

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIDGEWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Little Hulton, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105912

Headteacher: Mrs. Jenny Ogg

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Jean Harding
21378

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 November 2002

Inspection number: 246536

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bridgewater Street Little Hulton Manchester
Postcode:	M38 9WD
Telephone number:	0161 790 2281
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. Vincent Devine
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21378	Mrs. Jean Harding	Registered inspector	Music Religious education	Results and achievements Teaching Leadership and management
31718	Mrs. Denise Shields	Lay inspector		Care and guidance Partnership with parents
22398	Mrs. Lynne Wright	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage of Learning Information and communication technology Design and technology	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
22704	Mr. Garry Williams	Team inspector	Science Physical education	
4262	Mr. Tony Taylor	Team Inspector	English Art and design English as an additional language	Special educational needs Curricular provision Equal opportunities
25577	Mr. Bill Jefferson	Team Inspector	Mathematics History Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a school for boys and girls from 3 - 11 years of age. There are 315 pupils on roll, including 15 children who attend full-time and 17 part-time in the nursery. It is bigger than average size for primary schools. Most pupils are of white ethnic origin; none speaks English as an additional language. It is a Beacon school, which means that it offers its expertise to other schools, including involving parents with the education of their own child, and raising standards in writing.

About 13 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is well below the national average; most have general difficulties with their learning. Two pupils (less than one per cent) have a statement of special educational needs, which is below average. Two pupils are looked after by people other than their own parents. About 35 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is above average. The school is situated in an area of mainly rented housing and there are many indicators of social deprivation. Most of the children have had pre-school educational experience within the school's own nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is often well below the levels expected and to reception it is lower than expected, with many of them having significant problems with speaking.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, with significant strengths, that successfully raises pupils' standards of attainment through good teaching and the development of the whole child. Pupils are very eager to learn and are very well behaved. There are many very good features of the school's practice, which ensure that, by the time they leave the school, pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are high in important areas, such as writing. The curriculum is good in many respects, but in others its planning has not ensured that pupils have had enough teaching in some subjects, and so standards are not high as they should be. The leadership of the headteacher is very good but that of the governors is unsatisfactory and this has compromised the school's effectiveness in some aspects. A number of statutory requirements are not met. It has a little more money than many schools, nevertheless this school gives good value.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are high in writing, science, history and most aspects of physical education by the end of Key Stage 2, and in religious education at Key Stage 1.
- Children in the Foundation Stage¹ and pupils throughout the school make good progress in learning because the high quality support encourages them to learn independently.
- Pupils use their speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and problem-solving skills very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Due to the very good provision for their personal development, pupils have very good attitudes to learning, they behave very well and work well together.
- Attendance is good.
- The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is very good, and they set high expectations.
- The teaching is good and has some very good features.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is very good.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in information and communication technology and music at Key Stage 2, which are below expectations;
- The involvement of governors in the leadership and management of the school;
- The overall management of the curriculum;
- Several important areas of health and safety, including the condition of the infants' toilets.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

¹ The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

The school has made good improvements since it was inspected in February 1998. Although teaching was then judged to be good, a key issue was for staff to widen the range of teaching styles; this they have done successfully. The teaching and the overall provision have improved in the Foundation Stage. The assessment of pupils' abilities has improved considerably, as has the use of the information acquired. The resources for English, especially the provision of books, have also improved. Not only have standards been maintained in most subjects, but also they have improved in English and science. The general support and care given to pupils continues to improve except for some aspects of health and safety. The accommodation has improved, although there is still more to be done. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved a great deal. The new organisation of the governing body, reported in 1998, has not brought about the predicted involvement. However, there are now new governors, and a very recently appointed new chair, who is experienced, so the capacity for future developments is better than it has been recently.

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	D	D	A
Mathematics	E	D	C	A
Science	D	D	C	A

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

Over the last four years, the trend in attainment in these core subjects was in line with the national trend, with a notable dip in 2000 due to the abilities of that year group. Last year's Year 6 appeared not to make as good progress as they might through Key Stage 2 but this was due to the relatively high turnover of pupils in their last years of school, and the number being of lower ability. Standards are now rising and the work seen during the inspection shows that, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are generally in line with national averages and expectations, but attainment in writing, science, and history is above average. Attainment in information and communication technology and music is below that expected. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are mostly as expected by the Agreed Syllabus, with some deficiencies. No firm judgement can be made about standards in geography as little has been taught since last year. Attainment in physical education is higher than expected for pupils of the same age, although in swimming it is below the expected level. Pupils' progress through the school is very good as they join the school with lower than expected attainment and leave it with higher than expected knowledge, understanding and skills in important areas.

Children in the Foundation Stage make especially good progress in their learning, even so most will not achieve the learning goals as they go into the Year 1 because they come into the school with particularly low skills in many areas. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national averages and expectations, but pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion is above the expected level. Their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing are those expected and this shows good progress in learning through Years 1 and 2. There have been fluctuating grades in the National Curriculum tests results since 1999 as these grades are dependent on the degree of the learning difficulties of each year group. In comparison with similar schools, last year, pupils at the end of Year 2 did better in reading, and much better in writing and mathematics².

All pupils make at least good progress in their learning. Girls do not do as well in the national tests as boys, but this was not evident during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. Pupils who are more able than others and those who are looked after by people

² 'Similar schools' are defined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment found in schools nationally.

other than their natural parents, mostly make good progress. A major factor in the good progress is pupils' very good use of their basic skills in communication and application of number. Pupils are very good at working with others, and their good thinking skills, information processing and problem-solving help their learning in all subjects, but they do not use their information technology skills well enough in other lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils love school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There have been no exclusions and there are no problems with bullying, sexism and racism.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils love to take responsibility. Children's development in the nursery and reception classes is very good and is key to their learning.
Attendance	Good, and punctuality is also good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching across the school is consistently good over time. Almost all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, most of it was good and a high percentage was very good, with two lessons being of outstanding quality. Good teaching and learning was observed in all classes. A few lessons were unsatisfactory as the planning and teachers' explanations were not good enough to ensure pupils' proper understanding. All the lessons in the nursery and reception classes were at least good, and in Years 1 and 2 many of them were very good. The teaching of pupils in Year 6 is consistently of high quality. Staff teach literacy and numeracy well and encourage pupils to use their skills in other subjects. However, teachers do not plan for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills enough in other subjects. The teaching of English, mathematics, science, physical education, and history is good. Key factors in the high quality of teaching are the teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour, and their management of pupils. There is a very good emphasis on practical work to ensure understanding. The very best lessons have good pace and pupils relish the challenge and excitement of the activity. Skilled support staff are used very well and play an important part in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught particularly well. Homework is satisfactory, but more could be given to older pupils. Because of the good teaching, pupils acquire secure new knowledge, understanding and skills, which they use to good effect. They are very interested in the work and try hard; even the youngest children concentrate very well for long periods of time. An important factor in pupils' good learning is the way that they think for themselves and make great efforts to be independent; this is due to the staff's approach.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for the Foundation Stage. It is broad and relevant for Years 1 - 6 but for older pupils religious education and music are given too little time. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good in terms of assessment, teaching and support.
Provision for pupils'	Very good for spiritual, moral and social development, and good for

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	cultural development. Planning for pupils' personal development is very good. Racial tolerance is promoted effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Many aspects of care are very good, but aspects of health and safety are unsatisfactory. Assessment in core subjects is very good and in other subjects it is satisfactory, except for music and religious education. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is very good.

Pupils are given too little chance to attain the required standard in swimming. Not all the programmes of study for information and communication technology are taught at the required level. All pupils have good access to all that is on offer. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. Parents think very highly of the school and good efforts are made to involve them, but this has little impact on attainment at present. A significant number of pupils are not heard to read at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the headteacher that is key to the school's success. She has built a strong staff team and a supportive ethos. The leadership and management by senior staff are good overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Too little real involvement. There are several aspects of procedures that do not comply with statutory requirements, which governors do not know about, or have done too little about, and this is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good by the headteacher and senior staff but governors do not have sufficient success criteria to judge the progress towards targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall, especially in bidding for, and the use of, extra money. Current priorities are supported by careful financial planning. The rather large sum carried forward is for essential repairs. Staff, the accommodation and resources are mostly used well, and the principles of best value are generally effectively applied.

There is a good number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Resources are mostly good, but the lack of some resources for information and communication technology, and the lack of staff training, mean that some aspects of the subject are not taught in sufficient depth. The condition of the infants' toilets is unacceptable, although the accommodation is generally good. The school has excellent possibilities for training teachers based on its very thorough induction scheme. The ethos of challenge that has been established ensures pupils' academic learning, social development and happiness in school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>That their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are expected to work hard and do their best are making good progress behave well <p>That the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has approachable staff is well led and managed helps pupils to become mature and responsible 	<p>A minority of parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would like more homework would like to know more about how to help with maths homework would like more information about their children's progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• promotes the 'complete child'• has improved in recent years• has helped them to work with their own children in curriculum workshops	
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Most parents think very highly of the school and inspectors think that they are right to be happy with what is provided for their children. Parents do have a point about the homework; more could be given to older pupils. The school should provide parents with more details about their child's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children come into the nursery class with standards generally well below the national norm in all areas of learning, which is lower than they were at the previous inspection. Their language skills are particularly restricted. Carefully planned, good quality teaching, which takes full account of each child's assessed needs, helps them to make good progress, so that by the time the children move into the reception year they are working at levels below national expectations, although some are still well below the levels expected in their language development. However, the attainment of children entering the present nursery class is higher than usual; it is below the national norm, and the attainment of a few children matches national expectations for children of this age. Good teaching and planning throughout the reception year ensures that the children continue to make good progress. Although many are still not ready for the National Curriculum teaching programmes when they move into Year 1, some are. A few children, who have still to establish learning patterns consistently, nevertheless, make good progress, although they are still well below expectations at the end of the year. The children's personal and social development is a priority in the Foundation Stage and is developed and encouraged vigorously throughout, particularly through the good emphasis on play. By the time the children enter Year 1 they have made very good progress to match expectations in many aspects of this area of learning. At the time of the previous inspection, children's attainment was said to be below average on entry but their progress was satisfactory. Progress through the Foundation Stage is now good; this is an improvement over the last four and a half years, and is due to good teaching and a very thorough curriculum.
2. Pupils make at least good progress through Key Stage 1, and their attainment is above that expected in religious education. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, for the last four years, show a fluctuating picture with better grades in 2000 but with current grades in reading and mathematics which are lower than they were in 1998. In writing, grades are about the same as they were. However, the overall performance of pupils over the last four years has exceeded the national average. The variation in the National Curriculum tests results between years reflects the different abilities of the different year groups; the Year 2 groups of the last two years (the current Year 3 and 4 pupils) were of considerably lower attainment when they joined the school than other groups have been.
3. National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 for 2002 show pupils attained below average levels for reading, and above average for writing and for mathematics. The pupils achieved very high levels for science and for speaking and listening, as assessed by the teachers. The percentages of pupils in Year 2 achieving higher grades was average in writing, speaking and listening, and science, but was lower than average for reading. Boys did especially well in writing compared with boys nationally. In comparison with schools that admit pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average for reading and well above average for writing and for mathematics.
4. Pupils' standards of attainment and achievements at Key Stage 1 are the same as reported at the previous inspection. Evidence about Key Stage 1 gathered during the inspection, including observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils and hearing them read, show that pupils attain levels in most subjects that are in line with national expectations and averages except for religious education, where their knowledge and understanding are above the level expected. Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are average. Standards of attainment in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history, music, physical education, are as expected. No judgement can be made about attainment in geography, as no lessons or written work were seen, and there are no records of pupils' achievements or attainment.

