

INSPECTION REPORT

ASH GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Macclesfield

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111017

Headteacher: Mrs D Hulley

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Hooper
15334

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th January 2003

Inspection number: 247070

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Belgrave Road Macclesfield Cheshire
Postcode:	SK11 7TF
Telephone number:	01625 500604
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Reid
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15334	Julie Hooper	Registered inspector	Art and Design Music Religious education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? – The school’s results and pupils’ achievements. How well are pupils taught? English as an additional language. What should the school do to improve further?
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector		Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30398	Chris Scola	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
18331	Jonathan Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Special educational needs. Equality of opportunity.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a smaller than average primary school catering for boys and girls between the ages of three and 11. Most of the pupils who attend the school are from the immediate area. Currently, there are 156 pupils on roll, which is considerably less than at the last inspection when there were 244 pupils attending the school. The number of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal times is very high at 42 per cent. The pupils are in six classes, one of which is a nursery where there are 29 children attending part-time. The children enter school with a wide range of differing experiences, but, in general, their attainment on entry is well below that expected for children of their age. The school has identified 27.1 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is above national figures; none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. All pupils speak English as their first language. Over 47 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is very high when compared with the national figures. Although four teachers left and two joined the school in the past two years, five of the teachers have been in post since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ash Grove Primary School is an effective school, despite the problems, beyond its control, it is encountering as a result of the rapidly falling roll. It provides a good education for its pupils in a supportive environment. Most pupils have good attitudes towards their work, which has a positive impact on their learning. The test results of the Year 6 pupils in 2002 showed that standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average although standards, overall, are improving. Inspection evidence shows that the standards of the current Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science are below average. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall and there was some very good teaching. The school meets the needs of most pupils well and works hard to be fully inclusive and promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. The headteacher has a clear vision for taking the school forward and this includes improving standards and providing a programme of work that meets the needs of the mixed age classes. Governors are supportive and appropriately involved. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils have a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall, and this is responsible for the improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The very good provision for information and communication technology enables pupils to reach standards above those expected for pupils of their age by the time they leave the school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership so that the whole school community is committed to raising standards.
- The very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development promotes high standards of personal development, good relationships and behaviour and the positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning.
- The pupils with special educational needs are provided for very well enabling them to make good progress in their learning
- The school knows and looks after its pupils very well and provides a secure learning environment; this raises pupils' self-esteem enabling most pupils to achieve their best.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school by giving greater challenge to the more able pupils.
- The role of the co-ordinator in improving standards by raising the quality of the teaching to the level of the best.
- Curriculum provision to cater for the mixed aged classes.
- Attendance

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in January 1998 the school has made good progress. It has maintained the high standards of provision particularly in the foundation stage, in leadership and in teaching. Support for pupils with special educational needs is now very good enabling the pupils to make good progress in their learning. The provision for information and communication technology is very good and pupils throughout the school are attaining above average standards. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 have improved, and a higher proportion of pupils are reaching the expected level for their age group. Although the headteacher monitors teaching and learning through direct classroom observation this only partially addresses a key issue from the last inspection, as the recommendation was that the role of the subject co-ordinator should be extended to include this responsibility. The school has a good personal, social and health policy which includes provision for the teaching of sex education addressing the other key issue. Attendance is not as good as at the last inspection. The headteacher, staff and governors have recognised the weaknesses in the school and have well considered plans for continuing the improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	E	E	E
mathematics	E*	E	E	D
science	E*	E	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that, since 2000, the standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have been well below the national average. When compared with similar schools standards in mathematics and science improved in 2002. Standards in all three subjects are improving and more pupils are reaching the expected level for their age group. However, not enough pupils reach the higher Level 5. In the 2002 national tests, the Year 2 pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but did much better when compared with similar schools, especially in reading. Teacher assessments in science indicated well above average attainment.

In the reception class, most children reach average standards in their physical development but are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all other areas of development. Standards in English, mathematics and science of the current group of Year 2 pupils are below average. The targets set for the current Year 6 pupils are very challenging. Although the inspection evidence confirms that standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are below average, the pupils have made at least satisfactory progress as they moved through the school because when they entered school their standards were very low.

The school has successfully updated the provision for information and communication technology, and this has had a significant impact on standards which are above average in Years 2 and 6 with a significant number of pupils in Year 6 achieving well above average standards. In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups are as expected for their ages. In religious education, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in Year 2, although standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age group. In assemblies and singing lessons most pupils sing tunefully with great enthusiasm, often attaining above average standards.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and take full advantage of the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	The provision for the personal development of pupils is good. The positive relationships between the staff and the pupils contribute well to pupils' learning.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is well below the national average, but has improved this year.

The vast majority of pupils are friendly and polite to visitors and are eager to talk to them about their school life. The pupils have good relationships with each other. Although most pupils attend school regularly, the high mobility of pupils has an adverse effect on attendance, especially unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good, overall. In the nursery and reception class the teaching was nearly always very good. The teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and promote it well through a wide range of stimulating activities, so the children make good and often very good progress in their learning. The quality of teaching throughout the rest of the school was generally good although it was evident from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work that this varies from class to class. Although the continuity of a number of pupils' learning was disrupted when they had to move to another class at the beginning of the term because of the reduction in the number of classes, most teachers successfully minimised the adverse effects of this. The quality of teaching in English was usually good and in mathematics it was satisfactory overall, although basic skills, such as letter sound recognition and number facts, are taught well. In all classes, lessons are planned with a clear focus on what the pupils are going to learn and most teachers use questioning techniques effectively to test out the pupils' previous learning before introducing new facts and concepts. The teachers' subject knowledge is sound and most teachers use this well to promote learning.

Class discipline in the majority of classes was good and most pupils listened attentively and responded well. However, sometimes, in the classes of older pupils, the teachers did not always contain the challenging behaviour of a few pupils, which disrupted the class so that the pace of learning slowed down. Most teachers use assessment information effectively to help plan future lessons. However, not all teachers have high expectations of what pupils, especially the more able pupils, can achieve, and do not plan tasks that challenge them.

Good provision is made for the pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are taught individually or in groups often make very good progress in their learning. The teachers' marking is often good, and in the best examples the teachers make comments that help the pupils move on in their learning. Homework is used appropriately to support the pupils' learning in most classes. The teaching assistants make a very valuable

contribution to the pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs; they are briefed well by the teachers and are clear about what they should do.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, overall. It is generally broad and balanced. The provision for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is very good. However, following the unexpected need to reorganise the class structure this term, the school has recognised the need to adapt the curriculum provision to cater for the mixed age classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils have very good support enabling them to make good progress in their learning
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection. Staff know and look after their pupils very well.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school has established a good partnership with parents and this is developing. Most parents have positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is managing the difficult period associated with the rapid fall in the school's roll effectively. She has the full support of the staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They are very supportive of the school and most have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates its performance effectively and takes appropriate action to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Educational priorities are linked to the school budget and specific grants are used appropriately. These are helping to raise standards.

The school has a good number of teachers and support staff. The accommodation is of a good size and well maintained. Overall, the school has sufficient resources to support all subjects. The school applies the principles of best value soundly to expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The staff are very approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.	
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In general, the team agrees with the parents' positive comments. The inspectors found that the amount of homework given to pupils throughout the school is appropriate for their ages. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including some for the Year 1 and 2 pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although there is a range of attainment, assessment and inspection evidence shows that on entry to the nursery the majority of children are of well below average attainment. By the time they enter the reception class the majority of the children's attainment is still below average. The good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) ensures that the children make good progress and achieve well. By the time they are five, the proportion of the children reaching the early learning goals in their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world has improved, although overall attainment is below national expectations. However, in their physical development, the majority of children reach the early learning goals.
2. In 2002, standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for Year 6 pupils were well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in English and below average in science and mathematics. The attainment of these pupils when they were in Year 2 was well below average, indicating satisfactory progress overall. In addition, of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2002, just over half had been identified as having particular learning difficulties. However, in all of these subjects, although a much higher percentage of the pupils attained the expected Level 4 than in 2001, too few attained the higher Level 5.
3. In 2002, the results of the national tests for the Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were average, indicating a great improvement over the three previous years especially in reading and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading were well above average and, in mathematics and writing were above average.
4. The school has set challenging targets for 2003 in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that the Year 6 pupils are attaining below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the current Year 2 in English, mathematics and science are below average. The school suffers very high levels of pupil mobility in the juniors and even more so in the infants. Because of the rapidly shrinking school numbers over the last two years, causing turbulence in the school's staffing and organisation, the pupils' overall progress has been inconsistent and sometimes adversely affected. However, it was clear, particularly in English, mathematics and science, that teachers did not always provide sufficiently challenging work for the more able pupils in order to raise their levels of attainment.
5. In English, standards in reading and writing in Years 2 and 6 are below average. Although standards are rising, the school is aware that they are still not high enough and have put a high priority on teaching the basic skills of reading and improving writing skills. Reading skills are taught very systematically as the pupils move through the school and in Year 6, the pupils read a wide range of texts. In their writing all pupils are developing and using appropriate techniques to plan and structure their work as they write for a range of audiences and purposes. Most pupils present their work neatly although too few pupils in Year 2 join their letters. The school has also placed a great emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, and teaching in this area has improved. Despite this, standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. A large number of the pupils use a limited vocabulary, speak in simple sentences and do not adapt their speech sufficiently to suit different audiences and purposes. However, in Year 6 standards in speaking and listening are much better, but are still slightly below average.
6. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of number is improving, although throughout the school, pupils are generally less confident when applying this knowledge to solving problems. However, pupils are given good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, most pupils progress steadily in the development of their knowledge and understanding of science facts, but in their scientific enquiry the pupils do not always find it easy to draw conclusions and give clear explanations of their findings.

