greater understanding of life in their own community in a different era. Whilst pupils listen to music of different countries and times, few are able to discuss it. The school library contains too few books celebrating different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The dedication of staff in their concern for the welfare and support of pupils is very strong. They are aware of the needs and personal circumstances of pupils and place an emphasis on the development of social skills. This has a positive effect on their learning. More formal procedures for recording pupils' personal development have been introduced and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
45. The school has effective procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils. Regular checks of the building are carried out and safe practices are observed during lessons. There is good involvement of the governing body in health and safety matters and the site supervisor provides good support. The school is trying hard to bring about improvements to the school building, dining facilities and heating system. Risk assessments for the school and for out of school visits are in place and procedures for dealing with accidents are good. Child protection issues are well defined and effective. Staff with responsibility for child protection issues are experienced and follow local guidelines carefully.
46. Much work is undertaken in building the self-esteem of pupils and in giving them confidence. Pupils are given the opportunity to voice their concerns and are encouraged to discuss their qualities and what they do well. There are very good systems in place to ensure that pupils have access to support for personal and academic problems. The headteacher has a pivotal role in this and all staff are caring and genuinely concerned about pupils' well-being. They have established very good relationships with pupils, who feel that they are valued as individuals. The learning mentor has established very good links with families and works closely with pupils and parents where it is felt that extra support is required, whatever the reason. This contributes very well to the support available to pupils and helps to ensure that any concerns are voiced and dealt with. During the inspection, staff were seen to deal sensitively when pupils were unwell or upset.
47. Measures are in place which are very effective in encouraging, praising and rewarding good behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and any instances of unacceptable behaviour are recorded, extra support given and parents involved if necessary. Pupils are made aware of the consequences of their actions and encouraged to apologise if they have hurt or upset anyone. The reward system is clearly understood and appreciated by pupils and parents.
48. The school has rigorous measures to encourage and reward good attendance and to ensure that any absence is explained although these are not yet fully effective and attendance rates remain well below those achieved nationally. Detailed records are

kept and parents are contacted when attendance is poor or unexplained. The school has good support from the educational welfare service. Parents are regularly reminded of the need for good attendance and punctuality but the success of the school's measures is dependent on the support of all parents.

49. The school has made good improvement in its use of information from annual tests and assessments since the previous inspection. This has had a significant effect on the improvement in standards now being seen in the school because teachers are more aware of the needs of their pupils. There are now good systems for assessing pupils' academic progress. These include a series of regular tests and assessment tasks carried out at the end of each term and at the end of the year to check on pupils' progress in the National Curriculum. The school also carries out an assessment as children start in the Nursery and uses this as a starting point to track pupils' progress. The results of all tests are recorded on a computer program giving a clear term by term overview of pupils' progress each year. The school makes good use of this information to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is spotted and to determine how to group the pupils and so make the best use of staff. For example, in 2002 this tracking of pupils' achievements showed that a number of pupils in Year 6 were only a small way off attaining the higher level in English, science and mathematics and so classes were organised to boost the attainment of this group of pupils. This led to higher test results in English and science although it did not work as well in mathematics. Also, when the tracking shows that pupils are lagging behind the level expected for their age additional sessions have been effective in helping them to catch up with their peers.
50. The school is in the process of changing its systems for recording assessments of pupils' understanding of work at the end of a week or when a topic or block of work is finished in English, mathematics and science. Currently this information is recorded on a great many tick sheets and as such is cumbersome and time consuming. The new procedures, which are in the process of introduction, are designed to give more concise information and to cut down on unnecessary work. In English, these will usefully contain a piece of written work each half term that has been marked against National Curriculum levels. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, the school is assessing pupils' work by taking a sample of work from a pupil whose work is representative of others in their group. This is a satisfactory method but could mean that some pupils are wrongly assessed if their work differs greatly from that of others in their group. There are weaknesses in the recording the progress pupils make when they read in a group in literacy lessons. This is done well in some classes, with detailed comments kept on pupils' progress, but not in others. Without this record, it is all too easy for teachers to forget pupils' achievements from the previous week.
51. The school makes good use of the information gained from assessment to monitor individual progress. The end of term targets teachers set for the forthcoming term in English illustrate this. So that pupils share these targets, they are attached to the front of their English books. They are a useful guide for teachers but, although they are written in simple language that pupils can understand, there are too many targets and they are too broad for pupils to recognise when they have been achieved. They use phrases that are hard to quantify such as *I will try to....* or *I will use interesting words in my writing*. Consequently, they do not represent a good method of helping pupils understand how much progress they have made. Additionally, teachers do not always mark work with reference to the targets, either to congratulate the pupil on achieving the target, or to explain what more needs to be done.

52. The school's assessment system identifies those who may have special educational needs or need extra support because they are learning through English as an additional language. Class teachers' concerns are discussed with the special educational needs co-ordinator who makes further assessments if necessary. A termly review is made of pupils' progress towards targets in their individual education plans. This ensures their learning builds on prior attainment and they make good progress. The school has not introduced a system of assessing pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum in smaller steps that helps to show how these pupils are progressing towards the level expected nationally for their age. The school is not making full use of assessment information to check on the effectiveness of resources and adult support on the progress these pupils make. It has, however, identified these concerns as areas for development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Overall the school works very well to maintain the support of parents and makes very good efforts to involve them in the education of their children. Parents' views of the school are significantly more positive than at the time of the last inspection.
54. Parents who replied to the questionnaire, those who attended the meeting or were seen during inspection have no major concerns about the education of their children. They have very positive views about almost all aspects of the school's work and are confident that their children are doing well in a school which is well led. Parents feel well informed and are happy to contact the school if they have any concerns. Staff are approachable, helpful and make parents welcome. Parents are contacted quickly if the need arises. Some parents are not happy about the amount of homework provided. The school has sought the views of parents about homework in a survey in which the majority of parents expressed the view that they did not want their child to be given homework. The school has acted upon the results by introducing a system where homework is provided but is optional. Some pupils are not taking homework although parents have requested it be provided and parents are unhappy about this.
55. One area which concerns parents greatly is the accommodation and in particular the dining facilities which are in poor condition. The school is aware of this and shares the concerns of parents. Staff and parents are currently raising funds to replace the dining facilities.
56. Good relationships with parents are established early and parents of children due to begin Nursery are invited into school with their children to help them to become familiar with the school. The school continues to work hard to foster a partnership with parents as pupils move through the school. Parents are welcome in school to discuss any issues, including the progress of their children, and sufficient opportunities for consultations are provided. Annual written reports to parents are good, giving clear guidance on what pupils have done, how well they have achieved and what they can do to improve.
57. Parents of children with special educational needs are confident to approach the school to seek advice. They are informed of their children's targets at parents' evening and are invited to help with work at home. However, a significant number do not take up this offer.

58. Parents are consulted regularly about school issues in newsletters that keep them well informed about events and the topics being taught. Reading records are provided and some parents add comments, but their use by parents as a means of communication with school is very limited. The school holds workshops on a variety of subjects, including how parents can help their children in their work, but these are not supported well. However, events and assemblies involving pupils are well supported. During inspection, one assembly led by Year 6 pupils about their topic on the Victorians was well attended by parents, grandparents and other family members. Few parents provide assistance in classroom activities and, although most parents support their children's education by ensuring good attendance, a minority fail to do this and this has an adverse effect on the learning of these pupils.
59. The majority of parents support the school by working with staff to ensure that their children behave well and by instilling in them a respect for teachers and a willingness to learn. The headteacher has established good relationships with parents and the learning mentor is instrumental in maintaining contact with parents when pupils are experiencing problems.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both new to the school since the last inspection and have increased the focus on self-evaluation and collaboration. As a team, they have put many new initiatives in place to tackle the low standards in the school. Although these have not had time to influence the standards in Year 6, they are now filtering through to other classes and standards are much higher in Year 5. The headteacher is very active around school, and is working especially hard to improve relationships with parents. This has been most successful and she has earned the respect of many. Parents are unanimous in their view that the school is well led and managed.
61. The deputy headteacher leads by example, teaching successfully Year 6 pupils who are now showing a responsible attitude to their own learning and a desire to improve. In the school's determination to raise standards the headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced rigorous assessment systems. The introduction of these systems has been well managed and has led to a wealth of information being available to track pupils' progress. This ensures teachers now have a clear view of gaps that have occurred in pupils' knowledge and skills. This is becoming a major driving force in helping the school to take what actions are needed to further improve.
62. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are providing good leadership. They show what can be done to initiate change for the better. They carry out detailed audits of their subjects and draw up action plans which feed into the school's improvement plan. They monitor teachers' planning to check that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and review examples of work to monitor standards in the subjects they lead. This monitoring has led to a greater sharing of expertise but has not always identified areas requiring attention. For example, the inconsistencies in the teaching of spelling and handwriting. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology has made a significant impact on the improved standards because of the successful introduction of new planning guidelines and greatly improved resources. Subject leaders have opportunities to monitor teaching and check on standards in lessons. However, these observations

