

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MONICA'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Flixton

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106356

Headteacher: Mr PJ Tyrrell

Reporting inspector: Mr John Williams
22516

Dates of inspection: 10 - 13 March 2003

Inspection number: 246589

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Woodsend Road South
Flixton
Manchester

Postcode: M41 6QB

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T Dobson

Date of previous inspection: 12/01/98

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22516	John Williams	Registered inspector	Educational Inclusion Mathematics Music	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13450	Jenny Madden	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development and attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23196	Sue Chesters	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Information and communication technology	How high are standards? Interpretation of results
30205	Terry Kenna	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30142	John Morris	Team Inspector	Special educational needs Science History Physical education	How well does the school cultivate pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the residential district of Flixton, some seven miles south-west of central Manchester. The pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. The majority come from the immediate locality, an area of mixed council and owner occupied properties. The school has 299 full-time pupils. Another 42 children attend part-time in the nursery. Thirty pupils (9.5 per cent) have been identified as having special educational needs, this is lower than average. These needs range from specific learning difficulties to speech and communication problems and visual and hearing impairments. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Two pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and are at early stage of learning English. The school only admits baptised Roman Catholics, predominantly from the parish of St Monica, but about 20 per cent come from surrounding parishes. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average for their age. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals (3.9 per cent) is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It is a truly inclusive community which recognises each pupil's uniqueness and worth. The pupils are prepared very well for life in a diverse society. The school achieves very good standards and, yet, constantly strives to improve still further. The headteacher and staff seek to involve the whole school community in the school's progress. In the time that they are at the school, the pupils are happy and learn rapidly. They progress from average levels of attainment to well above by the end of Year 6. The school achieves these high standards because it is very well led and managed, and because the quality of teaching is very good. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils are achieving well above average standards in English, mathematics, science, history and art and design.
- Throughout the school the quality of teaching is very good and this results in the pupils learning very well.
- The school is very well led and managed by an outstandingly dedicated and compassionate headteacher. All the committed and extremely hardworking staff support him very effectively and share his vision for the future of the school.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and personally. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to school and show a great deal of enthusiasm, interest and involvement in all of the activities provided.
- It provides outstandingly well for the children in the Foundation stage.

What could be improved

- The planning of the Science and Information and Communication Technology curriculum for the mixed age classes in Years 3 – 6 needs to be made more manageable.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection. Standards are high. The quality of teaching and learning are now very good with a substantial amount of teaching that is very good and at times excellent. Leadership and management are very good with excellent leadership from the headteacher. The curriculum is improved and all requirements of the National Curriculum are now met. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment are very good and the school makes very good use of the information gained to set targets for improvement. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good.

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	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A
Science	B	B	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

(Similar schools are those with up to 8 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals)

The above table shows that the results of the 2002 national tests for pupils, at the end of Year 6, were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. These results, in English and mathematics are also well above average when compared with those of similar schools. In science, they are in line with results of similar schools. The school has maintained standards at these levels in the tests over the last four years. Inspection evidence confirms that in the current Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards for the Year 6 pupils are well above average in art and design and in history. They are above average in information and communication technology and geography. In design and technology and physical education, they are average. No judgement is made about music as not enough was observed during the inspection.

In the 2002 national tests and tasks for Year 2 pupils they attained above average levels in reading and well above average levels in writing and mathematics. The results in reading were similar to those achieved in similar schools. In writing and mathematics, results were well above those of similar schools. For the current Year 2 pupils, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history. They are above average in geography and information and communication technology and average in design and technology and physical education. There was not enough evidence during the inspection to make a judgement on music.

Children achieve very well in the reception class and most are on target to meet or exceed the goals set for the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special education needs, including those with specific learning difficulties and physical disabilities, make very good progress. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are learning English as an additional language also make very good progress. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. The school sets itself realistic targets each year and usually succeeds in achieving them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show very good attitudes to their work, to members of staff and to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are very polite, courteous and helpful. They socialise very well at break times and older pupils regularly help younger ones.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils relate outstandingly well to adults and to each other. They share ideas profitably and work very sensibly together. They enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around the school and are keen to help with

	routine tasks. They are ready to accept further responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive promptly.

Pupils take great interest in school. They understand very well the effect of their actions on others and show very great respect for other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs. This includes the values and beliefs of faiths and cultures different to their own. The older pupils are mature and are full of initiative.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and has improved dramatically since the last inspection. This very good quality teaching results in pupils achieving very well and making very good progress. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations of what it is that the pupils can achieve. Their lessons move along at a very good pace and teachers plan activities which match the needs of the pupils very well. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. High quality teaching assistants work alongside the teachers, very effectively, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved, particularly for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of acquiring English. Teachers manage the pupils particularly well. They reward good behaviour and good work with praise and encouragement. This effectively enhances pupils' learning and also their enjoyment of lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. Good learning opportunities are offered to all pupils. However the science and ICT in the mixed age classes in Years 3 – 6 could be made more manageable.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides very good opportunities for pupils identified as having special educational needs. They are included particularly well in the school community and take part in all activities. Pupils make very good progress towards the targets that are set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The very small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English are very well cared for and supported. Outside agencies are used very effectively to support their learning and thus pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides outstandingly well for its pupils' spiritual development. It provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop morally and socially. Cultural provision is also very good. Pupils are prepared very well for life in a diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good systems for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. It has very good procedures for checking and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are outstandingly good.

Teachers know their pupils very well and support and guide them with care and sensitivity. The school has a very good working partnership with parents. The quality of information provided for parents is good and they make a very good contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits from an outstandingly committed and caring headteacher who has brought about considerable improvement. He is very ably supported by the senior management team. Teachers monitor improvement in their subjects very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors offer the school good support. They are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are effectively involved in school development and improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance well and sets clear targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Specific grants and other funding are used to very good purpose. Spending is monitored closely and the school makes sure it gets the best value for the money that it spends.

The school makes good use of the building. There is a good number of well-qualified teaching staff to meet effectively the needs of the curriculum. More support staff would help delivery of science and ICT in Years 3 – 6. Resources are good overall. Staff use them well to enhance pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their child to work hard and achieve his/her best • Behaviour in the school is good • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed • They feel comfortable about approaching the school • Their child is making good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons • They do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on • They do not feel that their child gets the right amount of work to do at home

The inspection team agrees with the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by parents. Inspection evidence confirms that provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is good. Teachers use homework well to support pupils' learning in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation stage¹

1. The children enter school with average levels of attainment in all areas of learning². They achieve well and are on course to attain, and in some cases exceed, the goals set in all areas of learning.

Years 1 and 2

2. Results in the Year 2002 national tests and tasks show that standards in writing and mathematics for Year 2 pupils were well above average. They are above average in reading. The results in writing and mathematics were well above average when compared with those of similar schools. In reading, they were in line with results of similar schools. In science, teacher assessments show standards were above average. Inspection findings show that, for the current group of pupils in Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Standards in art and design and history are well above average. In geography and information and communication technology, they are above average. Pupils attain at average levels for the age group in design and technology and in physical education they are average. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection, following the national trends. Achievement is very good and pupils are likely to reach the targets set for the end of Year 2.

3. There has been remarkable improvement in nearly all subjects since the last inspection. The table below shows the significant improvement that has been made in standards in the majority of subjects. This represents outstanding improvement.

Improvement in standards in Years 1 - 2

Subject	Last inspection findings	This inspection findings	Improvement
English	In line	Well above average	Very good
Speaking and listening	Needing improvement	Well above average	Very good
Reading	Satisfactory	Well above average	Very good
Writing	Satisfactory	Well above average	Very good
Mathematics	Average	Well above average	Very good
Science	Average	Well above average	Very good
Art and design	Average	Well above average	Very good
Design and technology	Average	Average	Maintained
Geography	Average	Above average	Good
History	Average	Well above average	Very good
ICT	Average	Above average	Good
Music	Average	No judgement	

¹ Foundation Stage: the curriculum for children under six, which started in September 2000, which replaces the desirable outcomes.

² Areas of Learning: the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is made up of six areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

Physical education	Average	Average	Maintained
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Years 3 – 6

4. The results achieved by Year 6 pupils in national tests in the year 2002 were well above average in English and mathematics. They were above average in science. These results in English and mathematics were well above those of similar schools. In science, they were in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history. They are above average in geography and information and communication technology. In design and technology and physical education, standards are average for the age group.

5. The very good achievement of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds means that standards have risen steadily since the last inspection. There has been considerable improvement in most subjects. The table below shows the significant improvements in standards in the majority of subjects.

Improvement in standards in Years 3 - 6

Subject	Last inspection findings	This inspection findings	Improvement
English	Average but unsatisfactory progress	Well above average	Very good
Speaking and listening	Speaking unsatisfactory	Well above average	Very good
Reading	Average	Well above average	Very good
Writing	Average	Well above average	Very good
Mathematics	Average	Well above average	Very good
Science	Average	Well above average	Very good
Art and design	Average	Well above average	Very good
Design and technology	Below average	Average	Good
Geography	Average	Above average	Good
History	Average	Well above average	Very good
ICT	Average	Above average	Good
Music	Average (singing good)	No judgement	
Physical education	Average	Average	Maintained

Across the school

6. No judgements have been made about standards in music because not enough was seen during the inspection. However, work seen indicates that standards since the last inspection have been at least maintained. It is likely that they have improved and are above average in some aspects, such as singing and performance.

7. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. They receive very good support, which enables them to achieve well. They work hard to meet, and usually do reach, the targets set for them in their individual education plans. The very small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English make very good progress. This is because they are supported very well by all staff and, because the school's truly inclusive philosophy enables them to have access to all parts of the curriculum, they achieve very well.

8. The improvement in standards shown in the above tables is due to a number of factors, including the:

- very good quality teaching
- successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies
- improvements in curricular opportunities provided by the school
- improvements in how co-ordinators manage their subjects
- improvements in how standards are monitored throughout the school.

9. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills, needed for pupils to succeed in the tasks set, ensures that pupils achieve very well and reach the targets set. All pupils are on course to reach the targets set for them this year. The school sets itself appropriate targets and strives to exceed them. It works hard to raise standards in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. This is now a major strength of the school, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when this area was judged to be good. Relationships and personal development are excellent whilst behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance are very good.

11. Particular strengths in this area of school life are:

- the hard work and motivation of pupils
- collaboration between pupils in the school
- pupils enjoyment in the life of the school
- the levels of positive discussion in lessons.

12. Pupils arrive in the morning cheerful and ready for work and their parents often accompany younger pupils. The start of the school day is orderly and pupils settle quickly to work. During lessons in the very good learning environment they are very well motivated reacting positively and with enthusiasm. This was particularly well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson about the Greek gods, where learning was very good. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged and supported so that they too are fully engaged. Consequently they achieve very well, whilst working at their own level.

13. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Sometimes, it is excellent. Parents are very conscious of this and full of praise for the school. This level of very good behaviour is so well incorporated into school life that, in the majority of cases, a teacher has only to look at a pupil or slightly raise their voice to show displeasure. As a result teachers are able to use the whole of each lesson to teach pupils, and engage them in good levels of discussion. In the playground pupils play very happily together. During the inspection, no signs of rough or boisterous behaviour were seen. Relationships in the school are excellent. They are modelled on the example of the adults in the school and permeate the whole of school life; in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Teachers have a very good rapport with their classes. As a result, pupils are comfortable and not afraid to make mistakes. They work well in pairs and groups, sharing ideas and supporting each other very effectively. This was shown well in a Year 1 design and technology lesson, when pupils helped each other to design a poster and to evaluate each other's work.

14. Personal development is similarly excellent. Pupils readily accept responsibility. In a recent survey of pupils' opinions, 79 per cent said that they would like to take more responsibility. At present they take responsibility for using resources, tidying away and planning as much of their work as possible. Year 6 pupils take responsibility around the school whilst House Captains play an important role in encouraging pupils to work hard to gain points for their house. In fact, house points play a crucial role in motivating pupils in

lessons, particularly in tests. It is very apparent from pupils' work that they think for themselves and are used to trusting their own ideas. This is evident in the individuality of the work produced. All pupils are very keen to help those less fortunate than themselves. They undertake fund raising activities. There is indeed a waiting list of pupils who want to organise events in the school to raise money. The school regularly puts on productions by pupils. The choir has sung in the Manchester Evening News Arena, the Bridgewater Hall and the Trafford Centre. These events have all helped to raise pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.

15. Attendance is very good and well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The overwhelming majority of pupils arrive on time for the start of school. There are a few pupils who are regularly absent and this is having a marked effect on their ability to make progress. There have been no exclusions in the previous year.

16. All pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work and develop their self-confidence well. In one literacy lesson, a pupil with hearing impairment was enabled to pick up sounds from the teacher who wore a transmitter. This enabled the pupil to take an active part within the lesson and in group activities, improving her self esteem. Peer group support in the group activities was very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. In the last inspection, one lesson in five, mostly in Years 3 – 6, was judged to be unsatisfactory. One in three was good or better. The quality of teaching now shows signs of substantial recent improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is now very good. Nine out of ten of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. Almost two thirds of lessons were very good or better. Outstandingly, one quarter of the teaching observed was judged to be excellent. The strength of teaching in the school is now significant. It is consistently very good and often better, throughout the school. This is because of

- the highly effective monitoring of teaching and learning undertaken by the headteacher and senior management team
- recent training that all staff have received
- the enthusiasm with which all staff have tackled recent changes
- the way in which they now work together for the benefit of all pupils.

18. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy in English lessons and numeracy in mathematics lessons is good. The teachers have worked hard to implement both strategies, which they have done well. Interesting texts and a good range of carefully selected guided reading texts and relevant reading books have ensured that literacy lessons are challenging and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Numeracy lessons have good mental warm-up sessions, conducted with good pace, in which the vast majority of the pupils are engaged and are clearly focused on improvements in their mental agility.

19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy supports learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in science lessons the pupils have the opportunity to measure accurately and to record the results of their experiments, explaining what the results show. Teachers promote good cross-curricular links so that the pupils can begin to see the relevance of their learning and the way that it develops. Teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology regularly as a tool in other subjects.

20. Throughout the school, the teachers show commitment in their drive to improve their teaching. The headteacher and other key staff monitor teaching carefully and are well aware of strengths and weaknesses throughout the school. All staff strive to improve their own practice and provide the best possible teaching for their pupils. The support and assistance that the teachers give to each other has a positive impact on the quality of teaching within the school. All staff work together as a very efficient team. Teachers manage their pupils outstandingly well. They constantly strive to find ways to reward and encourage good behaviour and work. They are very sympathetic and positive. Teachers usually have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. They use the correct subject specific language to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science.

21. In the most successful lessons, teachers place a significant level of demand upon all individuals, to ensure that they are fully involved. In a Year 2 lesson for instance, pupils were asked to interpret pieces of music specially chosen to enhance their appreciation of a poem. It was a very challenging session and the pupils were inspired to produce very good work. In less successful lessons, the work given to pupils with different abilities is not sufficiently different to challenge them all. In most lessons, pupils listen carefully to the good instructions that they receive and know exactly what they are expected to do. Most work hard and learn very well.

22. Teachers' planning is very good. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan closely to the structured frameworks. They plan all lessons very well and, at the beginning of each lesson, recap and revise previous learning effectively. Most share the learning objectives for each lesson with the pupils. They return to the aims at the end of lessons to ensure that the objectives have been met. In other lessons, the best learning occurs when teachers have a very clear idea of exactly what it is they want their pupils to learn.

23. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and their work are very good. Teachers question pupils very well to establish what they know and understand and to help them to think for themselves. All staff have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. The vast majority of pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers praise and encourage them so that they give their best performance. This ensures that most pupils are fully involved in their lessons, work hard and concentrate well. As a result, pupils achieve well.

24. Lessons are well organised. Teachers use time and resources effectively and, as a result, lessons move along at a good pace. The well-trained learning support staff give very good support to pupils and considerably enhance their learning. They are appreciated by the school as a very valuable resource.

25. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Marking focuses clearly on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Teachers monitor the pupils' work well and give support and advice, as needed. There is much very good practice. Homework is used well to supplement work done in class.

26. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by staff, both in class and around the school. This enables pupils to make very good progress. Individual education plans are very good. They set clear targets, detailing success criteria, and strategies and resources to be used. Differentiation is well planned for in all lessons, ensuring that all pupils are fully involved. The special educational needs co-ordinator has two half days each term to track pupils and to give written feedback to teachers. There is close liaison with parents and she has introduced a form to enable the pupil and parents to have an input into what they consider are the pupils' needs. A key factor in the successful application of teaching for

pupils with additional needs is the open door policy of the co-ordinator for special needs and the willingness of the staff both to talk through difficulties and to share good practice.

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

27. The curriculum is good overall. It is broad, balanced, relevant and interesting for the pupils. The quality and range of learning experiences are good. In all subjects statutory requirements are met. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

28. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. The teachers, supported by the Foundation Stage team, plan the children's work with excellent regard to all the areas of learning for young children. There is a very clear emphasis on learning through play alongside the development of the children's personal and social skills as well as their speaking and listening skills.

29. The school has worked very hard to provide a broad curriculum, which will interest all the pupils. It is planned to ensure that pupils have appropriate first-hand educational experiences. Visitors are encouraged to come to the school to talk to the pupils. The expertise they share with them enables pupils to see the rich diversity of opportunities available. The pupils visit places of educational interest in their immediate and wider community. This provides a good stimulus and context for their work.

30. All subjects are supported by detailed plans mostly drawn from government recommended guidelines. There is a two-year rolling programme of study for most non-core subjects. This enables teachers to ensure that pupils cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum when they are in mixed age-group classes. In Years 3 to 6, subjects such as science and information and communication technology are taught as discrete year group lessons. However, in the mixed age-group classes, these subjects are taught at the same time. This imposes an added burden upon teachers who, in order to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, regularly teach two lessons concurrently. There are also occasions, when whole year groups are withdrawn from the various classes for specialist teaching, such as swimming. This is difficult to organise and places a heavy workload on teachers. The school is very aware of these difficulties and has plans to address them.

31. The school has enthusiastically and successfully embraced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. It has employed an extra teaching assistant in Years 5 and 6 to help implement the new Further Literacy Support initiative in Year 5. This enables the pupils to be grouped according to their age and ability, and to work in smaller groups. This effective strategy results in pupils having more help with their work. It also has a positive effect upon their attitudes and how well they achieve. The impact of these strategies shows in the improved test results of the pupils by the end of Year 6.

