

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stacksteads, Bacup

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119661

Headteacher: Mrs J Gibson

Reporting inspector: Mr P M Allen  
17531

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 248047

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Huttock End Lane Stacksteads Bacup Lancashire
Postcode:	OL13 8LD
Telephone number:	(01706) 873177
Fax number:	(01706) 875623
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr P Boast
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17531	Mr P M Allen	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
13448	Mrs D Lloyd	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?
17310	Mrs A McAskie	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design History	How well is the school led and managed?
29381	Mrs A Brangan	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and the opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a small primary school set in an area of socio-economic difficulty in Stacksteads in the Rossendale Valley. The vast majority of the pupils are drawn from the immediate area with around a third coming from one of the four local authority estates close to the school. Around two thirds of the pupils live in rented accommodation. The number of pupils has gone down in recent years. There are currently 98 pupils on roll with slightly more girls than boys. All pupils are of white UK heritage background. There are four classes, one for Reception and Year 1 pupils, one for Year 2 and Year 3, one for Year 4 and some Year 5 and one for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. At the time of the inspection one of the classes was taken by a supply teacher who was familiar with the school. Thirty pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mainly concerned with moderate learning difficulties, this proportion being above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, this proportion being below the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well above the national average. Virtually all the children have had experience of pre-school education in the nursery class of a nearby school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is wide and varies from year to year, but overall it is well below what could be expected. Following a period of secondment to the school, the headteacher was appointed on a permanent basis in May 2002. Prior to her arrival the school had been through a turbulent period with staffing and other difficulties.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school with many good features. It is becoming more effective following a period of considerable difficulty which had an adverse effect on teacher morale and on the standards being achieved. Although the school is beginning to successfully raise standards and pupils are increasingly enabled to achieve well relative to their abilities, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are below national averages at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. The overall quality of teaching across the school is good. The school is benefiting from the very effective leadership and management of its relatively new headteacher who is providing a clear and purposeful agenda for raising standards and the quality of education. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is well supported by the hardworking and committed staff.
- The good provision and support for the significant number of pupils with special educational needs enable them to make good progress.
- Children are given a good start to school life in their Reception Year.
- The school's excellent approach to promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes is having a significant impact on the quality of learning.
- The school has a very caring, peace loving, Christian ethos.
- Pupils respond well to the very good provision made for their spiritual, moral and social development and the good provision for their cultural development.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards across the school in English, mathematics and science.
- The information and communication technology curriculum.
- The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress to include all aspects of the curriculum.
- The music curriculum.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997. Since then there has been an overall improvement in the quality of education provided. Many significant improvements have taken place since the appointment of the new headteacher. The issues from the previous inspection have been partially addressed. Schemes of work were developed soon after that inspection but many of these have become outdated and are being reviewed. Although there has been some staff training, there is still a need to improve staff confidence in the teaching of information and communication technology. A recent marking policy is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of marking. In recent times the quality of teaching and learning has improved, as have the pupils' attitudes and behaviour which are now good. The staff have a shared will and a good capacity to continue to improve the quality of education and to continue the process of raising standards.

## 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*	D	C
mathematics	E	E*	D	C
science	E	E*	D	C

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

Children make a very positive start in the Reception Year and, whilst virtually all of them are likely to achieve the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals, very few are likely to exceed the goals in most areas of learning. Although standards at the end of Year 2 are below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science, they are higher than those achieved in the 2002 tests. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below national averages in the core subjects. These standards are reflected in the results of 2002 which were below the national average but in line with those of schools in a similar context. Standards are rising following a period of low results; in 2001 the results in all three core subjects were in the lowest five per cent nationally. The overall evaluations are significantly affected by the well above average number of pupils with special educational needs; for example, in the current Year 6 over a third of the pupils have special educational needs in literacy and numeracy. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils are enabled to achieve well, including the significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are unsatisfactory because pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. Whilst standards in the other subjects are satisfactory overall, standards in music are unsatisfactory because pupils do not currently have sufficient access to all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The need to raise standards is well recognised and, to this end, the school is setting challenging targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are good; the pupils know what is expected of them. They play well together at break times. Older pupils are well aware of the way that behaviour has improved over the past couple of years.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and the teaching and learning are underpinned by very good relationships.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and in line with national averages.

The good attitudes and behaviour reflect the school's caring, peace loving, Christian ethos where every child is valued.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Very good teaching was observed in the class with the youngest pupils and in the class with the oldest pupils. This has a very positive impact on the progress made in these classes. English and mathematics are usually taught well with effective strategies for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers have good subject knowledge, although confidence is less secure in information and communication technology and music. The teaching enables all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Support staff make a very positive contribution to the teaching and learning. The vast majority of pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning with a will to do well. The quality of teaching is improving with time, as are the responses of the pupils to that teaching.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall the curriculum is broad and balanced, except in the areas of information and communication technology and music which are in need of further development. The school recognises the need to continue to improve the planning of the curriculum and to raise the profile of subjects such as history, geography and design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is being managed effectively with very good support from the special educational needs teacher and the classroom assistants. The quality of the provision enables the pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	There is very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development and good provision for cultural development; the pupils respond well in these areas. Pupils show respect for the values and beliefs of others. They understand right from wrong and care for each other.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very good level of pastoral care. Assessing, monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress, although good in English, mathematics and science, are underdeveloped in the other subjects.



Although parents appreciate what the school offers, more could actively involve themselves in their children's learning. The provision for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements and pupils do not have full access to all aspects of music. The school cares well for its pupils and all are fully included in all facets of school life.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The enthusiastic headteacher, well supported by the conscientious acting deputy headteacher, is providing very good leadership and management, putting in place effective strategies to raise standards and improve the quality of education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school and its headteacher and meets its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A very positive start has been made in the school's self-evaluation of its performance, including the review and appraisal of standards and the monitoring of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes careful, strategic use of its resources, including special grants and additional funding. The budget surplus is being carefully managed to enable the current staffing levels to continue.

The work of the school is well led by its detailed improvement plan. There is an adequate number of teaching and support staff. Overall the school is well resourced, except in information and communication technology. The accommodation is relatively spacious and standards of caretaking are high. There are good playground and grassed areas. There is a lack of an outdoor play area for the reception children. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• Their behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and parents are kept well informed about progress.</li> <li>• The school is very approachable, expects the children to work hard and is helping them to become responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would appreciate more extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Some feel the school does not work closely with parents.</li> </ul>

The number of extra-curricular activities is similar to those of most schools of the same size, although there is recognition of the fact that all the activities currently on offer are sporting ones. The view of the inspection team is that the school is doing all it can to work closely with parents, some of whom make very little contact with the school. The inspection endorses the positive views of the school as expressed in the parental responses.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Raising standards is the school's main priority. In the national tests taken prior to the previous inspection in 1997, standards were low and below national averages in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The view of the school, endorsed by the inspection team, is that standards are still not as high as they can be.
2. The school has undergone a period of instability in which there have been significant staffing and other difficulties which have had an adverse effect on the results and the pupils' achievements. The current headteacher has made very good progress in raising standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the overall learning climate. Parents have noted the greatly improved behaviour of the pupils and the school's effectiveness in helping their children to progress. The improvement in behaviour has had a very positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning.
3. The number of pupils in the school has gone down since the previous inspection. Currently a relatively small number of children start school each September. Although attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, overall it is well below what could be expected, particularly in their language and communication skills. A strength of the school is the good start given to children in the Reception Year. The good teaching the children receive means that they make good progress and achieve well relative to their abilities. Virtually all the children in the current Reception Year are likely to meet the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) although few are likely to exceed them in most areas of learning. The children attain well in the personal, social and emotional area of learning, in the physical area and in the creative area. They attain less well in communication, language and literacy, in the mathematical area of learning and in knowledge and understanding of the world, in spite of the good and sometimes very good teaching they receive in these areas.
4. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These standards are higher than those achieved in the 2002 tests when the results were well below average when compared with all schools and well below average when compared with schools in similar contexts.
5. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also below national averages in English, mathematics and science. These standards are reflected in the 2002 test results when pupils' performance was below the national average but in line when compared with similar schools. The 2002 results were a great improvement on the poor results of the previous three years.
6. The overall evaluations at both key stages are significantly affected by the well above average number of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs. In the current Year 6, for example, over a third of the pupils have special educational needs in the acquisition of basic skills and, in the main, are most unlikely to reach the appropriate level for pupils of their age in the forthcoming tests. Across the range of tests undertaken at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
7. Standards are improving in the core subjects due to the concerted effort made by the school to improve the quality of teaching, planning and assessment procedures. The staff, well led by the headteacher who has a clear agenda for raising standards, are working hard to this end. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. The impact of this is that all pupils are now better enabled to achieve well relative to their abilities. This was reflected in the scrutiny of work undertaken during the inspection which evidenced the good progress being made by the pupils over the course of the year. The school now has much better information to enable it to assess pupils' progress and to set targets. There are plans to make more use of its data to further develop individual target setting with higher and more focused targets.