are not always spotting concerns, such as the inconsistency in guided reading sessions in the literacy hour and the failure to require pupils to explain their methods of calculating in numeracy lessons.

63. The management of special educational needs is good, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. However, in the interim years, there have been several holders of this position owing to staff changes and, as a result, good procedures have not been fully maintained. Similarly necessary changes were not implemented as well as they could have been. The current leader, having made a thorough audit of the situation at the start of this academic year, has improved procedures and channels of communication. Good plans have been put in place to improve provision and fill some of the gaps in practice. While pupils' progress is tracked well, there are no systems to evaluate the effect that different activities, programmes of work and resources for support are having on the pupils' progress.
64. Governors are effective. They have a good picture of what is going on in school because of liaison with subject leaders, attendance at school events and detailed reports from the headteacher. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they are aware of the weakness in mathematics and the action the school has taken to tackle this problem. They are very committed to improving the school's accommodation and appreciate this as having a big influence on pupils' attitudes to learning. They have consulted with the local authority to seek support for improvements both financially and in terms of expertise. The sub-committee structure is organised efficiently and ensures all statutory duties are fulfilled.
65. A positive feature of management is the evaluation of the school's performance. Close attention is given to the results of national tests, and adjustments are now made to correct areas of weakness. With the improved assessment procedures the school has a better picture of pupils' current attainment. Teachers use this well and the school can now see standards that have been stubbornly low starting to improve. For example, the move to grouping pupils according to their ability in English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 has enabled teachers to focus more closely on the needs of the pupils. The school's improvement plan is used effectively to respond to any concerns and identifies relevant priorities and targets for success. It is a well constructed document based on a three-year cycle and so is effective in leading the school over a longer time than the current year. However, it is sufficiently flexible to adapt to issues raised by the analysis of the school's performance or to take on board new initiatives. A positive feature of the plan is the on-going focus on English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and this ensures standards in these subjects are kept at the forefront of school improvement.
66. Under the new management team, performance management has been successfully introduced and this has improved the monitoring of teaching. All teachers are now observed at least three times a year and colleagues share good practice, with the result that teaching has improved. Some weaknesses during the inspection were linked to temporary staff or the absence of key staff to support new teachers and closer monitoring of their specific needs is needed. Performance management is effective in identifying staff training which is now closely linked to individual needs and the needs of the school.

67. Financial planning is very good. Governors consider their financial circumstances carefully and match them to the needs identified in the school's improvement plan. The school administrative staff provide up-to-date information about spending and the headteacher and governors keep a tight rein on spending. The school has earmarked any surplus funds to further improve the accommodation. Additional grants are spent correctly. This can be seen in the funding from the Education Action Zone which has been spent on books and computer resources. The learning mentor is having a positive effect on the pastoral care of pupils and this is good use of money from the Excellence in Cities initiative. The school has not had a financial audit since the last inspection when it was identified that areas for concern had been put right. The governors give close attention to the principle of best value. They are aware that their spending on additional support staff has had a positive effect on behaviour and learning in the school. Consultation is an important part of the management of the school. Parents and pupils are consulted through questionnaires about any major changes. Parents appreciate this involvement and it was this consultation process which led to their support in fund raising to replace the dining room. The school makes effective use of both national and local data to compare their results with other schools. This is followed up with contact with similar schools to seek advice if data suggests a strength which the school can learn from. This is evidence of the school challenging itself by seeking out support in its determination to raise standards further.
68. As at the time of the last inspection, the school is well staffed. The number of class teachers is adequate. They are well qualified and their effectiveness is boosted by a high number of teaching assistants. Governors have made the decision to employ a large number of classroom assistants with one deployed in every class. They provide good value for money especially by helping pupils with special educational needs because they offer very valuable assistance in lessons and work very well alongside teachers. On occasions too much support is offered and some pupils rely on this too much and then find it difficult to work unaided. The school has been able to maintain small class sizes. The induction procedures for new teachers are in place. The school, with its supportive community, provides well for students training to be teachers or nursery nurses.
69. The school is housed in a building which was originally two schools and has adequate space for the delivery of the curriculum. Good use is made of the accommodation and much work has been done to improve the environment by attractive displays. However, the state of the building, in particular the external corridors and dining facilities, are a major cause for concern. The corridors are extremely cold in winter and leak when it rains. The dining room is housed in a building which was erected over 70 years ago as a temporary construction and is cold, unwelcoming and not helpful for to social interaction at lunchtimes. Pupils have to cross the yard to gain access, which presents problems in bad weather. Funds are currently being raised to replace this facility. Heating in school is provided by large storage heaters which are noisy. The playground has been improved since the last inspection and secure play space for younger children is good. The gardens are attractive although little use can be made of them by pupils because of tree roots, which are potentially hazardous.
70. Resources for teaching the curriculum are mostly satisfactory although they are good in some subjects. A weakness of the last inspection in the shortage of computers has been addressed and there are now an adequate number to teach

information and communication technology. Outdoor equipment for younger children and resources in mathematics are good. The library is underused and the quality and range of books in the library are inadequate.

71. The school's aims include *recognising the person as an individual, providing a safe environment and a varied curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils from all social and cultural background*. The many strengths in the leadership of the school mean these aims are very evident in the daily life of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and all staff should:

(1) Raise standards in English and mathematics by:

- implementing a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and planning for writing in a range of styles in other subjects;
- ensuring all staff make effective use of the time available for guided reading in literacy lessons;
- ensuring children in the Foundation Stage are fully challenged and have enough opportunities to learn their letters and sounds and are encouraged to make use of this knowledge in their own writing;
- providing more problem solving opportunities in mathematics and improving the strategies for pupils to explain their calculations;
- ensuring that when necessary numeracy targets are included in the individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs;
- ensuring pupils do not rely too heavily on adult support and have enough opportunity to work unaided;
- implementing a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work and the setting of targets in English and mathematics so that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve.

The school identifies raising standards in English and mathematics as a priority in the school's improvement plan.

See paragraph numbers 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 50, 51, 62, 68, 75, 77, 78, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 125.

(2) Continue to seek ways to improve the school's accommodation, especially the dining room.

This is an area of development already identified by the school.

See paragraph numbers 45, 55, 67, 69.

(3) Promote attendance by making parents more aware of the educational implications of their children missing school.

See paragraph numbers 16, 48, 58.

In addition to the key issues above, the governors may wish to consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:

- improve the number and quality of books in the library;
- develop the use of the library for independent research.