5. By the end of Key Stage 2, overall standards of attainment in most subjects are in line with national expectations and averages, but in some subjects they are better than expected and represents very good progress since pupils joined the school with below expected levels of attainment. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In aspects of English, such as writing, science, history and physical education standards are higher than expected. Attainment by the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology is below expectations. Progress in learning in music has been unsatisfactory and so pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is lower than it should be, as they have not had enough teaching in this subject. No firm judgement can be given about pupils' standards in geography as only one lesson was seen and there has been no work done in the subject since last spring; however, discussion with pupils showed that they have little knowledge and understanding of some geographical work and this is due to problems with curriculum planning. Their progress has, therefore, not been as sound as it could have been.
6. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 for English, mathematics and science in 2002 show that, overall, pupils attained below the national average level in English and at average levels in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average for English, mathematics and science. Pupils who have been in the school since they were in Year 2 have done well. Current pupils in Year 6 are working at average levels in reading and above average levels in writing. Progress in writing, through the school, has been very good due to the consistently good quality of the teaching, and lots of practice. Pupils' progress through the school in reading and mathematics has also been good. The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 for the last four years show fluctuating grades, dependent on the ability of each cohort of pupils. The significant dip in 2000 was predicted by the staff, and they made appropriate plans to help those pupils who were less able. Overall, the trend in attainment has been in line with the national trend, with recent improvements.
7. Inspection evidence, including a detailed analysis of these statistics, as well as lesson observation and scrutiny of work, shows that standards of attainment in most subjects, for most pupils at Key Stage 2, are at least in line with national expectations and averages, and above for some important areas. Standards of attainment in writing are above expectations, and this helps pupils' attainment in other subjects. Given the attainment on entry to the school, pupils' progress in learning is very good. Where their progress has not been good enough, such as in aspects of information and communication technology, music, geography and aspects of religious education, this has usually been due to weaknesses in the curriculum provided. Much time has been spent on core subjects, to the detriment of other National Curriculum subjects, and this has affected standards. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of investigative science have improved considerably, and this is helping their attainment in science overall.
8. A very positive feature is the way that pupils use their key skills of learning well in other subjects. Across the school pupils make good use of their learned communication, reading and numeracy skills. They make very good use of their skills in writing, but too little use of their information and communications technology skills. They work together and solve problems very well, and they demonstrate secure thinking skills, such as reasoning and enquiry. The school has identified the improvement of pupils' listening skills as a priority target for this year, but there is no hard evidence that these skills are less than satisfactory, and in some cases pupils' listening skills are higher than usually expected.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well; this is the result of the very good extra provision, including withdrawal from their classes for literacy and the teaching of the support assistants. Most make very good progress from the earliest stages of their schooling and continue this until they leave. Those with specific statements of special need do very well in relation to their potential. They make especially good progress because of high quality small-group work, and individual support from the learning support assistants.

10. Pupils of higher attainment are usually sufficiently challenged, especially in English, mathematics and science, but this is not always the case in other subjects. Most are working at higher levels in the National Curriculum programmes of study. The school is putting in place procedures to identify any pupil who is gifted or talented. Talented pupils are identified and encouraged through the school's programme of extra-curricular activities.
11. The school analyses all national tests to see if there are any differences attributable to gender or race. There is no observable difference in the attainment of pupils that can be attributed to their background or ethnic origin. There is, however, a significant difference in the attainment and progress of boys and girls, especially in the National Curriculum tests results, particularly in English. Boys do better than girls in the school, which is unusual. The staff are considering the reasons for this, and have come to tentative conclusions. They consider that boys do well because there are no gender difficulties in the school, and all pupils are challenged well as individuals; and this appears to be valid. Also, there were more girls with some learning difficulties last year. Another reason the school suggests, but has yet no proof, that the older girls in the locality lose their taste for serious study as they approach adolescence; staff are consulting their receiving secondary schools about this, as this is sometimes the situation with girls of this age. They are trying appropriate, different ways of teaching to see if different groupings work.
12. The school's targets for 2002 were just about met for English and but the target of 82 per cent attaining the required grades for mathematics was a bit high; 73 per cent attained the required grade. The targets for 2003 are ambitious, but attainable given that the school has the information to make reasonable predictions about pupils' attainment next year. The target for mathematics for the following year is also high but, similarly, there is no reason why it should not be attained given pupils' current attainment and progress. Pupils have individual targets for some aspects of English, but not for other subjects, and this is an area for further development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The school is very successful in meeting its aims to develop self-confident, responsible pupils with a positive and independent approach to learning and high standards of behaviour. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to school. Their behaviour and personal development are also very good, based on the very good personal relationships that exist between all members of the school community. Parents' views that behaviour in the school is good are correct. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and now, from the start, pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility and to use their own initiative throughout the school day. They are also taught, and encouraged, to take an independent approach in everything they do in school. The previous inspection found this area to be a strength of the school. It is now an even greater strength.
14. The pupils like coming to school because it is a safe, happy place and '*there are friends all around you*'. The youngest children come into school happily and confidently because they understand, and like, the daily routines. They settle enthusiastically to the interesting activities provided, and organise themselves very efficiently, putting on aprons for painting, for example, or choosing an activity quickly. The few who have yet to settle to this routine are helped to choose, and staff work with them to establish an understanding of what work and play are. Children in the nursery and reception classes play with quiet concentration for comparatively lengthy periods because the activities are stimulating and well-organised. Staff value each individual child highly. Children's views are sought and listened to, and this gives them confidence to have a go at whatever is expected of them and to join group discussions as much as they can. The children follow the staff's very good example of a positive and caring approach and are helpful to each other, sharing toys and playing alongside each other amicably.
15. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. As they move through the school, they generally sustain very good concentration and try hard to do their best, because lessons are mostly interesting and well-paced and the pupils recognise that teachers want to help them to achieve as

well as they possibly can. This helps them to maintain good levels of self-confidence and, as a result, behaviour in lessons is very good overall and pupils make good progress in their learning. Where lessons are more slowly paced and over-directed by the teacher, pupils' concentration wanders but they still remain well-behaved, because they know it is an expectation of the school. Pupils enjoy learning new things and are often excited by what they have found out as, for example when pupils in Year 2 found out that Samuel Pepys buried his wine and cheese during the Great Fire of London! This, and good teaching, help the pupils to make connections in their learning, so that they use, for example, their knowledge of note-taking, writing instructions and measuring accurately to help them in other lessons, such as design and technology. This is a significant factor in the good progress made by all groups of pupils as they move throughout the school and in the very positive attitudes that they have to learning. The take-up and enthusiasm for extra-curricular activities is indicative of pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs try very hard and appreciate the help they are given; this helps them with their learning.

16. There have been no exclusions. Pupils' behaviour is very good in less formal situations, such as playtimes and lunchtimes. Playtimes are sociable occasions where boys and girls play well together. The good levels of adult supervision, and the traditional games offered, ensure that high standards are maintained. Lunchtime arrangements are well organised so that meals are taken in a friendly, pleasant atmosphere. Pupils are well mannered and converse quietly throughout the session. They are really pleased when they, or their friends, are awarded a badge for good behaviour or for a clean plate or empty lunch box. The school is achieving its aims to develop a calm, orderly atmosphere, and it is one where all groups of pupils flourish.
17. The caring ethos of the school, and the very good relationships, are evident in class and around the school. In class, pupils work with increasing co-operation as their language skills develop and they support each other effectively. Pupils in Year 5 help each other with fiddly joins to make stable shelters in design and technology. They listen to each other's answers and build on them, as when they decide the best sort of font and background for the title page of the computer presentation in Year 6. Older pupils are caring of younger ones and look after them as the need arises. They have a good understanding of how their actions make others feel. Their respect for different values and beliefs grows satisfactorily as they move through the school and they gain wider life experiences through such opportunities as a talk from an eight-year-old visitor on what it is like to be a Jewish boy.
18. Pupils are expected to use their own initiative as a first step in tackling any task or solving any problem, so that their personal development is very good. Teachers will not readily do anything for any pupil, such as threading a needle or providing information, that they can do for themselves with practice and thought, so that pupils become skilled at problem solving in all aspects of school life. All pupils are expected to be responsible for themselves, right from the beginning of their time in school and class sessions often focus on such ideas as trust and sharing. The youngest children tidy up after themselves with impressive speed and efficiency, as well as carrying out given tasks such as taking the register to the office. As the pupils get older they assume other roles within the school and they take them on readily and conscientiously. Prefects from Year 6 have well defined, important jobs that help the smooth running of the school. For example, one prefect is assigned to each class before the morning session, and in the nursery they get the milk, and other equipment, ready and check the toilets.
19. Attendance is good because of the high priority the school gives to encouraging regular attendance. This is in line with the findings of the previous report. There is no recorded unauthorised absence. Virtually all pupils arrive at school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The teaching is good across the whole school. There has been an improvement in the teaching since the previous inspection, especially in the Foundation Stage. There was a key issue for the school to address relating to two aspects of the teaching in 1998, because there was insufficient challenge for all pupils, and assessment information was not use well enough. Also, teachers used a narrower range of teaching styles in some subjects than they did in English. These issues have been addressed very well and are having a very good impact on pupils' learning.
21. Of the lessons observed over the whole school, 94 per cent were at least satisfactory, 41 per cent were good and 30 per cent were very good, including two lessons that were of outstanding quality. Good teaching was observed in every class. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and 85 per cent was good, with one lesson being very good. At Key Stage 1 nearly all lessons were at least satisfactory 73 per cent were good or better and 47 per cent were very good, with one being excellent. The one unsatisfactory mathematics lesson was because the planning was not good enough to address the learning needs of the pupils. Ninety-two per cent of lessons observed at Key Stage 2 were at least satisfactory, 66 per cent were good or better, and 32 per cent were very good, including one that was excellent. The unsatisfactory teaching was observed in three lessons for pupils in Year 4. The teaching of pupils in Year 6 is consistently of high quality. All the teaching of pupils in Year 6 observed was at least good and much was very good, with one excellent lesson. All lessons in English observed were at least satisfactory and most were good, with a high percentage being very good.
22. This high quality teaching ensures good learning by pupils of all abilities. The key to the good teaching across the whole school is the high expectations set by all staff. Good practice is shared and internal and external monitoring shows that the teaching has been continuously improving. Teachers generally have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except for some aspects of information and communication technology, for which more training is planned in order for them to be able to teach to the required level. The teaching of basic skills is very good, and this is a crucial factor in pupils' successful use of these skills in all parts of the curriculum. Even very basic lessons in letter sounds are given a real buzz by lively presentation, such as was observed in a Year 1 class. Pupils therefore want to learn because the work is interesting, and also because they want to please the teacher.
23. The children in the Foundation Stage are given a very good start. Good quality teaching, the very good teaching of basic skills, teachers' very high expectations that all children will try their hardest, and very good management class management within a very interesting and relevant curriculum, all ensure that the children make good progress. They make particularly good progress in the development of their social and personal skills because the teaching team puts a lot of time and energy into teaching good manners and giving the children the confidence to become independent in the way in which they tackle activities.
24. Across the whole school, the staff's management of pupils is very good. The ethos of support, respect and fun while learning, which all adults have built up over years, promotes very good relationships and ensures that lessons run smoothly. There are hardly any raised voices, and staff expect pupils to work hard and to behave sensibly. As a result they do, and this promotes good learning and a happy atmosphere in the classes. Interruptions to the teaching because of restless behaviour are very rare and, if it does happen, pupils are suitably embarrassed. Even when the lessons are not as stimulating as they might be, pupils still try hard and concentrate for long periods of time. The skilled support staff are used well and they play an essential part in raising the attainment of pupils, especially those who are less able. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and most achieve very well during their time in the school. The teaching and support staff are very aware of the needs of the pupils who have special educational needs, have the skills to meet them, and use them well. Expectations for work, effort and behaviour are very high and are largely met by the pupils who generally work hard to improve. They have positive attitudes and usually do significantly well.

25. Lessons generally go with a swing and little time is wasted. A good range of appropriate resources is used, but teachers do not plan for enough use of information and communication technology in all lessons. This means that pupils' technological skills are not as well developed as they could be. Similarly, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the subject by reference to a multi-cultural dimension in the work, which would add substantially to pupils' cultural development. Teachers' planning is generally good, but not as good as it could be, especially in lessons in non-core subjects. Although work is planned to cater for the needs of pupils of all abilities, suitably differentiated work, especially for the more able, is not always in evidence, or just consists of doing a bit more. The best lessons have detailed planning to cover what pupils are supposed to learn, not just what they are required to do. An example is a very successful religious education lesson for pupils in Year 2, which ensured that they had a good grasp of the symbolism of a Christingle.
26. Staff use a good range of strategies for teaching, and this is a big improvement since the previous inspection. In the less successful lessons, however, these strategies are not so well used, and so pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Through her monitoring the headteacher has knowledge of this, and encourages the best practitioners to help others to extend their repertoire. Staff use good questioning to ensure that pupils have a sound grasp of the information and to assess their understanding. Work in pairs and in groups is effective and promotes pupils' collaborative skills very well. A mathematics lesson for more able pupils in Year 6 was highly successful due to the comfortable, relaxed environment established by the teacher that encouraged independence, a collaborative approach and problem-solving. This overt encouragement of pupils' independence is a most important factor in this school's promotion of successful learning, and this was an excellent example of what can be done if one lets the pupils do it.
27. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, but the comments do not always give tips about how the work could be improved. However, they have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding as they question closely during lessons. Homework is set and followed up. Parents are mostly happy with what is set. Pupils generally like the homework and older pupils would like more, and they have a point.