8. The school has focused on improving literacy and numeracy over the last two years and, as a consequence, information and communication technology has not been a main priority. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because the pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. The need to address this is well identified by the staff. Across the other subjects standards are broadly in line with what could be expected except in music where standards are unsatisfactory because pupils do not currently have sufficient access to the programmes of study, most notably those concerned with composition.
9. Overall, the school continues to become more effective in meeting the needs of all the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported enabling them to make good progress. Increasingly, the needs of the higher attainers are being met with higher expectations made of them. The school is making a very good start in its main priority, that of raising standards in English, mathematics and science.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. In recent years the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils and its negative impact on teaching and learning gave cause for concern. Since the arrival of the current headteacher this area has been targeted for improvement with much success. As a consequence, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Relationships are very good and every pupil's contribution and efforts are valued. This shows a marked improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development remains good and their attendance is broadly in line with that found in similar schools.
11. Most pupils show a lively enthusiasm for learning. They listen carefully, settle quickly and sensibly to practical tasks and maintain their concentration for sustained periods, even when the work is demanding. For example, in a numeracy lesson, all Year 5 and 6 pupils persevered with the interpretation of data from graphs and bar charts, even though some found it difficult to apply their understanding of the principles involved to the solution of a practical problem. Similarly, the very young children in Year 1 worked hard to draw and label items they would pack in a holiday suitcase, eagerly searching for more items to include, confidently attempting unfamiliar spellings and proudly demonstrating their work to the teacher and the visiting inspector.
12. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good and reflects the school's strong Christian ethos. Pupils respond well to the rewards they can earn through trying hard and behaving well. Team points, entries in the 'Golden Book' and the possibility of being named Star of the Week are motivating factors, but the older children are beginning to understand the intrinsic value of good behaviour, consideration and respect for others. The minority of pupils who find it difficult to behave well are given extensive personal support and, because pupils respond well to the school's high expectations, there have been no exclusions in the past year.
13. Relationships between children and between teachers, children and other adults in school, are very good. Parents and pupils agree that there is no bullying. Outside lessons children play happily together, sharing equipment and taking turns in games fairly and sensibly. In class they collaborate well, working together in pairs or groups and helping one another when appropriate; for example, a Year 1 pupil using a computer program to develop counting skills confidently asked a friend for help when not sure what to do next. Because pupils get on well together and because they have implicit trust in their teachers and other helpers, they learn more effectively.
14. Parents agree that the school is helping their children to grow in confidence and maturity and this is clearly seen in the attitudes of the older pupils who take on roles of responsibility willingly and proudly. Most of them have regular jobs around the school, many of them done voluntarily. Through their involvement with the Pupil Council, pupils are developing a basic understanding of the democratic process. They are pleased to know that the school listens to their views and proud of the changes that their efforts have brought about.

15. Pupils' attendance is broadly similar to national figures. Most children have very good records of attendance and punctuality and there is very little unauthorised absence. The school provides support and encouragement for the very small minority of pupils whose attendance patterns cause concern.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching observed was good overall and was higher than that identified in the previous report. It was very good in just under a quarter of the lessons observed, good in half and satisfactory in virtually all the remainder. Very good teaching by the teacher and the nursery nurse was observed with the reception children. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception Year enables the children, regardless of ability, to make good progress, giving them a very positive start to school life. Very good teaching was also seen in the Year 5/6 class.
17. Teachers carefully group pupils according to their abilities providing appropriate but challenging work for the various groups. In most lessons instruction is effective. Teachers use questions effectively and give instructions clearly. In most lessons, teachers ensure that pupils understand what they have to do and good routines help them to gain independence in their learning. Classrooms are well organised and resources readily available. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good support for children with special educational needs, so that they make good progress towards their targets. Good use is usually made of the support staff who make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
18. The school has worked very hard and successfully to improve pupils' behaviour; this point is readily recognised by the parents and also by the older pupils. This improvement has led to a peaceful, harmonious environment which supports the quality of teaching and learning. In the less successful lessons, there are insufficiently high expectations of the pupils, as a consequence of which the pupils are not as productive as they could be. In the most successful lessons, teachers manage the pupils well and there is good behaviour. This was the case in the lessons observed in the oldest class. In a well resourced and well organised science lesson on fair testing, pupils developed a range of investigations; one group investigated which materials made the best parachutes. Through skilful questioning the teacher elicited from the pupils scientific answers about the importance of fair testing. Pupils settled quickly to the task, showing good levels of collaboration and making very good progress in the development of independent skills. In lessons such as this, time at the end of the session is used well as a means of assessing pupils' learning in the lesson; it is clear that these assessments inform the planning for the subsequent lessons.
19. Where teaching is very good, it inspires enthusiasm and ensures that all pupils achieve well relative to their abilities. This was the case in a numeracy lesson for children in the Reception/Year 1 class. The teacher made good use of the 'roaring dinosaur' puppet to fully engage the children. When individual children counted out dinosaurs in sequence in twos and threes, the children spontaneously applauded one another, thus promoting self-esteem. The tasks were well explained so that children knew just what was expected of them. There was a strong emphasis on taking turns and co-operation. The nursery nurse led a game of 'dinosaur dominoes', promoting number recognition, matching and counting, whilst the teacher moved around offering very effective support for the other groups. The teaching and learning of the youngest children is most successful when the nursery nurse is fully involved, such as when the two year groups are taught discretely.
20. An issue from the previous report was to ensure that teachers were able to use and teach information and communication technology. Although there has been some staff training there remains a need to build up the confidence of some staff members in information and communication technology. Teachers are confident in most curricular areas, except for music. The school lacks a specialist and this factor, together with a lack of clear guidance on what to teach, is having an adverse effect on teaching, learning and standards in the subject. **K I 2, K I 4**
21. The quality of planning is variable. The planning for English and mathematics is well structured

and guides the teaching and learning effectively. In some other subjects the planning systems are less clear and this can have an adverse effect on some lessons such as one observed in music.

22. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves are very good and this underpins much of the teaching and the learning. This is a caring school where the staff have a close knowledge of the pupils and their needs. The very good relationships are a strength of the school and contribute significantly to the pupils' learning. Teachers create a climate where pupils are confident in answering questions or offering opinions knowing that, whatever their reply, it will be accepted with encouragement. This is especially important for the lower attaining pupils. The teaching promotes the self-esteem of the pupils who know that they are valued. Pupils have positive perceptions of the staff and the teaching they receive.
23. An issue from the previous report was to develop a marking policy. The recently developed policy is having a positive impact on the quality of marking, although there is some inconsistency in the marking of spellings. Work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are helpful in giving pupils encouragement and guidance on how they can improve. The marking is often very personalised and promotes the development of self-esteem; for example, in response to a descriptive piece of writing on the visit of a Muslim lady to talk about her faith, the teacher wrote, 'This is a sensitive piece of writing. I am very proud of you.' Teachers make useful formal and informal day-to-day evaluations of lessons which guide future plans. Homework is generally used well to extend learning. The school has a clear commitment to continue to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils are able to achieve the best they can and a very good start has been made.