7. The school has successfully updated the provision for information and communication technology, and this has had a significant impact on standards which are above average in Years 2 and 6 with a significant number of pupils in Year 6 achieving well above average standards. The pupil's use of information and communication technology to research and communicate information and to support their work in other subjects is very well developed by the time they leave the school. In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups are as expected for their ages. In religious education, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in Year 2, although standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age group. In assemblies and singing lessons most pupils sing tunefully with great enthusiasm, often attaining above average standards.
8. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified early and very good intervention programs are put into place to help them particularly in literacy. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants who provide a very good blend of challenge and support to individual pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Nearly all pupils have good attitudes to the school and their behaviour is good. Relationships and personal development are also good. Attendance is below the national average. Parents are happy with behaviour and relationships within the school. The findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
10. The children behave very well in the nursery and reception classes; they soon get used to the routines of the classrooms. The children quickly learn to hang up their coats and take responsibility for their belongings. In both classes the school has good arrangements in place for the children to be introduced to the school day and this means that they come into school happily and confidently. The children enjoy learning, listen well to the teachers, concentrate and try hard; most persevere to complete a task before they move to a new activity. They play and learn well, both alongside one another and together. The good relationships that are formed with the adults who work in the classes help the children to make the good progress seen. The children are encouraged to take care of their own and the school's belongings and to put away equipment and tidy up.
11. The pupils enjoy going to school and take advantage of the wide range of activities available. They travel around the school in an orderly manner and are well behaved in the dining room at lunchtimes. They play well together in the playgrounds at playtimes and lunchtimes. Many friendship groups are seen playing together during these times. The pupils are polite and friendly and spoke readily to inspectors during the inspection.
12. The pupils with special educational needs are encouraged and helped to take a full part in school activities. They have good relationships with the adults who support them, and all of the adults ensure that the pupils are given good opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. The pupils with emotional and behavioural problems are given good support and helped to improve their behaviour and achievement.
13. In lessons, the pupils' behaviour is good overall and closely reflects the quality of the teaching in the majority of lessons. Generally, the pupils concentrate for long periods of time and make good contributions to lessons, sometimes with great enthusiasm. On occasions, they work in pairs or in groups and this helps to improve their collaborative skills. However, in a few lessons, a small number of pupils, often the older boys, are not able to sustain concentration, especially when they are not being directly observed. The school aims to be totally inclusive but has necessarily had to exclude pupils in the past mainly due to their unacceptable behaviour. Due to the school's well established programme of monitoring and promoting good behaviour, the number of exclusions are now lower than they used to be.
14. The pupils show good respect for the views and feelings of others and this is reinforced in assemblies and lessons. They are also very caring and the way that two pupils helped another pupil, who had fallen over, illustrated this very well. The pupils are proud of their school and show respect for the school property and to all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. There are many opportunities for them to take responsibility and to show initiative. Apart from the usual prefects and monitors jobs, which are available, pupils often willingly offer to take on extra work and responsibility knowing that there may be a gold award given when it is completed.

15. Relationships within the school are good overall. A good family atmosphere has been developed in the school and the supportive learning environment that has been created is being beneficial to the school as it strives to improve standards.
16. Attendance last year was well below the national average and unauthorised absences were well above the national average. However, this year, the school has worked hard to improve the situation and both attendance and unauthorised absences have improved. Attendance is still below the national average but is much better than it used to be.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection, although the quality of teaching has improved as no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and there is now a higher percentage of very good teaching. Of the 43 lessons observed, nearly eight in ten lessons were good or better, and four in ten lessons were very good or better; one lesson observed was excellent.
18. In the nursery and reception class the teaching was nearly always very good or better. The significant strengths of this very good teaching which most effectively help the children to make good and often very good progress in their learning are the quality of the relationships, a good understanding of what interests young children, clear instruction and effective questioning, and, in the main, high expectations. The classes are well organised and the children are very well managed. There is a good balance between teacher-directed learning activities and those the children complete independently. The teachers plan these activities carefully and this ensures that there are opportunities for the children to have access to all the areas of learning.
19. For the five to seven year olds, all but two of the lessons were good or better and half were very good. The quality of the teaching of the seven to 11 year olds, was good and better in nearly two thirds of the lessons and almost a fifth were very good. In general, these judgements were supported by the scrutiny of the pupils' current work, although the work the pupils did last term varied considerably from class to class and was sometimes unsatisfactory. Although the continuity and progression of a significant number of pupils' learning was disrupted when they had to move to another class at the beginning of the term because of the reduction in the number of classes, most teachers successfully minimised the adverse effects of this. Most teachers had already gained a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils in their classes and use assessment information effectively to help plan for the wide range of ages and ability levels in their classes. However, not all teachers have high expectations of what pupils, especially the more able pupils, can achieve, and do not plan tasks that challenge them. In some of the lessons the teachers plan the same work for all pupils and the planning does not always set out activities for the different ages and abilities of the pupils. As a result, although the less able pupils are well supported by teaching assistants, the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
20. In the best lessons the teachers are conscientious, enthusiastic and clear about what they expect the pupils to learn. The teachers often involve the pupils in their own learning by telling them what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson and, at the end, asking them to demonstrate that they have achieved this. In a very good music lesson, the teacher wanted the pupils to differentiate between the beat and the rhythm in a piece of music. Through a very skilfully led whole class session and group performances, it was clear from the teacher's questioning at the end of the lesson that the majority of pupils had achieved this.
21. The quality of teaching in English was usually good and in mathematics it was satisfactory overall. Basic skills, such as letter sound recognition in and number facts, are taught well. The school's high priority and strategies to improve standards in English have raised teachers' confidence and improved teaching. Not all teachers are as confident in the teaching of mathematics.
22. In all classes, lessons are planned with a clear focus on what the pupils are going to learn and most teachers use questioning techniques effectively to test out the pupils' previous learning before introducing new facts and concepts. For example, in a very good literacy lesson in the Years 5 and 6 class, the teacher, through a

very good question and answer session, ensured the pupils recalled the beginning of the story they had read the previous day. Whilst individual pupils were reading the next part of the story, the teacher continued this skilful questioning to make sure they understood what was being read and also to encourage the pupils to draw out the inferences made in the text.

23. The teachers' subject knowledge is sound and, in general, most teachers use this well to promote learning. For example, the headteacher takes most classes for singing lessons and because she has a very good knowledge of music and high expectations of what pupils can achieve the standards of singing in the school are often high.
24. Class discipline in the majority of classes was good and most pupils listened attentively and responded well, which enhanced and extended their learning. However, sometimes, in the classes of older pupils, the teachers did not always contain the challenging behaviour of a few pupils, which disrupted the class so that the pace of learning slowed down. When the pupils were involved in whole class lessons, the pace of learning was usually good, but a small number of older pupils have not yet learned to be responsible and learn independently in individual and/or group activities, so the pace of their learning is variable.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In all of the lessons the teaching assistants are deployed well and provide a good blend of help and challenge to the pupils they work with. The support is effective in ensuring the needs of those pupils with special educational needs are met. Many of these pupils are withdrawn from classes for targeted work with the teaching assistant. These lessons are of very good quality. The work is well planned and enjoyable. Consequently the pupils make good progress. When the pupils are taught in larger classes the teachers usually take good account of their needs and make good use of the additional adult support or learning resources that made available to them.
26. The teachers' marking is often good, and in the best examples the teachers make comments that help the pupils move on in their learning. Homework is used appropriately to support the pupils' learning in most classes.

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

27. The school provides a very good curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes which is based appropriately on national Early Learning Goals. The planning provides the children with a very productive, interesting and enjoyable range of activities that cover all the areas of learning and this promotes the good progress made by most of the children. The school has a well-organised outdoor play area which contributes well to the on-going development of the children.
28. For the five to 11 year old pupils, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is organised over a two-year period which has in the past ensured pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work unnecessarily. However, the recent restructuring of classes at Christmas, for example Year 2 pupils in a mixed class with Year 3 pupils later being placed in a mixed class with Year 1 pupils, has resulted in inconsistencies of curriculum coverage for these pupils. The school sees the need to address this issue, so that for all pupils, their knowledge and skills in all subjects are developed progressively as they move through the school.
29. At the time of the last inspection the school did not have policies and effective schemes of work for all subjects. This has improved and statutory requirements are met mainly through the adoption of recommended schemes of work. These reflect the school's particular needs and strengths. The teachers' planning for numeracy and literacy is good. Co-ordinators usually guide and oversee long and medium term plans based on the literacy and numeracy frameworks and teachers then plan thoroughly using an agreed format. In other subjects plans outline how the required skills and knowledge will be taught to pupils, but they do not always indicate how pupils of different abilities will be taught. Information and communication technology and its support for other areas of the curriculum is a strength of the school. For example, the pupils' work on the

Solar System is enhanced by multimedia presentations on the computer and their work in religious education on Muslim life is supported by the pupil's research on the Internet.