32. The school ensures that each pupil's development is secured in an environment where all individuals are valued and helped according to their needs. Individuals are accepted for their strengths and weaknesses and helped to fulfil their own potential. The school provides well for pupils' personal development through a programme that includes personal, social and health education, drug awareness and citizenship. These opportunities help to prepare the pupils to play an active role as citizens within the school. They also accept their responsibilities in the wider church and local community

33. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. The school addresses these needs effectively and enables pupils to make very good progress both in attainment and social achievement. In one physical education lesson with pupils in Year 4, a pupil with special needs was supported well by a support worker. During partner work on body stretches, the teacher observed how the pupil and his partner were doing. They demonstrated to the class, who noted how well they synchronised their movements. "That's because we count 1,2,3, together before starting," they said. The class all clapped and then put into practice the counting before starting. This was an example of excellent inclusion, development of self esteem and an attainable challenge within the curriculum. The school recognises that it now needs to identify and provide for pupils who may be outstandingly gifted in a wide variety of areas.

34. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a wide range of activities that covers many interests and talents. Pupils eagerly take up the opportunities that are offered. The school has sports teams, which play in competitive games against other local schools. A recently introduced Drama Club, run by two past pupils, has seen pupils' self-confidence grow, and plans for future productions develop. The contribution that the community makes to the life of the school is very good. The school makes a very active contribution to church life. All these opportunities enrich the provision that the school makes for the pupils and widens their understanding and experiences.

35. Relationships with other schools are very good. The school transfers pupils to many different secondary schools within the area, and there are links with all of them. Pupils gain confidence from these and are well prepared to transfer to the next stage of their education.

36. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. It is a strength of the school. The school has developed the feeling of spiritual warmth, which it has set out in its mission statement, to "recognise each child's uniqueness and worth." Pupils are made to feel good about themselves and are supported very well by all staff. Spiritual aspects of life are planned into lessons. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray during the school day. The school has a very strong spiritual awareness which is clearly evident within all aspects of its work. There are very close links with the local church, with pupils involved in singing and prayers on special days. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and supports the school in its work with families. Staff at the school, through their care and warmth, act as very good role models for pupils and this builds pupils' spiritual and personal awareness. A good example of this was seen in the shared wonder staff and pupils experienced watching the video link to the nesting box. They were delighted to watch blue-tits nesting and laying eggs.

37. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Staff work very closely as a team to support pupils and are very good role models. The atmosphere in school is extremely caring and friendly. Pupils enjoy support, friendship, and opportunities to achieve and celebrate success. Key features of classes are that positive effort and achievement are recognised and pupils are proud of their improvements. During the course of the inspection the senior girls' netball team successfully played another school team. It was a pleasure to hear the girls talk about the enjoyment that they gained from playing and how the other pupils clapped to celebrate their success. The positive support given to encourage good behaviour and attainment was evident at the first assembly. The headteacher read out the house points for the previous week, and two members of the successful house proudly went up to receive the plaque for the week. There is currently no school council, which would enable the pupils to have a voice within the school. During a discussion with a group of Year 5 pupils, one pupil stated he would like to see the school take the prickly bush out of the school playground because too many footballs were being damaged.

38. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Staff give pupils opportunities to meet socially at break and lunch times. Teachers frequently encourage pupils to work together in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to make choices. This helps them to become independent. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 literature class, looking at poetry. One pupil commented that when the poem said, "her brothers were the craggy hills and her sisters larchen trees", the poet was using figurative language to talk about her loneliness. Learning is successfully enhanced with regular visits. Pupils' work is well displayed. For example, history lessons are brought to life with visits to Chester, Tatton Hall and Wigan Pier. The school also involves parents and grandparents as excellent sources of information. There is an extremely active parents' association which is prominent in fundraising, recently providing new seating in the playground. They are also active in organising social activities for families, including the visit of a pantomime company, barbecues and discos.

39. The school provides very well for pupils' cultural development. Very good opportunities are provided to develop awareness of other cultures and celebrations. The school is involved in the diocesan project on World Religions. Each class is working on a project about a particular religion or faith to raise awareness of, and respect for other cultures. There are very good displays around the school to support learning. These include a display on India using artefacts lent by parents, photographs, books and examples of food including a range of spices and beans. The parents of one pupil of Indian descent, came in to make food for an Indian birthday party for pupils in Class 2. The school actively supports the work of Sister Virginia who is developing a school in Adigrat, Ethiopia. It keeps in regular contact. It has good photographic evidence of this in the main entrance. Involvement in the project is a humbling experience for pupils. It makes them aware of the need to support those who are less fortunate. The use of multi-cultural music, dance and poetry to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity is less evident.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Care for pupils has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now very good. There are some excellent features which reflect the caring ethos of the school. All pupils are very well known by their class teachers. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents described the school as caring and friendly resulting in happy, contented and hard-working children. Particular strengths of this caring school are:

- the promotion of very good behaviour
- the monitoring and elimination of oppressive behaviour
- support for personal development
- very good use of assessment to improve pupils' progress.

41. The school is truly inclusive. It very effectively meets the individual needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Pupils of higher ability are regularly challenged in their learning. The use of well-planned appropriate work, throughout the school, and dedicated learning assistants in the lower school ensure that pupils are all working to the limits of their capabilities. The school provides a safe environment for pupils. All staff are aware of their responsibilities for the health and safety of pupils and report any problems. They also emphasise safety in lessons especially science and physical education. This was well demonstrated in Year 5 during a science lesson on condensation and evaporation when resources were carefully controlled. Similarly when using a racket and ball in physical education they were reminded of the need for care when using the rackets. Daily checks are carried out by the caretaker both inside and outside the building. This is necessary because of the amount of vandalism experienced by the school. Governors regularly check the building. Risk assessments are made as part of a pre-visit by staff as they plan activities and

journeys out of school. The school feels there is no need to ask parents' permission for pupils to use the Internet, because of the secure firewall and constant supervision of pupils, when using computers. Child protection is taken seriously and the trained member of staff, who is regularly involved in training, keeps staff up to date about new initiatives and legislation

42. The promotion and monitoring of attendance in the school is good and attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance which is monitored weekly by the headteacher. There are a minimal number of families where attendance is a problem and the school, with the help of the education welfare officer, liaises with them on a regular basis. Parents rarely take their children on holiday during term time. Those who do, have very genuine reasons for doing so, for example the firm they work for allocates their holiday dates.

43. Procedures for the support and promotion of the very good behaviour in the school are based on the consistent application of behaviour strategies. They involve the development of self-esteem through praise and encouragement. In lessons, teachers manage pupils very well. They value pupils' contributions to lessons and include them wherever possible. Teachers consistently have very high expectations. These are reinforced by the enthusiasm and enjoyment exhibited by teachers which enables pupils to behave and perform outstandingly well. This was clearly shown in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson where pupils' attitudes and behaviour were excellent. This led to very good learning and attainment. Through the Catholic ethos in the school and the caring attitudes displayed and taught, bullying is minimal. Any small incidents are dealt with swiftly. Pupils are aware that they should talk to an adult if they are worried. Pupils are well supported and supervised during their time in the playground. Younger pupils have their own play areas for their safety and comfort.

44. Pupils' personal development is a high priority in the school. The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire say that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school makes every effort to emphasise the positive aspects of pupils' achievements inside and outside school. This was beautifully demonstrated in an upper school assembly where the theme of each individual's special attributes was clearly shown by pupils offering their own opinions as to why their friends deserved a reward certificate. In the classroom pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. This was well demonstrated in Year 1 English lesson where pupils were strongly encouraged to be independent and think for themselves. They sorted letters into alphabetical order, working independently. In a Year 6 lesson on the genre of science fiction writing, pupils used their initiative and thought logically for themselves.

45. The school provides a warm, caring environment for all of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are shown considerable warmth by all staff and pupils. Staff know their pupils well and provide very effectively for their needs. The school plans very well for pupils with statements of special educational need. It matches successfully the provision outlined in the pupils' statements. The school makes very good use of both visiting specialists and outside agencies. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very enthusiastic. She has ensured that all staff are aware of the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice for identifying pupils with special educational needs. These procedures, though very recently introduced, are effectively implemented by the class teachers and support assistants. Pupil's targets are reviewed each term and detailed records are kept regarding progress. When necessary, further assessment and advice is sought from outside agencies. Class teachers and support assistants are responsible for the daily needs of pupils with special educational needs. They keep comprehensive records of achievement. These provide a very good record of each pupil's personal achievements and academic progress through the school.

46. The procedures for assessing children's attainment in the Foundation Stage are very good. Staff track children's attainment and progress very effectively as they move through the nursery and reception classes. This establishes a base of very useful information that enables teachers to set targets for pupils from Year 1 onwards.

47. The procedures used by teachers to assess and monitor pupils' progress are very good. The strength of this very good practice emanates from the rigorous and continuous programme of evaluation and testing conducted by the school, and the way in which this information is used to influence the curriculum and modify lesson planning to meet pupils' learning needs.