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

24. The curriculum for the youngest children provides a good range of experiences across the various areas of learning, except in the physical area where the children are disadvantaged by the lack of an outdoor play area to develop their physical skills. The school offers a curriculum that appropriately places priority on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is broad and balanced except in the areas of information and communication technology and music. Pupils are not receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement in information and communication technology. Additionally, pupils do not have full access to all the appropriate experiences in music. The school is aware of these shortcomings and of the important need to address them. All staff have attended training to increase their knowledge and expertise in information and communication technology. An information and communication technology consultant visits the school to share expertise and raise the staff's confidence in the subject.
25. An issue from the previous inspection was to develop schemes of work. This was carried out soon after that inspection but many of the schemes have become outdated and are being reviewed. The school has recently adopted the nationally recommended schemes of work for most subjects. The work in English and mathematics follows the national strategies and use is made of commercial schemes to complement the strategies. The local small schools cluster scheme of work is used for geography. All subject policies have been recently reviewed and most are in the process of being updated. The school now has a good framework for lesson planning in English and mathematics which helps to promote continuity of learning across the key stages and from year to year. Planning in other subjects lacks structure and the school recognises the need to continue to improve its planning and to raise the profile of subjects such as history, geography and design and technology. The lack of clear guidance in music has a negative effect on the coverage of the various areas and on the progress the pupils are able to make.
26. Overall the school has effective strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy and this is having a positive impact on attainment in these subjects. Effective targets are being set to improve literacy and numeracy across the school. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, all staff have taken part in additional training on teaching the basic skills in literacy

- and numeracy. Valuable support has been given by the local education authority literacy and numeracy consultants. Booster teaching in literacy and numeracy is helping raise standards across both key stages. Many subjects of the curriculum are now very well covered by cross-curricular teaching; for example, in design and technology, pupils produce written plans and so develop their literacy skills. Similarly, pupils use elements of mathematics in their geography work, producing, for example, graphs and tables. Literacy skills are developed further in science by a range of diagrams, tables, experiments, evaluations and, with the oldest pupils, detailed explanations.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and provision for them is good across the school. At present there are 30 pupils identified with special educational needs. The school has updated its policy to take into account the revised national Code of Practice. Pupils with special educational needs have clear and helpful individual education plans, including appropriate targets, mainly based on literacy and numeracy skills; these are regularly monitored and reviewed. Good use is being made of the local education authority's support service. The school is becoming aware of the needs of the higher attaining pupils and increasingly provision is being made, although there is no written policy as yet. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the time of the previous inspection.
  28. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school provides programmes for health education, including sex and relationship education and drugs awareness. These programmes develop pupils' knowledge and understanding enabling them to make healthy and informed choices and there is good support from the school nurse. Pupils are taught the principles of healthy living and healthy eating in science, and in physical education, they are taught about the effects of exercise on their bodies.
  29. Staff provide very good role models for pupils and lessons proceed in a harmonious atmosphere where all pupils' efforts are appreciated and respected. The development of good relationships and consideration for others are deeply embedded in the life and work of the school. Pupils learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. The provision for social education is enhanced by educational visits to complement the topics taught; for example, the younger pupils visited the Eureka museum in Halifax to enrich their scientific learning and the older pupils visited a local shoe factory to support their design and technology topic on designing slippers.
  30. Care of the environment is a clear priority and many opportunities are taken to incorporate this aspect into the pupils' learning. The older pupils have been involved with a 'Groundwork' environmental scheme in planting trees and shrubs in the local area. In an art lesson, Year 4/5 pupils discussed outdoor sculptures and their effect on the environment; some pupils criticised the placing of these sculptures in Bacup and expressed strong feelings about their detrimental effect on the surrounding landscape. All pupils benefit from visitors to the school such as the members of a local brass band. The parish priest visits the school regularly. The 'Life Van' visits annually and all pupils further their knowledge about keeping their bodies healthy. The pupils say they enjoy the fun way the Burnley Youth Theatre enriches the pupils' experiences. Weekly French lessons are taught to Year 5 pupils by a teacher from a high school.
  31. The school has satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities although little provision is made for Key Stage 1 pupils. At Key Stage 2, sports activities are provided such as football, netball, rounders and cricket. Friendly and league matches are played throughout the year with other primary schools. Although some parents queried the range of extra-curricular activities provided, the provision is similar to those of most schools of a similar size. The education provision made through the extra-curricular activities provided and managed by the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
  32. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and the provision for cultural development is good. This provision is a strength of the school. It represents a significant improvement since the previous report. It is implicit in all the school does and is clearly reflected in its values. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The ethos of the school based on Christian principles is very strong and the school's mission statement is reflected in the daily life and conduct of all its pupils. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to gain

further insights into the Christian faith. Candles are used as a focal point at collective worship time, helping to promote prayer and reflection. One whole school period of collective worship observed gave the pupils the opportunity to reflect about Jesus being a role model in promoting peace. The teacher retold the Easter story and all pupils listened attentively. Good use was made of a 'tree' to hang symbols of Easter and peace; for example, a picture of a rainbow, a dove and a cross. 'How can you bring peace to the lives of other people?' was the concluding question.

33. Provision for moral development is very good. As a consequence pupils are helped to know the difference between right and wrong. They are given clear messages about standards and expectations for their behaviour. There is a clear reward and sanction system in place and pupils enjoy the star system and merit certificates. Pupils are encouraged to consider their responsibility for others and older pupils look after younger pupils at playtime. Prefects ensure that the organised games like football are played fairly. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and support charities. They respond well to the 'peace' that is promoted through all aspects of school life; for example by the peace displays in the corridor, by the doves of peace in the hall and by the millennium tapestry which celebrates creation.
34. Provision for social and moral development is very good. Staff encourage pupils to be well mannered and polite. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together in different groupings, to share equipment and space and to collaborate with each other; the pupils respond well. They play well together in the playground. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility by undertaking jobs. Two pupils from each class are members of the School Council, which includes a chairperson and a secretary who takes minutes. They meet once a month to discuss school issues. Pupils believe this is very effective and their opinions are valued. All classes have circle time; in a session observed in Year 5/6, pupils discussed respect for others, particularly tolerance. The session ended on a positive note where all pupils were asked to say something they like about themselves. One said, 'I'm happy about who I am'. The pupils were clearly familiar and comfortable with this format. They listened respectfully to the contributions of others and were confident in talking about sensitive issues without embarrassment. Circle time is well used to promote both speaking and social skills.
35. The provision for cultural development is good. The school has a well thought out policy that includes issues across the curriculum. Assemblies and subjects such as history and geography make a positive contribution to celebrating and understanding customs and traditions. 'The journey of the millennium tapestry' in which all pupils had some input, is displayed in the foyer after its return to school recently. Its journey is highlighted on a map of England with photographs of the tapestry exhibited at various venues. Recently an English teacher living in Kuwait came to the school to teach and gave pupils a glimpse of life in Kuwait. Wider links with Europe have been established through communication with German pupils; letters and photographs sent by these pupils are featured in a display. A Muslim lady gave a talk about her life as a Muslim, about her faith and about the importance of the Mosque in her life.
36. Overall the curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the pupils. It prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

37. Assessing, monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is good in English, mathematics and science but is unsatisfactory in other subjects. At the time of the previous inspection, assessment and recording in English, mathematics and science were judged to be satisfactory and appropriate use was made of weekly evaluations to plan future lessons and to set targets for individual pupils. The information provided on new entrants to the school was not well used. Assessment procedures have recently been reviewed and considerable improvements made, although the school recognises that assessment and recording of attainment and progress is still an area for development.

38. The school receives very detailed records from the local school nursery class which most pupils attend, giving useful information on early attainment in the Foundation Stage with reference to the 'stepping stones' which lead to the Early Learning Goals. Early assessments are then carried out which form the basis of a system of tracking pupils' progress through the school. In the Reception Year a great number of informal assessments are made of pupils' progress across the various required areas of learning. Just prior to the inspection the staff made a positive start in using the new national Foundation Stage profile which will provide the basis of future record keeping.
39. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is now systematically recorded but there is still no formal whole school procedure for assessment of other subjects. Formal assessments are made annually in English, mathematics and science using optional national test papers and other materials. Each teacher has an assessment planner outlining procedures required through the year. Subject portfolios are being developed to help teachers to make accurate judgements about standards achieved by pupils. Day-to-day assessments are used effectively to plan appropriate future work.
40. The school is beginning to focus on the collection of data and to analyse and interpret the results of pupils' attainment in national tests. All teachers have access to this information and use it to set future targets. A new marking policy has been introduced. Standards of marking are becoming more consistent. There is some very good practice on which to build. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory. There have been recent improvements, so that they now identify targets for future learning.
41. The school has a strong commitment to raising standards and recognises the importance of good assessment and recording procedures to monitor improvement. The procedures in place are providing useful information to guide the work of the school and future planned developments are appropriate.
42. The good standard of care and support for pupils that was seen at the last inspection has been maintained. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils feel confident and secure. Recent improvements in procedures for promoting good behaviour and attitudes to learning have been particularly effective.
43. Pupils' personal development is routinely monitored by class teachers and, because staff know children and their families well, any problems can be identified immediately and appropriate action taken. Parents appreciate the extent of individual attention that is given to pupils' needs. Very good relationships between children and all adults who work in the school contribute to the family atmosphere of this happy community, where staff show genuine concern for the personal welfare of each child.
44. The school has an effective health and safety policy which is carefully implemented by all staff. Safe practices are followed in lessons such as physical education, fire drills are carried out successfully and, in addition to formal health and safety inspections, daily checks of the building and grounds are undertaken to ensure everyone's safety. Risk assessments are completed in relation to the school premises and plans are in hand to formalise those that are carried out when children go on school trips. Children are well supervised at all times, there are appropriate arrangements for routine first aid and medical care and child protection procedures are properly in place.
45. A priority in the last year has been the improvement of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The revised discipline policy, with its emphasis on rewards for positive behaviour, is now consistently implemented by staff. Pupils and parents are constantly reminded of the school's high expectations, through assemblies, circle time, newsletters and meetings. Through praise and encouragement, staff have succeeded in building up pupils' self-esteem, while teaching them to show respect and consideration for others, so that they now behave well and are well motivated to succeed in their school work. Special help from an external counsellor is provided for those children who need additional support. Parents, staff and the pupils themselves remark on the visible improvement in behaviour and attitudes which is having a significant impact on the quality of



learning in the school.

46. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time at school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

47. Most parents are happy with the education that the school offers to their children. They appreciate the improvements that have taken place since the last inspection and are strongly supportive of the new headteacher. Only a minority of parents play an active part in supporting their children's learning at home, and their personal involvement in the life of the school is limited.
48. Those parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting have very positive views of the school. They are happy with the standards that children achieve and think they are making good progress as a result of the school's high expectations. They feel that this is a very caring, approachable school that keeps parents well informed and listens to their concerns. Most view behaviour as good, noting recent improvements, and they feel that children are learning to become mature and responsible. Several parents do not think that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons and a few do not think that the school works closely with parents.
49. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed and finds the criticisms largely unjustified. Extra-curricular provision is adequate for a school of this size, although the range of activities is mainly limited to sport. The school makes every effort to work in close partnership with parents.
50. Information provided for parents is wide ranging and of good quality. The prospectus is very attractively presented and written in a friendly, welcoming style that is easy to understand. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about administrative arrangements and events and there are ample opportunities for informal daily contact with class teachers. Formal consultation evenings allow parents to discuss children's progress in more detail, while the annual school reports mostly give a clear account of what children know, understand and can do, and set targets for improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In addition, the school has organised a number of special meetings for parents to explain aspects of the curriculum and to give information and guidance on how to help children with their reading at home.
51. Although all parents are keen to come to school productions to see their children perform, response to other events is disappointing. Only about half the parents attend consultation evenings with teachers, although special arrangements are made if parents are unable to come, while curriculum meetings attract very few parents indeed. Staff have been pleased to see more parents coming to class assemblies and the weekly "Celebration of achievement" assembly, but support for pupils' learning at home is very limited.
52. Parental help is actively welcomed by the school and the headteacher would like to encourage more parents to become involved in classrooms and day-to-day activities. Some parents give their time to help with make-up and costumes for performances, accompany the children on trips or share their expertise by coaching sports teams. The Parents' Association is led by a nucleus of very committed parents who organise social and fund raising events to help promote the corporate image of the school, as well as providing welcome 'extras', such as a digital camera, for the children to use. The annual Christmas Fair, organised by parents in conjunction with the parish, is a well supported, enjoyable event that enables pupils, staff, parents and parishioners to work together in raising considerable sums for the pupils.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

53. The leadership and management of the school is very good, matching the previous inspection

report's judgement of effective leadership and management. The enthusiastic headteacher, well supported by the conscientious acting deputy headteacher, is putting in place effective strategies to raise standards and improve the quality of education. Recent years have been difficult for the school because of staff changes, falling rolls and discipline issues. The lack of stability has had a detrimental effect on the school moving forward and improving at a time when the national focus has been on increasing self-evaluation and the setting of challenging targets aimed at raising achievement.

54. Since the recent appointment of the present headteacher a great deal of progress has been made and the school is now moving forward at a rapid pace. The decline in the school's circumstances meant that some issues from the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. A start has been made on updating schemes of work aimed to raise standards of attainment, improving teacher confidence in information and communication technology and in implementing suitable policies. However, the present circumstances dictate that the previous issues may not be the most important priorities for the school at present.
55. The new headteacher has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there are very clear indications that she has a good grasp of the main priorities for development. She has the ability to manage change well and to motivate and influence staff and has already succeeded in making considerable progress by building on strengths and identifying areas for improvement. Staff development has been one priority. Until recently teachers have had too little opportunity for professional development and have not been sufficiently involved in self-evaluation. Improvements can be seen in lesson planning and in the work of the co-ordinators. Ambitious targets for improvement have been implemented after a comprehensive evaluation of the current situation and considerable input from the local education authority advisory service. New draft policies are in place for all subjects and aspects of school life.
56. The areas for development have been clearly outlined in the school development plan, which is a useful working document with clear targets aimed at raising standards. It covers one year in detail, but also includes a brief longer term plan. It shows how the school is undertaking systematic self-evaluation. The headteacher, with considerable support from the local education advisory service, is now monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. There are specific targets for staff related to planning, teaching and attainment, all linked to performance management.
57. The aims of the school are appropriate and have been agreed by governors and shared with parents. They are well reflected in the work of the school. With the exception of information and communication technology and music, pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff work closely together and provide a friendly and secure environment for the pupils which reflects the caring, Christian ethos of the school. This, together with a very effective behaviour and discipline policy, has enabled the school to become a calm environment where pupils feel very secure and valued and behave well.
58. The governing body is very supportive of the school and its headteacher. A number of members have a long association with school and are very loyal. The chair is a regular visitor to school and has a good working relationship with the headteacher. He takes Mass once each term. The members fully acknowledge and appreciate the improvements made by the present headteacher. They are now much more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but have little involvement in monitoring the work done and few are able visit the school on a regular basis. Members acknowledge that the number of pupils on roll is a major concern and have set up a public relations committee to more actively promote the school. There is evidence of a shared determination to succeed and move forward.
59. The school manages its finances and resources efficiently. Money is well used and resources deployed effectively. There are serious concerns about the effect of a possible falling roll. At present, through prudent spending, there are sufficient reserves to maintain the present staffing levels. The finance committee has drawn up a series of future predictions based on various pupil numbers and is looking carefully at the possible options should pupil numbers fall further. The

money from specific grants is used satisfactorily for their designated purposes. The headteacher and governors work hard to ensure that the school gets the best possible value from its limited budget. They are very mindful of the small number of pupils and the need to promote the school.

60. There is an adequate number of teaching and support staff. The accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The conscientious school caretaker maintains the building to a high standard. Overall most subjects are well resourced, with the exception of information and communication technology. Resources are used efficiently.
61. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life. Effective procedures are in place for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. The small size of the school and the quality of care ensure that all pupils are treated as individuals and this enriches the quality of provision for these pupils. The information and communication technology curriculum does not meet statutory requirements and the pupils do not have full access to the National Curriculum in music.
62. Overall this is an improving school which cares for its children in a supportive, peace loving, Christian atmosphere. The school has explicit aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which are reflected in all its work. The headteacher's great and infectious enthusiasm and the way she is leading the school forward in its aspirations to become better, augur well for this improving school.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed. In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

i. Raise standards across the school in English, mathematics and science by:

- further developing target setting based on National Curriculum level descriptors;
- promoting greater productivity on the part of the pupils;
- raising expectations of what the higher attainers can achieve;
- continuing to develop the good support for pupils with special educational needs;
- continuing to raise the profile of reading and writing in the school;
- continuing to target standards in spelling;
- giving pupils more opportunities for extended writing including the development of detail; and
- continuing to give pupils opportunities to write and make a personal response in the foundation subjects;

*(paragraphs 7, 26, 83, 89, 96)*

ii. Improve the provision for information and communication technology by:

- continuing to develop confidence through information and communication technology training;
- continuing to review, extend and renew computer provision;
- developing a range of software to support learning in all areas of the curriculum;
- providing more routine use of computers in all classrooms; and
- systematically ensuring that pupils have regular and full access to the programmes of study in information and communication technology;

*(paragraphs 8, 20, 21, 24, 94, 104, 112, 134, 136, 137, 141)*

iii. Further develop the assessing of attainment and progress by:

- reviewing and developing current practices in English, mathematics and science;

- creating clear systems for assessment of information and communication technology and the foundation subjects;
- creating a new policy which identifies the details, including the timescale, for assessing; and
- using the resulting data to inform the school's work in raising standards;

*(paragraphs 37, 39, 41, 117, 122, 127, 133, 138, 150)*

iv. Improve the provision for music by:

- developing a clear scheme of work to guide the work;
- staff training to increase confidence in teaching music;
- reviewing of the timing and frequency of lessons; and
- monitoring to check that pupils receive full access to all the programmes of study.