30. The curriculum offered to pupils is further enriched through a very good range of extra-curricular activities. For younger pupils a weekly art club is held and for the juniors a number of high quality after school clubs are organised including football, dance, choir, drama and country dancing. Additional funds for out of hours learning are used very well to provide a breakfast club and an after school club.
31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The pupils are carefully identified and a structured program is set up. Time is made available for the staff to talk to the special educational needs co-ordinator and the well-informed support teaching assistant about the process and needs of the pupils in their classes. Individual education plans are in place and the school works closely with outside agencies. The overall targets are broken down into manageable steps and some pupils are given the opportunity to monitor their own progress. The school has adopted the new Code of Practice and updated the policy to good effect. Teaching assistants working with groups of special need pupils are very well informed and plan closely with class teachers to ensure that each pupil's learning needs are met.
32. The school's arrangements for personal, social and health education are good. A key issue from the last inspection was to create a Health Education Policy including a program of sex education. This policy has been established and includes the teaching of sex education through the science curriculum. There is a scheme of work for personal, social and health education which effectively promotes issues such as making difficult decisions and drugs education. For example, in a good lesson the Year 4 and 5 pupils were introduced in an effective way to the effects and issues around smoking. The school has identified pupils with specialist gifts and talents. It has not, however, established a policy for drugs that gives guidance on how to work with other agencies in the community.
33. Relationships with other schools are satisfactory. There is a good induction system in place for pupils entering the nursery and reception years. The school makes good use of the community by encouraging visits from local churches, the police and from Macclesfield Town football club.
34. The provision for the pupils' spiritual awareness is good. In assemblies, the pupils are frequently given the opportunity to develop insight into the values and beliefs of others. For example, in one assembly the pupils, having listened to and watched the role play of the story of 'The Lost Sheep', were reflecting on the story at the end. Older pupils had gained a clear understanding of the meaning of the story that, as one pupil said, 'Everyone counts'. The pupils are encouraged to share in each other's success. For example, pupils receive recognition of their efforts in assemblies when they receive individual and class awards, for example, for good attendance and 'worker of the week'. In classroom discussions most pupils listen carefully to each other, and most express their thoughts and feelings confidently. Some opportunities are made through class activities to appreciate the wonders of the natural world. This was very evident as many pupils visited the nursery class to gaze in wonder and delight at the newly hatched and hatching chicks.
35. The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils are taught the principles of right and wrong and care of property and the school environment. The pupils are encouraged to discuss issues or any worries they may have during circle time, designated sessions for promoting their personal, social and health education through whole class discussion. The teachers actively promote opportunities for such discussions, encouraging the pupils to develop a caring and tolerant attitude. A very good example of this was observed when the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were sharing their thoughts and ideas about the reasons why people lie and the problems associated with this. In another good lesson the Year 1 and 2 pupils were discussing positive ways of dealing with personal feelings, such as sadness or anger. Through good example and the positive mutual respect that exists between the pupils and adults in the school, the staff constantly distinguish between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, so that the standard of the pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. The school rules are simple and each class has developed its own rules and teachers often refer to these. Eye catching, 'child friendly' notices are dotted around the school and encourage pupils to think, for example, 'Stand up for what's right – even if you stand alone'. The staff take every opportunity to build pupils' self esteem by rewarding good work and behaviour and this has an important impact on the good relationships that exist in the school.

36. Provision for the pupils' social development is also very good. There are opportunities for the pupils to work co-operatively in pairs or groups in lessons, and take responsibility for jobs in class and around the school, which the pupils undertake conscientiously. The pupils often volunteer to clear up at dinner times because, done on a regular basis, this earns a gold award. Social awareness is well promoted through the good range of out of school clubs, inter-school sporting and other activities. These give all pupils the opportunity to socialise outside school and learn how to behave in the wider society. The house system (named after trees) makes an important contribution to the spirit of citizenship. The pupils gain leaves as rewards for good behaviour and work which are collected and counted by the head boy and girl and the shield is given to the best 'Tree' in The Foresters Assembly each week. Those children and other people who are less fortunate than themselves are remembered too, and the pupils frequently raise money to support them. For example, the Year 6 were very proud to talk about how they had recently raised over £100 for a "Blue Peter Appeal" from a bring and buy sale they had organised themselves.
37. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good, overall. Frequent opportunities are provided for the pupils to appreciate their own culture, through music, art and drama. The pupils often use the local environment for their studies. Visits pupils make in connection with their historical studies, for example, on the Victorians and Tudors, provide access to a wider national culture. The pupils also participate in performance opportunities such as concerts and festivals. Through much of the curriculum, and especially geography and religious education, the pupils learn to appreciate the cultural traditions of others. Although older pupils took part in a dance activity with a visiting dance group specialising in African, Brazilian and Cuban rhythms, in this all white school, there are limited opportunities to prepare the pupils for multicultural life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for the welfare of its pupils. Health and Safety procedures are very good. Monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. Parents are pleased with the way that the school looks after their children. This aspect has improved since the last inspection.
39. The school has very good procedures for child protection and follows them with sensitivity and thoroughness. Awareness amongst the staff is very good and the designated teacher keeps very well up-to-date by attending courses and conferences about child protection. At the last inspection, the school was criticised for 'not implementing an effective health and safety policy'. The school has addressed this matter and now has a comprehensive health and safety policy, which is very well implemented. First aid procedures are also very good, with first aid boxes in all classrooms and available for educational trips and visits. Attendance procedures have improved recently and, as a result, the unauthorised absences have improved. The procedures are considered satisfactory but the school needs to introduce a more comprehensive and proactive system.
40. The school staff know the pupils very well and provide very good support and care for them during the school day. Pupils who need particular attention are very well supported during lessons and at all times whilst at school. The school has good links with outside agencies.
41. There are very well established procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. These are consistently applied throughout the school. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and there is virtually no aggression or bullying in the school.
42. Pupils records are kept efficiently by the school secretary and annual pupil reports are of a good standard and, consequently, the promoting and support for pupils' personal development is good.
43. There are very good assessment procedures for pupils on entry to school and throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes. The regular testing of the pupil's reading ability and the use of the optional Year 3, 4 and 5 national tests enables the school to track the progress of the pupils in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs are also supported very well through structured and rigorous assessment systems. The results of the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests are used to identify areas for

development and improvement. However, this data is not used so well to target the needs of the more able pupils. There are no formal assessment procedures in place for science or the foundation subjects. The school is aware of this and is beginning to address the issue in order to improve differentiated planning particularly for the more able.

44. The pupil's work is marked conscientiously although the scrutiny of pupils' work showed there are inconsistencies in a minority of classes. Marking is most effective when there are comments that praise and encourage and provide targets and guidance for the pupils on how they might improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents have good views of the school and the work that it does. The school has worked hard to improve the effectiveness of its links with parents, which are good. Good information is given to parents to advise them of their children's progress. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning. Partnership with parents in the nursery is very good. These findings are similar to the last inspection.
46. The parents who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school and are happy with the work of the school. There are minor concerns about the amount of homework and the range of activities outside school. At the pre-inspection meeting, the parents indicated that they were pleased with all aspects of the school and no issues were raised.
47. The inspection team sees that homework is reasonably consistent throughout the school and that there is a very good range of activities outside lessons. The school tries hard to involve parents in the life of the school and arranges Family Literacy Courses for them and allows them to use the information and communication technology suite every Thursday evening. An 'Open Door' policy exists in the school; the pupils are allowed in as they arrive and many parents come in to see the teachers at this same time or at the end of the day.
48. The school provides parents with an informative and very well presented School Prospectus which is supplemented by an annual governor's report to parents. There are regular newsletters to keep parents informed of news and events in the school. The annual pupil reports are evaluative of what the pupils can do and provide 'next steps', or targets in English, mathematics and science. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The greatest challenge for the leadership of the school, over the last two years has been managing the consequences of the rapid fall in the pupil numbers, due to circumstances beyond the school's control. This has meant moving to mixed age classes and it has had a major impact on the curriculum. Even more challenging has been the unpredictable nature of this change in pupil numbers. For example, in September just when the headteacher and governors had re-organised the classes for the present school year, there was a further dramatic fall in numbers, which entailed further re-organisation. The leadership of the headteacher has been very good during this very difficult period. She has maintained the morale of the school and kept all parents fully informed. The governors have been fully involved, made some very difficult decisions and given good support to the headteacher and her staff during this very difficult time.
50. All the adults who work in the school have continued to work very hard to improve standards in English, mathematics and science as well as other subjects. For example, the new information and communication technology suite has had a very great impact on information and communication technology standards and progress throughout the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively, and subject policies and schemes of work have been improved and developed. Because of cuts in staffing, subject co-ordinators have had to take responsibility for more, and sometimes different, curriculum areas. They have also had to reorganise the way various subjects are taught to ensure that all age groups have equal access to the National Curriculum. Although the subject co-ordinators monitor the pupils' learning to some extent through work samples, their role in directly observing the way the pupils are taught is underdeveloped and has not improved since the last inspection. Developing their role to quickly identify and

address any gaps from policy to practice would, for example, ensure consistency in the way all teachers set targets.

51. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages provision very well. She ensures the pupils' needs are met through careful deployment of teaching assistants and the provision of very good quality individual learning plans for the pupils who need them.
52. Many governors are regular visitors to the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well, and work hard to support the school. Individual governors have responsibility for curriculum areas such as English and special educational needs and are beginning to be 'linked' to other subjects to gain a greater insight into teaching and learning. The governors appraise the work of the headteacher and have set targets for improvement. They effectively fulfil their role in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.
53. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document. Pupils, parents, staff and governors have all made important contributions to the plan. Specific grants awarded to the school are used well and linked to expenditure outlined in the school improvement plan. But the school recognises that because of the recent re-organisation there are several areas, which need revisiting and require further development.
54. Control of the school's finances and the day-to-day management of finance are very good and have been maintained since the last inspection. Financial officers from the local education authority work very closely with the headteacher, school bursar and governors to advise on the school's finances. This has been vital over the last two years when the rapidly shrinking budget has meant major decisions have had to be made over staffing. Every month a detailed analysis of spending is carried out and any variances or staff changes that will have a financial impact are identified. The school Bursar is very effective and plays a vital role in this. A two-year budget projection is drafted in consultation with the headteacher and the staff and it is then submitted to the finance committee for consideration and again to the full governing body for approval.
55. The principles of best value are applied well and the governors at all times are prudent when considering the purchasing of goods or services. Financial planning is related through the school improvement plan to the school's educational priorities. For example a bid was successfully made to support the after school club which provides a very useful function for parents and carers. Curriculum co-ordinators have a small role in managing their own budgets. However, because of the changes and additions to their responsibilities this is an area that the school recognises will need further development.
56. Grants for specific educational purposes, such as special educational needs, are used well for the purposes intended. The school has deliberately increased its spending on teaching assistants. These play a major role in supporting teaching and raising standards particularly for those pupils who have some specific learning need.
57. There is currently a good match of teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Overall, the teaching was found to be good, with several very good lessons during the inspection. Good systems are in place for appraising the performance of all staff, including the headteacher. Individual needs, as well as those of the school, are taken into account when planning professional development and this has contributed to the effectiveness of staff. For example, the rise in the standards in English has been supported by amount of training the staff have recently received.
58. The school is based on a large site with very attractive grounds. There is a very good enclosed nursery/reception play area and also an enclosed infants' play area with grass and hard playground with a range of very good resources. There is also a very large and attractively landscaped junior area. The school building itself is very well maintained and has been improved a number of times over the years. It still has one temporary building, half of which is used as a classroom, and the other half used as an after-school club. This is in reasonable condition. The classrooms are of a good size and there is a separate room for music lessons. The school has taken advantage of the extra space created by the fall in pupil numbers and moved the library from the corridor into a spare classroom. This has increased use of the library and created a very useful area for the development of reference skills.

59. The headteacher and governors are rightly proud of the success of the new information and communication technology suite, which has had such an impact in raising standards in information and communication technology. The large hall doubles as a dining hall. The school is light and airy enhanced with attractive displays providing a very good learning environment. The school caretaker looks after it very well. The site and accommodation provides a very good facility and enables the school to deliver the full range of the national curriculum. Resources to cover all areas of the curriculum are satisfactory overall, and those in the nursery and reception classes are very good.
60. Taking into account the school's expenditure and the quality of education provided, including provision for the personal and non-academic needs of pupils, the school gives good value for money and has maintained standards since the most recent inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to build on the current improvement of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should take the following actions:
- (a) Improve standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school by continually reviewing the curriculum and lesson planning to ensure that challenging work is provided for more able pupils. (*Paragraphs 2,4,19,43,87,90,94,96,101,102*)
 - (b) Develop the role of the co-ordinator to improve standards by raising the quality of the teaching to the level of the best. (*Paragraphs 50,88,96,106,110,114,117,135*)
 - (c) * Revise the curriculum provision to cater for the mixed age classes to ensure that the skills and knowledge of all pupils, in all subjects, are built on progressively as pupils move through the school. (*Paragraphs 28,49,111,114,115,117,135*)
 - (d) *Improve attendance by: (*Paragraphs (9,16,38,39)*)
 - continually ensuring pupils and parents understand the importance of regular attendance;
 - continuing to provide incentives for pupils to attend school regularly.
- * Identified as an area for development in the school improvement plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	16	15	11	0	0	0
Percentage	2	37	35	26	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)	14.5	127
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	35

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
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	6	13	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	4
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	17	18	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (63)	95 (96)	84 (63)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (75)	95 (63)	100 (67)
	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	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	5	10	13
	Total	14	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (39)	70 (52)	89 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	10	10	14
	Total	20	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (39)	74 (58)	93 (77)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
113	18	1
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
1		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	127
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	528,675
Total expenditure	561,325
Expenditure per pupil	3,321
Balance brought forward from previous year	82,492
Balance carried forward to next year	49,842

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	145
Number of questionnaires returned	62
Percentage of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	34	8	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	39	7	3	2
The teaching is good.	74	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	23	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	33	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	32	7	0	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. There are currently 29 children in the nursery, attending part-time either in the mornings or the afternoon. The children enter the reception class in September of the year in which they become five and attend full time soon after the beginning of the term.
63. Although there is a range of attainment, assessment and inspection evidence shows that on entry to the nursery the majority of children are of well below average attainment. By the time they enter the reception class the majority of the children's attainment is still below average. The good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) ensures that the children make good progress. By the time they are five the proportion of the children reaching the early learning goals in and personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world has improved although their overall attainment is below national expectations. However in their physical development, the majority of children reach the early learning goals.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

64. The children enter the school with a wide range of personal, social and emotional development but overall it is well below average. Although they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes it is unlikely that the majority will reach the national expectations by the age of five. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teachers make sure that all the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and as a result they develop positive attitudes to learning. The children settle quickly and happily when they come into school because they know the routines on entering the classrooms.
65. The teachers have high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves and, as a result, their personal and social skills are developing well. The children take care of their personal hygiene and they gradually become more confident and capable when dressing and undressing for physical education sessions. In both classes there is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and of children-chosen activities in the classes. This provides good opportunities for the children to develop independence and self-reliance. They are provided with good opportunities to work and play together as when they move between the activities during the free-choice sessions in the classrooms. They persevere with tasks and behave very well; they are kind and supportive to one another. Most children are aware of and adhere to simple class rules, for example, 'only four children can play in the sand'. There are good relationships between all the adults who work in the nursery and reception classes and the children. The children are gaining confidence in speaking to adults and to each other. They try hard to respond to questions from their teachers and other adults and are beginning to think things through for themselves and to give explanations for their answers.

Communication, Language and Literacy

66. Although there is a range of attainment the majority of children enter the nursery class with well below average language skills. In particular many children's speaking skills are poor. Although the very good teaching in this area enables the children to make good progress by the end of the reception year, only a small proportion of the children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of their development.
67. The children enjoy listening to and looking at story and information books and they concentrate well in the sessions that focus on language development. The teachers recognise the limited vocabulary that many of the children have. They look for opportunities to extend the children's vocabulary by skilful questioning and give good examples of speech by speaking clearly and distinctly.

68. The teachers develop and build the children's early reading skills through the sharing of books and stories and the teaching of phonic skills. The teachers give the children good opportunities to talk about the characters in the stories and make predictions. The majority of the children in the reception class are developing a good knowledge of the individual letters of the alphabet by sight and sound. A few children can recognise a range of words from the key words list by sight. They gradually develop their knowledge of letter sounds to help them write unfamiliar words. They recognise, read, and most make good attempts at writing their names. The most able children read a basic vocabulary and are able to read what they have written. All the children take reading books home on a regular basis to share with parents and carers and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement.
69. As soon as the children enter school in the nursery class they begin to acquire an understanding of the writing process. The teachers build the children's confidence by modelling writing so that they learn that print carries meaning, and that it can be used to express thoughts and ideas. Throughout the nursery and reception class the children are taught the way to hold pencils, to form letters correctly and are encouraged to try and write for themselves. The classrooms have alphabet charts and labels to encourage the children to link letters and sounds and write words themselves. There are good formal and informal opportunities for the children to encourage them to write for a variety of purposes. For example, in their outdoor activities, the children in the nursery take orders in 'McDonalds'. The teachers value the efforts that the children make and as a consequence they increasingly approach writing tasks with confidence and enjoyment. However the majority of the children's vocabulary and ability to express themselves clearly in sentences is limited. This means that the process of learning to write is slow and the children do not all reach the expected level by the time they are five.