48. Very good use is made of the information that is gathered through the checks made on pupils' learning in all subjects. Assessment procedures for non-core subjects³ have improved significantly since the last inspection. This was an issue raised in the last inspection. Teachers now keep simple, but effective, records of pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects. Performance in the national tests is analysed, to identify areas of learning that need development. This information is used very well to set learning targets for individual pupils. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. However, the school has identified that there is more work to be done. It is seeking ways to simplify even further the paperwork involved in assessment and also ways in which pupils can be involved in evaluating their own achievements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The last inspection said there was a strong partnership between the school and parents. This has been maintained. Parents of children attending the school, consulted for this inspection, agree that this is a very good school. Over 95 per cent say that the school is well led and managed and ensures that their child works hard. They also think that the school ensures that they behave well and in addition, they like school! They also agree that children are helped to mature and become responsible. As parents, they feel comfortable approaching the school with any queries or problems that they may have. More than 90 per cent of parents say that their child is making good progress as the result of the good teaching. They are less happy with the amounts of homework given and feel the school could keep them better informed on progress and work more closely with them as parents. Only 65 per cent of parents agree that the school provides a sufficient range of activities outside the classroom. However, the inspection team does feel that the school makes very good provision in this area of school life.

50. Particular strengths of the school's partnership with parents include:

- parents confidence in the school
- the ease with which parents feel they can they can approach the staff
- the support provided by parents for the school and pupils
- the social and fund raising events organised by the Parents Association.

³ Non-core subjects: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

51. The school provides very good links with parents. These begin with the induction programme for parents and children as they enter the nursery class. The school brochure is informative. The school keeps parents fully up to date about school life through newsletters and letters about specific events. Teachers also ensure that parents are aware of what children will learn in lessons and the level of homework expected. Thus parents can provide appropriate help at home. There are regular workshops for parents, for example parents of Year 3, 4, and 5 pupils are told about the optional SATS tests their children will be taking and Year 5 parents have an information meeting about the local Secondary Assessment and Allocations Procedure.

52. Information about pupils' work and progress is very good. Parents see the targets set for their children on a half-termly basis. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the review meetings and individual education plans prepared for their children. Informal contact between parents and staff takes place on a daily basis, especially with parents of younger children. This is much appreciated by parents. There are two formal progress meetings held for parents during the year. The annual progress reports to parents contain much information useful to parents and targets are set for literacy and mathematics. There are meetings for parents to discuss the reports, however children do not have the opportunity to give their opinions of their year in school.

53. Parents are very involved with and supportive of the school. They help on a regular basis particularly with the younger children but this tails off as mothers take up employment when their children become more independent. There is no shortage of help for trips, sport or the events held by the parents association and pleasingly a wide cross section of parents get involved. The Parents Association, described as brilliant by the headteacher, raises large amounts of money for the school. It does this by organising quizzes, garden parties a Christmas Fair and many other events. This has enabled the school to provide a covered area for the reception class, markings for the playground and also to re-furbish the library.

54. The school has clear expectations of the homework to be done by pupils. This is passed on to parents. The majority spend time on a regular basis helping their children with all aspects of their homework.

55. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and involved in the progress their children make. They are invited to discuss their children's individual education plans each term.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides the school with outstandingly compassionate and dedicated leadership. He is a positive exemplar of the caring ethos of the school. Thanks to his commitment the school has made a remarkable recovery since it was last inspected. All the issues raised in the last inspection have been met and improvement has been excellent. The headteacher has a strong belief in the virtues of working as a team and a clear vision of how he wants the school to develop. He is supported by a very good senior management team and by an outstandingly hard working and dedicated teaching staff. As subject leaders they are playing an increasingly important role in bringing about improvement and their commitment to succeed is noteworthy in every aspect of school life.

57. The governing body is active and supportive. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They are fully informed about school activities and, thanks to the headteacher's comprehensive reports, have a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school. They are developing their confidence in asking challenging questions and in holding the school to account for its standards.

58. The school's recent priorities have centred around improving the quality of teaching, and eliminating unsatisfactory teaching. The rigorous monitoring of lessons and the very good system of performance management, have been aimed at raising performance. This has been outstandingly successful and the quality of teaching, which was a weakness at the last inspection, is now a strength of the school.

59. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, knowledgeable and efficient. She understands the needs of the pupils very well and is extremely supportive. All pupils are tracked and monitored very carefully as they progress through the school. A strength of the school management of special educational needs is the teamwork developed by the teachers and learning support assistants who make a strong contribution to the provision with their expertise in both daily planning and assessment.

60. Day-to-day financial management is very good. Specific grants and other funding are allocated very carefully. The school secretary is particularly efficient and provides the headteacher and teaching staff with very good support.

61. Teachers and teaching assistants are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum although the school recognises the desirability for extra support in Years 3 – 6 to make the delivery of ICT and science more manageable. A programme of training linked to the school development plan ensures that all staff are kept up-to-date. Midday staff are well organised and helpful and ensure good lunchtime routines. All staff are well motivated and are fully committed to making the school an exciting learning environment.

62. Resources for teaching are good in most areas of the curriculum and very good in history, art and design and in the Foundation Stage. Facilities for the teaching of information and communication technology are adequate.

63. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. It is well maintained and kept clean by the caretaker and her staff. The teaching environment in the classrooms is of good quality. Colourful displays of pupils' work serve well to celebrate achievement and there is much interactive material, which enhances the opportunities for learning. Although the school does not possess its own playing field, a good arrangement with the adjoining secondary school enables pupils to use their field.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to further improve the quality of education and standards achieved, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- make the science and information and communication technology curriculum planning simpler and more manageable to teach, in view of the mixed age classes, in Years 3 – 6.

(paragraphs 3, 108, 138.)

65. In addition to the key area for development, the following less significant but nevertheless important aspects should be considered for inclusion by governors in the action plan:

- to develop a system for identifying and making provision for outstandingly gifted and talented pupils

(paragraph 33)

- to consider ways to take greater account of the opinions and views of pupils.

(paragraph 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	12	17	14	4	0	0	0
Percentage	25.5	36.2	29.7	8.5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	299
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	22	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	22
	Girls	21	22	23
	Total	41	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (84)	96 (97)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	22
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	43	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (92)	98 (100)	98 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	14	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	18	17	19
	Total	31	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (96)	94 (94)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	32	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (98)	91 (96)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	292	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26.25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	604220
Total expenditure	572878
Expenditure per pupil	1746
Balance brought forward from previous year	7210
Balance carried forward to next year	31342

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	341
Number of questionnaires returned	155

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69.7	25.8	3.2	1.3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62.1	33.3	1.3	2.6	0.7
Behaviour in the school is good.	69.7	29	1.3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	36.4	10.4	1.3	1.9
The teaching is good.	63.9	28.4	1.9	1.9	3.9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46.5	38.7	12.9	1.9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73.4	22.1	3.9	0	0.6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76.6	22.7	0.6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54.2	35.5	7.7	1.3	1.3
The school is well led and managed.	78.7	16.8	1.3	1.9	1.3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66.5	30.3	0.6	1.3	1.3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	36.8	21.7	3.3	11.2

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

66. At present, there are 42 children attending part time in the nursery (24 attend the morning session and 18 in the afternoon). There are 30 children in the reception class. The children all move from the nursery into the reception class in the September of the year in which they become five. The majority have attended the school's nursery. This year, 3 children were admitted from other nurseries in the area. Both classes have their own very well equipped teaching areas. Each also has its own discrete outside play area. The nursery area is very well equipped and established. The reception area is also well equipped and is continuing to develop, in order to offer pupils a clear progression of experiences.

67. In the last inspection the children were judged to make sound progress. Teaching was satisfactory with some that was good. The school has built on this position and has worked very hard to bring about further improvements. Teaching has developed further and is now very good, enabling the children including those with special educational needs, to achieve well and make good progress.

68. The majority of children enter the nursery with a full range of ability. Their attainment levels, in most areas of learning are those expected for children of this age. However, in recent years, attainment in personal and social development, and children's skills in speaking and listening have been below the levels expected. The children achieve well throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes. This is a result of the very good teaching that they receive. All staff continually assess the children's progress. This informs day to day planning, ensuring that progress is continuous across the two classes. Consequently most of the children are likely to leave the reception class with levels of achievement in line with those expected in all areas of learning.

69. Staff in both the nursery and reception classes have very good links with parents. There are good procedures to help the parents, carers and children settle into school and so become involved in their children's work. Each week parents are informed of topics to be studied, stories told, songs sung and areas of learning that will be observed. Children take home books so that parents and carers can help them with their work. This helps to develop an effective partnership between home and school.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. By the time they complete the reception year most children are likely to attain the nationally agreed standards in personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well, because all staff have high expectations of them. Children work hard in a busy, calm environment. All the children, including those who have special educational needs, are encouraged to join in enthusiastically with class discussions, play together and help each other with their work.

71. Staff encourage the children to share equipment, play together and to collaborate in their play. Children understand that they need to put up their hand when they wish to answer the teachers' questions or offer suggestions or ideas. In the nursery class some children still

prefer to play alone or alongside others in the sand, when painting or when planting their seeds. Children in the reception class line up quietly, when they are going to assembly. They chat to one another as they work and often choose to work in sociable groups, especially in the role-play areas. The children are polite and respond positively both to each other and to adults. They share resources well. All the adults working in the classes are consistent in their approach to children. For example, they reinforce the need for good manners, and sharing resources with one another. This helps the children's moral and social development. Children are learning quickly to become independent in their learning. Their views are listened to. Children manage well to get themselves ready for playtimes and physical education. They help to tidy their equipment sensibly at the end of each session. Most respond positively to the patient and caring support that they receive. They follow instructions and are eager to learn new skills.