*(paragraphs 8, 20, 21, 24, 25, 142, 143, 145)*

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- the review and development of planning procedures, notably those for information and communication technology and the foundation subjects; and
- making full use of the skills of the nursery nurse in the Reception and Year 1 class.

*(paragraphs 19, 25, 64, 71, 117, 143, 145, 150)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	78

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	15	7	1	0	0
Percentage	0	23	50	23	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

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

#### 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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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)***

In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 1 are not reported as the number of pupils in Year 2 was fewer than 11.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	11	8	19

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	13	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68(39)	74(39)	89(57)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68(350)	74(39)	74(39)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 2 are reported in total and not by gender as the number of girls in Year 6 was fewer than 11.





### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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	100
Number of questionnaires returned	38

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	16	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	29	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	21	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	18	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	18	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	21	0	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	24	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	29	16	0	8

## **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**

63. The good and sometimes very good teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) ensures that the children make a very positive start to school life. This is one of the school's strengths. All the indications are that the provision has improved since the previous inspection and children are making better progress. The vast majority of the children have had experience of pre-school education in the nursery class of a nearby primary school. Although levels of attainment vary from year to year, assessments undertaken soon after the start of the Reception Year indicate that standards are well below what could be expected, especially in speaking and listening and early writing skills.
64. The reception children are in a class with the Year 1 pupils who often act as role models. The mixture of age groups makes the children's transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 a very smooth one. The quality of education is good overall in spite of the disadvantage of having no outdoor play area. This lack of a secure outdoor environment with a range of large toys and equipment prevents the children from accessing experiences across the areas of learning within an outdoor play setting. The Reception children benefit from the very good support of a full-time nursery nurse. A feature of the teaching is the very good partnership between the teacher and the nursery nurse, who provide opportunities for children to learn well with high expectations, thus enabling them to achieve well relative to their abilities. The nursery nurse and the teacher provide a consistent, very supportive approach, although there are times when more use could be made of the teaching skills of the nursery nurse; for example, in enabling the two year groups to be taught discretely.
65. A lot of thought and co-operation goes into planning the work, which makes good use of the good range of resources supporting most of the areas of learning. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the hard work and sensitivity of the teacher and the nursery nurse who are responsible for a caring ethos where every child is valued as an individual. The supportive relationships enable the children to feel happy during their introduction to school. All the parents spoken to were very appreciative of this. Self-esteem is promoted all the time, with the words 'well done' being heard throughout the sessions. A lot of informal assessments are undertaken but few formal ones. At the time of the inspection the staff had completed records of attainment through the new national assessment profile. The further use of this will provide a useful, coherent system for recording individual children's progress in each of the areas of learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

66. Virtually all children are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and most are likely to exceed them. Success in this area of learning is due to the very good level of care and the very good teaching. Personal and social development is seen as underpinning all the teaching and learning and children progress very well in this area. They gain confidence in a range of familiar and new situations; they establish effective relationships with the adults. They learn to select and use activities and resources independently; for example, during 'free choice' time when making choices from sand play, role play, small world play and dressing up. Children learn to share and take turns such as when playing dominoes and when using the computer. They are encouraged to be independent. 'In my group, by the end, the children didn't need me', explained the nursery nurse to the teacher in a discussion at the end of a session.
67. Children are kind to one another and learn to co-operate well. They learn to share resources, such as the clothes, the dolls and the prams. They are enthusiastic about their learning and become well engaged. They learn to listen attentively to stories such as 'Dinosaur Roar, Dinosaur Whisper'; they enjoy favourite ones like 'Peace at Last'. The adults encourage the children to become independent so that they become confident in making choices and making decisions. Children respond well to the ethos of care where every individual is valued. They spontaneously

applaud one another. The adults provide good role models and treat the children with respect and friendliness.

68. The children are happy to work both with or without adult supervision and are willing to join in with the full class. They have a positive approach to all new experiences and their enthusiasm is clear to see. They show curiosity when learning about the properties of the many materials available, such as water, sand and playdough and when accessing images by clicking the computer mouse. The quality of learning is good and children make very good progress.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. In this area of learning most of the children will meet the Early Learning Goals and a small number will meet the higher level competencies such as those concerned with writing. Only a very small number are likely to exceed the goals. A strong emphasis is placed on early reading skills and most children make good progress. Competency in this area enables access to all other areas and so is given a high profile. The promotion of speaking skills is appropriately given a very high priority; for example, through role play at 'St Joseph's Station'. They enjoy using finger puppets to perform the story of 'The Little Red Hen'.
70. The children listen attentively in a large group. They enjoy familiar nursery rhymes such as 'Humpty Dumpty' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. The children show good listening skills during literacy and numeracy sessions. They are learning to follow instructions; for example, when playing letter recognition games. They have a growing vocabulary. They take part in imaginative play in the large role play area which has been used as a vet's, a Chinese restaurant and a flower shop. Although they enjoy sharing and choosing books from the very good selection and taking 'home readers', they could benefit from more opportunities to take home picture books from the very good selection. The teaching in 'circle time' makes an important contribution to speaking and listening as do the many opportunities for working in small groups.
71. The children listen attentively in assemblies and show good understanding of what is said to them in response to the teacher's questions and explanations. During the course of the year they 'trace' and copy adults' writing and start to write independently. They enjoy books and develop word recognition skills. The vast majority are making good progress in early reading skills. The higher attainers use their knowledge of sounds to read simple regular words. A satisfactory range of information and communication technology software helps the children to reinforce and practise their skills. There are plans to further develop the amount of software to support work in letter and sound recognition. The quality of teaching in this area is good, although there are occasions such as story time when the class could benefit from being in two discrete groups, giving better opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.

### **Mathematical development**

72. In this area of learning, the vast majority of children will probably meet the Early Learning Goals but only a small number will exceed them. The children work well across the various aspects of mathematical development. They show confidence in counting and recognising numbers to nine with a good proportion able to go beyond that. They join in the very good range of number rhymes and counting games and begin to learn to write numbers. They learn to sequence events such as the times of the day and are beginning to sequence days of the week.
73. Daily opportunities are taken for counting and practical activities which promote number recognition. Children enjoy games which involve matching, sorting and sequencing. They are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical and positional language confidently; for example, words like 'bigger', 'smaller', 'above', 'below' and 'behind'. Higher attainers can work out one more or one less than a number from one to ten and, in practical activities and discussion, they begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. They enjoy doing simple mental arithmetic. They are given a good range of mathematical experiences and opportunities to practise these skills. Although there is some practising of skills on the computer, there is

recognition of the need to further develop software to provide practice for counting and number recognition. Very good teaching was observed in this area of development, resulting in the very good progress made. Where the teaching was most successful there was full use of the very good teaching skills of the nursery nurse.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. In this area of learning the vast majority of children are likely to meet the goals but only one or two will exceed them. The children who have difficulty in expressing themselves and in sharing their knowledge attain less well in this area. Although in the main the children are given a good range of experiences to help them to find out about the world and they make good progress working towards the required competencies, few opportunities are provided to go out of school to learn about the local area. They learn about their own history through a topic 'All about me'; they learn about 'My special people'. They study old teddy bears. They enjoy using construction kits to make models such as a doll's house and a train and enjoy making pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. They learn about the travels of Jeremy Bear and Steven Seagull.
75. Children learn about the seasons of the year and the characteristics of each one. They plant beans, flower seeds and cress. They enjoy scientific work such as activities on freezing and melting and using bulbs and batteries to create a simple circuit. Although the children enjoy using the computers independently and many show the appropriate levels of skill in controlling the mouse to play various games, there is recognition of the need to further develop software to better support this aspect of the work. The children begin to learn about their own culture and heritage and about festivals such as the Chinese New Year. They enjoy poems from other cultures such as a sampan poem, a Caribbean counting rhyme and 'My sari'. The quality of the teaching observed in this area was good.

## **Physical development**

76. All the children are likely to attain the goals for this area of learning, with a good number likely to exceed them. Children enter the school with a wide range of physical abilities. The standards of attainment are affected by the lack of a designated outdoor activity area. Children can engage in energetic physical activity only during their physical education lessons and at playtime. There are no opportunities for children to choose to work out of doors or to develop their skills of co-ordination and balance through using wheeled toys and large equipment. The school is aware of this gap in its provision.
77. Children develop their pencil skills, learn to control a paintbrush effectively and to join pieces of construction kits. Fine motor skills are developed through a range of activities such as cutting, sticking, modelling and manipulating mouldable materials and, as a result, most begin to control their fingers and hands well. They handle tools, objects and materials safely, although the provision could be improved to include opportunities for using equipment such as saws, hammers and nails. Children use the computer mouse with increasing control. The quality of teaching observed in this area of learning, such as that seen in the development of fine motor skills, was good.