Mathematical development

70. The children enter the nursery class with well below average skills in mathematical development, only a very small minority of the children can already count or recognise numerals. Throughout the nursery and reception classes the teaching is consistently very good, and enables the children to make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding and skills. By the end of the year in the reception class the proportion of the children who have achieved the early learning goals is below average. The teachers make the learning fun through the use of the numbers in games; this helps the children build confidence in counting and using their number skills. For example, a group of children in the reception class were developing their knowledge of numbers up to six when laying the table for Kipper's party. The children make good progress because the teachers know what they have learnt and plan the next stage of work to build on their knowledge of, and skills of working with, numbers.
71. The teachers frequently provide good opportunities for the children to count and use numbers, and develop an understanding of the number system. By the time they are five many of the children recognise the numbers one to ten in digits and most of the children can count to at least 20 and some confidently beyond. The use of familiar songs and rhymes help pupils develop the idea of addition and subtraction. The children learn about patterns by continuing a sequence started by the teacher or by creating their own examples. The teachers develop mathematical language well; for example, estimating numbers of objects using 'more than' or 'less than' and, when measuring a baby in the nursery, 'are you taller or shorter than the baby?' Most children name shapes such as square, circle and rectangle when creating shapes on the computer.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

72. The children enter the nursery class with well below average experience of this area of learning. By the time they are five, most children do not achieve the level expected in knowledge and understanding of the world although, overall, the children make good progress because the quality of teaching is very good in this area. The teachers plan together for topics and generally provide a good range of interesting and exciting activities to support learning in this area. There is good provision of opportunities for the children to explore and investigate scientific areas. The children learn to recognise the stages of change and growth in themselves as they see a mum bath her baby, and in animals as they watch in wonder as chicks hatch from eggs and compare the different stages of hatching with those on pictures. They observe change and growth in plants as their hyacinth bulbs grow. Good opportunities are given for the children to notice and record changes in

the weather and to understand how time passes by learning the days of the week. There are regular opportunities for the children to discover the stories and festivals of Christianity and festivals such as the Chinese New Year. In both the nursery and reception class the children are given good opportunities to use computers. Children in reception showed that they had good control of the mouse when they were creating colour monster pictures and the more able children were dragging coloured shapes to make pictures of people.

Physical development

73. In the nursery and reception classes, the children develop their physical skills well through the indoor and outdoor sessions. Most children reach the national expectations in this area of learning. The teaching in this area is very good and enables the children to make the good progress seen.
74. By the time they are five they can dress and undress themselves with help with fasteners. There are good opportunities to develop fine motor skills using paintbrushes, pencils and scissors, as well as through joining together pieces when completing jigsaws, tracks and construction kits. In a gymnastics lesson the children in the nursery showed very good control of their bodies as they developed sequences, balancing, climbing, crawling, sliding and jumping of the apparatus to finish with a correct landing. The reception children showed a good awareness of space by not bumping into each other in their outdoor activities, especially when using the wheeled equipment. They take care when they are playing not to act in ways that may hurt other children. They have regular opportunities to develop their skills in throwing and catching quoits and balls. The outdoor areas used by the children in nursery and reception are well equipped with resources for promoting children's physical development.

Creative development

75. The children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the children make good progress in their creative development. However, because the majority of the children enter the school with well below average attainment in this area of learning they do not all attain or exceed the early learning goals before they leave the reception class. For example, very few of the children know the basic range of colours when they enter the nursery class or have had any experience of using paint or modelling materials. However, the children are soon painting with great enjoyment and concentration. They develop an understanding of how paint can be used to depict people and scenes and like to talk about and explain their pictures. They experiment with a wide range of other materials, for example, wax and oil pastels, printing materials, weaving with wool, felt, ribbon and decorating their work with beads, feathers and buttons. Sand and water are available for children to explore and use on a regular basis. In both classes the children have good opportunities to explore the sounds that different instruments make and the adults help the children extend the experience into a group playing and singing together sessions. Structured music lessons and a range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes, contribute the development of the children's understanding and enjoyment of sound, rhythm and pattern. These lessons also contribute well to the children's social development through the idea of playing musical instruments as a 'team' make a good sound. The children particularly like to sing and put actions to a wide range of traditional and new rhymes and songs. Good resources for a variety of role-play situations, both indoors and outdoors, are provided and the children enter enthusiastically into imaginary events in McDonalds, the Baby Clinic or Victorian kitchen.
76. The teacher with responsibility for Early Years is very well informed and enthusiastic. She contributes a clear vision and direction to the provision and development of the curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes. Because the teachers work closely together in the planning and delivery of the curriculum she has good opportunities to check what happens in both classes and to see what needs to be improved. The furnishing, decoration and displays in both classes are lively and colourful and the classrooms provide a good variety of activities to support learning in all areas of the Early Years' curriculum.
77. The school has good arrangements in place for the introduction of the children to both the nursery and reception classes. These include opportunities for the children to visit the classes and meetings for parents. Information booklets are provided for the parents and open meetings are held to explain what and how the

children are learning. The teachers are readily available to the parents and carers to discuss any problems on a day-to day basis and regular evenings are arranged to cover the overall progress made by the children.

ENGLISH

78. The national tests for 2002 show that by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, the pupils' attainment in English is well below average. The tests in 2002 for pupils at the end of the infants show that pupils' attainment in reading and writing is average. However, these figures do not give a true picture of standards across the school. The school has very high levels of pupil mobility in both juniors and even more so in the infants. Also of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2002, just over half had been identified as having particular learning difficulties. The national test results show that since the most recent inspection the school has made good improvement in the teaching of English, with a greater number of the pupils reaching Level 4.
79. In the current Year 6, the pupils' standards are below average. Their attainment when they were in Year 2 was well below average. Their progress has been inconsistent and has been affected by turbulence in the school's staffing and organisation because of the rapidly shrinking school numbers. However, the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because they are identified early and given very effective support. Standards in writing have risen over the last two years because of the emphasis the school has placed on this area of the curriculum. Also, the school has used extra funding to employ additional teaching assistants. This has enabled various groups of pupils to receive specially targeted support in small groups.
80. Pupils' attainment in the present Year 2 is below average. These pupils have been more affected by the reorganisations and their progress has been inconsistent. However, since the most recent reorganisation, their progress has been good.
81. Despite the very great emphasis the school places on developing speaking and listening skills, standards are still below average by the end of Year 2. However, the pupils have made good progress in both these areas because of the way speaking and listening are taught. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to speak in front of the class and publicly in assemblies and school performances. The teachers and teaching assistants constantly encourage them to use accurate grammar, such as correct tenses and through skilful questioning develop their ability to answer in whole sentences rather than in monosyllables. For example, the pupils confidently read out the 'Adventure on the Moon' stories, they have composed to their classmates, who listen attentively. By the age of seven, most of the pupils pay close attention to instructions and listen carefully when texts are read to them. Most take part in group and class discussions in which they listen and respond to the ideas of other pupils. Although the pupils are eager to contribute to discussion work, they are often hampered by a lack of an adequate vocabulary with which to express themselves.
82. In Year 6, the pupils' listening skills are better developed, but skills in speaking are still below average. Nearly all the pupils listen carefully to instructions and to the contributions of other pupils. This is particularly the case in literacy lessons, where the pupils listen to, and discuss a wide range of texts. The pupils make steady progress in speaking skills by, for example, the way in which they answer questions and read out pieces of work such as their own sequel to the introduction of Nicholas Fisk's 'Grinny.' Poets and story tellers have visited the school as well as a variety of visitors who give interesting presentations and further develop listening skills. The school is also very active in ensuring that the pupils go to plays and pantomimes as part of the curriculum. The pupils speak enthusiastically of when they saw 'Beauty and the Beast' in the Manchester Theatre. They are even more enthusiastic when they recall their own performance of 'Puss in Boots'. For example, one pupil reflected, 'The best night of my entire life, I can't wait for the next time....'. Since the most recent inspection, opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills have improved, but regular drama lessons to reinforce these skills are not yet been fully integrated into the English curriculum.