72. Teaching and learning in this area of the children's work are very good. Members of staff are patient and caring with the children and this enables them to learn and develop their self-confidence. All staff give clear ideas of what is expected of the children. Patient, supportive teaching results in a calm working environment where the children are happy and self-confident and make good gains in their learning. The spiritual culture of the school is being developed as the children think about and thank God for all the wonderful things he has made.

Communication, language and literacy

73. The children achieve well in communication, language and literacy as a result of very good teaching. By the end of the reception year most of the children are on course to attain the levels expected of them.

74. On their entry to the nursery, speaking and listening skills are below the level expected. Staff work effectively to encourage the children to develop their speaking skills, so that the majority enter the reception class with levels expected for their age. They are encouraged to answer their name on the register and to talk about what they have enjoyed doing during the week. All are given many opportunities to express themselves in role-play. The children in the nursery built a helicopter to fly to Africa and they got ready for a wedding. The reception class were busily building houses for the "*Three Little Pigs*", then they dramatised the story. The children in the nursery develop their speaking and listening skills as they enjoy working in the jungle and the flower shop. Their knowledge of the flower shop is quite extensive following their recent visit to a real shop in the neighbourhood. Speaking and listening are further developed in the reception class where children play together to work through different scenarios. They made telephone calls to the estate agents and arranged to view houses, they looked at maps to find the location of the property, and set up the appointment on the computer. The children took great pleasure in these activities, and used vocabulary such as *terraced, detached, and semi-detached*. These kinds of activities ensure that the children find their learning exciting and fun. As a result they are keen to learn and so learn well.

75. The children talk about the stories they read. The reading area is very popular. A particularly popular activity in the nursery is crawling into the polar bears cave, with bear hats on, to listen to stories which they take turns 'Reading' to each other. In the reception class, they enjoy sharing their books with an adult and are confident in reading their "words". They are positive in their use of books and sort books into information books and those that are storybooks. They all have books to take home to share with their parents or carers.

76. Writing is displayed prominently in all areas of both the nursery and reception classes and this is effective in encouraging the children to write. Children regularly work on the writing table and use a wide range of tools. When the children enter the nursery, they 'sign in' on the large whiteboard. Writing and reading skills are taught carefully and systematically and the most able children in the reception classes write simple sentences unaided. All staff focus very clearly on small groups of children, giving them very targeted individual help with their reading and writing. The lower attaining pupils are given extra help and encouragement to write their letters correctly. As a result of this very good organisational strategy all the children achieve well, with the children learning the correct way to write their letters.

Mathematical development

77. In mathematical development children achieve well as the result of very good teaching and learning. Consequently their attainment at the end of the reception year is likely to be at the level expected for children of their age. The children are helped to achieve well through the very good, individually based, thoroughly planned practical teaching that they receive in both classes.

78. Teachers provide many activities and experiences so that the children develop their mathematical skills through focused, targeted teaching and play. The children in the nursery thoroughly enjoyed counting in fives and tens and naming the days of the week while they waited to choose the helpers for the session. Children in the reception class confidently count backwards and forwards to 20. In their small group activities most sort and count objects correctly and use them to solve simple problems of addition and subtraction, counting one more than or one less than. Most recognise coins, their denomination and some of their properties. Children enjoy singing number rhymes such as *Five Little Speckled Frogs*. The repetition of number sequences in songs and the adding on and counting back in mathematical games help children to develop an understanding of number. Playing mathematics games with dice, ordering number cards, and completing mathematical programs on the computer, all help the children to develop their mathematical language and understanding.

79. The teaching and learning of mathematical understanding is very good overall. All staff take every opportunity to develop the children's understanding of number in their everyday activities and play. For example they count the numbers of children for various activities, or make patterns with coloured beads and use containers in the sand and water trays. This practical approach to teaching mathematics ensures that all children are fully engaged in their learning. A wide range of teaching techniques and resources supports learning in this area very well. The children's learning is securely developed through successive activities based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Most are learning to solve simple number problems accurately and are familiar with mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. The teachers design a wide range of activities, including games, to consolidate and carefully extend the children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. In knowledge and understanding of the world, most children are likely to attain the standards expected by the time they complete the reception year. The teachers provide a wealth of exciting activities to extend the children's understanding of the world around them. Teaching and learning are very good and this ensures that the children achieve well.

81. The teachers are effective in planning themes for both the nursery and the reception classes, which extend and develop the children's learning from starting points within their understanding and interests. For example, in the nursery, children were busy working on the themes of jungles and the flower shop. The teacher had planned a varied programme that engaged the children in a wide variety of learning experiences; this included a visit to the local florist, looking at gardens along the way. The children have opportunities to extend their understanding through role-play as shopkeepers and customers in the flower shop and explorers in the jungle. The children were very eager to write cards to put with the flowers that they had bought, and sow seeds to grow their own flowers. Children in the reception class were equally excited by the questionnaires they had taken home for their grandparents to complete about what life was like when they were children. This excitement was developed further when the children had the chance to handle and then draw some of the artefacts that they had collected; a wireless, bellows, an oil lamp and others.

82. A strength of the teaching is in the way that the teachers plan the curriculum across the two classes. This means that the children's progress is carefully structured and built upon. Lesson planning effectively brings together work in geography, history, information and communication technology and science. The teachers start from the children's understanding and take their learning on so that they extend their understanding through play and enquiry. The wide range of activities planned for the children enables them to work in many different contexts, which allow the children to extend their horizons through play.

Physical development

83. In physical development most children are likely to attain the levels expected for children of their age by the end of the reception year. Very good teaching and learning in this area of learning enables the children to achieve well.

84. Staff help children to make good progress by employing many strategies to help them to improve their manipulative skills. Children use both outside areas to help them to develop their ability to control their body movements through activities such as running and jumping. They also use the wheeled vehicles to extend their play. Skilled adult teaching also means that the children are taught how to control their tools as they work. For example, the children are encouraged to form their letters correctly by using pens on the white board, pencils and crayons. They use scissors well to cut out flowers. In physical education lessons, the children use dance to learn to work co-operatively as well as to enjoying learning. They practise taking turns to follow each other through the jungle.

85. Physical development was taught very well in the lesson observed in the reception class. The staff provided good individual support to help the children to fully develop and extend their skills. The children worked hard to improve as a result of this very good teaching. Children listened well and were developing their spatial awareness appropriately as they found their own space to work in. They move around the hall sensibly. Children are developing their sense of direction and pace of movement well. For example, the teacher reminded the children to listen carefully to the development of the story and the movements required on their journey round the world. Children moved imaginatively to the music with good expression following the very good lead given by the teacher and they achieved very well. The outdoor environment is being used in both classes very successfully for a range of activities across all areas of learning. For example, they develop children's understanding of living things such as plants and insects. The children work imaginatively engaged in drawing and creative activities as well as physical exercise.

Creative development

86. In creative development most children are likely to attain the standards expected in this area of learning by the time they reach the end of the reception year. Staff teach the children very well and consequently they learn very effectively. The children are taught and learn very well. They have many opportunities to learn new techniques and use different materials in lessons.

87. The children paint expressively using a range of equipment and materials in their work. They use a variety of pencils and felt pens with increasing control as they draw, paint and write. Paintings in the style of Lowry are well proportioned and colour is used to good effect. They investigate the properties of play-dough and find out they can change its shape by rolling, twisting and pinching it and cut out shapes. In the role-play area, the children develop their skills of co-operation and communication well as they take on the roles of the characters in the story of *The Three little pigs*. They are able to explain the best way to build the brick wall in the little pig's house so it won't easily fall down. The children explore sounds and rhythms of the jungle. They enjoy singing some well-known songs such as *Five little speckled frogs* and *If I were a butterfly*.

88. The teachers provide good opportunities for the children to develop their creative ideas through painting, modelling, role-play and music. They stimulate the children's interests with lively questioning. The children are encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts. In the nursery a calming atmosphere is created in the jungle through the use of very appropriate background music. The staff prompt the children to choose their resources and tools carefully and they value the children's work by effectively displaying it for everyone to see.

ENGLISH

89. Standards, for speaking and listening, reading and writing at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6, are well above those found nationally. Pupils, of all abilities and from all backgrounds, achieve very well at all stages. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when there were inconsistencies in standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Progress was judged unsatisfactory then, and pupils did not reach the standards of which they were capable. Now, pupils are challenged very well. As a result, they achieve very well and reach standards which are well above average. The main reasons for the improvement are the:

- improved quality of teaching and learning
- effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, which has impacted positively on standards
- improved breadth and relevance of the curriculum, which now offers pupils a good range of practical opportunities to practise their literacy skills
- improved roles of the co-ordinators, who use their very good knowledge and understanding of the subject to move standards forward.

90. Standards in speaking and listening of Years 2 and 6 pupils are well above average. Speaking and listening is very well promoted from the youngest classes. In Year 1, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are good at predicting what might happen in a story, after looking at the book's cover. They know how to listen to the opinions and ideas of others, and take their turn in discussions. The emphasis on discussion continues throughout the school, so by the time that pupils join the upper junior classes, they have become very skilled in discussing and listening very carefully, in a variety of situations. For example in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, a group of pupils discussing their reading book, 'The Secret Garden', moved into an in-depth debate on how attitudes to different cultures has changed. They showed very clear understanding of how, in the past it had been acceptable to use people as slaves but how, today, that should not be tolerated. Thus, they not only used their discussion skills to

demonstrate their historical knowledge, they also showed remarkable understanding of moral, social and cultural issues.