## **Creative development**

78. All the children will probably achieve the goals and a few are likely to exceed them. Children enjoy the creative area of learning which is well taught and well provided for in the classroom. They paint and experiment with a good range of resources. They use crayons and felt tips to create increasingly colourful drawings. They create colourful paintings of themselves and of trains. They use computer software to create pictures of people and creatures. They weave and create collages depicting the seasons of the year.
79. Children are given opportunities to use their imagination in art, dance, imaginative play and role

play. They sing simple songs from memory, begin to recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movements to music. They sing a very good range of number rhymes, action songs and nursery rhymes. The quality of imaginative play is generally good and children enjoy playing in the large role play area. The creative area of learning provides a good variety of experiences and overall is well taught. The teacher and the nursery nurse are very committed to the children. The very good relationships underpin the teaching and the learning. The children respond well to the high expectations made of them, enabling them to make good progress throughout their time in the Reception Year.

## ENGLISH

80. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in speaking and listening were judged to be below average throughout the school. Standards in reading and writing were judged to be in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since then there have been indications of underachievement in English at both key stages. Under the leadership of the new headteacher this underachievement is being successfully addressed and standards are rising, especially in writing.
81. Results can and do, vary from year to year given the relatively small numbers in each year group. However, it is possible to use national performance data to consider standards over time at the end of Years 2 and 6. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, results indicate that the performance of pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading fell below the national average. The performance in writing was above average, mainly because of the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. The results over three years at the end of Year 6 indicate that performance was well below the national average. In 2002, although standards were below the national average, there was a significant rise in the number of pupils reaching Level 4 and standards were in line with those in schools with a similar intake.
82. Overall standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in summer 2003 in speaking and listening, reading and writing are likely to be below national averages reflecting the high number of pupils with special educational needs. Across the range of tests undertaken, there is no evidence of significant variation in the performance of boys and girls. Relative to their abilities, pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, achieve well across the school.
83. The school recognises the need to raise standards in English and has begun a programme of development designed to improve teaching and learning. A very thorough audit of needs has been carried out by the headteacher in conjunction with the local education authority advisory service. A range of strategies, including significant staff development to increase teachers' and pupils' expectations, has been implemented. Teaching seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and overall it was good. Very good teaching was seen in the Reception/Year 1 class and the Year 5/6 class. The overall good quality of teaching and learning observed suggests that systems in place are proving successful.
84. A new policy and scheme have been introduced and resources reorganised to ensure better use. Working alongside a literacy consultant has significantly developed the role of the co-ordinator. Separate handwriting and marking policies have been agreed by all staff. Standards of marking are not yet fully consistent, for example, in the correction of spellings, but there is evidence of some very good quality marking, which combines praise with very useful guidance for pupils on how to improve their work. This is setting high standards for the school.
85. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers and other adults in the classroom. They follow instructions and listen politely to the contributions of other pupils. Most speak confidently in small groups and to adults but a significant minority appear reluctant to respond to the whole class. Much work is being done, especially with the oldest pupils, to encourage them to participate more fully in class discussions. Some pupils have some difficulty in expressing their thoughts and feelings clearly because of the limited range of their vocabulary and responses tend to be short. The responses given by some pupils show that they are easily confused by more challenging questions and a significant minority struggle to recall information given in previous lessons. Teachers are working hard to develop better speaking and listening skills through group discussions, role play and drama during the literacy hour and in other subjects such as history and religious education.
86. In Years 1 and 2, pupils read simple texts with expression in the class and group reading sessions. Through literacy sessions, they are beginning to use a range of reading cues to help them to read unfamiliar words. They are taught to find information from pictures and text. Together, teacher and pupils examine books to find the title, author and illustrator. Pupils begin to distinguish between books which tell them stories and those where they find information.

Systematic teaching of basic skills is enabling them to learn their letter sounds and develop a sight vocabulary of key words. When reading individually, pupils use their phonic knowledge to build simple words. Too few are confident readers who have developed sufficient fluency, accuracy and understanding to enable them to read aloud with expression or to use books to find information.

87. At Key Stage 2 there is a wide range of reading ability. The older higher attaining pupils read regularly for pleasure at school and at home. They talk enthusiastically about their books and how author and illustrator can influence their choices. Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl and J K Rowling proved to be very popular authors. One Year 5 pupil described the Harry Potter books as 'cliff-hangers'. Although the skills are being developed through the structured approach to reading now in place, too few pupils read independently with sufficient fluency and confidence. A significant number of lower attaining pupils often need to employ their phonic skills to help them to decode more difficult words. There are occasions when the books these pupils are reading are too difficult.
88. The school ensures that pupils read a good range of interesting texts in literacy lessons including stories, poems, plays and factual information. The opportunities for independent library study are limited. The library area has been reorganised but as yet it is not used sufficiently well. The school has firm plans for its future development as a resource for teaching library skills. The school has a good range of books which are supplemented by loans from the local education authority library service. Few pupils make regular visits to a public library. Pupils are encouraged to take home reading books on a regular basis. Teachers would welcome a greater involvement by parents in developing pupils' reading skills.
89. There is a clear agenda to raise standards of written work, especially those of the higher attainers, in order that more pupils reach the higher Levels 3 and 5. Targets set for development in English, aimed at raising standards, are reflected in the school development plan. They include improvements in teachers' planning and raising standards of spelling and comprehension skills.
90. Throughout the school a significant number of pupils experience difficulty in writing and spelling. In Years 1 and 2 higher attaining pupils usually spell simple words correctly from memory. Although they have experience of using capital letters and full stops, too few are able to use them correctly with consistency in their writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes; for example, retelling fairy stories such as 'Cinderella' and 'The Three Little Pigs'. They are beginning to understand that a story has a beginning, a middle and an end. Non-fictional writing includes instructions for making puppets, diary writing and school rules. Pupils use computer programs to reinforce and consolidate their knowledge of phonic blends and to word process stories and poems.
91. At Key Stage 2, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write on a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction subjects, including science fiction and legends, autobiographies and newspaper reports. They learn the difference between formal and informal writing. Some pupils wrote letters to the editor of a newspaper complaining about homework, whilst others complained to a cafe about the service they received. Through these activities pupils are beginning to understand the difference between fact and opinion and to express points of view with confidence. Pupils usually focus well on their work in lessons and produce sufficient work.
92. Productivity is particularly high in the class with the oldest pupils, where the teacher's expectations of amount and quality of work are very high. The quality of teaching in this class is having a very positive impact on standards. The very good practice was evident in an evaluation project carried out over the inspection week. The very good planning, instruction and daily evaluation of lessons, together with high expectation of the pupils' work and behaviour resulted in creditable work and good development of pupils' critical appraisal.
93. Standards in handwriting and presentation are variable. Although there is evidence of regular handwriting practice, high standards of presentation are not always maintained when pupils write independently.



94. The strong ethos of the school is obvious in many lessons. Pupils have the opportunity to talk and write about peace and love. Texts are carefully chosen to offer opportunities for pupils to express feelings. A story highlighting the effect of poverty on a family of refugees provoked strong feelings about fairness because a child in the story had no presents for her birthday. Across the school, teachers use work in other subjects well to develop language skills. Information and communication technology is used for some writing activities and to reinforce learning; for example, e-mails are sent to penfriends in Germany. The school is aware that the use of information and communication technology needs further development. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through the various initiatives aimed to boost performance and the good quality support helps them to make good progress. Visits to the theatre and the use of theatrical groups in school enhance the curriculum.
95. Assessment procedures are good. A range of standardised assessments are analysed carefully and provide useful information on progress made and future priorities. The homework policy is in need of review. The language co-ordinator now plays a more active role in monitoring teaching and learning through scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. She is leading the subject well. Reviews of planning done over the past two years, together with evidence from the inspection, clearly show the good progress that has been made in English. This reflects the quality of the initiatives in place and the hard work and the commitment of staff to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

96. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are below the national average. These standards are slightly higher than those achieved in the 2002 national tests when the performance of pupils was well below the national average and well below that of schools in similar contexts. Similarly, standards at the end of Year 6, where over a third of the pupils have special educational needs, are below the national average. These standards are similar to the 2002 results where standards were below the national average but in line with those of similar schools. The 2002 results were much higher than those of the previous period when twice in three years the results were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Similar standards to those seen were referred to at the time of the previous inspection. A small number of pupils in Year 2 now attain standards at the higher Level 3 and a small number of pupils in Year 6 are reaching the higher Level 5. All these results indicate steady progress and improvement, though standards overall are still below average. The higher attaining Year 5 group are likely to achieve much higher results in 2004. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs receive very good support in class and, although they make good progress, their performance has a negative impact on the overall evaluations.
97. Year 1 pupils are able to count and highlight patterns of two. They make good progress in counting on and back and adding and taking way numbers to 20. They understand the difference between odd and even numbers and know by heart all pairs of numbers with a total of ten. They successfully use number lines and number squares. They can describe the features of familiar two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Year 2 pupils build well on the number work of the first year. They become able to count on in steps of three, four and five to at least 30 and some are able to count back in these steps. Their books show some understanding of place value in 100s, tens and units. They begin simple division and multiplication. Pupils recognise different shapes and their properties, solve word and number problems and record different types of data using tallies and bar charts. Their books show that the pupils are productive and that they are achieving well. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils with learning difficulties well so that their work shows improving standards. Higher attaining pupils are challenged to achieve further.
98. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds continue to make progress in Years 3 to 6, although progress is most marked in Years 5 and 6. The impact of the high number of pupils with special educational needs means that in national terms the school's overall attainment is still low. Some pupils' limited use and understanding of language makes the solving of spoken and written problems difficult for them. The books of the average and higher attaining pupils show satisfactorily progressive coverage of the National Curriculum.

99. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn to recognise fractions and use them to find fractions of shapes and numbers. They identify lines of symmetry and recognise shapes with no lines of symmetry. Many, although not all, know by heart facts for the two, three, four, five and ten multiplication tables.
100. The higher attaining Year 5 group of pupils is able to use decimal notation for tenths and hundredths. They use all four number operations to solve simple problems involving numbers and quantities; they become adept at explaining their methods and reasoning. Year 6 pupils work successfully in the four operations of number. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and can solve problems involving these. They correctly measure angles, know the difference between regular and irregular shapes and can work out the perimeter and area of various shapes. Higher attaining pupils correctly use co-ordinates in graphs and geometric shapes and have begun to work on the theory of probability. In one lesson, pupils were challenged well to solve a problem requiring deduction rather than calculation, arranging counters on a board guided by a set of conditions; higher attaining pupils were able to see the logic of the problem whilst others solved it by trial and error.
101. Most pupils prefer numeracy to literacy and their attitudes to their mathematics lessons are good. They are attentive and keen to learn. Most pupils, including the youngest, maintain their concentration well throughout the hour-long session. Teachers contribute to this by moving the lessons along at a good pace and using resources such as number sticks, squares and lines. Pupils work well together in groups and continue to concentrate when the teacher is working with another group. The presentation of work is usually good with many pupils taking pride in their efforts.
102. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy and the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is secure and they teach with confidence. Lessons are well organised and the balance between whole-class learning and individual and group work is appropriate. There is good pace to the mental session at the start of each lesson. Good use is made of mathematical knowledge in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in recording scientific data and in work on map co-ordinates in geography. The use of information and communication technology programs to support pupils' learning is relatively underdeveloped; this is recognised as an important area for improvement. The support staff are very effective in supporting the pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers regularly set homework to extend and reinforce pupils' learning in class. Extra support is given to pupils through well organised 'Booster' and 'Springboard' groups.
103. The assessing, monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is good. Results of tests are recorded carefully and teachers note pupils' attainment and progress at regular intervals. The marking of pupils' work, guided by the new policy, generally provides helpful comments and suggestions.
104. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator has received effective support through a well organised programme of improvement by the local education authority advisory service. All teachers are familiar with the requirement of the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and there is an increasing emphasis on work scrutiny. Identified areas for development include strategies for improving mental arithmetic and the further development of information and communication technology materials. Resources for the subject are good with each classroom being well provided for with equipment and materials. The recent policy review and the development of a new scheme of work have added to the subject's effectiveness.
105. All the evidence indicates that standards of teaching, learning and attainment are improving and that the school is moving forward in its target of the further improvement of results, including increasing the number of pupils who reach the higher Levels 3 and 5.

## **SCIENCE**

106. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below what is expected nationally, as they were in the teacher assessments of 2002. Standards at the end of Year 6, where there are a significant number of pupils who have special educational needs, are below the national average which reflects the results of the 2002 national tests when standards were below the national average but in line when compared with similar schools. These results were an improvement on the results in 2000 and 2001 when attainment was very low. These improved results indicate the commitment of staff to develop pupils' learning in science. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well relative to their abilities across both key stages. The science curriculum is accessible for all pupils. The school is committed to raising standards with the target of enabling more pupils to reach higher National Curriculum levels. Investigative and practical science is well represented in the science curriculum and pupils learn about fair tests and their importance within science work.
107. By the end of Year 2, most pupils acquire much of the scientific knowledge expected for this age group. Most pupils can sequence the growth of a plant from seed to flower and they know the types of conditions in which plants grow well. They know how things around them change in a consistent way, such as in an ice pop investigation when predictions were recorded. Writing skills are developed when pupils use descriptive words in describing salt dough before and after cooking; they write 'squeezy', 'squidgy', 'firm' and 'crumbly'. Evidence from their books shows that pupils are trained to write independently about their investigations. This was evident in their accurate observations about how their bodies feel and change before and after exercise when one pupil wrote, 'I feel excited before PE because I will get some energy and feel fit' and another wrote, 'After PE my muscles have been working. I am sweaty. My heart beats fast'. By the end of Year 2, the higher attaining pupils have an understanding of the principles of fair testing, although for many this is just emerging.
108. By the end of Year 6, pupils have knowledge of the life cycle of plants and animals including humans and of the need for a healthy lifestyle, including the effects of exercise and the effects of misuse of drugs. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 write about the human eye and how the coloured part is called the iris, about the way light comes into the pupil and about the way eyelashes keep dust away from the eyes. Scientific vocabulary is becoming more familiar to them. They use words like evaporation and water vapour when writing about a condensation investigation. There is a significant leap in progress in the oldest class when pupils undertake much independent writing such as about the water cycle, electricity and fair testing. At the end of a Year 5/6 lesson about investigating scientifically and deciding how to find answers, most pupils gained confidence and expertise in their ability to plan an investigation. Pupils are very familiar with the criteria for fair testing. For example, one group when planning to see which material would make the best parachute, knew they had to use the same size materials, the same length of string and of the need to drop them from the same height.
109. The teaching seen was good overall and very good at Year 5/6. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Most teachers build upon pupils' prior learning to ensure that progress is continuous. For example, when Year 4/5 pupils were examining plants they knew that orange pips were the seeds and one pupil said that she had planted a peach stone at home 'as the weather is getting warmer'. All pupils' experiences and opinions are valued in this school. In a Year 2/3 lesson on musical instruments and the sounds made, the teacher used every opportunity to extend vocabulary and build upon pupils' knowledge. She used demonstration to lead the pupils to recognise that sound is caused by vibrations and kept the pupils' interest by organising plenty of practical activities. When two pupils were feeling the vibration of an elastic band, another pupil said, 'Does it tingle?' Pupils' speaking and listening skills were extended throughout the lesson.
110. The very good teaching in a Year 5/6 lesson demonstrated the teacher's high expectations and her success in challenging the older pupils when the majority of pupils confidently planned an investigation with much independence. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Teachers choose interesting and enjoyable activities that promote pupils' enjoyment in science. Pupils are encouraged to use scientific vocabulary using the teachers' language as guidance. Reviews at the end of all the lessons are used well to compare the findings of experiments and

reinforce what has been learnt. Teaching in science has improved since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory overall.