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

28. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is of very good quality and shows very positive improvement since the previous inspection. It is based in a strongly thematic approach which helps the children to see threads in the learning which are developed through direct teaching and a strong emphasis on play as an effective means of academic and personal development. This is very successful in involving and enthusing the children. The curriculum gives the children a very wide range of experiences which are directly related to their everyday life, such as setting up the imaginative play area as a Macdonald's, and investigating a real building site as well as playing in their own model sites. The introduction of detailed, well-structured plans for areas of continuous provision, such as mark-making, is innovative and highly effective in helping the children to make good progress.
29. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 has many good features but also areas for improvement particularly at Key Stage 2. The quality is the same as was reported at the previous inspection. It promotes learning in all the subjects of the National Curriculum and includes the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. It offers very worthwhile opportunities for learning and reflects the pupils' needs and encourages their interests at each stage. The curriculum is broad and relevant, and focuses well on the pupils' all-round development. It is, however, a curriculum under pressure. The many new positive initiatives, such as the additional literacy support strategies and booster class activities, collectively impinge on the overall time available. While the curriculum remains broad, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the school to maintain depth in its curriculum coverage.

30. Subjects such as geography, music, religious education at Key Stage 2, and swimming tend to be curtailed. History is taught in two-term blocks, alternating with the teaching of geography; the differing length of terms each year means that these two curriculum areas have unequal timetable allocation, and therefore pupils do not have as much teaching of geography as they should to ensure that they learn enough. Information and communications technology at Key Stage 2 is not as widely developed and in sufficient depth as it needs to be. Also, even more could be done to ensure that the curriculum for the highest attaining pupils matches their potentials. The major change from the findings of the previous inspection has been the pressure of new initiatives. There is a need for a review of the curriculum as a whole, to ensure it fullest breath, balance and coherence. There being no overall curriculum co-ordinator, nor an active committee of the governing body, this presents problems in terms of change within an appropriate time-scale. However, there are many very positive aspects of the curriculum. The strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy are very good and effectively promote the pupils' basic skills.
31. The school ethos is inclusive, and despite there being a need for further attention to the challenge for higher attainers, the pupils are usually assured of equal opportunities in their learning. There are currently no pupils with English as an additional language in the school at present, and a policy for their inclusion has yet to be developed. This has not been a priority recently, but procedures need to be in place ready for any eventuality. The school's support of pupils with special educational needs is an area of very good provision. Great care is taken to identify pupils' needs early on in their school career, and to ensure that there is support sufficient to match them. A significant feature of the school is that many pupils with special educational needs reach standards close to the average in their knowledge, skills and understanding because the curriculum for them is planned very carefully and continuous support is given.
32. The provision for health education, sex education and drugs education is satisfactory; it currently meets requirements. A new co-ordinator for personal, social and health education has been appointed, and has a good grasp of what is required. Liaison has taken place between local education authority advisers, school governors and managing staff in order to identify needs and to ensure that the programme of education is relevant, appropriate and extensive enough to ensure the pupils' good overall development.
33. During the previous inspection, the range and quality of the extra-curricular activities the school provided were noted as excellent. There is no higher accolade, but there is a sense in which the school deserves one! It has retained the range and quality of these experiences, despite many pressures, with sporting and cultural activities, educational trips and holidays, safety activities such as cycling proficiency, and charity work. The pupils regularly and enthusiastically attend these extra opportunities for learning, and it is little wonder that the school extra-curricular notice-board, with its interesting information, is read avidly.
34. Bridgewater Primary is a school with Beacon status. It has beneficial links with other local schools and with the community at large. Other primary schools state that they have been helped very well by Bridgewater staff in their development of their curriculum areas and, especially in their links with parents. The parents' workshops in subjects such as numeracy, science and design and technology have been a great success. Pupils are prepared well for secondary education. Links with the local high school are established, but currently undergoing review due to the changes that have taken place locally in secondary education. There has been little input through links with other schools through governors recently.
35. Overall provision for the pupils' personal development is very good, and remains a strength of the school, as it was at the previous inspection. Arrangements to develop the pupils spiritually show good improvement, and are now very good. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and for their cultural development it is good. The school's strong ethos of care is evident in many aspects of its work and the school's aims place high priority on promoting a tolerant approach to people and acceptable moral standards.

36. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good and much of the school's work reflects a strong belief in promoting self-esteem and valuing others. The school promotes mutual respect very strongly throughout. Each individual is listened to and valued so that self-knowledge, respect and confidence grow. Staff make it quite clear to the pupils that they want them to be happy and successful in all aspects of their school life and to this end they teach them how to think things through for themselves. School assemblies successfully help pupils to understand that they are members of a school community with shared values. The school expresses its values firmly and openly through praise and rewards and very good relationships. This sense of community is reflected in the wholehearted way in which pupils respond to school rules and live up to the high expectations of good behaviour. Many opportunities are given to help pupils explore their own values and thoughts. As pupils progress throughout the school these sessions are carefully planned to take account of the pupils' increasing maturity and self-awareness by stressing more difficult concepts of trust and co-operation. Religious education makes a good contribution to spiritual growth at Key Stage 1, but at Key Stage 2 there is not enough emphasis on valuing what other religious beliefs bring to the pupils' understanding of the spiritual dimension. The teaching of poetry and dance often requires the pupils to think outside of their own immediate feelings and to reflect on deeper emotional feelings.
37. The school encourages the pupils' moral development very well through a series of moral codes written in language that can be understood by the youngest children, as well as the oldest pupils. These rules guide the pupils in every school situation and make the school's high expectations of good behaviour and attitudes totally clear. Of particular note is the spelling out of what these expectations look like in practice. Pupils know and understand what will happen if they break the rules, and that they will be rewarded consistently and fairly if they stick to them. There are many incentives to obey the rules, such as stickers and house points, and pupils are happy that the school is a good and safe place to be. Their developing maturity in understanding the importance of rules is shown in their own class rules, written and accepted by all class members, so that by Year 6 '*take pride in your work*' is a firmly established principle. The equal rights of each individual is promoted very strongly through, for example, a very clearly expressed position on bullying, so that this is a very rare feature of school life. Right and wrong, and some more complex moral issues are explored in whole class sessions, such as the right of children in an Indian village, studied by pupils in Year 5, to better schooling. From the start, pupils are given many opportunities to exercise moral choice and the school expects them to take personal responsibility for their actions at all times, in all situations. Children are encouraged to be independent thinkers and to have their say. Pupils in Year 6 say they feel confident that they would be listened to if they felt they were being unfairly treated, and that positive action would result.
38. The pupils' social development is promoted very effectively. Pupils are given many chances to work together co-operatively in many aspects of school life, and they do so very well, living up to their teachers' high expectations. Assemblies, charity events and residential trips for older pupils all promote a strong feeling of belonging to a class and school community. Personal qualities, such as good effort or kind actions are actively promoted through events such as class special mention awards which show that pupils are proud of what they achieve in and out of school. Pupils are given their say in how the class functions and they have real responsibility, which they readily accept, for the smooth running of their class. Pupils are proud of their school, and enjoy being part of it. The excellent provision for extra-curricular activities promotes pupils' social development very well.
39. Pupils are being helped to develop good cultural awareness. They have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage through local studies in geography and history. These subjects also give the pupils a good insight into the cultures of other groups of people in the past, and present. Visits by 'Henry VIII' and an 'ARP Warden' bring the curriculum to life and help the pupils appreciate the feelings and experiences of other people. Visits in the locality widen the pupils' cultural understanding through showing them different aspect of life and what contribution different people make to their own cultural experiences. Pupils have a wide range of cultural

experiences through drama, music and dance. These include such diverse events as a music workshop on African drumming and a visit from the Philharmonic orchestra. Every class has had a dance workshop which included Indian dance and New York street dance. Although art and design lessons include influences from cultures outside our own, the scope is limited. The teaching scheme for music includes the use of musical instruments from around the world, but again wider musical influences are not apparent in any depth. The school promotes an awareness of an appreciation of other cultures and social groups through promoting empathy and respect for all groups of people and individuals, and encourages the pupils to think, for example, about what it would feel like to be a refugee coming to their school. A Buddhist workshop gave pupils in Year 6 the opportunity to meet a visitor who had very different beliefs and values to their own. However, not enough is done to include examples from other cultural and ethnic groups in everyday teaching so that the pupils' awareness of life in our multi-cultural society, although satisfactory, is not as well extended as it could be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Pupils are highly valued and welcomed into this very caring school. There are very good arrangements for the day-to-day pastoral support of the pupils. The secretarial staff, classroom assistants and mid-day supervisors, as well as teachers, all play a significant part in the success of this aspect of the school's work. This high quality support gives boys and girls of all ages the confidence to seek help if they should need it and enables them to develop into mature and responsible young people. Parents have confidence in the support and guidance provided for their children. However, arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare range from very good to unsatisfactory. Most, but not all, areas have improved since the time of the previous inspection.
41. Attendance is monitored very effectively and absence is noted and followed up quickly. Very good procedures are in place that encourages pupils to attend school regularly and on time. The school is very aware of those who do not and there is good liaison with the educational welfare officer (EWO) in order to support these pupils and their families. However, in line with the external advice it receives, the school leaves the registers open until not long before lunch. This does not follow the government recommendations that they should be closed thirty minutes after the start of the school day.
42. Procedures relating to child protection and to support those children who are in public care are very good. The designated person has detailed knowledge of local practice. Any issues or concerns are dealt with extremely sensitively. Arrangements are very clear and known to all staff, who are vigilant and this ensures that pupils receive a consistently high level of care appropriate to their needs. The medical needs of pupils are very well catered for, when required teachers have received specific training to enable them to support individual pupils. There is an appropriate number of staff qualified in first aid and who are able to deal quickly with any incident or illness when they occur. Supervision arrangements are very good; there are always sufficient adults on duty at break and lunchtime. Lunchtimes are particularly sociable occasions, relationships are friendly, and there is a lovely atmosphere in the dining hall. The breakfast club is well attended, and provides pupils with a nourishing breakfast and a relaxed start to the school day.
43. The premises committee carry out a termly review of the school site and buildings; the full governing body monitors these reports. However, insufficient attention and urgency has been given to addressing the issues raised in the local education authority safety audit of the school that was carried out earlier this year. Although a very small number of areas have been addressed, there are many significant points that remain outstanding. Because of this health and safety arrangements are unsatisfactory. The governing body are not fulfilling their 'duty of care' towards all staff and pupils, effectively enough. However, since the inspection team left the school, significant work has been done to address the deficiencies that had been brought to the school's attention during the inspection.

44. The monitoring of the personal development of pupils is given high priority. Teachers endeavour to ensure that pupils receive not just an academic education, but one that develops the self-esteem and confidence of each individual child. There is very much a focus on developing 'the whole child'. It is very successful in this aspect of its work. The emphasis on positive play means that lunchtimes are, for the most part, times when pupils play and socialise well together. Pupils who have difficulty controlling their behaviour are very well supported. For instance they are able to have short periods of quality time with adults to talk through their problems and discuss strategies for coping and dealing with their problems. The school's arrangements to monitor pupils' personal development, behaviour and deal with incidents of any kind are unobtrusive but very effective. The systems are very clear, understood by the pupils, and enable the headteacher to identify quickly where additional support is required or when parents need to be contacted to discuss concerns. The pupils confirm this; they express the utmost confidence that incidents are dealt with quickly and that all pupils are treated fairly and can gain support from adults if they should need it. There are appropriate arrangements to ensure that there is no racism.
45. Very high priority is given to promoting the children's achievements in the Foundation Stage. They grow in confidence and self-esteem from the start, due to the staff's good care and because they know their children very well, enabling them to provide the right experiences at the right time. All children are assessed very carefully when they first enter the nursery and reception classes. This gives the teachers a very good idea of what each child needs and areas of particular concern are noted, and acted on. Teachers keep very careful ongoing records of each child's significant progress so that they can help them in areas where they are experiencing difficulties. These records are easy to use and effective, although they are not used to set individual targets for learning which would focus teaching even more effectively.
46. The reasons for the very good achievements of pupils with special educational needs revolve around the school's thoughtful and conscientious practice. Very good strategies are in place for identifying early, any needs the pupils might have, for example in literacy and numeracy skills, behaviour, or social and physical development. Support is given which is firmly focused on individual needs and over long periods when necessary. Carefully prepared individual education plans are constructed, and the learning challenges and targets in these are followed conscientiously, either in small groups working with additional support, or in the wider classroom situation. These plans are very regularly reviewed and updated. The success of the assessment for pupils with special educational needs makes a large impact on the overall attainment of pupils in the school.
47. Overall, systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in English, mathematics and science. The arrangements for assessment are much improved since the previous inspection when much data that was acquired was not easy to use. The current assessment procedures, for core subjects, have had a major impact on pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Staff build on the entry assessments for children in the Foundation Stage to monitor progress of individual pupils as they move through the school. Individual pupils are carefully tracked through the school. In addition to statutory testing at seven and 11, pupils are tested at the age annually from the age of seven in mathematics and English. Reading and phonic tests, linked to 'key words' in the literacy strategy, are regularly given to pupils in Years 1 and 2. Regular reading tests are given to pupils in Years 3 - 6. Examples of levelled work are kept in English and this is due to be extended to other subjects. Pupils' answers to National Curriculum tests questions are analysed for misunderstandings. Attainment in science is measured by using end of topic assessments linked to National Curriculum targets. Very good use is made of the data acquired. In non-core subjects and religious education there is very limited, formal assessment of pupils' progress and overall standards. The assessment of pupils' attainment is building up in subjects where the curriculum has been refined, but in subjects such as music, where the school is still working on its programme, little individual assessment takes place. For most subjects teachers do not yet assess and record how well individual pupils are progressing towards meeting the National Curriculum levels of attainment.