83. When they enter school standards in reading are well below average. But although all pupils make good progress in their reading, by the end of the infants standards are still below average. Those pupils who have special educational needs make particularly good progress because of the very effective support from skilled teaching assistants. The school has made the teaching of the basic skills in reading a high priority. There is also great emphasis on ensuring that all pupils have a clear understanding of the way in which letters, and groups of letters, represent sounds. The pupils understand that authors of stories use plot, character and description to hold the reader's attention. They make predictions about the outcome of the stories they read based on what they know about the characters and settings in them. All pupils read regularly to the teacher or classroom assistant and this reading is very closely tracked and monitored. Their parents are also involved in this, but although many pupils take home their reading books, only a minority receive regular support at home in their reading.
84. By the end of the juniors, attainment in reading is below the national average and only a small minority read at the higher levels. The high proportion of lower attaining pupils are rigorously tracked and given more individual support. All pupils are set challenging reading targets. 'Partnered Reading' where mixed ability pairs support each other, also helps and encourages the pupils to improve their reading. The basic skills of reading are taught very systematically and there is a great emphasis particularly for younger and less able pupils on understanding how letters and groups of letters make sounds and how to make these sounds into whole words. These pupils make good progress. The school library has just moved into an empty classroom and this is already being well used, although the majority of pupils do not have well-developed reference skills. There is a good range of modern fiction books and pupils are encouraged to expand the range of their reading. For example, the class reading of 'Kensuke's Kingdom' inspired an interest in Michael Morpurgo's books and the school purchased a whole set of his other stories in response to this. Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically about their reading. For example, they compare various Roald Dahl and JK Rowling characters and express their preferences for various books such as 'Bad Girls', 'Boy' and 'Stig of the Dump'. More able readers discussed why they like particular books such as 'A Tale of Two Cities,' 'Watership Down' and 'Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh.'
85. Although Year 2 pupils attain below average standards in writing, these are rising because of all the initiatives the school has recently introduced to improve the teaching of writing; for example, the use of very carefully structured planning sheets and an increased focus on and extra time devoted to extended writing. The majority of pupils have made good progress in their writing and those pupils who have special difficulties with their writing make particularly good progress because of well-targeted work and skilled support from teaching assistants. Younger pupils form most letters correctly and the most able pupils spell some common words accurately. By Year 2 most of the pupils are able to write familiar words correctly and some can compose a sequence of sentences in longer pieces of work, such as when composing instructional writing of 'How to make a Gingerbread Man'. The very small proportion of more able pupils write pieces of narrative with interesting vocabulary and make appropriate use of character, setting, narrative and dialogue such as when writing a Mystery Story 'Something in the Cellar.' The standard of presentation is generally good and most pupils write legibly, although too few join their letters.
86. The standards attained by pupils in writing at the end of Year 6 are below average. However, standards have risen over the past two years because of the emphasis the school has placed on improving the standard of writing. Also, there have been many very recent improvements to the way writing is taught across the school, such as using models of well-written text to brainstorm ideas so that pupils improve their own writing. In a Year 6 class, for example, some particularly good ideas were produced using this model when composing for science fiction. There is also an increased emphasis on using a wider range of writing. This is linked to other areas of the curriculum such as in geography when pupils produce tourist brochures for Macclesfield. Right across the school, information and communication technology skills are used very well to enhance and produce attractive displays of pupils' writing, such as poems, book reviews and longer pieces of individual writing. In lessons there are many occasions when the pupils type in their work onto a laptop or other computer and use spell-check to self-correct. Most of the pupils attempt a wide range of types of writing that include stories, poems, factual writing, letters, biographies, play-scripts and diaries. There is a strong emphasis on teaching grammar and by the end of the juniors, the pupils identify and correctly use verbs,

adverbs and adjectives. They successfully use speech marks, paragraphing and other forms of punctuation. All pupils have individual spelling targets and this motivates them to improve their spelling.

87. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. Teachers plan literacy lessons well and all teachers make good use of learning resources, use explanation and discussion effectively and establish good relationships with the pupils. Management of pupils is good. However, assessments are not always used effectively to set appropriate work for certain groups of pupils. For example, work is particularly well matched for the needs of the less able pupils, but for more able pupils the work is insufficiently challenging and opportunities are limited to extend their learning. The teaching assistants are very effective at supporting groups of lower ability and pupils who have special learning needs. They also have a very important role in improving standards in reading. The school sets individual targets for pupils and already this has had some impact, but it is not consistently applied throughout the school. Across the whole school particular homework tasks are well used to support the learning of literacy skills.
88. The English subject co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning and samples some of the pupils' work to keep a check on standards. However, she has not directly monitored teaching so she has not been able to identify areas of inconsistency, such as not all pupils having writing targets even though this is school policy. Training from experts has helped teachers assess writing and given them a greater understanding of the teaching of literacy. The very directed way, in which writing is now being taught with teachers clearly demonstrating writing techniques, is beginning to improve pupils' writing across the school.

MATHEMATICS

89. At the last inspection the standards in mathematics were judged to be average at the age of seven but below average at 11. The results of the 2002 national tests indicate similar standards. The inspection evidence confirms this picture with the older pupils and indicates that the attainment of the seven-year-olds is also below the national average.
90. Over the last three years however, pupils have begun to make better progress, with an increasing number achieving average standards. Pupils are organised in ability groups for mathematics. This system has been generally effective in enabling appropriate work to be matched to the needs of the pupils and has resulted in good support and progress for pupils with special educational needs. There is, however, some underachievement by some of the more able pupils and not many attain the higher levels by the time they leave the school.
91. In Year 2 a few more able pupils can partition to solve addition problems, for example $29+81 = 30+80$ and $9+1$. Over half of the pupils understand doubling and can use this to solve computation problems such as $4+5$ is $4+4+1$. They are less secure, however, when asked to apply these strategies to two or three digit numbers. Over half of the pupils are unable to quickly recall number bonds to 20. The more able pupils can add two simple pairs of two digit numbers together but many Year 2 pupils have difficulty in understanding place value. Most pupils can count in 10's although only a few are able to work with numbers over 100. They are aware of simple 2D and 3D shapes and some can understand simple co-ordinates.
92. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 can count forwards and backwards in 10's and 100's, sort three digit numbers into odd and even and arrange numbers in order up to 1000. They know the mathematical names of many 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes and can calculate the time using the fractions $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{3}{4}$. The more able can calculate more complex parts of a fraction such as $\frac{1}{8}$ and can understand simple equivalent fractions. They can work quickly in mental arithmetic to multiply two numbers and half the result. Many pupils do, however, find it difficult to add pairs of three digit numbers together and find subtraction difficult to understand.
93. In Year 6, the pupils have reasonable recall of multiplication tables up to 10, round numbers to the nearest 1000 and can convert fractions to decimals. Many can measure accurately converting centimetres to metres and can use pie charts to represent information. The more able understand percentages and can use appropriate calculations to solve word problems involving money. Most Year 6 pupils are, however, not confident in applying their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. For example, pupils were confident in

their knowledge of money but when asked to solve a word problem that required them to interpret a division question involving calculations in money, many were unable to do so.

94. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. For example, in one good lesson, the Years 3 and 4 pupils, in different ability groups, were given appropriately demanding work to do on vertical addition of two or three digit numbers. The more able worked on adding pairs of three digit numbers with an emphasis on place value; the pupils of middle ability used two digit numbers and the least able pupils added groups of 10. All the pupils in this lesson were given work that was well matched to their abilities and made good progress. Where teaching is less effective the pace of learning for the more able pupils is too slow and the work lacks suitable challenge. Occasionally, pupils become confused by excessively complex strategies and the original learning objectives are lost.
95. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of number skills. In some year groups there is a lack of data handling work and many pupils do not have the opportunity to plan their own mathematical investigations. The co-ordinators are aware of this and plan to address the issue. The school implements the National Numeracy Strategy well and has received good support from the local education authority consultant. There are good opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum. For example, in science and information and communication technology the pupils produce good quality bar, line and pie charts on their shadow measurements. All teachers use ongoing assessment of pupil's understanding to adapt their daily planning. There are structured and detailed assessment procedures to monitor progress that are now being used to track individual progress and set targets.
96. The mathematics co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. They benefit from monitoring and evaluation exercises carried out by the head teacher but have no opportunities for first hand classroom observations of teaching and learning. They produce detailed action plans and realise the need to plan more carefully for the more able pupils and to encourage pupil's investigative skills. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and the subject is well supported by information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

97. The standards achieved by the pupils at age 11 are below the national average but they are improving and are better than at the time of the last inspection. The school's national tests results have improved significantly over recent years in terms of the proportion reaching Level 4. Over the last three years the number of pupils reaching Level 4 has doubled. There has, however, been no significant increase in pupils achieving higher levels in science. This is a similar picture for teacher assessment in science at the age of seven. All pupils reached the average standard in 2002 but none the higher Level 3.
98. As the pupils move through the school many make at least satisfactory progress. Most pupils are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of science. There are many occasions, however, when the lack of challenging work for the most able limits their progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from the teaching assistants and make good progress.
99. Year 1 pupils can compare materials to see if they are hard, bendy or can be squashed. Many can make good oral conclusions but find the recording of their work difficult. Some Year 2 pupils can understand the stages of the life cycle of the butterfly and the frog. They study how milk is produced and how water can be changed to ice or steam. Many pupils however, do not draw good conclusions and give clear explanations of their findings. There is no challenging work for the most able in considering whether the changes of state of water are reversible.
100. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to read a thermometer correctly and to measure the warmest and coldest parts of the classroom. They construct electrical circuits and many understand the concept of electrical conduction and insulation. These pupils are developing the different ways of recording their science very well. They do not, however, have many opportunities to plan and predict their own investigations. Year 5 pupils study solids and liquids and the more able can differentiate between a solution and a suspension. They have the opportunity to study shadows and many successfully record their shadow graph results through the

computer using an Excel sheet. However, when asked why the length of shadow is dependent on the sun's position very few pupils could explain the concept successfully. Year 6 pupils study light and how reflection can be inverted or changed according to the type of mirror used. These pupils set up their own investigations and have opportunities to predict their results. They also gain scientific language but many do not draw accurate scientific diagrams to represent their results.