See paragraph numbers 43, 70, 90, 125, 148.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	23	17	3	0	0
Percentage	0	16	45	33	6	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)	22	203
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8	105

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	9	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (74)	79 (70)	79 (70)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	19	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (74)	75 (57)	88 (65)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

* Figures not included because they are 10 or less.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	11
	Girls	10	7	14
	Total	16	15	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (55)	56 (52)	93 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	11
	Girls	10	7	14
	Total	17	15	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (55)	56 (52)	93 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
151	5	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292.4

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21.6
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	644,830
Total expenditure	625,069
Expenditure per pupil	2,753
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,013
Balance carried forward to next year	73,625

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	203
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	29	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	42	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	45	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	73	26	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	34	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	32	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	29	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	41	3	0	9

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

73. Children attend the Nursery on a full time basis and transfer to the Reception Class in the year of their fifth birthday. Currently, 22 attend the Nursery and 25 are in the Reception class. Overall provision is good and children follow a rich variety of experiences linked to the officially recommended six areas of learning.
74. When the children start in the Nursery, assessment evidence shows that their attainment varies but many show knowledge, skills and understanding well below that expected for their age. As at the time of the last inspection, the children make good progress. They reach the early learning goal recommended for their age in their personal, social and emotional development because of the warm, relaxed and encouraging atmosphere. Outdoor facilities have greatly improved since the last inspection and pupils reach the level expected for their age in their physical development. In response to a variety of imaginative activities, children also reach the expected level in their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children do not reach the level expected in their mathematical skills or in language and literacy. Considering the very low starting point of many in these areas of learning, their overall achievement is good although a few higher attaining children are not making as much progress as they could. Children with special educational needs are identified early and supported effectively so that they make good progress. Children learning through English as an additional language are new to the school and staff are very aware of their needs. They check to see they have friends and include hand signals if required. Consequently, these children have settled well and are starting to communicate with staff and peers.
75. The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. At the time of the inspection a temporary teacher was replacing a member of staff absent through ill health. Teaching in the Nursery is satisfactory overall but the pace of learning is not always fast enough and this does not encourage effective learning. Teaching in the Reception class is good and this boosts achievement and children become enthusiastic learners. A strength in the teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is the support from Nursery Nurses and a classroom assistant. They play a full and active part in lessons and this is especially beneficial for the children with special educational needs and those needing support in learning English as an additional language. These children thrive in this caring atmosphere and make good progress. Assessment procedures are firmly embedded in planning so that teachers plan tasks to match children's needs and this build up their self-esteem as they are enabled to be successful. Occasionally, in both the Nursery and the Reception class, too many activities are provided and it is unclear what the children are expected to learn. This leads to some children moving too quickly between activities and not extending their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Adults have a good understanding of the needs of these young children and grasp every opportunity to encourage independence. They provide children with small duties, such as completing the weather chart, and they are eager to carry these out. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning. Learning is better in the Reception class where the teacher takes time to explain to pupils how their

behaviour affects others. For example, when children are not giving their full attention, they are asked to leave the group because *I cannot teach the rest of the class*. This approach encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour. As a result, when the teacher says *I will close my eyes and see how well you can move and sit ready for a story*, the children rise to the challenge and move in a very orderly manner. In the Nursery, a few find it difficult to take turns and share but staff organise many games activities which encourage co-operation with others. This includes a choice of activities at the start of the day. As a result, children arrive happily and settle to a task, often with a friend. All are confident in following the daily routines. This can be seen in the way they stick their best pieces of work on the achievement award and respond correctly when their name is called for the attendance register. Children are starting to accept responsibility to tidy away their resources but this is not always insisted on and so a few leave this to support staff which means that a learning opportunity is missed. All staff are good role models and are polite towards the children. This reaps benefits and children are often courteous and sensitive to the needs of others. This was seen when a child hurt herself on the playground and children were very concerned that the teacher helped her. Children are confident trying out new activities and had great fun experimenting with ice and warm water. At the end of the day in the Reception class, children enjoy sharing their news with others. Most listen carefully but many find it difficult to maintain concentration and their interest in the activity wanes. Children learn about Christianity and attend the whole school assembly with the other pupils. They learn about other faiths and cultures in many subjects. This can be seen in work children have produced after reading the story *Handa's Surprise*. They have located Africa on a map of the world and tasted the exotic fruits Handa had in her basket.

Communication, language and literacy

77. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff chat openly with the children and encourage them to explain what they are doing. Time is set aside to allow children to share their experiences. Many are able to describe an important event in their life. For example, one child in the Reception class told the class about a recent holiday with her family and explained it was very hot. Others find it more difficult to put their ideas into words and need a lot of prompting from staff to talk to the class. Most listen to stories attentively but the use of a lengthy story from a small book at the end of the day failed to capture the children's interest and they became restless. Listening was much better when a large book showing how a caterpillar changes to a butterfly was used and most followed this text closely. In the Reception class, most have a good understanding of how a book works and when given an opportunity opt to share a pop-up book with a friend. Because the teacher makes good reference to pictures, the children use these well in their own attempts at reading. A few spot familiar words but have not yet reached a level of reading short phrases with any accuracy. Children are starting to note the initial letter of a word because letters are taught using practical activities. However, this is not a regular part of literacy lessons and so children are not confident relating the letters they see to the correct sound. They turn to an adult when the word is unfamiliar and are not using the letter clues. The higher attaining children are just starting to take note of letters and one child was able to read *f-u-n because it starts with f and ends in n*. The teaching of writing is satisfactory but the overuse of photocopiable worksheets prevents higher attaining children extending their writing skills. Similarly, the children rely too much on the teacher providing a word for them rather than having a go at spelling out new words. As a result, children lack confidence writing unaided and few are starting to compose their own sentences.

Mathematical development

78. Teaching and learning are good and through a variety of practical activities children quickly learn to count to 10. Children in the Reception class count one-to-one when making shapes with dough. In the Nursery, children regularly count the number of children in the class and enjoy singing number rhymes. They sort coloured socks into the correct sequence. They enjoy sorting and matching and were successful making two models using different shapes and checking they were the same. Their knowledge of shapes increases in the Reception class because the teacher provides imaginative tasks which capture their interest. For example, after a class discussion about the names of shapes, children worked with the teacher making a model robot. Effective questioning extended their knowledge of the properties of shapes and some started to recognise three-dimensional shapes. Children find it difficult to explain their ideas. For example, one child referred to a *flatter line* and another *long but a little like smaller*. A review of work in children's books shows most can continue a pattern recognising colours and shapes. They are less confident applying their number skills to solve simple problems, for example, in identifying which number comes before or after a given number. Higher attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged and are less confident using their skills to solve simple problems. For example, with the help of counters they understand *more* and *less* but cannot identify how many more or less. Many are not forming numerals correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. This area is taught effectively through a range of interesting first-hand experiences, As a result, learning is good and children increase their understanding about the world around them. They explore how seeds grow and explain they need water and light. Older children have drawn diagrams and labelled the main parts of a plant. Children in Nursery had great fun playing with the ice balloons and understood they were melting but could not explain it was the warm water that was making them melt. In an imaginative lesson in the Reception class, children enjoyed classifying different items and deciding if they were natural or man-made. A few can give detailed explanations for their decisions, such as *a creature lived in a shell so it is a natural resource*. Others find it more difficult to put their ideas into words but are able to describe the resources as *soft, shiny* and, *can be seen through*. The teacher challenges the higher attainers, for instance by asking them whether plastic flowers were natural or man-made and they gave considerable thought to this before deciding man-made, with one response identifying they were *artificial*. Information and communication technology is taught well and computers are available for use throughout the day. As a result, children in the Reception class are able to move a shape around the screen to draw a picture. Teachers plan visits and visitors to make learning relevant. This was seen in the walk in the school's attractive garden and children learn to appreciate the wonder of nature as they observe how plants are starting to grow in spring. A mother visited with her baby to answer questions about caring for a baby. This knowledge has been imaginatively extended in role-play in the class *baby clinic*. Children enjoy carrying out different roles and this enhances their social skills as well as their numeracy and literacy as they measure the toy baby and make marks on record cards. Practical tasks are very well organised and resources imaginatively prepared to promote independent learning. Many particularly enjoy using construction blocks and build well constructed wheeled vehicles. Sometimes some activities lack a clear focus, for example, water play, and this leads to some silly play that does not promote learning.