91. Standards in reading are very good throughout the school. In the current Year 2, they are now well above average, which is an improvement since the 2002 national test results. Pupils become more fluent and accurate as they move through the school. Most read with a sense of pleasure and involvement. Parents make good contributions to their children's reading, through listening to their reading at home and filling in their reading record books. The school inculcates a love of reading in the pupils. Teachers share their love of books with the pupils. This enthuses the pupils and encourages them to find solace in reading. The range of basic reading books available is good. The two library areas are pleasant and welcoming. This encourages pupils to linger and think about the books which they select to read, rather than rushing to grab the first book that comes to hand.

92. Younger pupils use a range of strategies appropriately to read difficult words. They become increasingly confident in tackling unfamiliar words and gain a sense of pleasure and involvement in their reading. Most pupils can discuss the stories which they have read, showing understanding of the main points and suggesting what might happen next. They understand the purposes of the contents and index pages, and the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Most Year 6 pupils are fluent readers and discuss stories with an appreciation of events and characters. Most pupils show understanding of a variety of texts, identify key points and use inference and deduction appropriately.

93. A good range of opportunities for developing writing skills is provided throughout the school. Teachers are very good at giving their pupils interesting and demanding activities. Younger pupils write in a variety of styles. For example, they write instructions on how to make buttered toast and jam, and they label diagrams. By Year 2, they write very well-structured, grammatically correct sentences and use, accurately, a good range of punctuation. Older pupils successfully extend their writing skills and write character profiles, book reviews and poetry, as well as using a wide range of narrative and factual styles of writing. By Year 6, they have very good understanding of the structure of English, as was shown in their use of the conditional with past, present and future tenses. They explained clearly why they chose certain verbs, using phrases such as "it implies that" and "you would be fixated by."

94. The school has identified relative weaknesses in spelling and handwriting. To address both of these areas, it has bought in a good range of extra resources and has developed systematic programmes to teach spelling and handwriting skills. This is beginning to impact effectively on pupils' learning, which, although already good, is beginning to show further improvement. Information and communication technology is used effectively in some lessons. Pupils learn, for instance, to present their work in original and attractive ways, by using a word processor to draft and redraft ideas and then to print the text.

95. The teaching and learning of English is consistently good and often very good, throughout the school. Teachers manage their classes outstandingly well, and have very good working relationships with the pupils. They are good at 'modelling' activities, so that pupils can see what is to be done. Correct vocabulary is well used in different subjects, with the result that pupils learn to use the correct terms. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 information and communication technology lesson, pupils talked with understanding about the pie charts and histograms that they were exploring. Activities such as this make valuable contributions to pupils' basic literacy skills.

96. The National Literacy Strategy has been well established throughout the school. The school has introduced personal targets for pupils, which are kept on the inside cover of their

work books. These give clear guidance on how to improve. Assessment procedures are very good. They give teachers very useful information about pupils' attainment and progress. This enables them to track and monitor pupils' achievement very effectively. Basic literacy skills are well taught throughout the school. Teachers make good use of all opportunities to develop literacy, whatever subject they are teaching. Discussion and questioning are used well in all subjects, and reading and writing tasks are effectively integrated into the work.

97. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the work, and so learn very well. Those pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English, receive very good support and this enables them to take part successfully in all lessons. Thus, they achieve very well. The school has a clear policy for the marking of pupils' work and teachers generally make helpful comments on how to improve. They use praise and rewards well to motivate their pupils.

98. The curriculum leaders work very effectively together. They have a very good understanding and overview of their subject and a clear vision for raising standards even further. They carefully monitor planning and have had some opportunities for monitoring the teaching and learning throughout the school. This has enabled them to identify areas for improvement and to establish plans of action to address them. English is very well led and managed. Resources are good and used well.

MATHEMATICS

99. Standards in mathematics are well above average. Evidence from the inspection and school assessments confirms this very good picture. At age of seven and 11, most pupils are on course to attain levels well above those expected for their age, in this year's national tests, with a significant number set to attain the higher levels. This represents well above average achievement. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Standards in numeracy are very good throughout the school.

- 100 There are three factors readily identifiable as agents in improving standards:
- the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy gives teachers clear guidance
 - the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is consistently very good
 - pupils enjoy mathematics.

101 Pupils in Year 1 are developing fluency when adding numbers up to ten, and learning that more than two numbers can be added together. In Year 2, pupils focus on finding the difference between numbers. They complete addition and subtraction of two digit numbers and check their answers by addition. They concentrate on developing new strategies. Pupils' understanding of place value of numbers to 100 is good. Most pupils recognise the different characteristics of basic two-dimensional shapes such as circles, pentagons and hexagons. In their work on directions they recognise quarter, half and full turns and rotate a shape about a given point. Younger pupils measure in non-standard units. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are ruling and measuring lines to the nearest centimetre and confidently tell the time on the hour, and at quarter and half past the hour.

102 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to develop their mental arithmetic skills, secure in their recall of number bonds to 20 and multiples of 2, 4, 5 and 10. They explore different methods of multiplying two digit numbers. They develop a good understanding of how mathematics works, for example, the commutative law and the importance of the decimal point and place value to avoid confusion when writing 6p as £0.06 rather than £0.6. They tally information and record this as a simple graph. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident in using

the four rules of number. For example, they apply the tests of divisibility to numbers to see which will divide exactly by 2, 4, 5 10 or 100. The oldest pupils can add, subtract, divide and multiply large numbers accurately and use decimals, fractions and percentages to calculate answers. Pupils' in Year 6 are also confident in their understanding of shape, space and measurement. They use formulae to find the area of shapes and the length of missing sides. They know the differences between acute, obtuse and reflex angles and draw them accurately. They interpret data and are confident in finding the mean, median, average and range of a series of values. In their work on probability pupils use vocabulary such as *likely, certain and impossible* accurately.

103 In the most successful lessons there is a good level of interaction between pupils and teachers. Lessons are planned with a strong imaginative and practical element, allowing pupils to learn at first hand. Questioning is skilful and probes key areas, making pupils think. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a consequence they respond very well. There is extra support in booster classes for individual pupils who need extra help to enable them to succeed

104 Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good and they work hard particularly in oral sessions when the pace is fast and the work challenging. In some lessons good use is made of information and communication technology and this is becoming a regular feature in teachers' planning. The co-ordination of mathematics is very good and this also contributes to the improvement. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. The information gained from regular assessments is used successfully to target pupils, individually and in groups.

SCIENCE

105 Achievement in science is very good throughout the school. There are examples of good and very good achievement by pupils of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Attainment in science is very good and well above national averages. Planning is at a developmental stage. The school is seeking ways to provide pupils with the best opportunities to achieve optimum learning. The school management team are aware of the current unsatisfactory aspects of the way that the curriculum is delivered in Years 3 – 6 which has a negative impact upon learning.

106 Up to the age of seven, pupils have completed activities on personal data, body parts, the senses, noise and sounds, electricity, currents and plants. There is clear evidence of pupils gaining pleasure from scientific enquiry, testing out theories and being aware of fair testing. Pupils develop good scientific vocabulary. For example, one pupil in Year 2 said that "to make sure the test is fair you have to use the same size pots". Work within the books shows very good development of research techniques and clear frameworks to support writing. Pupils are keen to share their knowledge, and there is excellent interaction between them. One pupil asked the inspector if all plants need soil to grow, at which point her partner went and fetched a jar containing runner beans and water, saying, "beans don't need soil but they need water".

107 By the age of 11, pupils have studied properties of liquids, solids and gases, sounds, pitch, the solar system, evaporation, condensation, electric circuits, balances, forces, and tasting. There is very clear evidence of very good use of investigative work to promote scientific enquiry. Pupils make predictions and learn to test them. They build on their earlier learning about fair testing and ensure that tests are fair. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge and to bring science alive. Following a visit to the Catalyst Museum in Runcorn, one pupil

wrote, "The visit was very interesting because from a dirty salt rock we produced some clean salt that we could put on our chips." The display of photographs, and word- processed reports following the visit shows clearly how pupils work individually and together to collect evidence and develop scientific ideas. Work is well presented and there is a good writing frame to support the reporting of investigations. The well-planned and organised experiments stimulate the pupils' interest in learning about science.

108 Teaching is very good and this promotes very good quality learning. In the more effective lessons, there is a very positive learning atmosphere, pupils are very keen to be involved and the teachers plan very well. Pupils are actively involved in developing skills of research and scientific enquiry. Pupils are allowed to get things wrong and to reflect on how they could be more rigorous. Teachers support individual groups well, using questioning effectively very well to support and challenge learning. On occasions, even when teaching is very good, the learning outcomes are unsatisfactory. When this happens, teachers are enthusiastic, very well organised, and the pupils respond very well. However, there is an expectation that the teacher can teach two different topics to two different age groups by splitting his/her time with each group. This can result in unsatisfactory learning. The school has recognised the need to reorganise its groupings or to provide the teachers with additional support.