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the four lessons observed three were satisfactory and one was judged to be good. The teaching has both strengths and weaknesses. The teachers generally plan lessons well, have clear learning objectives for the pupils to follow, use explanation and discussion effectively and establish good relations with the pupils from whom they demand high standards of behaviour. All of these features were present in a lesson in which the Years 3 and 4 pupils were learning how to measure temperature in different parts of the classroom. They became quickly interested in the clear and enthusiastic teacher explanation and instructions. In some lessons however, teacher's subject knowledge varies and this results in missed opportunities to prompt challenging questions or answer pupil questions with confidence. There are also instances where the more able pupils are not given challenging tasks to further their scientific understanding or to plan their own investigations.
102. There is an effective scheme of work to guide the teacher's planning. However, there is no formal assessment system in place to ensure the tracking and targeting of pupil progress in science. As a result, the planning for the more able pupils is similar to that of the other ability groups in the class. The co-ordinator has built up a satisfactory range of resources that are well used by the teachers. The outside environment of the school provides very good resources for scientific learning. Information communication technology is used well to support science teaching. For example in Years 4 and 5 the pupils use a multi media program to present their work on the Solar System.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards for the pupils in Years 2 and 6 are as expected for pupils of their age and some art work of above average standards was observed in displays. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. Very few art lessons were observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, it is clear that art has a high priority in the school. The teachers show in the careful and imaginative way they display art work, that they value the pupils' efforts.
104. Work on display shows that pupils develop and use their skills appropriately as they move through the school. They experiment with colours mixing them and matching them, using colour to show different textures and to produce different tones of colour. They use a good range of materials effectively in their work, such as pencil, paint, chalk, pastel and wax crayons, polystyrene for making printing blocks, and paper and fabric for collage work. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 had made a patchwork quilt using a collection of fabric samples. They had experimented, working in three-dimensions, to make colourful papier-mâché fruits. The pupils frequently use their artistic skills to support their work in other subjects. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils had made some masks following a literacy lesson on writing instructions. In their art lesson, they were developing their skills of colour mixing to paint them. The quality of teaching in this lesson was a very good, as the teacher had good subject knowledge which he passed on with great enthusiasm to the pupils. He encouraged the pupils, praising their work so that they were confident to share their work with others, appraising and suggesting areas for improvement. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 were making pencil sketches of mountains, using shading very effectively. Some of the pupils were describing and demonstrating the benefits of using proper sketching pencils to do this especially for smudging to create shading. These pupils had also made some very accurate observational drawings of buildings and other features in Macclesfield. Some very effective work by Years 4 and 5 pupils showed a series of ten pictures depicting the life of Muhammad using a wide range of materials and techniques.
105. Other work on display, shows that the pupils study the work of other artists, such as, Picasso and Kandinsky, and use the art work of other cultures such as India and Africa as inspiration for their own work. This also makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The pupils often use computers to

produce eye-catching pictures. For example, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 had created colourful pictures using pointillism technique.

106. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. The policy has been reviewed recently and a scheme of work is in place to help the teachers with their planning. Currently, there are no formal procedures for assessing the pupils' work or progress or for monitoring the curriculum and teaching. However, teachers make informal assessments and the co-ordinator monitors work through scrutinising class portfolios of work and photographic evidence. Resources are adequate, with basic needs kept in classrooms and specialist needs, centrally. When appropriate, the pupils make visits to art galleries to extend their knowledge of art. Some pupils also have the opportunity to develop their skills further in the after-school art club.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However from the scrutiny of the pupil's past and present work, the teacher's planning and discussion with staff and pupils it is possible to judge that at the ages of seven and eleven standards are in line with national expectations. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2. All of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The opportunity for making mechanisms that can be controlled in different ways is a strength of the subject. There are, however, weaknesses in the areas of pupils being able to design products and to evaluate their own ideas. A few pupils use clay for simple artefacts but there is insufficient experience of malleable materials throughout the school.
108. In Year 2 the pupils develop their ability to use simple tools to cut and shape materials such as paper, card and re-cycled materials. They used textiles to make squares for patchwork quilts and designed an Egyptian headdress. They studied different types of houses and had the opportunity to design their own bungalow. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 designed pneumatic monsters using boxes, bottles and balloons. They also have opportunities to make electrical alarm systems using their scientific knowledge of circuits and switches well. The Year 6 constructed wheeled toys. They also made their own bread either with a bread maker or with their own hands.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally very good. In the very good lesson, the Years 3 and 4 pupils were encouraged to think and talk about their alarm system designs. They had opportunities to select and use tools effectively and to evaluate their work. Probing questions were asked by the teacher to establish suitable ideas for construction. Overall, teachers' planning is satisfactory and reveals a range of work in design and technology. However, around the school and in classroom areas the evidence and range of work is rather limited. Little opportunity is given for the pupils to systematically record and evaluate their work.
110. There is a subject policy and scheme of work that gives good guidance to teachers. This was not the case at the last inspection and represents a positive improvement. Resources are satisfactory and the curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to work with a suitable range of materials. The co-ordinator works hard to develop the subject but has little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Standards in geography are in line with national expectations and are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The majority of pupils make good progress in developing their geographical knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior levels of learning, because of the good provision made for them in lessons. However, the recent re-organisations and class mergers because of falling numbers, has required the school to look closely at the aspects of the geography curriculum that have been covered by the various groups of pupils in the school.

The scrutiny of work, for example, shows that some Year 1 pupils have had few opportunities to undertake work to ensure the development of early geographical skills.

112. By the age of seven most of the pupils have developed a sense of place in relation to their own locality and are beginning to develop an awareness of places further afield. The study of a community, on the Hebridean Island of ‘Struay’ enables the pupils to make comparisons between that community and their own lives. The pupils are able to make effective use of a range of sources of information, such as photographs, books and maps to find out about life in an island community. The pupils also develop an early understanding of their immediate area by making simple maps showing where their homes are situated in relation to the school as part of their local project of ‘Houses and Homes’ This has good links with historical, mathematical and English work.
113. This understanding and appreciation of their immediate environment is continued in Year 3 and 4, where the pupils develop good understanding of how and why local streets evolved. This is linked with the industrial development of Macclesfield. Year 4 pupils go on a field trip following a local river, the Bollin, from its source for a few miles downstream to study erosion and river features. As part of this work they develop an understanding of how the UK’s weather is affected by the proximity of the Atlantic and how the water cycle causes more precipitation on the west side of the country. They develop environmental awareness and understanding through a visit to the local recycling centre. Year 5 and 6 pupils develop a good understanding of how the mountain environment is so different and confidently identify the major mountain chains. They compare mountain areas such as the Lake District, the Austrian Alps and the Himalayas and conduct personal research making very effective use of the Internet. They know that the development of tourism brings development into mountain areas, but that often a high price is paid such as the deforestation of parts of Nepal or the scarring of Alpine resorts with ski development. Very good links with literacy are made when they give interesting Power Point presentations on their chosen mountain area. They confidently use a range of maps of different scales to plan journeys, have good knowledge of ordnance survey symbols and can interpret some of the physical features of ordnance survey maps and locate points using six figure grid references.
114. Geography teaching is good. The planning for lessons is clear about the specific skills and knowledge that will be learned. The teachers’ subject knowledge is good and they make the subjects interesting and relevant by making effective use of the local area. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the impact and challenge that the recently re-organised classes and the school moving to mixed age groups will have on the curriculum. Although she has a view of standards in geography and what is needed to improve them, there is no direct monitoring of teaching. This is an area for development. Also, the school recognises that assessment in geography is another area for development.

HISTORY

115. By the end of Year 2 and 6, standards in history are in line with national expectations and are similar to those reported at the time of the most recent inspection. The majority of pupils make good progress in developing their historical knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior levels of learning, because of the good provision made for them in lessons. However the recent re-organisations and class mergers because of falling numbers, have affected the delivery of the history curriculum and not all pupils have full access to the curriculum. The scrutiny of work, for example, shows that because of the way history is timetabled, some pupils have had few opportunities to undertake work to ensure the development of early historical skills. This is an area that the school recognises needs addressing.
116. By the age of seven, the pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding and a sense of the past. Through their work on ‘Houses and Homes’ they begin to understand in some detail what peoples’ homes and lives were like years ago. Also a study of ‘Vehicles in the Past enables them to gain an understanding of how different transport was, long ago and how it has changed through the ages. Both these topics have good links with other areas of the curriculum such as geography and design and technology when, for example the pupils construct various models of buildings based on a local survey. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have good factual knowledge of the way of life, traditions and beliefs of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Tudors

and Victorians as well as studying how the second World War affected peoples' daily lives. Books, artefacts and very good use of the Internet stimulate discussion, research and a keen interest in finding out about history. Local visits help to enrich the curriculum. For example, younger pupils visit West Park Museum and learn about Egyptian houses and how and why the River Nile was so important. Older pupils visit the Heritage Centre to attend a Victorian school, and found out how strict the teachers were! The industrial heritage of Macclesfield is exploited and the pupils develop a good understanding of how, for example, the development of the silk mills left a legacy of buildings and the different uses these have been put to. For example, they know that in 1854 an Italian immigrant started making clocks and barometers in what subsequently became Arighi Bianci's furniture store. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum. This applies especially in English where personal accounts based on Victorian or Egyptian lives are used to broaden the pupils' understanding of the lives of people in the past.