Physical development

80. This aspect is better than at the time of the last inspection because of the improved outdoor facilities. Children in both classes benefit from attractive outdoor resources and good use is made of these facilities. The children are aware of space as they push prams and steer large wheeled vehicles around a track. Children work with a partner giving lifts to each other. This is effective in including the children learning through English as an additional language. They happily join in and enjoy having a ride with a new friend. With effective help from the teacher, children improve their throwing skills and are aware of the need to take care aiming as they try to throw a bean bag into a hoop. Most are well co-ordinated and are confident handling items including construction blocks and scissors. Teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery and good in the Reception class. In a physical education lesson in the Nursery, the teaching was ineffective because it was too formal and this restricted children's learning because they did not have an opportunity to find different ways to move around the hall. Too much time was spent watching other children and this limited their learning. In a good dance lesson in the Reception class, the teacher effectively carried on the theme from the book *The Hungry Caterpillar*. Learning was good because of clear instructions and demonstrations by the teacher. Because the choice of music was good, children learned to curl up to represent the cocoon and then moved lightly as they changed into butterflies. By the end of the lesson, most were able to successfully join three movements together to represent the life cycle of a butterfly.

Creative development

81. Teaching and learning are good and children explore a stimulating range of media. An easel and paper is readily available and children enjoy exploring with colour and pattern. They give close attention to flowers and plants in their attempts at painting them. They enjoy making random patterns and then folding the paper to create a butterfly. Effective questions and the use of a mirror extend the children's understanding of symmetrical shapes. Children benefit from the expertise of a visiting music specialist. These lessons are brisk and great fun. Children appreciate sounds can be high and low because the teacher makes the children reach up for high and bend down for low sounds. They sing tunefully and recognise a pattern as they clap in time to the music for *Clap your hands and wiggle your toes*. In Nursery, children are rather unadventurous in their role-play in the class *garden centre*. They enjoy making an imaginary garden with the plants but the lack of labels and other resources does not inspire them to take on the role of other people. Imaginary play is better in the Reception class because the children found the items in the *baby clinic* more inspiring and they develop many interesting scenarios and story lines.
82. Currently, the manager of the Foundation Stage is absent and this has led to some lack of recent monitoring to check that teaching is sufficiently challenging to ensure all children are making as much progress as possible. Assessment systems in place are good at checking on the skills children are attaining but are not linked closely to the level expected nationally for the age of the children. The school is preparing to introduce the new nationally recommended early years profile, which provides a more detailed record of attainment to identify the progress children make, linked to the early learning goals.

ENGLISH

83. The standard of pupils' work is average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6, which is a similar picture to that of the last inspection. This does not do justice to the good improvements that have been made, and the higher standards now being attained in Years 3 to 5 where pupils' work matches national expectations for these year groups. Improvement has been brought about by:
- good improvement in teaching and learning;
 - effective management which has led to better planning in response to the National Literacy Strategy;
 - the active approach now used to teach pupils their letters and sounds;
 - improved assessment which enables teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs;
 - planning opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills;
 - additional classes for higher and lower attaining pupils to boost their progress;
 - more classroom assistants to offer help in lessons.
84. Although the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been well below average for the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level has improved each year. In 2002, the school's results were well below the national average but above average when compared to similar schools. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6, but the school is on track to improve on the results for 2002, albeit by a small margin. Considering many pupils in Year 6 did not reach the level expected for their age in the national tests at age seven their current standards represent good achievement.
85. At the end of Year 2, results in writing in the national tests for 2002 were above average, because the proportion attaining the higher level was greater than nationally. In reading, however, results were well below average. The teaching of reading has improved and the achievement of pupils currently in Year 2 in both reading and writing is good. In previous years, girls have performed better than boys in tests. This is less evident now because of the good methods and resources now being used to encourage boys with their learning.
86. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use good strategies to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. For example, teachers ask questions that need more than a brief answer, and give pupils opportunities to develop their talk through role-play activities. As a result, pupils in Year 2 have developed the confidence to offer their opinions at a level expected for their age. They use a good range of words, although the structure of their sentences is sometimes incorrect, for instance, using the wrong form of a verb. Pupils write stories that are punctuated well and follow a logical sequence, but, as with their speech, they sometimes make grammatical errors. Their understanding of different styles of writing is good. Pupils enjoy words and learn to use them imaginatively because stories, rhymes and songs are used skilfully by teachers. This was seen in a lesson when pupils wrote humorous verse in the style of a well-known rhyme about the sound of different foods cooking. A higher attaining pupil chose the words, "crackle, crackle, crickle crackle," to describe bacon grilling and was pleased with the effect he achieved. Pupils' knowledge of books is satisfactory. They retell, with a good amount of detail, the events in the books they are currently reading, but find it difficult to identify their preference for a story or to

compare different settings and themes. Pupils of all levels of attainment use letter sounds to help them work out unknown words and those of average and higher attainment use a good range of other strategies successfully. The majority of pupils read at a level expected for their age or beyond. Although most pupils' handwriting is legible, few join letters successfully and a significant number do not make them well proportioned. The school is currently looking to improve the teaching of handwriting so that pupils learn to join letters when learning their first words.

87. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 continue to give pupils good opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening. Year 6 pupils spoke clearly and confidently as they dramatised in a school assembly a short scene depicting Victorian hardship. In a discussion time, they listened to others and put forward their own opinions at a level expected for their age. However, many find it difficult to put their ideas into words, especially in a formal situation. In their written work, Year 6 pupils spell and use grammatical structures at a satisfactory level, although many mainly use simple sentences, steering away from a wider range of sentence structures that would give their writing greater depth. Many use punctuation accurately and are starting to structure their work in paragraphs. Their writing, however, lacks the development of ideas expected by Year 6 and consequently is below average. Pupils' reading and writing skills are sufficiently developed to support learning in other subjects and teachers plan opportunities to use these skills. However, they do not always include writing in a variety of styles or at length. Many read texts at a level expected for their age and those of higher attainment spot the clues the author leaves to encourage the reader to predict future events. The weakness in their reading lies in their inability to examine a text closely and give appropriate explanations as to the author's choice of words and techniques. Their knowledge of books is satisfactory, but their understanding of the organisation of different kinds of written material, especially factual texts, is below the level expected for their age. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 make good progress in these aspects of reading. In Year 5, for example, pupils of average attainment quickly identified the words Ted Hughes had chosen to use in story of 'The Iron Man' that encouraged the reader to sympathise with the main character.
88. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets for reading and writing set for them in their individual education plans. Although the school does not yet have a system for assessing their progress in small steps, their work shows that the standards they achieve are good in comparison to their previous attainment. The school's good focus on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem makes a significant contribution to these pupils' achievements. Occasionally, pupils make less progress when teachers or support staff provide too much help rather than encouraging independent learning. Similarly, activities are set that consolidate knowledge rather than developing it further. In one lesson for instance in Year 6, the pupils used pens to highlight words that rhymed that they had identified earlier in the week though many were ready to write their own version. The very few pupils who speak English in addition to the language they speak at home make good progress in learning English. They benefit from the school's good focus on speaking and listening and work that is carefully adapted for their needs.
89. In the inspection, the number of satisfactory lessons and those that were good were in equal proportion. Teachers' planning and work in pupils' books indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge of the methods recommended in the National Literacy Strategy and other national guidance documents and this has ensured that basic skills, especially the learning

and use of letter sounds, are taught well. The school has developed particularly good strategies to encourage pupils to become keen writers. Pupils make good progress in understanding how to structure their written work because teachers explain how to do this very well. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn because teachers use effective and stimulating methods. In a good lesson in Year 5, for example, aimed at improving pupils' skills in editing their own work, pupils were so enthusiastic, they found it hard to wait their turn to point out the errors they had spotted in the displayed piece of writing. Lessons are planned so that there is an equal focus on developing writing and reading skills. However, in the classes for the upper and lower ability groups in Years 5 and 6, too much time is spent on handwriting practice and learning spellings. Pupils carry out these tasks diligently but they do not have the same keenness for this kind of work. Consequently, although they do well in spelling tests, pupils continue to make errors in their own writing. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good because teachers and classroom assistants have established very good relationships. They use humour to good effect and there is rarely need for reprimands. Because teachers assess pupils' achievements well, work is set at the right level of challenge for all pupils. At the start of a lesson, teachers share with pupils what they are to learn and, at the end, generally check to see if they have been achieved. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of their own learning. The school's system for setting targets, however is less successful as targets are too broad and too long term and they are difficult for pupils to know when they have been achieved. Teachers are diligent in marking work but comments are not always followed up and in some cases comments give praise but do not help pupils understand how to improve.