48. Teachers use assessment information very well in English, mathematics and science. They use it generally, to highlight the next step for planning that securely builds on previous learning. In English it is used regularly to set and update targets in pupils' individual 'Gold Books'. In mathematics, assessment is also used to place pupils in groups according to proven ability and changes in attainment over time. The school is aware of the need to further develop assessment procedures to track pupils' achievements in non-core subjects as they move through the school. Information is used well to compare the school's own performance with that of schools nationally and also with those schools who teach pupils from similar social backgrounds.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. An effective partnership has been established with parents. This means that parents are able to contact the school when they have any concerns. It also enables their views to be taken into consideration when the school is planning to review its practice. These findings are in line with those of the previous inspection.
50. Parents hold very positive views about the school. They think their children are expected to work hard and try their best and that teachers are helping children to become mature and responsible. They feel able to approach the teachers if they have any concerns or problems. The inspection findings agree with these very positive comments about the school. Only a very small number expressed any dissatisfaction when responding to the questionnaires. They feel that their children do not get sufficient homework. Inspectors find that the homework set is much the same as in other schools, but pupils in Year 6 could be given more.
51. The school has successfully sought ways to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education. It regularly runs workshops that enable parents to work alongside their children on specific projects such as science or design and technology. Parents speak highly of these opportunities, comments such as '*Now I know what my child does in science*', and '*I didn't realise how much my child knew*' indicate the benefit of these events. In the reception class parents have taken part in the SHARE reading workshops, which enable them to work with teachers to find ways to encourage their children to read and write. Although no parents currently help in the classrooms on a regular basis, they are always willing to provide an 'extra pair of hands' to accompany pupils on school visits. There are others who will help with specific lessons such as cooking or making props and costumes for the school play; the school appreciates this help. Class assemblies, school productions and harvest celebrations are always extremely well attended by parents.
52. In the Foundation Stage there is a well-planned induction programme for children starting in both the nursery and the reception class. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in this process; many do so and because of this their children settle quickly into the routines of school life. In the nursery partnership between home and school is encouraged through simple, but enjoyable homework tasks such as looking after 'George the Bear' for the night and writing a diary about his activities. The diary shows that both parents and children enter into the spirit of this homework with much enjoyment. This involvement is not fully capitalised upon in the reception class, however, because there no activities, such as a toy lending library or story sacks, that would involve parents in child centred activities. At present, there are no family learning projects for the parents of the youngest children, although the school is currently considering how these might be established and plans to seek the views of parents for suggestions.
53. Following any event, such as a workshop or open evening, parents are always asked for their views. This ensures that the school can be certain that parents are happy with what the school provides. Amendments to school practice have been made as a result of suggestions from parents. For instance parents' evenings are now held on two days with appointments now available both early and late in the day. A crèche facility is also provided, this means that parents with very young children are not disadvantaged, but can attend knowing their children will be

looked after. The school also actively consults with parents on important issues and changes in policy, such as the review of its anti bullying strategies. This extensive review, which also involved pupils, has resulted in a detailed policy that is clear to all who have a vested interest in it. Also money from the community access initiative provided information technology training for parents.

54. The information provided for parents is good. Newsletters are regular and keep parents up to date with what their children will be learning during the term. Day-to-day information is regular and sent in good time. Parents are made aware of the work their children will be expected to do at home. Nevertheless, records show that few parents support this work, for example hearing their children read at home. Parents of children with special educational needs also receive regular good quality information. They are invited to attend the review meetings to discuss their children's progress and what additional help may be required, but few do so. Despite the school's efforts direct parental involvement in their children's learning at home is limited.
55. The school brochure contains a great deal of practical information for parents who are new to the school. The governors' annual report is similarly rich in practical detail, but neither contain all the information they should; the school has been made aware of this issue. Annual reports giving detail of children's progress are unsatisfactory overall. This is because they vary in the quality of the comments given. In the best examples, usually in English and mathematics, teachers provide detailed commentary. Here they usually indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses and progress made. But this is not the case in all subjects; most comments are focussed on what pupils have covered or their attitude to the subject. No areas for improvement are indicated, for instance in the form of targets which could be discussed and agreed with parents thus enabling them to see how they might help their children to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership by the headteacher is very good, and this is key to the good improvement of the school. She has accomplished a great deal by hard work and empowering staff to do a thorough job. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and senior teachers, who also have a very good impact on establishing a high-performing staff team. Staff morale is high and staff absence is very low; this speaks volumes about the shared commitment to their work. The ethos of the school is one that promotes good relationships and high standards of academic performance and social behaviour; it encourages self-discipline. The aims are for self-confident pupils. The realisation of these aims is one key to the school's effectiveness. The leadership and management by the headteacher and school staff are the same as were reported at the previous inspection.
57. The management of the school by senior staff is good. Managers have a good overview but too few systems have been set up to ensure that they have sufficient detail to make changes where there are deficiencies, and, at times, too long a time-scale has been set for improvements, such as for the provision for music and to improve health and safety. Because of this there are some aspects that have not been addressed well enough, and a significant number of areas where the school does not comply with legal requirements. This deficiency in management consequently affects the provision for pupils.
58. The internal management of the school by staff with subject and pastoral responsibilities is good. There is a good emphasis on the learning environment. The senior management team, especially the headteacher and deputy, has a good understanding of what needs to be done. The managers have kept up-to-date with the latest requirements, such as appointing a member of staff to oversee the provision for pupils who are in public care. However, there is no policy nor agreed practice in the event of sudden arrival of pupils who may use English as an additional language, or other disadvantaged groups, and this is not the best practice. The co-ordination of subjects is good for core subjects and satisfactory overall for other subjects, but it is unsatisfactory for information and

communication technology and music. Teaching has generally been monitored well but not for all subjects, and so deficiencies have not been noted. The co-ordinators' evaluations of pupils' progress in core subjects, have produced the improvement in standards. However, this is not the case for all subjects where, at times, the monitoring is insufficiently evaluative, with an emphasis on the strengths rather than the weaknesses, and targets for improvement being insufficiently specific. There is no overall co-ordination of the curriculum and this has affected pupils' standards of attainment in some subjects. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator has a very clear idea of how she wants it to develop, based on her good understanding of young children's needs, interests and how they learn best. She has worked very hard to form a successful teaching team.

59. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed very well. There is a lower than average number of pupils in the school with special needs, but this is not an accident of situation. A major factor is that prompt and concerted remedial action is taken to ensure the pupils' needs are met and their skills improved. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in tandem with staff to ensure effective provision, and they are alert to new developments, such as the new code of practice and its implications.
60. The resources the school has been able to build up, both in the skills of support staff and in appropriate equipment, are carefully targeted to achieve maximum benefit. It pays off, and the pupils with special educational needs and those with lower levels of attainment benefit greatly. Funds allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are appropriately targeted and contribute effectively to the good progress made by these pupils. A high level of resource has been invested in providing learning support assistants and the provision has a positive impact in raising standards.
61. Governors are supportive but ineffective. The realisation of the clear vision for the school that has been set, the good aims and very positive ethos, with an overt commitment to high achievement, are the results of staff's efforts and not as a result of the leadership and management by the governors. The previous report stated that the governing body had an appropriate structure and that it was taking effective steps to ensure that it is involved in the life and work of the school. Five years ago the inspectors reported that the governing body was insufficiently involved with the budgetary process, but systems had been devised so that it could be fully aware of developments. The predicted increased involvement, and the examination of plans and practices, has not come about, except for some aspects of accommodation, resourcing and finance. Governors have too little input to the school development plan and although they keep a good eye on the budget, there is a lack of rigour in some practices that affects the running of the school. There is a significant number of areas in which the school does not use the best practice, and some areas where it does not meet statutory requirements, including issues of health and safety. Too many weaknesses identified through the risk assessments have not been addressed. Governors, however, accept responsibility for the deficiencies of the school which are, in the main due to lack of knowledge and understanding on their part, which stems from too little training and insufficient analysis of the real issues. Having had the deficiencies brought to their attention immediate action was taken, before the end of the inspection, to remedy the most urgent weaknesses.
62. Governors have not had the skills to hold the school to account or to be 'critical friends'. Governors who are not staff have spent little time in visiting the school or in meetings; the committee that should have an overview of curriculum has not met for over a year, and is unaware of the deficiencies in the planning for the curriculum. The review of subjects and areas of the school such as the provision for special educational needs has not been done. Some essential refurbishments, such as the infant toilets have been delayed for over four years. Of concern is the fact that some governors, who are not staff, consider the input of the governing body is good. However, there is a recently appointed new chair who is very experienced, and some new governors. In order for the governing body to be more effective, the full complement of governors needs to be recruited, and arrangements made to ensure that all governors have the training to contribute fully to the management of the school.

63. The headteacher, in consultation with the staff, devises the school improvement plan and there is little input from governors. Although the plan is useful in guiding the school's development, it only covers one year, although the headteacher and new chair are aware that outside influences, such as a change in the local education authority's policy for funding for pupils with special educational needs, may affect the school adversely. The current plan has many targets, but many of these are on-going, such as the decisions to continue monitoring, rather than real priorities for this year. The long-term strategic planning for the school's development is only concerned with finance and does not consider other aspects which determine success. There is appropriate evaluation of what has been achieved and governors and staff know what is planned and how well things are going.
64. Financial planning is satisfactory, which is the same judgements as was made at the previous inspection. The current management system for setting the budget is secure. However, the governing body is not yet sufficiently proactive in the initial stages of its drawing up. The carry over figure, over seven per cent from last year, is to be shortly reduced to within acceptable limits with the immediate planned expenditure for improvements to the accommodation. The finance committee meets on a regular basis and receives regular monthly statements to monitor expenditure. Although, currently they have not identified a criterion for success to evaluate the impact of major expenditure items, such as the computer suite, it is an issue, the school has active plans to address. Administration procedures are unobtrusive and work well.
65. Effective use is made of grants to support new initiatives and to improve further the quality of opportunities for raising standards. The headteacher is proactive in obtaining grants, which supports the school and its work. For example, money for Beacon status raises the profile of the school and provides opportunities for improved communication with other schools. The work with other schools to improve the tracking of their pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, has also improved Bridgewater staff's own practice.
66. The school has a good number of teachers and an adequate number of support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and the learning needs of the pupils. Performance management is now embedded in the life of the school. Performance objectives are linked closely to teaching and the school's improvement plan. The support and development of newly qualified teachers is exemplary. Two teachers in the school, at that stage in their career, sum up all aspects of the support they have received, by saying that they already feel like '*a member of a family*'. The school would give a high-class opportunity to new teachers in training for them to learn good practice.
67. The accommodation is good overall. Classrooms are, in the main, of a suitable size and the learning environment is enhanced by quality displays, which celebrate pupils' work and achievements. Specialist rooms such as an information and communication technology suite and library area have been created, which are raising standards. Internally the school is well maintained and clean. Outside there are suitable play areas, both hard surface and grassed, for children of all ages. A good environmental area has been developed which promotes attainment in science. The accommodation does, however, have shortcomings, one of which is significant. The infant toilets (for pupils in Years 1 and 2) are in very poor condition; the doors do not fit and often become jammed shut, and several toilets do not have seats. The pupils describe them as horrible and smelly. The condition of the toilets was an issue raised at the time of the previous inspection. Although the junior toilets have recently been refurbished, the improvements for the infants are not scheduled until July 2003. There has been an unacceptable length of time in addressing these problems, especially as the school had finances available to complete the necessary work. Having been told about this situation, the school has started to improve these facilities.
68. The school has accumulated a good range of learning resources. Those for English, for numeracy, and for special educational needs, are particularly good. The resources are extensive and appropriate and are usually matched well to both the needs of the curriculum and to the needs of the pupils and teaching staff. The resources are also of good quality and are usually stored in a

way that makes them readily accessible. This is very efficient and helps to maximise the time and opportunities the pupils have to learn. However, there are areas of resourcing that need to be reviewed to ensure the same general measure of efficiency. These relate to information and communications technology, and to the use of the community in religious education studies. The criticisms about resources made in the previous inspection report have all been addressed. The resources in the nursery have been upgraded and are now good. The range of literature for use in English is now very good, and the library has been reorganised and supplemented. The school has usefully employed an agency to advise and extend the library and this has been very beneficial. The only impediment to its fuller use now is that the library is used for teaching groups every morning. This tends to limit the accessibility of the library resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the school even further, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

1. Raise the standards of attainment of pupils at Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology and music by:
 - ensuring that sufficient time is allocated for teaching and practice in these subjects;
 - arranging for the further training of staff where there is a need;
 - devising, and using consistently, systems for assessing pupils' attainment.
(paragraph numbers 5. 7. 106. 114. 123. 124. 127. 128. 129. 130)