109 The co-ordination of science is currently good. The school has introduced curriculum programmes based on government guidelines. However, the co-ordinators are aware that the planning of science teaching to meet the learning needs of all pupils requires development. There are good and developing links between the co-ordinators at both key stages. They are very enthusiastic and keen to develop the scientific skills of pupils and promote further the high levels of attainment. The co-ordinators have started the process of monitoring the subject progress by scrutinising samples of workbooks and discussing their findings with reporting back to teachers. Basing schemes of work on the government guidelines throughout the school has broadened the curriculum. It has also given guidance to teachers and challenged pupils to raise still further their very good attainment levels.

110 The school has received a grant of £300 to develop an environmental area/wild life garden, from the Manchester Metropolitan University. Plans also include setting up a science council to protect and improve the school environment, and a gardening area for the infants. The school is developing links with a local secondary school regarding the transition programme in science and this helps the sharing of good practice. The school has an annual science week, which includes activities, visiting speakers and an afternoon when parents come into school to work on science activities with their children. For example, Year 2 pupils and their parents were recently involved in making planes to see which would fly the furthest. The co-ordinators are keen to help teachers develop their skills in monitoring scientific enquiry and promote pupil self review, however to date there has been no planned observation of teaching

ART AND DESIGN

111 The level of pupils' attainment in art and design is well above expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve very well.

112 As a result of working through a very effective school scheme of work based on national recommendations, and delivered over a two-year cycle, pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum involving the use of a wide range of media, techniques and stimuli. They are also introduced to the study of well-know artists across a range of cultures and historical periods. For example, Year 2 pupils have studied several artists including Monet, Cezanne, Jawlensky and Paul Klee. Many very good displays of this work are evident, in which they use various media in the style of these artists.

113 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 mix colours in paint and other media, and draw accurately from observation. They learn successfully to create collages using folded, plaited, twisted and coiled paper of different types and colours and use malleable materials to explore shapes and textures and work with textiles. They learn successfully about artists from reference books and posters. They study and about tone and line, colour, pattern and texture, shape and form. By the end of Year 2, some pupils review their work and think about how they could improve it. With adult support, they develop a piece of work over time. For example in Year 2, pupils produced a textile curtain which was the culmination of a series of lessons including observational pastel drawings of fruit, which were then printed onto the fabric.

114 By Year 6, pupils collect visual stimuli and explore their ideas through sketching. For example, in some very high quality drawings of trainers, observations focused on pattern, line, texture and tone. Pupils learn about perspective and begin to use it successfully in their sketches. They explore pattern when making salt dough figures, abstract collages, cross stitch designs and African masks.

115 Pupils have very good attitudes to art. They concentrate very well and keep on task. In a mixed age class lesson seen on perspective, pupils helped others who had difficulties, while the teacher repeated the lesson introduction for the Year 5 pupils who had returned from their swimming lesson.

116 Although only one lesson was seen in Year 6 where teaching and learning were good, it is apparent from the work seen around the school that teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils experience a sense of success in art lessons. Good examples of this were seen in Year 6 where the teacher supported the group of Year 5 pupils who regularly miss the initial input to the lesson.

117 The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and is a very efficient manager. She maintains a very good supply of resources and visual aids, all of which are carefully cross-referenced to the school's scheme of work. This strengthens teaching and learning because it links learning objectives to the units of work to be covered and because it ensures an appropriate balance of elements and approaches to the art and design curriculum. She monitors teaching and learning by looking at pupils' work, early discussions with staff, and checking medium term planning. Good assessment procedures are in place, which are used well to modify lesson plans, address the short term planning and to ensure that the impact of teaching on attainment is monitored. The use of information and communication technology is being developed. The co-ordinator organises an extremely popular extra-curricular club for pupils in Year 2; this enables pupils to further develop their interest, skills and techniques. At the time of the inspection, pupils were painting portraits using various photographs and prints. The results are very sophisticated.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118 The level of pupils' attainment in design and technology is in line with expectations at the ends of both Years 2 and 6. This remains the same as at the last inspection. Pupils including those with special educational needs achieve well.

119 As a result of working through an effective scheme of work based on national recommendations and arranged over a two-year cycle, pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum involving a wide range of media, techniques and stimuli. Pupils design products for many differing functions and situations. Staff give pupils opportunities to develop and improve their designs. For example, in Year 2, pupils designed and built cars. They investigated wheels and axles and then re-visited their designs in order to improve the cars' mobility.

120 In Years 1 and 2 the lessons seen were very good. They were based on food technology sessions. Year 2 pupils learnt how various foods change in appearance and texture when they are processed by *squeezing, grating, slicing, and peeling*. This resulted in very good learning taking place as pupils used very good vocabulary to describe their results. During this lesson great emphasis was placed upon the need for hygienic practices and the safe use of utensils.

121 By Year 6, pupils use their skills in design to take into account the need for appearance, comfort, function and cost. This was seen in a very good lesson observed in Year 6, where pupils were designing and making slippers. The teacher's very high expectations gave pupils the confidence to successfully design patterns for their slippers, using all the appropriate techniques to ensure that they were a good fit.

122 Although only a small number of lessons were seen, it is apparent from work seen around the school and from photographic evidence that teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils have the self-confidence in order to achieve a sense of success in their design and technology lessons. Good examples were seen in Year 6 where the teacher's very clear explanation and demonstration of techniques and her high expectations resulted in an increase in pupils' self esteem.

123 The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and manages the subject satisfactorily. Since the last inspection she has developed the resources available for the subject and they are now good. She monitors teaching and learning by looking at pupils' work, discussions with staff and monitoring medium term planning. Good assessment procedures are in place, which address the short term planning and ensure that the impact of teaching on attainment is monitored. However, this could be further improved by the development of a photographic evidence base. The use of information and communication technology is in the very early stages of development.

GEOGRAPHY

124 Standards in geography are above expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. The standards achieved by the pupils reflect their very good achievement and progress they make as they move from year to year.

125 As a result of working through a very effective school scheme of work based on national recommendations and delivered over a 2 year cycle, pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. This involves a wide range of studies in all areas of the subject. The whole scheme is regularly reviewed and evaluated, thus ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible curriculum.

126 By the end of Year 2, pupils study the local features of the area and acquire a growing awareness of signs and symbols and the differences between human and physical features on simple maps. They compare their own local area with other locations and associate places with major features of maps. Pupils successfully plot their routes to school. They investigate their local environment and investigate things that they would and would not see there. They look at leisure facilities that they would find locally. They investigate the food they eat, and identify on the world map where it comes from; they discuss the climate in different countries where different foods are produced. Excellent use was made of a pupil with from an Indian background, when, as part of a topic on India, his mother was invited to school to demonstrate the preparation of Indian celebratory food, and to talk about India. This event was much enjoyed by staff and pupils and enhanced pupils' understanding of other cultural backgrounds.

127 By the end of Year 6, pupils confidently use a range of maps to locate places or features, including major rivers such as the Nile. They have traced the journey of a river. They appreciate the necessity for clean water for life, and the implications that this has for people in developing countries. Pupils become involved in local environmental issues. When investigating a local initiative *The Green Travel Plan*, they wrote letters to their local authority complaining about cars parking near the school, and suggested traffic solutions. Strong links have been set up with a small village school in Pendle. Reciprocal visits are made, ensuring that pupils from both schools can make comparisons with their own area. All pupils, whatever their gender, cultural background or ability achieve well in developing their geographical skills throughout the school.

128 As no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, no judgements on teaching and learning have been made. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good. Where teaching is good, pupils are actively engaged in the task and have purposeful discussions with each other. They understand what is required of them and work independently. Appropriate tasks that have clear expectations ensure that good learning takes place. This was observed in a very good Year 4 lesson, where pupils used two and four figure grid references to locate places on a map of the local area. These well-organised activities ensured that all were very successfully challenged. This resulted in very good learning both geographically and mathematically. While in a good lesson seen in Year 6, good planning ensured that all pupils were fully involved as they designed a questionnaire that would help find a solution to the traffic congestion problem at the Trafford Centre. The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils helps to ensure that lessons are well managed and behaviour is very good. Planning is good and it has good detail. Most lessons are interesting to the pupils and this effectively supports their learning.

129 The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and manages the subject well. Since the last inspection, she has developed resources, improved the curriculum, and developed effective assessment procedures. She monitors teaching by evaluating pupils work, discussions with staff and monitoring lesson plans together with medium and short term planning. Assessment procedures address the short term planning and help to ensure that the impact of teaching on attainment is monitored. The use of information and communication technology in geography is being developed.

HISTORY

130 Achievement in history is very good. There is clear evidence within work seen and in lessons that pupils of all ages are developing very good knowledge of people and events in history. In particular, the school has developed excellent sources of evidence and pupils

have gained confidence and skills to source information. Standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6.