90. The leadership of the subject is good and a major factor in the good achievement of pupils. The co-ordinator is committed to improving the methods and strategies teachers use, in accordance with nationally recommended practice. Occasionally a few pupils miss a small amount of lessons for individual reading but overall the emphasis is on ensuring that all pupils are included in the school's provision. Information and communication technology is used to a satisfactory level, although some useful programs such as those that help with letter formation are not used. The pupils visit the school library each week to choose a new book to read and this contributes well to their interest in stories. The library, however, is not well stocked and has few displays to promote and encourage interest in books, especially non-fiction. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 do not have enough knowledge and understanding of factual texts. Although there are good systems in place to monitor teaching and learning, some aspects of the subject are taught in different ways and, on occasions, less effective methods of teaching are used. In group reading sessions, for example, a few teachers asked pupils to read a page of the shared book while others listen. While this can be an appropriate method if the focus is on improving performance, it is not helpful in improving other reading skills. Other discrepancies in practice, such as those concerning spelling and handwriting, have not been checked by the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

MATHEMATICS

91. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are average in Year 2 and achievement is good. Standards are below average in Year 6. Considering the low starting point of these pupils in Year 1 and Year 3, overall achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from additional support in lessons including the use of information and communication technology which enables them to achieve well. The

small number of pupils needing support because they are learning through English as an additional language are set tasks to suit their needs and also make good progress.

92. At the time of the last inspection, it was found that standards for both age ranges were in line with national averages. Test results following the inspection did not identify the anticipated standards and the present findings indicate that the school has made satisfactory progress. However, standards remain below average in Year 6 because a high percentage (44 per cent) of pupils are identified with special educational needs. Their results at the age of seven indicated standards were well below average so it can be seen that many have made good progress to reach their present position of below average. This rise in standards is due to:
- much better teaching and good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - staff training and sharing of good practice and agreement as to consistency of approach in their teaching;
 - more rigorous assessment systems and use of this information to track the progress pupils are making;
 - improved attitudes of the pupils and greater interest in learning;
 - all numeracy lessons have trained classroom support assistants;
 - weekly problem solving activities help pupils use and apply their learning;
 - increased quantity and quality of resources and better use to support learning;
 - the grouping of pupils according to ability in Years 5 and 6 so tasks are set that are better matched to their needs.
93. Results of the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed pupils to be attaining standards well below the national average of all schools. When compared with similar schools, results were average, showing pupils were doing as well as expected. Standards have fluctuated since 1999 but have consistently remained well below national figures although there was a rise in test results last year. In the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results showed pupils to be attaining standards that were very low compared with the national average and well below the standards achieved by similar schools. This lack of any significant improvement in test results has been linked to the ineffective use of assessment information which led to higher and lower attaining pupils not making as much progress as they should have. Standards are showing improvement now the assessment systems are more firmly established. The national trend in improvement has been very slight and overall the school has matched this trend, albeit remaining below it.
94. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress, overcoming their low attainment on entry to the school. Pupils take pride in their work as can be seen in the quality of presentation. They succeed in all aspects of the curriculum, knowing several different strategies for solving problems mentally. Most know and use their 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Higher attaining pupils use these known facts in solving problems. For example, they transfer the knowledge that $6 \times 2 = 12$ into 6 apples at 2p each will cost 12p. The great majority of pupils recognise and name shapes and also identify properties, for example that a pentagon has five sides, which is just one indication of good language development. Most can use data to draw simple graphs and then use them to extract facts. The lower ability pupils are growing in confidence in handling number. They count accurately and some rose to the challenge to compare more or less of one colour car with another and calculate how many

altogether. The evidence for use of the computer is insufficient and even in the very good lesson seen there was a lost opportunity to use computer generated data as a basis for their interpretations.

95. Standards seen in Year 6 lessons illustrated well the problems that this year group has. Many find it difficult to work effectively without support from adults. Few pupils in this group confidently achieve the key objectives for learning for Year 6 as set out in the National Numeracy Strategy. For example, the lesson showed them needing a great deal of support to succeed in the conversion of units of measure. Although they could suggest units of measure for length and weight and such sound basic knowledge as $1000 \text{ gm} = 1 \text{ kg}$, only few pupils readily volunteered the information that $10\text{mm} = 1 \text{ cm}$ and any previous knowledge of capacity had been largely forgotten. Only 25 per cent of the pupils could suggest the way of converting grams to kilograms. They lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. Nevertheless, Year 6 pupils' books show work of a higher standard than seen in lessons. It is presented neatly with evidence of pupils gaining experience over a suitably wide range of topics. Pupils have used a range of methods to interpret data. There are instances of above average work being achieved and of higher attaining pupils working accurately with decimals and fractions. In spite of this better work, there is little evidence that pupils are able to use their knowledge to investigate and solve problems, and independent work is insufficiently developed throughout the school.
96. The arrangements for grouping pupils of similar ability for their lessons in Years 5 and 6 is beneficial to all groups and facilitates teachers in their very focused planning to meet the needs of the group. It is especially helpful for pupils with special educational needs because the work they are expected to do matches their needs and ability and the teachers' approach and detail in instruction can be matched to their speed of learning. At present, targets for numeracy do not form part of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs so sometimes the required input is not sufficiently identified. Within other classes, the teacher plans work for at least three levels of ability in the class. The teacher, with the support of the always present classroom assistant, provides good support for those who experience difficulty whilst developing the independent working of the more confident pupils. This works well in enabling all to have full access to the curriculum although on occasions advice is too readily provided and pupils lack confidence working independently.
97. The overall quality of teaching is good and, together with realistic and high expectations, leads to good learning throughout the school. There were seven lessons seen taught of which nearly 72 per cent were good or better. This is a very good improvement on the last inspection when it was reported that only 20 per cent of teaching was good or better. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and teachers have good knowledge of how to implement it well. Lessons are well planned and the objectives for learning are clear. These are often shared with pupils and an example of this very good practice was seen when the Year 2 teacher told the pupils, *At the end of the lesson you will have learnt...* Most lessons proceed at a good pace, starting with a very focused oral session and pupils are kept interested through good questioning which varies in its degree of challenge to include all members of the class. Although there are examples where pupils are required to explain how they arrived at their answer, this is not consistent. As a result, an opportunity to learn from each other is missed and pupils are not challenged to deepen their understanding of routines and basic principles. Behaviour is very well

managed and the classroom support assistants play a full part in this and all other aspects of the lesson. Teachers promote numeracy skills well in other areas of the curriculum. In infant classes, chronological sequencing is very good when used in relation to history and lessons for the older pupils, especially in science, show use of charts, graphs, measure and reading scale. The teachers know their pupils well and the good plenary held at the conclusion of every lesson informs the teacher of the quality of learning that has taken place and helps to inform or modify future lesson plans. This illustrates the good quality and use of day-to-day assessment.

98. At present the school is awaiting the arrival of a new member of staff who is to manage the subject. In the meantime, the subject is managed very capably by the head-teacher. Monitoring and evaluations have been carried out and are documented. Test results are analysed and these are used to determine specific areas for the school to target. The school sets targets for pupils to improve but these are not always consistent and they, together with some examples of marking, do not make sure that pupils are really aware of what it is they have to do to improve. There is well founded optimism regarding future standards and assessment shows standards in Year 5 are now very close to what is expected for this age.