117. The pupils' good progress and positive attitudes reflect the overall good quality of the teaching. The teachers plan lessons well. Effective questioning, pace and classroom management are also features that support good progress in consolidating, developing and acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator realises that the history curriculum needs adjusting because of the mixed-age classes. He has an overview of how the pupils learn from evidence of their work and history portfolios. However he does not directly monitor teaching. This is an area the school needs to develop. In the past he has amended and improved the planning of work across the school and has ensured that there are the appropriate resources available to match the requirements of the history curriculum, although this is still an area where further input of artefacts are needed. A start has been made on tracking the pupils' achievement in history but this is an area in which requires further development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. By the ages of seven and eleven, the standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average when compared with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. The school has worked very hard to improve standards and all the pupils, including those with special needs are making good progress as they move through the school. The attainment of many older pupils is in fact well above the national standard.
119. By the end of Year 2, most of the pupils have good mouse and keyboard skills. They know basic word processing functions and print out and save their work. The pupils learn to change the font and size of the text and can re-arrange the text when re-drafting their writing. Many of the Year 1 pupils competently use a paint program on the computer to draw simple patterns and pictures. The Year 2 pupils used an art program effectively to make book cover designs for their ICT folder. Many combine text and graphics to produce good finished products.
120. The younger pupils in the juniors use tool bars effectively to change different typefaces. They edit text and develop their literacy skills by changing adjectives and nouns in their writing on the computer. The pupils in Years 4 and 5 create a data base spreadsheet and produce graphs on the different lengths of shadows. Some of the Year 5 pupils use an excel spreadsheet to total amounts of money for making cost lists for pudding ingredients in their mathematics work. By the time they leave the school, most of the pupils use power point to create multimedia presentations that include graphics, art and sound. They retrieve text and pictures from the Internet and other software and integrate into their own work. Overall the pupil's progress in the use of ICT to research and communicate information and to support their work in other subjects is very well developed by the time they leave the school. For example the pupil's work in art is supported by an ICT program to create patterns based on the work of Seurat. In geography the pupil's knowledge and understanding of river development and mountains is supported through an effective CDROM and the Internet. Some of the pupils successfully use a computer to set up control experiments but this is an area identified for further development in the juniors.
121. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good. It is most effective when the teacher makes good use of demonstration so that all the pupils know what to do. In a Year 1 class the teacher skilfully and clearly explained the functions of the computer graphics program. This enabled the pupils to use the tools to good effect. The teacher invariably made very good use of the projector to display on a white board the image of

the program being used. This helped the pupils to quickly acquire the skills they need to use the program successfully. For example in the Years 4 and 5 class the pupils gained skills to help them in their power point presentation on the Solar System.

122. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise. The scheme of work ensures that the teachers plan the work well and are able to make the best use of the very good quality resources that are available to them. The new computer suite and the associated networked computers around classrooms are having a positive impact on standards and progress. The suite is well used by all pupils including access at lunchtimes. Staff training is intensive and during 2003 it is anticipated that all teaching staff will complete the basic ICT training. Systems for assessing pupil's progress in ICT are, however, underdeveloped.

MUSIC

123. The standards of attainment by the time the pupils are seven and eleven are in line those expected nationally and overall the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
124. The pupils enjoy singing, they sing in tune and they know a range of songs and hymns. Particular enthusiasm and commitment is often shown in singing lessons and hymn practice assemblies. These are taken by the headteacher who conveys her love and enjoyment of music to the pupils, motivating them very well. The pupils' response to music is generally good. They handle instruments well and treat them with care and respect. Throughout school, all the pupils have opportunities to play a range of untuned and tuned percussion instruments. For example, the Year 3 and 4 pupils carefully selected appropriate instruments they needed to keep a beat and play a rhythm. In groups, they worked with great concentration and co-operation developing a performance to a familiar tune. They enjoyed the challenge of performing their pieces and in doing so recognised how they could improve. The quality of teaching in this lesson was very good. The lesson moved at a very brisk pace, the teacher had high expectations of performance and behaviour, very good subject knowledge so that by the end of the lesson most pupils had a clear understanding of the beat and the rhythm in a piece of music.
125. The quality of teaching in lessons seen during the inspection was good and often very good. In all of the lessons the teachers had very good knowledge of the subject and were clear about what they wanted the pupils to learn. They generally managed the pupils effectively and expected them to participate fully in the activities, so that lessons moved at a good pace.
126. The co-ordinator is new to the school and has a high level of musical skill. He is enthusiastic and is keen to continue to promote the pupils' musical learning throughout the school. Most teachers are confident to teach music and the scheme of work they use ensures that the pupils' skills are built on systematically. The school has a good range of tuned and untuned instruments kept in the music room, and each class has its own bag of instruments.
127. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The pupils have regular opportunities to listen to music, especially when they enter and leave the hall for assemblies. They also have opportunities to hear professional musicians from a range of musical traditions and cultures. For example, last year the Year 6 pupils enjoyed dancing and drumming to African, Brazilian and Cuban music in a 'Bang Drum Workshop'. Older pupils also took part in Macclesfield Music Festival.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. The evidence from a limited number of observations, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and conversations with the pupils and the physical education co-ordinator would indicate that physical education has a satisfactory place in the curriculum. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and all of the pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress. The curriculum includes gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming. Standards have been maintained since the most recent inspection.
129. By the end of the infants most pupils show good levels of co-ordination as they move round safely, stopping and changing direction when instructed by the teacher. In a very good dance lesson, they devise imaginative

sequences of twisting, turning, pushing and pulling to interpret the wind up mechanisms of toys. They use space well and have a good sense of rhythm. They understand the importance of warming up and have a good bank of warm-up routines.

130. Junior pupils have good ball skills. In an after-school football club pupils show good passing and ball-control skills. They have good positioning skills and play well as a team. In gymnastics Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrate a good range of warm-up exercises and have average gymnastic ability. More able pupils devise sequences of moving through space on the floor from a 'curled-up' shape to travelling using a cartwheel or roll and finishing with a contrasting 'stretched-out' shape. However many pupils find completing a whole sequence difficult. In a lively Year 5 and 6 dance lesson those pupils, who attend the after-school Street Jazz Club, show very good rhythm and a wide range of gymnastic and dance skills when interpreting the music. Records indicate that by the time they leave school most of the pupils are able to swim 25 metres.
131. Overall the teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly. They have clear learning objectives and high expectations. Teachers manage lessons well and in most lessons a high standard of behaviour is maintained. However there are times in the upper juniors, when the silly behaviour of a minority of pupils is allowed to continue and this disrupts the learning for the majority of pupils and slows down the pace of the lesson. Good use is made of the pupils' performance to demonstrate and develop teaching and learning points. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including netball, football, rounders and cricket. The school successfully competes in a range of inter-school sports such as athletics and football. These activities effectively provide support for the subject, enrich the physical education curriculum and extend learning in the juniors. The school has recently participated in a national scheme to increase teaching skills and improve resources.
132. The co-ordinator has introduced a structured curriculum based on national guidelines. This provides good support for teachers and incorporates many ideas for effective delivery of the curriculum. The school has some useful links with the nearby football club. The spacious school hall and the very good range of outdoor play areas are well used by the school to provide a full physical education curriculum both during the school day and for a wide range of after-school clubs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. There was very little evidence to make a judgement on standards in Year 2 as no lessons were observed and the pupils had recorded very little work. However, by the end of Year 6, the pupils' knowledge and understanding is as expected and standards are the same as at the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Through the ethos of the school, collective worship, personal, social and health education lessons and religious education lessons the pupils learn to care for each other and to live in harmony. For example, one pupil described her feelings about school as 'It feels just like home'.
134. During the inspection the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were gathering information about Islam worship and beliefs. The pupils were learning about the Qu'ran and its importance to Muslims. In the lesson observed the teacher used the interactive whiteboard effectively to help pupils in their research by answering the questions she had given them. The Year 3 pupils had written about a special meal they remembered relating it to their studies of the Jewish faith and the Passover meal. In Years 4 and 5, the pupils were also studying Islam and a delightful series of pictures pupils had made in their art lessons sequenced the important events of Muhammad's life. In assemblies, the pupils often hear about the stories Jesus told and learn the meanings of his parables.
135. The co-ordinator has recently taken over the post due to the reduction in staff. She is aware that coverage and continuity in the development of pupils' skills and knowledge is currently a problem because of the decrease in the number of classes. Also there are no formal procedures for assessing the pupils' work or progress or for monitoring the curriculum and teaching. However, most teachers are confident in their own knowledge and understanding of the history, concepts and practices of religions required by the Agreed Syllabus. The school has a good bank of resources to support the teachers. Some of these were used

effectively to support displays of art work undertaken in connection with religious education. The local church is also used as a valuable resource.