2. Improve the governors' involvement in the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that existing and new governors are well enough trained so that they understand and can fulfil their roles and responsibilities; this should ensure that all statutory requirements are met;
 - devising systems to allow better long-term planning for the school's development, and putting in place suitable success criteria to enable governors to decide if their targets have been achieved;
 - devising systems and organisational structures which will ensure compliance with set procedures; a more active committee would help in this respect;
 - arranging that governors visit the school more regularly to monitor its work;
 - ensuring there is a full complement of governors.
(paragraph numbers 57. 61. 62. 63. 136)

3. Improve the overall management of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that there is an overview of the whole provision;
 - allocating an appropriate amount of time for each subject;
 - ensuring that the time allocation for religious education is in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
 - appointing governors to be linked to the priority areas of the curriculum.
(paragraph numbers 5. 7. 30. 58. 61. 111. 127. 128. 129. 130. 136. 139)

4. Ensure that all the procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are in place**, and that there is total compliance with set procedures by:
 - arranging that problems found during formal Risk Assessment procedures are dealt with promptly;
 - making sure that all staff and governors know what is required in terms of health and safety;
 - devising improved procedures to find out about problems with the accommodation and resources;
 - improved training for senior staff and governors;
 - improving the infants' toilet facilities without delay.
(paragraph numbers 43. 67)

In addition to these key issues for action, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider:

- Ensuring that that their considerable investment in computer technology is justified by improving the cross-curricular use of the equipment and the suite by pupils.
- Reviewing the arrangements for the teaching of swimming so that all pupils have the chance to learn to swim the required distance by the time they leave the school
(paragraph numbers 8. 94. 121. 124. 135)

*** These were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection, and governors had already started to address these issues before the formal end of the inspection.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

66

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

60

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	18	27	15	4	0	0
Percentage	3	27	41	23	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)	24	291
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	24	18	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	22	23
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	36	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	95 (95)	98 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	24
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	41	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (91)	98 (93)	100 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2001

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	27	18	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	23
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	33	33	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (69)	73 (63)	84 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	24
	Girls	15	13	16
	Total	36	33	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (77)	73 (63)	89 (81)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2001

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	284	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155.7

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	777082
Total expenditure	765914
Expenditure per pupil	2349
Balance brought forward from previous year	53614
Balance carried forward to next year	64782

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	30	4	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	42	15	3	3
The teaching is good.	65	31	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	34	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	32	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	28	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	35	3	0	3

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

69. There are 32 children in the nursery class, 15 of whom attend full-time and the rest either for the morning or the afternoon session. There are 44 children in two reception classes. Most of the children have had some pre-school educational experience. Most children start in the nursery in the autumn term, so that they have the maximum time in each class. Numbers have fallen in the nursery in recent years. The children like coming to school and their parents and carers know that they are cared for well. The children understand, and like, the routines at the start of each session and they quickly settle to work because the activities are interesting and staff offer good support.
70. Although attainment on entry to the nursery class is generally well below that which is expected nationally, very good assessment processes, very good class management and high expectations within a rich and interesting curriculum, enable all children to make good progress so that they are below the national expectations when they go into the reception classes. Attainment in language skills is generally lower than in other areas of learning. The continuation of well-focused teaching in the reception classes ensures that all groups of children continue to make good progress. However, most children are still attaining below the national expectations in all aspects of the learning, except in their personal and social development, when they move into Year 1. They make very good progress in their personal and social development and match expectations, due to the high priority placed upon this by the school. This year's nursery class has higher general attainment than previously, and is below the national norm, although some children in this group are matching expectations in the areas of learning.
71. The previous inspection report stated that children under five made satisfactory progress with their learning. Progress is now good and so there has been a marked improvement due to the provision and the good teaching in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The children enter the nursery with poorly developed language skills, which hinder their conversation and co-operative play. All activities and routines are designed to make the children as independent as possible, as soon as possible. Staff plan as many ways as they can to give the children self-confidence so that they will have a go at new things. The success of this approach is evident in the way that the children quickly pick up class routines and get themselves ready for different activities. The few who continue to wander around the room are quickly noticed and helped to choose and settle to something. As the children move through the reception class they look after their own personal hygiene with increasing efficiency. Activities are planned to give the children chances to play with others to build up their social skills. Boys and girls in all three classes play happily together, pushing prams and looking after the 'babies'. Children tidy away at the end of the session very speedily and tidily, because they have been taught how, and they know it is expected of them. The teaching of good manners has high priority and the children are polite and helpful to each other and to adults. Because the children are secure and interested they concentrate on activities for comparatively long times, and are very well behaved. Teachers plan for this area very carefully and all staff work hard to give consistent messages to the children. As a result, all children make very good progress and most achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Staff extend the children's speaking and communication skills through their own careful use of language and skilful questioning. Planning includes the language focus of the main activities, but this is not consistent in detail across all areas of learning, nor is there a daily language focus to enable all adults to work together with maximum effect. Because some children do not talk much initially, staff work very hard to give the children the necessary vocabulary and language patterns,

gradually extending the children's talk to whole sentences by the time they move to Year 1. This is done by talking to the children constantly about what they are doing, seeing and feeling during play and more formal activities, to show the children a range of language styles. In the reception classes most children are beginning to convey meaning, ask simple questions and describe what they are doing in simple terms. Imaginative play areas give the children good chances for more structured and focused play and talk, where children happily assume their roles, having more sustained conversations as they get older.

74. Children in both classes enjoy sharing books with adults and this is a regular part of the nursery class routine so that the children quickly learn how to handle books and turn the pages. They also enjoy listening to taped stories. Many children entering the nursery do not know the difference between letters, numbers or symbols. In the reception classes labels and signs provide a reading environment that encourages the children to find out what words mean. Many children tend not to talk spontaneously about the pictures in their reading books, or build up a story from them, even when asked, and need a great deal of support in their attempts to read, only recognising a few repeated words in the text. More able children can retell a story simply in the correct sequence and in whole sentences. They use picture cues to help them decide what a word might be, and can recognise letters. The children are not experienced readers but short formal reading and writing sessions develop the reading and writing skills of most children effectively. Mark-making areas in all classes are well-resourced and used spontaneously and the children enjoy making lists and writing instructions. Most nursery pupils hold a pencil correctly when they enter. They gradually begin to incorporate symbols and letters to represent writing of phrases that explain their pictures. By the time the children move in to the reception classes many attempt to write a simple sentence but much of this is still 'play writing'. Teachers work very hard to help children understand the purposes of writing and to help them explore and experiment with sounds and to hear and say initial sounds of words. With a lot of help some children write individual letters on a flip chart to record rules the class makes up, for a building site, for example.

Mathematical development

75. Children start school with little experience of number in their everyday lives and many are not sure of the difference between letters and numbers. Many practical games and activities in the nursery class help children to understand that numbers have names and an order. They begin to count and order numbers through games and songs and by the time they go into the reception classes more able children recognise, and order, numbers well beyond 20. More formal mathematics sessions enable many children to recognise numbers to 10 reliably and say more numbers in order. These sessions are backed up with interesting activities that reinforce number, and the language of mathematics. For example, sand and water play give opportunities for children to try out different size and shape containers and consider whether they are full, half full, or empty. Some lessons focus carefully on shapes and the correct words so that some children are able to recognise a number emerging from behind a screen according to whether it has curves or points. Work on shape recognition helps children in all classes to recognise some simple shapes, and some can indicate, for example in reception, that a cylinder will roll. Although there is a good mathematical focus to many activities, sometimes opportunities are lost to develop mathematical language by asking children the reasons for their answers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The children enter school with a narrow range of experiences of life. Teachers plan activities and contexts that encourage exploration and observation of the world around them to increase their experiences and knowledge. Nursery children are interested in finding out how things work and how things change, or can be changed, through skilfully-planned activities which help them to link their own early experiences to new ones. To help this to happen children in the nursery build houses and walls from wooden bricks, blow bubbles, run cars down lengths of guttering, adjusting the slope so that they can control their route, and choose, cut and stick materials to make collage pictures. The children have early experiences of ICT through using a mouse to move a cursor around the screen, even if they are not completely sure what they hope will happen. In the

reception classes, teachers expect the children to think through what they are doing and what will happen. Clear explanations, given at a level that all children can understand, help them to make good gains in their knowledge. The children become confident in using modern micro-technology through the use of toy microwave ovens, telephone and tills. They use the computer with increasing ease to trace outlines of houses, for example. Through walking round the locality they notice that there are different kinds of houses, which they build from recycled materials back in school. A visitor explains to the children about jobs on a building site, expanding their experience of a wider world. This is linked to early science experiences, using magnets to find 'buried treasure' in the sand. The children are given early knowledge of religion through talking about helping and talking to others, and saying prayers.

Physical development

77. The children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes because they are given regular, very good quality opportunities in a safe outdoor environment and a varied and stimulating indoor setting. Play forms the basis of many of these activities and its very careful planning takes good account of the development of social and language skills. Nursery children enjoy handling tools and objects to shape malleable materials such as dough, which is made more appealing to their imagination by the addition of different colourings, or glitter. They pedal and steer large wheeled toys confidently and avoid crashes. There are plenty of activities planned to develop fine, hand and eye co-ordination through such things as pegboard patterns and large jigsaws. The children concentrate very hard and are expected to think and act independently from their first days in school. In the hall the nursery teacher enthusiastically demonstrates different movements and, although most of them bend and stretch, some do not join in at all until the teacher holds their hands. At this stage the children do not realise they have to think about HOW to move. Reception children are given more challenging and co-operative tasks, such as building a wall from large plastic bricks, so that they have to co-ordinate a sequence of actions. They show an increasing control using glue and paint, but still need a lot of support. Decorating biscuits as pigs gave very good opportunities for manipulating small icing tubes and screw caps.

Creative development

78. The development of creative thinking is an important and vibrant part of the curriculum provided for the Foundation Stage. Of particular importance is the emphasis on helping children to develop their own ideas independently and confidently and to discover and explore. To this end, many continuous activities are very well planned so that good progress is not left to chance. Adults are skilled at helping less confident children to play when they first come to school. This approach is very successful because nursery children play happily side-by-side in quite complex games with trains and trucks. Although there is little conversation there is some co-operation and the children appear to know the rules of each game although these are not always clear to the observer. Children choose colours to paint confidently, as when they made bubble pictures and hand-prints. As yet, they do not mix colours or use the space on the paper in a balanced way, but they enjoy the experience. In both classes, all children have the chance to listen to, and to make music using a range of musical instruments. They enjoy banging and shaking them to make a sound, but do not spontaneously try to make a sound, or rhythm. Singing songs is a regular feature in all classes. In the reception classes the opportunities to develop imaginative thinking through role-play is extended. Based on the 'Bob the Builder' stories the children make their own construction site, wearing hard hats to do so. They firmly believe they ARE Bob the Builder and are energetic in their efforts. In role-play in a burger bar children take down telephone orders for food and drink and prepare them enthusiastically. Painting and print-making continues to provide creative development as do the more complex construction kits with which the children can build three-dimensional models.