SCIENCE

99. Science is a strength in the school because of the focus on learning through practical investigation. Consequently, the pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult make better progress. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are average. This was the case at the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are above average. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average in the juniors.
100. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. There is a clear trend of improvement over recent years. This supports the view that, even though there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, improvement will be at least maintained according to the current predictions. This is due to:
- very good teaching targeted on raising standards in Year 6;
 - more detailed assessment and planning guidelines to support teachers;
 - the setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 according to their ability, enabling teachers to pitch their lessons at the correct level;
 - the sessions to accelerate learning for the higher and lower attaining pupils are very successful;
 - the good management of the subject.
101. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language make good progress in science throughout the school due to the level of support provided for them in lessons. They benefit from the opportunities to work in groups so their peers can share their knowledge with them.
102. Pupils in Year 2 correctly classify a range of different materials found in everyday objects. They understand some are man-made and others are natural materials. Pupils note their different properties and recognise what makes them suitable for their purpose. Pupils enjoy investigating and understand how items can move by pushing and pulling forces. By using ramps pupils have discovered for themselves what affects the speed of objects as they travel down the ramp. However, pupils are

not always given enough opportunity to make choices or plan their own investigations. Pupils understand basic patterns of growth and in one lesson observed showed a secure understanding of how animals adapt to their environment. For example, they understood the reasons for fish having gills and fins. Pupils record their observations using different grids and charts and teachers promote pupils' numeracy skills in science. They are beginning to use books to find information about their topic but the library is not well stocked and it is not easy to locate books.

103. Pupils in Year 6 develop a good level of scientific knowledge and facts because teachers introduce them to a rich range of experiences Standards are higher than in English and mathematics because teachers plan for pupils to carry out investigations in groups and share their ideas with each other. This enables the lower attaining pupils to learn from others and grow in confidence as their literacy skills are not hampering their progress. All understand life cycles and understand that living things often rely on others for their existence. Many use technical terms to describe their activities. These include *producers, consumers and predators*. They understand what makes a healthy diet and the school is part of a Healthy School's Project. Pupils conduct their own investigations and are confident predicting what might happen. In a lesson seen pupils confidently conducted a detailed experiment comparing the amount of air in soil and sand. They planned their activities and included scientifically important aspects such as: ensuring it would be a fair test; making predictions and running the investigation more than once to check the validity of their results. Pupils use their numeracy skills in their calculations and in the choice of method to record their findings. They find information using the Internet as a source to practise analysing results and reaching conclusions based on data found in a line graph. An important reason for the high standard in national tests has been the positive response to additional sessions for higher attaining pupils. Similarly, pupils who need extra help to reach the level expected for their age attend extra sessions led by the headteacher. These sessions are most effective because pupils are taught in a small group and so are not easily distracted. In a lesson seen teaching and learning were very good and as a result, pupils quickly grasped the idea of the relationship between plants and animals as they exist in a food chain.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and insist on the correct use of scientific vocabulary. The effective use of questions leads the older pupils on to develop their own line of enquiry and pupils learn to question their findings. Pupils learn to work on their own in science and hence achieve better than in other subjects under examination pressure, because they are more accustomed to working without adult guidance. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good and leads to very effective learning. Here, teachers are very clear about the focus of the lesson and so pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are going to do and how it links with work in earlier lessons. This helps them see purpose and progress in their learning. Lessons are planned in detail with a good structure which keeps pupils engaged in their work and concentration is often very good. When teaching is less effective in Year 1 it is caused by some topics being introduced to pupils that are too advanced in relation to their age. They cannot understand concepts such as the internal organs concerned with digestion of food or the relationship between the Earth, Moon and Sun and this does not encourage effective learning.

105. Management of the subject is good. Good use is made of assessment results to plan for additional sessions in the drive to raise standards. The co-ordinator understands the range of expertise and confidence in teaching science because teaching has been observed. This has been successful in extending the focus on learning through practical activities and ensuring a wide range of experiences are covered. However, monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous to check that all teachers are consistently following the school's planning guidelines.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are at the expected level and achievement is satisfactory overall with examples of good achievement seen in some Year 6 work. Teachers check all have full access to the curriculum and as a result pupils with special educational needs and those who need help because English is an additional language make sound progress. The previous inspection reported standards to be above the national expectations by the end of Year 6 but these standards were not seen in this inspection because the evidence did not include the full range of National Curriculum requirements, for example work in three-dimensional media.
107. The quality of work in Year 2 is satisfactory with some examples where it is good. Pupils are able to express their ideas through a variety of media. They show satisfactory observational skills and begin to show awareness of the importance of composition. Pupils are aware of the work of great artists, for example producing a collage inspired by the work of Andy Goldsworth using natural objects in which they closely observe line, colour, shape and texture.
108. The work of great artists is used well to inspire work by pupils in Year 6, it makes a good contribution to their cultural development. The style of Robert Delaunay is emulated by pupils in very detailed and colourful work which is an example of the higher standard which they can reach. They show they recognise his approach to his work which they try to link with their own art, producing representations of fruit sections using line and tone. Similar high quality results stem from the work of Georgia O' Keefe in her depiction of flowers on a giant scale. They reflect her work well in the simple form and clarity of their efforts. It is a good feature of Year 6 work that pupils evaluate their work.
109. Insufficient teaching was seen overall to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. The example seen of teachers' planning for Year 6 is very good and shows different expectations of what will be achieved by the different abilities. There is some good use of art across the curriculum; for example the younger pupils create some very careful crayon pictures to support their work in history. Overall the care in the work seen suggests the pupils have good attitudes to the subject. Teachers are not using sketchbooks effectively to encourage pupils to plan and try out ideas.
110. Management of the subject is satisfactory. New planning guidelines concentrate on skills being progressively developed. Proof of this is seen in the large hall display which takes collage as its medium and represents work from all classes. Many use the work of great artists as inspiration for example, Year 3 use the work of Rene Magritte. This ensures the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are at the expected level and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language enjoy the practical aspects of the subject and make the same progress as the other pupils. This is a good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when standards for Year 6 pupils were reported as below expectations. Standards are better because of much improved overall planning in which the essential elements of the curriculum follow a clear path of progression from Year 1 to Year 6. This includes food technology, electrical circuits, mechanisms, structures and textiles.
112. From Year 1, pupils are thinking with imagination about making things. They explore how things work and draw their ideas. By Year 2, they have progressed from the simple moving picture with sliding mechanism which they do so well in Year 1 to responding to the challenge of *How did Jack and Jill get the water out of the well?* They solve the problem by devising a winding mechanism, which leads to some early investigation into the use of pulleys. They know a variety of ways of assembling and joining materials and make judgements at the end of their work in which they identify problems they encountered, such as *joining the bucket to the string which was too long*.
113. By the end of Year 6, pupils have benefited from the progressive development of skills and are able to work with more precision. Progress is evident in group projects showing the pupils' ability to work as a team. They also give more thought to what the product will be used for and its suitability for the task. The planning is more detailed and includes step by step instructions identifying the main stages of making. This process is well illustrated by the good display in Year 6 showing the process of designing and making a bridge. This process of planning is good and leads to the production of satisfactory models employing the skills and techniques learnt as they have moved through the school. Further evidence is by means of photographic records of fairground models as is outlined in the overall school plan for design and technology.
114. As no lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. What is evident from display and photographic evidence is that the elements of design, making and evaluation are present in all the work seen, for example in the work of Year 5 in making musical instruments. Good cross-curricular links are developed. Teachers see in the teaching of design and technology good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and the use of measures and the understanding the properties of materials related to work in science.
115. Management of the subject is good. The new planning guidelines have resolved the previous weaknesses and standards are rising. Advice has been sought from the Local Education Authority and this has been acted upon. Teachers are supported and kept advised of developments. There are good uses of information communication technology, for instance with a computer program to support work on electrical circuits.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Too few lessons were seen for secure judgements to be made on teaching and learning. From discussions with pupils from Years 2 and 6 and looking at examples

of work, it is clear that standards are as expected for their age and achievement is satisfactory. This is also the case for pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language. This was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