131 By the age of seven, pupils have followed a programme that includes timelines, history of their parents, grandparents, and themselves through the eyes of their parents or grandparents. The involvement of the family as sources of evidence is excellent. In one Year 1 class where the “memories” are displayed with a photograph of the pupil at a younger age, one parent wrote; “Here you are when you are three. You still liked Thomas the tank engine, playing with your train and you were not really bothered about football !!”. Pupils successfully develop a sense of chronology, using different sources of evidence and first hand information to find out about the past. For example, in linking letter writing to the feelings of evacuated children, one pupil wrote home to say, “I’m missing you really, really, really much I really want to come home”. Other work on the war years makes excellent use of resource material including a letter from the grandfather of one of the pupils, written at the time of the blackouts. When studying the Victorians, pupils visit Wigan Pier and have a lesson given by a “Victorian” teacher. In addition, the whole school hallway was transformed into a Victorian set, using Victorian artefacts, which were mainly supplied by parents and grandparents. The school’s very good pictorial evidence shows clearly that these young children enjoy their historical experiences. In particular, history is brought alive, both for the children and their families. For example, all become active participants in the Victorian events in school. This enhances pupils’ learning very successfully. In Years 1 and 2, one great grandmother of 93 years of age, visited the school, to talk to pupils of her experiences of living through the Second World War as a young mother in Flixton. The school has videoed this talk as a resource for future years.

132 By Year 6, pupils have continued on the exciting journey of making the past meaningful and relevant. In Years 3 and 4, pupils visit Roman Chester, dress up as Centurians, walk the walls, learn some Latin phrases and participate in archaeological digs. Pupils have completed very good work on Ancient Greece, the Romans, Ancient Egypt, Anglo Saxons and Vikings, the Tudors, the Aztecs and the Victorians by the end of Year 6. Work is very well presented and pupils are encouraged to use a variety of source materials. In one Year 6 lesson on the roles people played in the running of a Tudor ship, pupils were asked to write in “role”. There was an excellent response, with pupils’ reading out their “in role” accounts of life and other pupils asking questions. One pupil wrote, “I hate going to bed at night because everyone is so smelly and the room stinks”. This led to a very good discussion on sanitation, dehydration and diet. Work in books and discussion with pupils shows that the pupils are actively involved in learning, and have very good levels of achievement.

133 The quality of teaching is very good. When teaching is very good or better teachers plan well, have very good subject knowledge, challenge all pupils through very good support and appropriate targets, are enthusiastic, and stimulate pupil involvement through a range of stimulating visits and speakers. Teachers at all levels make excellent use of a wide variety of source materials. In one history lesson with Year 1, the teacher used a box of her possessions to enable them to understand the term memories.

134 The subject is very well led and managed. The two co-ordinators are both very enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge. They meet regularly to share ideas. They successfully advise and guide staff. This enables teachers to share ideas. They monitor very well pupils’ progress across key stages. With the mixed year group classes the curriculum is organised on a two year cycle and monitored closely to ensure no duplication of

learning. This is well organised and clearly documented. Teachers plan cross-curricular links and there are regular meetings every two weeks to develop cross curricular learning. This was evident when pupils did work on letter writing in literacy. They wrote as if they were evacuees writing home. Displays of work within classrooms are very good and greatly enhance learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135 Standards in information and communication technology for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are above average. Much of the work seen during the inspection, in interrogating databases and using spreadsheets, was well above average. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average at Year 2 and at Year 6. Improvement is particularly praiseworthy because the school suffered two setbacks when establishing its computer suite, both of which severely restricted teaching and learning for a number of months. Improvements are due, in the main, to the:

- improved subject knowledge of teachers, which has enabled them to teach pupils the basic skills needed when using computers
- improvements in hardware and software
- development of the computer suite
- improvements in the use of information and communication technology in other subjects, such as mathematics and science
- excitement introduced into the use of computers and allied peripherals, such as monitoring the growth of sunflowers using a digital camera daily and watching birdlife through a video link in a nesting box.

136 By Year 2, all pupils log on and off. They confidently use the return, shift and space keys. They make name labels to add to pictures, combining text and artwork. They use art programs to 'paint in the style of Mondrian'. By Year 4, pupils assemble and organise their ideas, using a database. They present their work well using a wide range of charts and graphs. In one lesson, the questions that one group of pupils posed, using data from their survey of journeys to school, showed particularly advanced understanding of databases. They were unable to manipulate the information to give the required answer. After a very technical discussion about the program's capabilities, they correctly decided that the program would be unable to give them the information which they required and that they would have to change the question which they were asking. This showed outstanding knowledge of how computers are only as good as the user enables them to be. By Year 6, pupils very competently use spreadsheets. They organise data very successfully, using formulae to provide the information they needed.

137 Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to this subject. They speak enthusiastically about their knowledge and experience. Teachers encourage the pupils' enthusiasms and enhance pupils' learning, by supporting their ideas. For example, in Year 1, one boy was so pleased with the work produced on the sunflower growth that he e-mailed it to himself at home, to share with his parents. Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of the skilful support of staff.

138 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Many teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this to advantage to move the pupils' knowledge and understanding of technology forward, at a rapid pace. They plan lessons carefully, to ensure that all pupils understand what they have to do. They encourage pupils to work out the set tasks manually. This means that when the pupils then transfer their work to the computers

they understand exactly what it is they are doing. Teachers interact with pupils at timely moments during lessons enabling pupils to achieve very well. This facilitates pupils' very good achievement. The curriculum is good and offers pupils very good opportunities to develop their skills. However there are occasions when teachers in the mixed age group classes are expected to deliver more than one lesson at once. This is an unnecessary complication and could be simplified and made more manageable. Learning is also enhanced by the very good quality displays around school. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has audited future training and resource needs. The school is aware that, although the computer suite has been successfully installed and is very effectively used, there is still a need for more computers in other parts of the building. There is an action plan addressing this.

MUSIC

139 Although too few lessons were seen during the inspection to draw conclusions about standards, it is evident that good quality music plays an important part in the life of the school. Pupils enter the hall for assemblies to music. This is carefully chosen to add meaning and atmosphere to collective worship. It is also an opportunity to introduce pupils to music from other cultures. The pupils listen to this music carefully and with obvious enjoyment. Teachers explain the background and history of the music, enhancing successfully the pupils' learning. This makes a good impact on pupils' spiritual and social maturity.

140 Pupils sing particularly well, often in parts. The school has a very enthusiastic choir which performs to parents and to other audiences, particularly at Christmas, when large scale performances are mounted in church.

141 In addition to being offered a full music curriculum pupils are also offered the opportunity to take part in such performances as an Easter Cantata. They also take part in concerts at The Trafford Centre. These are much appreciated by parents.

142 Very young pupils learn to sing a variety of songs matching pitch and rhythm accurately. Teachers sing along with them, conducting to keep them in tune and to keep the beat going. Older pupils sing confidently and with enthusiasm. Year 5 and 6 pupils in the choir, sang in parts sweetly and maturely. Pupils sing expressively, and mostly tunefully. Their diction is clear.

143 Younger pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to a chosen selection of pieces. These are all aimed at reflecting the various moods described in the poem *The Scarecrow* by Walter de La Mare. They help to make the words come to life and pupils write and draw vividly from their imagination. Older pupils identify melodies they associate with characters whilst listening to "Peter and the Wolf." They learn to identify orchestral instruments by their sounds and appreciate how music can be used to build suspense such as in the film "Jaws."

144 Mediaeval music and music from other nations, for example the Caribbean, is also used to enhance the curriculum and to help provide for pupils' cultural development. The school has recently provided training for those members of staff who are not so confident in teaching music. Examples of graphic scores are examined which make provision for both pitched and unpitched percussion.

145 The enthusiastic co-ordinator leads the subject effectively, giving good advice and guidance to colleagues. Resources are good. There is a good range and number of instruments. The school at present uses its own scheme of work which it is planning to review in order to incorporate national guidelines.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146 Standards in physical education are average. Pupils develop self-confidence, social skills and enjoyment from participating in a good variety of sports at a range of levels. Progress awards in physical activities are limited to the Trafford Swimming and Water Skills certification. Although pupils are actively involved in football, netball, cross country running, racket games, dance and gymnastics, there are no additional internal or external schemes to enable pupils to gain certification for their development and progress.

147 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good. They are enthusiastic and try hard to improve. The very good support and care of all staff enables pupils to gain enjoyment from taking part. The previous inspection report stated, "by the end of Key Stage 2, physical education does not meet statutory requirements". There has been good improvement since then. All requirements are now met.

148 By the age of seven, pupils enjoy experiencing gymnastics, dance and games. Teachers encourage and support pupils very well. This enables pupils of all abilities to participate effectively and safely practise skills of balance, changes of direction and pace. Pupils are made to feel good about themselves. Teachers do this by encouraging pupils to demonstrate their progress. They also learn to improve their skills by observing others who are performing skilfully.

149 By Year 6, pupils continue with games, dance, gymnastics, and also go to the local leisure pool for swimming. Pupils gain in self-confidence through physical activities. Team games such as netball and football encourage team-building skills and social development.

150 The quality of teaching and learning is good. When teaching is good or better teachers plan well and are enthusiastic. They use the warm-up well and a very good progression of activities ensures that pupils are challenged with increasing demands. In one outstanding lesson with Year 4 pupils, the teacher challenged the pupils to develop their skills of stretch and balance and to talk about good practice. When teaching is less effective there is a lack of emphasis placed upon the skills which make for good practice. In addition, teachers do not always highlight good points of a demonstration to support teaching points to enable other pupils to perform more effectively.

151 There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. However, short-term records do not indicate what pupils have achieved or where additional support is needed. In particular, small step improvements are not being identified. Co-ordination of physical education is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic. She runs a sports club after school on a Wednesday. She is supported by other staff who help with football teams and cross-country running.