ENGLISH

79. At the previous inspection pupils' standards of attainment in English were reported to be in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Overall standards have improved, for several reasons. Entry assessments shows that children enter school with levels of basic language skills considerably lower than those expected. The school addresses the needs of pupils of lower attainment and with special educational needs so promptly and successfully that the level of need later is much reduced. The school has to work very hard at all stages to ensure that the pupils achieve standards in line with the average. Scrutiny of pupils' work over time, talking to pupils and observation of their achievements in lessons clearly indicate that standards overall remain in line with expectations for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, but have now advanced to above the average in writing by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, and in line with national expectations for speaking, listening and reading, with aspects that are above expectations. The reason for this is that the school has done considerable work in the English curriculum since the time of the previous inspection. This can be noted through the very good provision for special educational needs, the introduction of a literacy programme, and considerable extra support, in various forms, for pupils with below average and average abilities. It has advanced the pupils' literacy skills substantially at all stages.
80. At Key Stage 1 the pupils' speaking and listening skills are in line with national expectations, as are their reading and writing skills. The majority can create a story, using appropriate vocabulary, developing their ideas in a sequence of sentences. They use capital letters and full stops appropriately. Spelling and handwriting skills are in line with expectations for this age and stage. However, opportunities are missed to encourage the pupils in the regular use of joined handwriting in day-to-day tasks. The majority of the pupils achieve better than average in comprehension tasks. Those of lower attainment and those with special educational needs achieve particularly well due to the very good support they are given. These pupils achieve at higher levels than would be expected, given their initial abilities. Progress is good, and often very good, at this stage for most pupils.
81. At Key Stage 2 the pupils' speaking and listening skills are as expected overall, as are their reading skills. The latter need to be promoted more fully as an area of enjoyment and pleasure if standards in reading are to improve. The lack of reading outside school constrains pupils' cultural development. One reason that their writing is better than their reading is that few pupils read at the more advanced levels for enjoyment; younger pupils show interest in reading, but only the more able pupils are enthused by it. Pupils have well-established library and research skills. Pupils can write at length about an interesting range of topics. They develop good skills in writing and spelling, and very good skills in comprehension and in handwriting. Pupils present their work very well, but they are given few opportunities to re-draft their work using a word-processor. There is little apparent difference between the attainment of lower attaining pupils and those of average attainment because of the continued support and encouragement they are given. Most of the pupils make very good progress over time, including those with statements of special educational needs. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are at least as expected as they are encouraged to talk, and to use a wide range of vocabulary. Progress is best in Years 5 and 6, and this is due to pupils' very good attitudes and well-developed learning skills.
82. The pupils develop good literacy skills by the time they leave the school because of the carefully planned, purposeful and supportive teaching. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in English during the inspection and a high proportion of lessons observed were graded as either good or very good. The skilled teaching, which involves good planning, careful introductions to lesson tasks, closely followed learning objectives, good management and organisation, and constant, but unobtrusive support, ensures that the pupils do their best and achieve as well as they are able. Examples of this good and often very good teaching were seen at Key Stage 1, in lessons on letter sounds, and at Key Stage 2 in lessons on writing instructions, poetry, and report writing. Pupils' work is constructively marked and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. Lessons are consistently properly planned and are effective in terms of the enhancement of pupils' learning; a few could do with a bit more challenge, especially for more able pupils. At times plenary sessions at the end of lessons are too brief to be of much use to pupils. The best

lessons are stimulating and challenge pupils of all abilities well. A lesson on report writing for pupils in Year 6 was very well taught as it enhanced pupils' writing skills and also promoted their imagination and their research skills about forces. The result was high quality work that also enhanced pupils' understanding of scientific principles.

83. The pupils engage readily and enthusiastically in English lessons. They work very hard and concentrate well. Their behaviour is usually impeccable. They listen to what their teachers have to tell them and eagerly respond when asked to answer questions or share an idea or point of view. An example of this lively co-operation and endeavour was observed in a poetry lesson in Year 5/6 when pairs of pupils were asked to read and enact the two characters in a conversation. The enjoyment was evident and the expressive qualities of the readings were first rate.
84. The curriculum for English is carefully planned throughout the school. It is based very firmly in ensuring the pupils of all abilities develop good language skills. This wide curriculum has been instrumental in driving up standards, especially in writing. The National Literacy Strategy has been incorporated into the schools' work and there are a variety of other developments aimed at bringing about improvements in the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, such as the special schemes for 'Early Literacy' and 'Additional Literacy'. The raising of pupils' speaking and listening skills has been a key factor in the improvement of their reading and writing skills. The teachers incorporate aspects of other subjects, such as science and history, very usefully into the English work, and the various strands of language are effectively developed in the other areas of the curriculum. Building on the firm basis of good, all-round literacy and language skills, there is a need now to focus more on the potential of the higher attaining pupils, and to use information and communications technology in a wider context in English work.
85. The school is alert to any developments or shortfalls in individual pupil's progress or the progress of different groups. There are very good strategies for finding out how well the pupils are doing, and what needs to be done to bring about improvements. Appropriate targets are set and careful analysis is made of assessment information to check what is happening. The school uses the information it collects very effectively to promote developments in learning and teaching. No difference between boys and girls' attainment was noticed during the inspection, although there is a difference in the National Curriculum tests. Boys do better than might be expected. The explicit teaching of vocabulary promotes the learning of boys in English, and this has a positive effect on their standards of attainment.
86. The subject is well led by two experienced established co-ordinators, and this has led to the wide curriculum. The resources for English are very good, particularly for the development of literacy skills; this is an improvement over the last five years. The support staff are skilled in helping the pupils, either in the various withdrawal groups and in classrooms. They make a very positive impact on the pupils' opportunities for learning and their progress in general. A survey shows that parents generally have positive views of the school. However, their support for important aspects of language development such as reading do not always appear to be readily forthcoming; few pupils told inspectors that they are heard to read at home, and this is constraining the development of some of them.
87. The library has been remodelled and restocked with the help of an outside agency and this has been beneficial. It is supplemented by loans from the local library services. The library was an area of criticism in the previous report. It no longer is. Unfortunately, the necessity of housing teaching groups in the library each morning limits general access and this constrains the further development of pupils' skills.

MATHEMATICS

88. Over the last two years there has been a particularly good improvement in most pupils' attainment in mathematics. The National Curriculum test results of pupils leaving the school in Year 6 have

improved year on year to match the average in 2002. Of particular significance is the fact that over one-quarter of pupils in Year 6 achieved above average levels of attainment. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be average compared with schools nationally, but there was no reference to the proportion of pupils doing better than expected. Also, the National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 1 have been consistently well above average in the percentage of pupils attaining the required grade over the last five years.

89. Currently standards are broadly in line with national averages, both at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. From pupils' low entry levels of attainment, this is good progress. Success is based on good teaching overall, good implementation of government guidelines regarding the teaching of mathematics, and with very good analysis of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Additionally, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are well provided for by the introduction of ability sets, which allow the teaching of less able pupils in relatively small groups. Marking is generally constructive and pupils are encouraged to present their work really neatly, which helps accurate calculations. Where marking is not as good, there is no indication of where the pupil went wrong. The staff have set a very good ethos for the learning of mathematics.

90. The mental and oral starter that introduces numeracy lessons is generally well taught and teachers demonstrate ideas in a practical manner. Such methods help pupils to concentrate well and do much to support their development of quick, mental response to questions and propositions from the teacher. Pupils are also taught well in the main part of the lesson. In most lessons in Years 1 and 2, tasks are undertaken in a practical manner. These ‘hands-on’ experiences, rather than a reliance on worksheets, go a long way towards developing pupils’ mathematical knowledge and, more importantly, their understanding. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are good at giving the reasons for their answers. Paper-and-pencil methods play a progressively important role in lessons for older pupils, although practical work is still undertaken. The final part of lessons (the plenary session) is used either to assess and re-enforce the learning that has taken place, or to identify how the day’s learning will be developed during the next lesson, and is an effective teaching strategy. For example, at the end of a Year 2 lesson, a ‘pupils versus teacher’ competition enabled the teacher to judge how effectively her pupils had understood the concepts of ‘multiply’, ‘equals’ and algebraic representation of a missing number. Importantly, all concerned also had fun.
91. The quality of teaching is good overall and this represents good improvement when compared to the previous inspection. At that time, teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Major strengths in the teaching are the development of independent learning and the encouragement of all boys and girls to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems both mentally and by using written methods of recording. Teaching assistants provide very valuable support; they have a positive effect on learning overall. However, in a number of lessons they are not used effectively during mental warm-up sessions. Lower achieving pupils in particular, at both key stages, suffer because only just satisfactory teaching is not good enough to raise their levels of achievement. Most of the teaching promotes good learning and progress in mathematics, but at times in classes for average and above average achieving pupils, there are sometimes insufficiently differentiated tasks for pupils of all abilities within each group. Planning does not identify how pupils of widely differing abilities are to be effectively challenged in all that they do during numeracy lessons. Both factors are areas for development in order to further improve standards, and the school is aware of this.
92. Most teaching at Key Stage 1 is at least good, but at times it is unsatisfactory. The very good lessons are characterised by the teachers’ very good class management skills that promote a happy, working atmosphere. Snappy, motivating teaching ensures that all pupils concentrate really well and all play a full part in the lesson. Lessons are very well resourced and this promotes good learning. Lower ability pupils in Year 1 can identify numbers up to 10 and are just beginning to use a number line when adding two numbers together to make that total. More able pupils in Year 1 can identify smallest, largest and middle when looking at numbers and can add these numbers accurately in their heads to totals of tens and units. They understand the order of events in a normal day and also that two hours pass between 2 o’clock and 4 o’clock. Average and above average pupils in Year 2 confidently count forwards to and backwards from 100 in 10’s. They understand multiplication as ‘lots of’ and understand the mathematics included in their knowledge of 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs when the planning includes tasks that are set at too high a level of difficulty for the ability of the pupils, and so there is insufficient development of their knowledge and understanding.
93. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall but that observed varied from excellent to unsatisfactory. Most teachers display confident subject knowledge, which enables lessons to proceed at a brisk pace. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Year 6, progress was such that pupils moved from the identification on a counting stick of one equal part of ten parts representing 0.1km or 100m, to the conversion from kilometres to miles of distances between European cities. They did this quickly and accurately to two places of decimals. Independent learning was very well promoted when the teacher challenged individual pupils to use the method that best suits their need. About half of the class settled for calculators and all pupils work in a relaxed environment developed from a clear, mutual trust and respect. Pupils demonstrated above average levels of attainment and they used and applied existing knowledge and understanding very well. In an unsatisfactory lesson for pupils in Year 4, pupils’ understanding was compromised by incorrectly presented teaching techniques.

Such lessons are unusual, as, mostly, resources and strategies are used well. For instance, in an effective lesson, pupils in Year 5 were learning to measure the perimeter of regular and irregular polygons. The overhead projector was used positively to clarify the task and later used to highlight pupils' responses to that task; this is good practice and develops pupils' secure understanding. Most lessons are thoroughly prepared but, at times, opportunities are missed to ensure pupils' thorough learning. In a satisfactory lesson for pupils in Year 3 the overhead projector was appropriately used, and coloured counters were moved to form visual representation of equal fractional parts of thirds, fifths and tenths. But opportunities were missed when defined 'pens' were not drawn to clarify groupings, nor was the numerical identification (eg) included, to demonstrate the match of pictorial, oral and written relationships. The concept had to be re-visited for many pupils and overall progress was only satisfactory.

94. The planned use of information and communication technology to support numeracy skills is limited and is unsatisfactory overall. It appears occasionally in teachers' planning but very rarely, during the period of inspection, were computers being used in numeracy lessons. This lack is also evident when examining classroom displays of cross-curricular work and reviewing pupils' work. All classes do careful work on data handling, and produce a limited number of hand-drawn graphical representations. There was little evidence of graphs being generated by using the information and communication technology suite.
95. The subject is very well managed by two co-ordinators responsible for each key stage. They are heavily involved in the effective use of assessment data to track pupils' progress from nursery to Year 6. This very good use of a variety of assessments is having a direct impact on raising standards. They are equally keen to promote further the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. Resources to teach mathematics are very good, and are having a good effect on pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

96. Standards are in line with the national expectation for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in their learning. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were in line with expectations for pupils at the end of both key stages and their progress was satisfactory. The better standards in science are due to well-planned opportunities for pupils to undertake and record their own scientific investigations, predictions and conclusions. Teachers' knowledge and expertise have improved and the management of the subject has ensured good development of pupils' inquiry skills, thus promoting better progress overall.
97. Current pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good progress in their learning due to consistently good teaching in both year groups. Pupils in Key Stage 2 show good progress overall, although, the progress is somewhat inconsistent in Years 3 and 4. However, the progress achieved in Years 5 and 6 is accelerated, and builds on what pupils have already learned. From the time pupils enter Year 1 to the end of Year 6, the picture is one of improving standards and progress in learning. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, especially those that joined the school with very little experience of scientific ideas.
98. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 they are developing an understanding of building up a circuit, which was reinforced by a visit to the science museum. They have developed an understanding of plants and animals in the local environment and study insects in the grass, under rocks, in the bushes and in the playground. They record their findings by answering questions, such as '*Where did you see it?*' and '*How many did you see?*' They accurately recognise how to list materials, how heat can change the characteristics and predict whether they can be changed back to their original form. Through good adult support, all pupils, including those with special educational needs understand these phenomena, due to the high emphasis the school places on 'hands on' experiences.

99. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 they understand and correctly explain why a test is fair and recognise the importance of repeated tests. The concept introduced in Year 3 required pupils to construct a 'fair test' in order to test the suitability of a material for swimwear. In Year 4 pupils conducted tests to prove that gases take up space and exert a pressure. Activities in Year 5 include changing and travelling sounds the location of the heart and surrounding organs. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they conduct experiments to measure how much an elastic band stretches with increased weights. After several weights of identical mass were added, pupils predicted the elasticity and confirmed their findings using a force-meter. The practical 'hands on' approach, probing questioning, the use of prediction and confirming with practical application has impacted considerably in raising standards with improved understanding. A good percentage of pupils have a better than average knowledge and understanding of science, especially in scientific enquiry, and this is helping them develop skills in all aspects of science. Older pupils are good at selecting a suitable approach when trying to puzzle out the reasons for what is happening. They are rigorous in their fair testing and identify key questions to pose when doing scientific experiments. They show good understanding of the importance of the environment and identify beneficial and unwelcome changes that affect the world. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well when presenting evidence and results. More able pupils do well because they are challenged in their thinking.
100. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Teachers take time to build on pupils' understanding and use key vocabulary. Over the last five years they have improved the development of pupils' scientific enquiry skills. Teachers use very probing questioning to encourage pupils to predict. They use scientific vocabulary and expect pupils to use it also; therefore pupils have a good grasp of abstract ideas and can talk about them. Pupils are aware of teachers' expectations and respond well. They are not afraid to make mistakes because they know teachers encourage learning and do not criticise or condemn errors. Pupils' ideas are highly valued, which contributes to their personal development. Marking of pupils' work, although regular and generally includes comments, is not sufficiently developmental to enable pupils to improve their own learning. Teachers and support staff diligently assess pupils' responses, which they share systematically in order to plan succeeding lessons. Teaching is less effective when too much is attempted in one lesson and limited responses to questions are acted upon. The impact of effective teaching ensures that almost all year groups work excitedly and tackle first-hand learning experiences and challenges with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils have good attitude to science and are eager to participate in lessons. This is because the teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is mostly very good and resources are used effectively to arouse pupils' interest in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs have specific targets identified by the teachers, which increases their confidence. They receive very good support from teaching assistants, which ensures good progress in their learning.
101. The management of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator is supportive of the teachers and her monitoring of teaching and learning has led to a shared commitment by all staff to plan more closely for pupils' progress in enquiry skills. The school has adopted the national guidelines for its scheme of work and is currently monitoring their effectiveness before customising it to better suit the needs of the school. The use of data from analysis of National Curriculum tests, and other tests, provide an effective system for identifying areas for further development and monitoring pupils' progress. Resources are good and effectively deployed.

ART AND DESIGN

102. The overall quality of the pupils' work in art and design is satisfactory. Standards were in line with expectations at the time of the previous inspection, and remain so. The pupils are given regular and progressive experiences in drawing, painting, printing, collage and textiles from their earliest days in school. In addition, they have opportunities to work with natural and manufactured materials, using these to build in three dimensions. Good attention is paid to ensuring that both the

National Curriculum attainment targets for art and design are developed. The pupils investigate a range of different materials and techniques, often making lively and interesting images and artefacts. Through selective studies of the work of a range of artists, they gain knowledge and understanding of some of the history of art, and how artistic ideas and themes are developed. Pupils of all abilities make the same sound progress in their learning.

103. The quality of the teaching is inconsistent but is good overall. In the satisfactory lessons the teachers plan the activities in an efficient manner. They provide a wide range of resources, set appropriate tasks that match the pupils' capabilities, and give firm support to the efforts of the pupils to ensure their satisfactory achievement. Sometimes the learning objectives are not made sufficiently clear to the pupils, however, and the results of their work are not evaluated sufficiently. This limits the benefits of the learning. Also, in order to give the pupils exciting experiences, teachers sometimes provide too many choices, for example, in the range of materials offered for a weaving task. This tends to confuse the pupils and distract from the job in hand.
104. When the teaching is very good the lessons have clearly stated objectives for learning that are reiterated during the lesson period to ensure pupils' understanding. The pupils are given choices, but these are in a narrower range and clearly influence the outcomes of their work. Techniques are discussed, and innovations by the pupils themselves are shared and fostered. The work of artists doing similar work is noted, and sufficient time is given, over a longish period, for the work to reach fruition.
105. The pupils enjoy their work in art and design. They mostly concentrate well and work hard and thoughtfully. When encouraged, they take pride in their work, and there are numerous examples of good quality work in the school. There is a firm progression in the development of skills and techniques. For example, techniques for the printing of stars and creating shiny paper collages in the Nursery develop into fabric and textile work such as designs for 'Joseph's Coat', and clay tiles at Key Stage 1. Useful links with other curriculum areas such as history or science lead to the construction of Viking brooches. Those observed in Year 4, with foil and mock gemstones, were of a particularly high standard, as were the images of vases of flowers created in newspaper. The work of the pupils in Year 6 is particularly good. Images, based on the observation of flower shapes and rendered into textile designs, a task that included drawing, tracing, experimenting with and deciding on layout, were of a very high standard indeed.
106. However, the quality of the teaching is not consistent enough to ensure higher standards overall. The examples of pupils' sketchbooks scrutinised during the inspection do not illustrate work in sufficient range and depth, nor are these consistently used to support individual development of ideas and plans for work. Information and communication technology is rarely used to develop the subject. While there is some good work, scrutiny of classroom and other wall displays indicates that the provision for art varies from teacher to teacher and from year-group to year-group. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but opportunities are missed to use the subject to develop pupils' understanding more in this respect. There is some assessment of standards by the co-ordinator. A recording system has recently been introduced at Year 6, but there is no school portfolio of pupils' work at different stages that would illustrate to the teachers how well the pupils are attaining and progressing in their art and design studies.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards match those expected nationally of pupils at the end of each key stage. This judgement supports teachers' assessments. Satisfactory teaching enables the pupils to make sound progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive firm support from staff which enables them to match the standards of their peers. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. The adoption of national guidelines for design and technology has ensured that pupils in Key Stage 2 now consider

the functions of the design during the design process. The teaching scheme is now more balanced and includes all the required elements that enable the pupils to make satisfactory progress.

108. Teaching in the two lessons seen was confident, and of good quality, enabling the pupils to achieve well. The lessons were well resourced. However, work in design and technology is not consistently planned to extend the learning needs of higher ability pupils, and there is little evidence of information and communication technology being used regularly in this subject. Although the pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work, both as it progresses and at the end, very little of this is recorded formally to help the pupils to build on previous experiences. The design and technology policy document, which would support teachers in such matters, is out of date and the newly-appointed co-ordinator has firm plans to replace it.
109. The curriculum is planned around themes, which interestingly and logically link aspects of different subjects. For example, as part of their history topic on World War II, pupils study air raid shelters before researching, designing and making their own type of shelter. This is one reason the pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils in Year 6 say they really enjoy design and technology lessons because *'You get to make things and to co-operate, and it is important to get things done'*. They worked hard to use the different joining techniques they had been thoroughly taught previously, to make a firm structure. Their recently acquired knowledge of the purpose of shelters, simple construction techniques and suitable materials was used to decide what sort of porch would be best for the school entrance prior to designing one. They all produced sound quality annotated drawings that matched the requirements of the brief. Pupils in Year 2 concentrated hard to cut out and sew Joseph's coat and persevered despite some setbacks, such as difficulties controlling the scissors and in threading a needle. The teacher showed admirable restraint in encouraging them without taking over. This expectation that pupils will solve their own problems contributes to good achievement in lessons seen.
110. The amount of pupils' work that is recorded or saved to be passed on from year to year is inadequate. Pupils say they are not sure what happens to their past work. This deficiency means that teachers and pupils have no easy way to measure the progress the pupils make as they work through different aspects of the curriculum. It also makes it difficult for teachers to get a clear idea of standards expected throughout the school. However, pupils recall a suitable range of experiences with pleasure and have worked with a satisfactory range of materials. The co-ordinator has only recently taken up her post. She is realistic about what needs to be done and has sensible plans and timescales to help her further develop design and technology throughout the school. She has made a positive start.

GEOGRAPHY

111. The last time the school was inspected standards in geography were judged to be in line with national expectations at both key stages, with pupils making satisfactory progress. Only one geography lesson was taught during this inspection, and there was no work to be scrutinised and so no secure judgement can be made relating to teaching or standards at either key stage. The planning is such that pupils in most classes have not had any geography lessons since the end of the Spring Term 2002. They will have their next geography lessons from January through to July 2003. An appropriate rolling programme is in place that takes into account mixed-age classes and ensures that pupils do not cover the same work twice. This is satisfactory planning in theory but because of the unequal length of terms, pupils have too long a gap between teaching and this cannot reinforce skills. It is unsatisfactory planning of the curriculum that pupils do not have any development or reinforcement of their geographical skills for about nine months. Classroom displays and pupils' 'Humanities' workbooks do not reflect any work in geography. Talking to pupils confirms that these gaps are too long that pupils' knowledge and understanding is very limited, and so progress is unsatisfactory.

112. When talking to a group of pupils in Year 6 they demonstrate limited knowledge of North-west England. Most have insecure, practical knowledge of the eight points of the compass and are unclear of the importance of scale when drawing and interpreting maps. They can recognise the outlines of major continents and sub-continent. Knowledge of the National Parks is limited to the Lake District, and K2 is incorrectly suggested as being the highest mountain in the United Kingdom. With prompting, they recall that Chembokali is in India and that it is in an important tea production area. Their knowledge and evaluation of land use in their immediate area is secure.
113. The curriculum is well supported by outside visits and studies of the local areas. Youngest pupils look at important buildings in the immediate area of the school such as the library, and also follow up lessons on 'Road Safety' by investigating road signs and markings. Pupils in Year 2 investigate a tourist area when they visit Lytham on the Fylde coast of Lancashire. Pupils in Year 3 become involved in environmental issues and suggest action to improve school grounds and the immediate area of Little Hulton. Pupils in Year 4 extend local studies to the Borough of Salford in which they live. During a valuable, four-day residential trip in Year 5, pupils look at the work of a river in a contrasting locality of Wales.
114. Apart from the overall timing of geography lessons, which is an issue for the senior management team, the leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is a subject specialist and has been in post for four years. When the nationally recommended scheme of work was implemented in 2001, she provided guidelines related to its adoption. She has been keen to include flexibility into the curriculum that allows individual teachers to select important current affairs as they arise and to look at their geographical significance. This is good practice. A good lesson was observed with Year 5/6 pupils when newspaper cuttings are provided for small groups of pupils to research the world-wide locations where the information has its basis. Groups then feed back to the rest of the class using a world map. Resources to support the teaching of geography are good, but information and communication technology is insufficiently used in the subject.

HISTORY

115. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are similar to those found nationally, and by the end of Key Stage 2 they are above national expectations. All pupils achieve well. Older pupils are encouraged to use their good literacy skills in history. These standards represent good improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be in line with expectations at the end of both key stages.
116. A nationally recognised scheme of work has been implemented and is proving to be beneficial in supporting teachers' planning. The curriculum is very well supplemented by a good use of visits and visitors. Staff from Lyme Park, bring a collection of old toys as part of a travelling workshop. Year 1 pupils are able to handle 'Grandma's Toys' before discussing 'differences' between their own toys and those they have recently experienced. These same pupils experience a 'Viking Day' when an appropriately dressed member of a commercial group visits the school to talk to the pupils, while dressing some of them up in Viking clothing. These valuable experiences are further extended, when Years 1 and 2 pupils welcome 'Samuel Pepys' who tells stories from his diaries and leads the pupils in song and dance, appropriate to the times of the Great Fire of London. As part of their humanities studies, pupils in Years 1 and 2 spend a day at Lytham to look at coastal features and to later compare today's sea-side holidays with those of fifty years ago.
117. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit the Egyptology section of the Manchester Museum. They also welcome a visitor from ancient Greece, who they may well have met as a Viking during their earlier days at Bridgewater School! These experiences promote an interest in history. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gain a real insight into life during the Tudor era when they visit Bramall Hall. Studies of the cause and effect of World War II are well supported by a visit to the Imperial War Museum. They also receive a visit from an evacuee, who describes experiences of children and families separated from each other for long periods, during the war. These experiences are