117. Pupils in Year 2 study children's lives in different countries of the world. They identify countries on a world map and discuss some differences between them. Their work has included information about the lifestyle and cultures of the children of other countries. Other work has included skills of making maps and plans and studies of their school's locality. They are able to discuss traffic-related issues in simple terms, including measures taken to control traffic. They express their opinions about the need for old buildings in bad condition to be replaced and that this improves where they live. When they talk about their holidays, they are able to use geographically based comparisons with their own location. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were studying seasonal changes through patterns of change in trees and the growth of bulbs.
118. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to study a photograph of a location in a different country and use a satisfactory range of geographical knowledge and understanding when talking about it. They analyse the landscape and identify natural features, such as the broad beach, drawing conclusions about the development of the area for tourism. Pupils understand the advantages and disadvantages of development and that people will have different views. They recognise similar developments in their own locality and understand that Salford docks is becoming an expensive area in which to live and this has led to changes in the types of work available. They have studied a location in Canada as part of the whole school theme on the Commonwealth last year. Pupils recalled their studies of another location in this country that is very different to their own. Many are confident in using maps and recognise the significance of co-ordinates and keys.
119. Although little teaching was seen, there is ample evidence to show it is at least satisfactory. The focus on learning through practical activities makes learning interesting for pupils. The theme week on countries in the Commonwealth is another example of teachers' efforts to make geography enjoyable and relevant for pupils.
120. Management is satisfactory. A strength in the leadership is the organisation of the annual, major theme for all pupils and this makes a significant contribution to their achievement and understanding. Geography work is 'blocked' throughout the year to alternate with the teaching of history. Under this type of planning arrangement, it is difficult to ensure that pupils' skills are systematically developed and knowledge is retained during the substantial gaps that are evident in the past work of some classes. The planning needs to be checked to ensure that there is no duplication (for instance the water topic is taught twice at present) and that the content of topics is appropriate for the age group. Some teaching demands too much of the pupils' ability to understand systems, such as Year 1 pupils being taught about the earth's 'rotation on its own axis' and its movement around the sun.

HISTORY

121. The standard of pupils' work at the end of Year 2 is above national expectations. Standards in Year 6 are similar to national expectations. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards in both year groups were average. When consideration is given to pupils' attainment when they start school, their

achievements are good. This is brought about by a well planned curriculum that makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language benefit from the variety of experiences and also make good progress.

122. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the way of life of people in more distant times. They know the names of the two historical periods they have studied, the Tudors and the Victorians. Because their teachers have made these two periods of history come to life, pupils' knowledge of these times is good. A pupil of average attainment explained clearly that the cross on the door of a Tudor house meant that the people inside were very ill. A higher attaining pupil explained that there were no hospitals, as we have today, to cure the sick. In Year 1, teachers use good strategies to help pupils look back over a period of time, starting with their own life. Pupils develop an understanding of how to place events in the order in which they occur, and this is built on well in Year 2. Pupils have been taught well to find out about history through a range of sources, including asking older family members.
123. In Year 6, the reality of life in Victorian times is understood well by pupils because teachers have made very close links to the local area. The pictures of the Salford artist, L. S. Lowry are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the industrial revolution and its impact on people's lives. Pupils research on the Internet and in books so they learn how information about the past can be located. They discovered, for instance, that Victorians enjoyed a variety of entertainments and were intrigued when they found that Buffalo Bill's cowboys performed in Broughton. Teachers in each year group use good strategies to help pupils set different periods of history into a correct sequence and pupils use dates with reasonable accuracy. Pupils in Year 6 record their work well and write good imaginative pieces using their knowledge of the past. They are not strong, however, in recognising that the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways and do not understand the relative validity of different sources of information.
124. Only one lesson of history was seen and in this lesson teaching and learning were good. It was well organised and encouraged pupils to think for themselves. The teacher's enthusiasm for investigating the past was communicated very well to pupils so that their skills in asking questions and looking for answers from pictures of artefacts from Ancient Greece was improved at a good rate. When planning work, teachers take good account of what pupils have learnt before and so plan work that builds well on their previous knowledge. This was a weakness at the last inspection and improvement has been good. Pupils' work is well presented and their enjoyment of the subject was well illustrated in a very good assembly by Year 6, presenting their knowledge and understanding of Salford life in Victorian times.
125. The good leadership of the subject noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. The subject is effectively used to promote pupils' skills in literacy although opportunities to write at length are not always provided. Skills in numeracy benefit from the use of dates for older pupils and the sequencing of events for the younger ones. Local museums and places of historical interest are used effectively and encourage pupils' interest and enjoyment of the subject. A weakness is in the history section in the school library. This section is not clearly marked and pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 found it difficult to locate a book on a specific historical period.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average and the achievement of many pupils is good. This is very good improvement since the previous inspection. Improvement has been brought about by:
- more detailed planning and tracking of progress;
 - teachers being more confident because of training;
 - better resources and technical support;
 - good management of the subject.
127. Pupils in Year 2 use a wide range of computer applications. In geography, they planned an imaginary island and combined photographs, a simple plan and some text as one piece of work. They chose different colours in order to change their images. They use a program to produce captions for pictures and labels. They are able to issue commands in order to control a screen-based *turtle* that leaves a track of its movements. Some of the tracks are very complicated and have involved the pupils in some complicated programming. A staircase was programmed and drawn as an example of their skills. Information and communication technology has been used to present work in other subjects. They have found information on the Fire of London and illustrated it with clipart. Their science work has involved them in classifying animals according to whether they lay eggs or give birth to their young. Pupils have used text and clipart, arranging it according to the classification, though they have not included sounds in their work.
128. Pupils in Year 6 use the computer to plot the movement of a *turtle* around the screen. They save their instructions as individual procedures and then incorporate these procedures into new ones that they are developing. The outcome is often very impressive. When things don't happen as intended, pupils show a good level of understanding when trying to 'debug' their instructions. They use a spreadsheet to automate calculations such as the total cost of some shopping and the change required. This work is highly relevant to our everyday experiences. They are becoming efficient users of the interactive whiteboards that link to the computer and, when required, the Internet. They use this feature to search the Internet for information to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils have used e-mail to contact embassies of countries that they studied during the Commonwealth project. They have also developed e-mail pen pal links with a nearby school. When they worked on a project with the police, they used webcams to gather evidence by tracing the movements of a child who had wandered away. They then 'interviewed' witnesses using live, on-screen communications. Pupils do not have opportunities to use equipment that senses changes in temperature, sound and light. The acquisition of the necessary equipment is imminent and will both extend their experiences and support their work in other subjects, such as science. Very few pupils have used the available software to compose and edit music.
129. It is evident from the record of work that pupils make good progress in acquiring new skills and developing existing ones throughout the school. This is largely because, until recently, a specialist who was also co-ordinator undertook teaching alongside the class teachers. This effectively supported staff and ensured consistency and progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language make good progress due to the support that they receive from classroom assistants and larger screens that make access clearer for some.

All classroom assistants have been trained to deliver a new computer based initiative that assesses pupils in their mathematics work and produces a tailor-made program for pupils with special educational needs to follow. This is very effective, pupils are engaged by it and it is already bringing about improvement in their work.

130. The limited amount of teaching seen was effective and learning in the information and communication technology suite was good. In the best lessons seen the teacher's enthusiasm was shared with pupils and the pupils were very keen to extend their skills. Support staff offer good support and have a clear understanding of their role. In one session the classroom assistant led the lesson and the lesson was very well planned with clear learning outcomes so that pupils are fully aware of the focus of the tasks. Teachers plan carefully to use computers to support learning in other subjects and this makes the learning more relevant to pupils as well as extending their knowledge of other subjects. During the inspection computers in class were not used as much as expected and opportunities were missed for pupils to practise the skills taught in the information and communication technology suite in their classrooms.
131. Management has been effective in bringing about many positive changes. Currently, the headteacher is managing the subject because of absence of the subject leader. A policy for the safe use of the Internet and email has been produced and parents are aware of the use of the technology for these purposes. The resources have been dramatically improved since the last inspection and only sensing equipment needs to be acquired and its use implemented to complete the breadth of the curriculum.

MUSIC

132. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. This was the case at the previous inspection. They achieve satisfactorily and pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and participate fully in lessons.
133. Pupils in Year 2 sing a range of chants and songs. They can control elements such as pitch and dynamics. They sing well in phrases because they have been taught to breath correctly. They can use instruments to play a beat and add rhythm. When they play instruments or clap a pattern, most of them can link the rhythm of the sounds to the symbols of traditional music notation, such as quavers.
134. No music lessons were observed in Year 6. Discussions with pupils show that they have a satisfactory understanding of a range of classroom instruments, having used them to create repeating patterns. When pupils talk about classroom percussion instruments, they use their correct names rather than a phrase describing how they are used, such as shaker or scraper. When they talked about the instruments, they were able to compare some of their different sound qualities. They demonstrated their abilities to maintain a steady beat whilst others added a rhythm pattern over it. This was done with a good level of accuracy. Their technical vocabulary is good. They refer to *dynamics*, *pitch* and *tempo* with a clear understanding of their meaning. They take part in warm-up exercises before they sing. In assemblies, pupils sing with enjoyment and quality.
135. There is little evidence of the use of tuned percussion in their work. Instruments, such as xylophones and glockenspiels that have the facility to play notes of different pitch are used to compose tunes and melodies and melodic patterns. Pupils in

Years 2 and 6 could not recall working in small groups during music lessons. When a whole class approach is used, their opportunities to work on their own task in composition are limited, as are their choices.

136. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory throughout the school, and good in two of the lessons observed. One of these lessons was in Year 5 when the teacher organised the pupils into groups to compose short themes based on rhythms and sound effects. This gave the groups lots of opportunities to choose the theme and, more importantly, the instruments that would be appropriate. They responded well, sharing responsibilities and resources and making good progress. A good singing lesson was seen in Year 1. The teacher showed good levels of expertise and enthusiasm; the pupils responded well. Before pupils sang, the teacher emphasised the need to warm up, and pay attention to posture and breathing. The teacher encouraged individuals and small groups to sing, which was done sensitively and gave them opportunities to perform.
137. The previous co-ordinator has left the school and there is no replacement at present. Currently, the headteacher is providing effective support and checking on the recently introduced scheme of work. Teachers feel that this is providing them with the support they need to teach music to their own classes. The need to develop pupils' skills in composition is fully understood, but it will be improved by the imminent purchase of larger tuned instruments of good quality. Further improvement would come about from:
- giving pupils more opportunities to make choices in their work;
 - giving pupils opportunities to develop their ideas;
 - organising pupils so that they work in smaller groups.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are the same as identified in the last inspection and are as expected for pupils' ages. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language are fully included and make satisfactory progress. The school gives significant attention to the teaching of swimming and standards are good. All classes have an opportunity to go swimming and as a result every pupil in Year 6 can swim at least 25 metres.
139. In Year 2, pupils move in time to music and adapt their movements to represent different characters in a dance they are preparing to perform for other classes. They move around like a snake and then make their actions faster as the music quickens and becomes lighter. However, they are not given an opportunity to evaluate their movements or suggest how they can improve. In games lessons, pupils are skilful at dodging and swerving in a lively warm up. They understand this is an important part of the lesson because the teacher points out the beneficial effects of exercise on the body. Pupils are starting to understand the need to follow rules as they begin to learn how to play rounders. Most show satisfactory co-ordination as they try to hit the ball. Their catching skills are better because they have been well taught how important it is to keep your eye on the ball.
140. Only one lesson was seen in Years 3 to 6 and this was a fitness session in Year 6. All joined energetically in the warm up and knew the need to exercise safely, the importance of stretching the muscles and the need to cool down afterwards.

Throughout the lesson, pupils maintained a good level of exercise and were eager to improve their performance. Many are very agile, and sprint and turn showing a good sense of direction and control.

141. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A good feature of lessons is the positive management based on good relationships. Lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers join in and are good role models. Most lessons follow a well planned sequence of activities, with a good emphasis on safety. However, some lesson plans are too brief and the focus of the activities is not always made clear to pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, too much time was taken up talking and this led to pupils losing interest and wasting the time allocated to physical activity. This was not the case in Year 6 when the pace was brisk and pupils were active throughout the lesson.
142. Evidence from photographs shows a good range of experiences is planned. These include special activities led by visiting specialists. The recent skipping workshop was very popular and has led to pupils enjoying skipping at lunchtimes.
143. Management is satisfactory. Since the last inspection a more detailed scheme of work has been introduced but the co-ordinator has had limited time to check that this is being followed in all classes. The school benefits from being part of an Education Action Zone and this has led to a focus on improving fitness in the school. Talented pupils are linked to local clubs so that they can benefit from expert coaching and competition. Staff give generously of their time to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include football, netball, cross-country, athletics and judo. Schools in the action zone organise mini-competitions so pupils learn the skills of team work and fair play. These activities play an important role in extending pupils' social and moral skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. The standard of pupils' work in Year 2 and Year 6 meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is good. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment in Year 6 was below expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those who need help because English is not their first language also make good progress and thrive on the focus on discussion. Improvement has been brought about by closer attention to the locally agreed syllabus and more planned opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through religious education.
145. Currently, in Year 2, pupils have only studied the Christian religion and moral issues, such as the meaning of 'friendship'. This is not a deficit in the school's planning as the study of another world faith, Islam, is planned for the summer term. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Bible stories about the healing miracles performed by Jesus. They know the names of some disciples and that they were friends of Jesus. From the current teaching about Lent in assembly and in their lessons, they can explain in simple terms why people give up pleasures during Lent. They know that Christianity has a special symbol, the cross and that it signifies that Jesus died for us. Pupils of all levels of attainment can retell the main events of the nativity.
146. In Years 3 to 5 pupils learn in greater depth about different religions. Islam, for instance, is studied in Year 3 where pupils consolidate and develop the knowledge they gained in Year 2 of the main features of this faith. This lays a good foundation

for when they meet this focus again in Year 6, having studied Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism in the intervening years. Aspects of Christianity are part of the programme of study for each year, so that, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils can identify ways in which Christianity differs or is similar to other religions. Pupils are taught well to consider important issues raised in religious education lessons. One pupil stated that all religions teach people to live a good life. Pupils showed a particular interest in the details they had learnt about the Sikh religion. One offered the view that the 'Five Ks' were all symbols to remind people of their faith and that it was not necessary to remember what they were called, but what it was they symbolised.

147. The limited amount of teaching seen was satisfactory and learning reflected the teaching. A fun quiz was used to check pupils' knowledge of the features of Islam covered in the previous weeks but did not give them the opportunity to discuss or develop their understanding of the different elements of this faith. A good feature of the lesson was the use of a data projector to show photographs of the inside of a mosque. The teacher asked pupils to make notes on what they saw and pick out the most important features. This was a good link with literacy but most pupils found it challenging and spent time worrying whether their notes matched those of their neighbour. The teacher realised this and redirected their attention well to an appreciation of the meaning of the building and the special places within it. Teachers' plans and pupils' work show that in most lessons teachers' explanations provide pupils with good information about different religions while encouraging them to discuss and think about the issues they encompass. Pupils' work is well presented and of a good quantity showing that pupils work hard in lessons.
148. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has devised a good system for teachers to plan work and assess pupils' knowledge and skills, in accordance with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, the school has very few books in the library on different religions and the library is not well used to help pupils use their skills in reading to explore the different aspects of the subject. The subject is used well to develop pupils' skills in literacy. Good opportunities are provided to enrich pupils' experiences through visits to local places of worship. The Year 6 'pen pal' link with a local school, where most of the pupils are Muslims, is a successful initiative in promoting pupils' understanding of this faith and extending their cultural development.