invaluable in supporting and developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of times and events gone by. Overall very good quality classroom displays that reflect the relevant areas of study identified, promote the subject very well. Good quality time lines form an integral part of displays and are re-visited regularly, as the teaching of the topic develops. Most time-lines include a period beyond present day. This is good practice because it supports pupils' understanding of the fact that events of today will eventually become a part of history. Pupils in Year 6 use their factual knowledge to compare past times with the present day.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and is good overall. This is good improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. A very good, well-constructed lesson provided pupils in Years 3 and 4 with good opportunities for research and independence. Key skills of learning are promoted in a firm, historical context. Pupils work in mixed ability groups to discuss aspects of Viking town life and to develop their observational skills. The teacher scribed pupils' questions on to an overhead projector, while positively promoting the idea of pupils being 'historians', as they investigated photographic evidence of a family eating a meal, writing their own opinions based on the evidence. One boy/girl grouping wrote an observation *'They do not have carpets like we do. They have earth floor and straw.'*
119. In a very good lesson, small groups of pupils in Year 6 examined and discussed a photograph of a railway platform crowded with guardians and children of varying ages carrying suitcases. They listened to taped conversations, in which evacuees and adults receiving them describe their feelings. All boys and girls responded with clear shock, when a child is heard saying that she is frightened she may never see her parents again. History comes alive. Pupils first plan, then write a letter home with positive encouragement to concentrate on descriptions of feelings. Pupils demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding when discussing the date they should identify at the top of their letter. All opt for the early days of September 1939. The subject does much to develop literacy skills.
120. When talking with pupils in Year 6, they demonstrate good knowledge of chronology. They exhibit a great enthusiasm for historical studies. They know that historical change is open to different interpretations, and this is the result of the school's encouragement of questioning. They accept that many aspects of life are not understood in the same way by everybody. Pupils can name important people from the historical periods they have studied and have a clear understanding of changes over time. When discussing the outbreak of World War II, pupils quote verbatim and at length from Neville Chamberlain's address to the nation.
121. There are good links with other subjects. For example, history supports literacy very well, particularly Years 5 and 6, with much practice in extended writing. Art and design and design and technology support history well, when pupils draw and make artefacts appropriate to the topics being taught. The subject promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. There is very little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support the development of pupils' research skills, and this is unsatisfactory. Individual pupils occasionally support their studies by downloading information from the Internet, but good opportunity is missed by not encouraging this aspect of historical investigation for all pupils.
122. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has been in post for almost four terms and is proud of her innovations, related to resource storage and the development of visits and visitors. The policy for history is good. Appropriate short-term development plans includes monitoring of assessment, with a long-term objective to monitor teaching and learning. Resources to support the teaching of history are good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Standards match national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is satisfactory across all aspects of the information and communication technology (I.C.T.) curriculum as they use computers and other electronic equipment frequently, and with increasing confidence and accuracy. Pupils' standards are below those expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. Although pupils in Years 3 - 6 make satisfactory progress in communicating information and data handling, progress in the other aspects of the ICT curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because the school does not yet have the equipment that would allow the pupils to work at the expected levels in controlling, monitoring and modelling, and the school improvement plan does not include it. This is similar to the picture found at the previous inspection. Statutory requirements for teaching the subject, therefore, are not met. Despite this there has been satisfactory improvement in many areas. Pupils now receive regular direct teaching that is arranged to give them enough time to complete work of quality, using the skills they have been taught. The computer suite has sufficient computers for each pupil to work alone, and efficient technical support means that any breakdowns are dealt with quickly. The interactive whiteboard in the computer suite has been a good investment as it enables teaching points to be made explicitly and clearly to the whole group, promoting discussion which develops their learning.
124. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers have yet to receive centrally funded training that will increase their confidence and competence across the ICT curriculum. Opportunities are missed to use ICT in other subjects, and planning for this varies across the school. The computer suite is not timetabled for use in the mornings and pupils cannot use it for their own work because it is difficult to keep an eye on them. The classroom computers are not used often enough to enable pupils to practice their ICT skills regularly for a real purpose, and the mobile interactive whiteboard stays in secure storage for much of the time. This is an unsatisfactory situation.
125. However, of the four lessons seen teaching was good in two because the teachers were confident in their own use of the programmes as a result of recent training, and their own hard work. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used reference books to discuss how Van Gogh used paint to show the effect of light. She used the whiteboard confidently to demonstrate colour change and the use of the spray tool to create the desired effect. The pace of the lesson and her use of technical terms, without further explanation, showed that she had high expectations of the pupils. They were excited to begin and started quickly and competently. The pupils were very confident in their use of familiar and new tools and their understanding of many of the computer's functions gives them independence in using them. Despite this, no work was planned for these pupils who are particularly competent and all pupils worked at the same task, at the same level. Good support for pupils with difficulties enabled them to achieve as well as their peers. In a Year 4 lesson similarly good teaching ensured that the pupils confidently used the clearly taught techniques to word process their own history research. In the very good lesson the teacher made her very high expectations of a Year 6 group, that they would use all their previously learned skills and work very hard, explicit. Although the pace of the lesson was relentless the teacher checked that all pupils understood and were keeping up. The pupils worked with total concentration and independence to produce a PowerPoint presentation of their own research on forces using a pre-set animation menu and dissolving screens. The effect was impressive. In an unsatisfactory lesson the slow pace dampened the enthusiasm of the pupils and discouraged them from using their initiative.
126. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. It is very difficult for the co-ordinator to get a view of actual curriculum coverage and standards, as very little pupils' work is saved, except on disk, or printed out. This is largely due to the difficulty of getting work from the printers, which are in the computer suite. This deficiency makes it difficult for pupils to check on their own progress and to see how far they have come over time. The co-ordinator has been in post a year and is unsure of how information and communication technology fits into the school improvement plan. He is resigned about the lack of equipment but is trying his best to support staff where needed.

MUSIC

127. Pupils' knowledge and understanding and skills in music are below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2; this is not such a positive judgement as was made at the previous inspection. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and generally attain at the expected level by the end of Year 2, as they have satisfactory provision. They sing sweetly and played untuned percussion instruments with gusto. But pupils in Key Stage 2 have too little teaching to ensure that they have acquired skills in all the elements of the music curriculum by the end of Year 6. The problem lies within the planning of the curriculum rather than in the quality of the teaching.
128. Very little music was taught during the inspection, but singing was seen at both key stages, one lesson at Key Stage 2 and a brief session at Key Stage 1. A group of pupils in Year 6, selected by their teacher was also interviewed. It is clear from this contact, and from the lack of records and planned activities, that pupils do not have as thorough provision as they should. With the guidance of a teacher who has sound skills in the subject, pupils in Year 5 understand the difference between rhythm and pulse and can follow simple musical notation. But by the end of the key stage pupils' achievements have been compromised by the thin provision and so display unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of music in all the programmes of study.
129. Singing at Key Stage 2 is enthusiastic, but not at the standard required by the end of Year 6. A lesson lasting a quarter-of-an-hour is given each week for all pupils from Years 3 to 6, by a non-specialist teacher. This is insufficient to ensure that singing is good enough and so, by the end of the key stage, pupils have insufficient skills and cannot sing in parts. Their production of sounds lacks accuracy and variation in dynamics is limited. Class music is also restricted and pupils in Year 6 have very little. Although the school buys specialist teaching from the local education authority music service, this is insufficient to provide teaching in all the programmes of study. Although there is some evidence of some interesting work, these specialist staff only teach one lesson each to two classes each half-term and there is too little other music taught by the usual class teachers. As a result, pupils learn too little. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of music is, at best, unsatisfactory; they cannot name any composers and their performing skills are weak. They have done some work on composing, but not enough to ensure a satisfactory standard. Their use of musical terminology is below that expected and they cannot discuss different types of music that they have listened to. This is a shame as pupils display enthusiasm for the subject and enjoy making music.
130. The co-ordinator is aware that the subject is not taught sufficiently, and that it makes too small a contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Too little information and communication technology is used. The teaching seen was satisfactory and the evidence of the raps produced by pupils in Year 6 shows skilled teaching; a good number of staff have skills in music, and others have real interest. But the subject has had too low a profile recently and this has affected pupils' achievements. There is a choir for older pupils but no instrumental tuition and no orchestra. Resources are satisfactory for the current curriculum, but no member of staff plays the piano and this is a disadvantage, especially when teaching singing. Pupils are not taken to concerts neither do they take part in locally organised music events. The management of music is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently produced a very basic policy and there is a very new scheme of work based on national guidelines and an appropriate commercial scheme. He has not checked on any teaching, nor has he looked at teachers' recent planning. The co-ordinator is not aware that pupils' attainment is below that expected, as there are no systems in place to monitor this; new methods of assessment and recording have been suggested but are not, currently, in use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 but above, in most aspects, for pupils by the end of Year 6. This indicates an improved

picture from the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line for pupils at the end of both key stages.

132. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their skills well in gymnastics and particularly well in dance. They use space effectively and are aware in both disciplines of other pupils around them. They have good control of movements, listen carefully and respond well to instructions. In a high quality dance lesson observed in Year 1, these young pupils changed pace and direction smoothly in time with the rhythm of the music. They displayed tremendous enthusiasm for their creative dance and built on previous learning. Their movements were sometimes energetic, sometimes graceful but always fluent, using their arms particularly well to reflect the mood of the music creating a colourful rainbow of musical expression. Pupils understand the need for warming up before they exert themselves and the need to cool down at the end of vigorous exercise. In gymnastics, pupils worked industriously on testing ideas to achieve different balances and using them in sequences to move across and over apparatus ending in well-executed jumps. In the juniors pupils continue to build on previously acquired skills, displaying energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils in their high quality dance movements show good control, working in pairs to create mirrored or opposing movements representing aspects of a fairground, such as the carousel or swing boats. In a games session observed, pupils built on previous rugby skills, such as passing and catching. In all lessons observed, pupils displayed the ability to work in pairs or in groups of four collaboratively. They discuss their ideas, try out and eventually make corporate decisions. This promotes social and moral development and identifies and confirms the school aims threading through all lessons.
133. Pupils are taught athletics in the summer and the very good opportunities provided by extra-curricular activities and the residential opportunities afforded to Years 5 and 6 pupils complement and extend the physical education programme when new activities, such as abseiling and canoeing are introduced. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 attend the local swimming pool but the percentage of pupils able to swim 25 metres unaided at the end of Year 6 is disappointingly low. This was an issue raised in the previous inspection, and has not been addressed.
134. The teaching is good overall. Teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils both in their behaviour and skills development. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate and improve their performances. Planning is appropriate and all aspects, including athletics are taught. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and this support and enhance skills development. The school involves itself in competitive sport for both boys and girls, which provides further opportunities for the team spirit and harmony to be developed. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy a residential opportunity, which focuses on physical activities, which serve to promote social and moral development, as well as independence and inter-dependence. All pupils, including those with special educational needs accept responsibility for collecting and returning equipment and respond readily to instructions. Pupils who may be talented in sporting activities are very well supported and the school endeavours to extend their experiences in the area of their talent. Staff and pupils dress appropriately for their physical activities.
135. The leadership and management of physical education are sound. The school has a satisfactory scheme of work, which is appropriate and the full range of activities are taught. However, swimming is an area of concern and this area of the curriculum needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Resources are good and this has a positive effect on the standards achieved. Assessment procedures and the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards are still to be developed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. The previous report stated that pupils' standards of attainment were in line with those required by the Agreed Syllabus by the end of each key stage, and that pupils made satisfactory progress. Currently pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in their learning and have knowledge and understanding of religion that is in advance of the expectations for their age due to the good

teaching and the sound curriculum. However, pupils at Key Stage 2 do not make the progress they should and, although they attain satisfactory standards in some aspects of the religious education curriculum, such as their learning from religion, many do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the facts of the major world religions. Standards are in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus in some respects, but not in others. The reason is that they have not had sufficient teaching in religious education over the four years of Key Stage 2, and, as such, the school is not complying with the agreement to teach to the locally Agreed Syllabus. The lack of teaching has affected pupils' standards.

137. Pupils show good attitudes to religious education, are enquiring, and accept that different people have different faiths, or none. This is due to the sensitive teaching which has ensured that, although pupils may be confused about the facts of the major religions of the world, they know about why people have a faith and how faith can help during times of trouble. This is a most important concept for pupils to have absorbed. Pupils in Year 2 show sound knowledge and understanding of the use of candles and light in different religions; they know about Diwali and Hannukah. They can explain some of the symbolism of Christianity; they know that the red ribbon around an orange representing the world stands for the blood of Christ, when making a Christingle. They can say what believers might learn from a Bible story. They can compare some ideas about their own lives with those of other people.
138. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a sound understanding of the reasons for worship and prayer. They are aware of the basis for religious journeys and know why Muslims go to Mecca, but many are confused about the facts of the journey to Bethlehem of Mary and Joseph, and this is below what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Bible, the difference between the testaments, and how the Bible can be used for research purposes. However, their understanding of the meaning of the 'ten commandments' and the psalms is at a basic level. When given the chance they think deeply about the meaning of the Bible writings, but lessons are not long enough for the deeper issues to be explored. Because they are questioning pupils they ask appropriate questions about life and suggest how religion might help them to find the answers. However, pupils are very confused about the facts of the religions that they have studied during their time at the school. They remember some facts about the faiths, holy books, places of worship and practices of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists, but in a very muddled way. A group of pupils in Year 6, selected by their teacher, could say very little about the festivals, practices, and symbols of three religions that they have covered, and are very confused when presented with ideas from all six religions covered in the Agreed Syllabus. They only have a hazy idea of the differences between these religions. They did not remember going to any places of worship except for the local church.
139. The reason for this lack of clear knowledge is that pupils have had too little teaching in religious education over time, and little consolidation of work they have studied in the different religions. Many classes have time allowed for teaching that is below that required by the locally Agreed Syllabus. The religious education co-ordinator, who leads the subject well in most respects, was not aware that too little religious education is taught. It is a curriculum management issue for the senior management team to address to make sure that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met. However, the co-ordinator has started to tackle the problems of an over-loaded curriculum, where the school considers that the national guidelines incompatible with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. She has a sound understanding of what is required and has produced a useful policy to address some of the issues raised here. Currently pupils' attainment and progress is not checked and so the deficiencies noted in the inspection, had not been picked up by staff. Some monitoring of teachers' planning has taken place, but this has not been enough. Teachers' lessons have not been observed for some time. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development and some contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development, but opportunities are missed to use religious education to extend pupils' thinking particularly about cultural issues.