111. Pupils respond well to their work and co-operate effectively in practical work, sharing tasks fairly and handling equipment sensibly. All pupils behave well, stay on task and show enjoyment. Some pupils know how to undertake research for extra information but this skill is generally underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and are supported very well, both by their class teacher and by well-directed support staff.
112. The teaching is well supported by a scheme of work based on nationally published materials that have been well adapted to suit the needs of the school. There is adequate planning of coverage for all age groups through a three-year rolling programme which has been devised by the co-ordinator. Assessing, monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress in science is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and provides good leadership although a programme for monitoring of teaching is not yet in place. The policy has recently been updated by the co-ordinator. Resources are adequate and improving. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop its range of software to support the work in science. Occasionally expensive resources are borrowed from the local high school. Practical environmental studies enhance the science curriculum. Pupils have helped the 'Groundwork Trust' to regenerate an area of dereliction within and around the grounds for which the school received a Primary Schools Award. These environmental studies make a valuable contribution to the pupils' experiences.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

113. Only a limited amount of teaching was seen in art and design during the inspection. Evidence from discussions with pupils, work on display, an examination of portfolios of pupils' work and their sketchbooks, indicates that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum which covers the required programmes of study and that the satisfactory standards found at the previous inspection have been maintained. Some pupils attain higher standards. A recent whole-school focus on pattern making shows the development of skills through the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least sound and in some cases, good progress and enjoy the interesting range of activities. This is an area where pupils with special educational needs can gain success and enhance their self-esteem.
114. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing useful skills in two and three-dimensional work using a wide range of media. They experiment with pencils, paint and textiles to create colour and texture. They paint pictures of characters from stories such as 'The Gingerbread Man'. They are introduced to the work of famous artists such as Hockney and Van Gogh. They look closely at natural and man made objects and then produce observational drawings and paintings. Year 2 pupils examined moving figures which they had cut from magazines and put into their sketch books as a stimulus for drawing; good sketches were produced of a child skipping.
115. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are introduced to a wider range of materials and study the work of famous artists, including some from other cultures. In one lesson pupils were studying old photographs of mill towns and pictures painted by L S Lowry. They then created their own sketches trying to capture the harshness of the environment. The oldest pupils produced good quality abstract pictures inspired by the work of Andy Warhol. In a lesson on textiles, the oldest pupils produced high quality sketches for banners they are going to make for the local church. The work reflected the quality of the artefacts used as a stimulus and the very good knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher. Work in sketchbooks often includes a written description of the work produced or information about particular artists.
116. No teaching was seen at Key Stage 1. The limited amount of teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was at least satisfactory and in one lesson it was good. Teachers plan interesting activities using a good range of resources and give pupils the freedom to experiment with the various media. Good use is made of praise and encouragement. Work is often planned to support learning in other areas of the curriculum or to support the school's work in promoting environmental issues; it reflects the caring ethos of the school. In one lesson, pupils looked at pictures of a range of

sculptures, designed to enhance the environment and expressed views about controversial works which have been erected in the local area. Information and communication technology is used effectively in art work.

117. Work on display throughout the school, which includes pupils' own work and that of famous artists, enhances the quality of the environment and makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the school. Although the experiences given are varied, the school has identified sculpture as an area for development. A new draft policy has been introduced and the co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the new scheme to be introduced which she feels will provide better continuity and progression. Although resources are adequate for the present curriculum, they will need to be further developed to support the new scheme. An action plan clearly sets out future developments including a review of planning, regular evaluation of weekly plans and a more formal system for assessing.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

118. It was not possible to see any design and technology being taught during the period of the inspection due to the way the timetable is organised. Teachers' planning, photographic evidence, displays and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that the standards attained at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection.
119. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, acquire an appropriate range of skills and knowledge and through both key stages they make satisfactory progress. Year 1 and 2 pupils showed effective techniques when they designed a train or investigated other vehicles. Year 1 pupils designed trains using boxes and wheels as part of their history topic about George Stephenson's Rocket. In Year 2, pupils generated a design which considered the suitability of materials identifying strengths and weaknesses. When planning and designing a bus, this year group were encouraged to use their thinking skills by the teacher's questioning; for example, one pupil wrote, 'The bus has big wheels because the weight of the people can be really heavy'.
120. By the end of Year 6, pupils are provided with work that generates interest and encourages them to take a pride in what they are producing. Year 3 pupils used their evaluation skills when investigating vehicles; they made good evaluations of their designs and their use of different and appropriate materials. Year 4/5 pupils studied different types of pop-up books and used this information to design and make cards for different occasions. They used their designing skills to make 'sliders' for these cards. Year 5/6 pupils designed and evaluated containers, assessing the suitability of the materials that they used. These older pupils also baked different breads such as stone baked garlic, and baguettes with cheese. They evaluated the cooking, appearance and taste. One pupil designed bread using a plait style and predicted how it would turn out; there was good evaluation by this pupil: 'My plait bread turned out how I thought it would. It was very big but did not lose its pattern at all'. Educational visits to a local shoe factory enhanced the older pupils' knowledge when designing and making slippers.
121. Pupils display positive attitudes to design and technology. They willingly discuss their work and some of the methods that they have used, but at times their limited vocabulary prevents them from making more rapid progress, as the process of discussing and evaluating their work can be slow.
122. The subject policy has been updated by the co-ordinator but has not been seen by staff or approved by the governing body. The scheme of work is based on the national guidelines. The co-ordinator is very new to the post and, at the time of the inspection, had not developed effective systems for assessment, recording and reporting. Overall the subject is well resourced.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. During the inspection only one geography lesson was observed and that was at Key Stage 1. Evidence from discussions with the co-ordinator, talking to pupils, a scrutiny of pupils' work and

displays across the school, indicates that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their learning across both key stages. Standards are similar to those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as they were at the time of the previous inspection.

124. By the end of Year 2, pupils successfully identify features of places such as roads and houses in Bacup. Year 1 pupils are introduced to mapping skills by drawing a route of their journey from home to school. Evidence of teaching about home addresses and fieldwork around the school grounds is in place. At Year 2, pupils draw maps of their own local area. They learn about Egypt, the people and their way of life and compare it with their own. Pupils are helped to identify the polar, desert, tropical and temperate regions on a map of the world.
125. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of place studies and can compare and contrast localities, for example, Southport with Bacup. Year 3/4 pupils are developing their knowledge of land use in the local area. They know about the continents and the polar regions. Pupils write independently about deserts and the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Year 5/6 pupils know that nearly all settlements began as small villages. Some good research work about boundaries around the world has been completed; for example, they discover the river Rhine forms part of a boundary between Switzerland and West Germany. The higher attaining pupils in Year 5/6 know the main cities, rivers, mountains and seas of Europe. Information and communication technology is used when information is downloaded about Manchester's city centre, the suburbs and the industrial district. This information is used to compare Manchester with Kuwait after the pupils experienced being taught by a teacher from Kuwait. Pupils consider environmental issues such as local improvements. They study the beauty of the National Parks, for example, the Lake District and Snowdonia. They consider environmental issues such as the world-wide pollution of the Earth.
126. In the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, pupils used geographical terms and names when investigating holiday resorts. The quality of teaching and learning was very good. Pupils discussed holidays and chose five items they would need to pack. These young pupils made very sensible suggestions and justified their choices. One pupil said, 'I would take a sun umbrella in case I get burned'; the teacher took this opportunity to introduce the word 'parasol' to the class. The teacher succeeded in motivating pupils and keeping them on task through her own enthusiasm, high expectations and well established classroom routines. She had very good class control and high expectations of good behaviour and response. Pupils' listening skills are developing well but speaking and writing skills are not as good.
127. The programme of work makes use of topics that are adapted to a two-year rolling programme. The co-ordinator attends meetings with other small schools to keep abreast of trends and feeds back to the staff. No assessment or monitoring is in place. New atlases and globes have been bought recently but more resources are needed such as ordnance survey maps. Educational visits enhance the subject. Year 4/5 pupils spent a day at the United Utilities Centre in Leigh. Last year pupils from Key Stage 2 went to a shoe factory and looked at how waste material is recycled.

## **HISTORY**

128. Only one lesson was observed in history during the inspection. Evidence from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and displays, indicates that pupils are receiving a curriculum that covers the required programmes of study and that they reach satisfactory standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sufficient progress. At the previous inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory.
129. Work seen throughout the school ranged from the Victorian period to modern times, although the long-term plan indicates that ancient civilisations and the Tudor period are covered during the four-year rolling programme.

130. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to the idea of change and the passing of time. Younger pupils compare old and new toys. They are also introduced to important figures in history such as George Stephenson. Through studying pictures, photographs and artefacts they make comparisons between the past and the present. In a lesson about holidays, pupils examined old seaside photographs to identify appropriate features such as clothes and transport which gave clues about the period in which the picture was taken. Skilful questioning helped them to look for appropriate information. They also discovered that pictures of the beach or coastline had insufficient features to identify a particular era. By the end of Year 2, pupils have examined a range of evidence and are beginning to notice similarities and differences between different historical periods.
131. At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to understand the reasons for changes that have taken place in history. They begin to develop their research skills using books, pictures, videos and artefacts as sources of information. Pupils have learned about the two world wars, about battles, air raids, rationing and, in particular, the experiences of children who were evacuees. The oldest pupils study post war Britain looking at changes in the 1940s and the 1950s.
132. The limited amount of teaching seen was good. Teachers use work in history to develop pupils' writing skills, although in some writing there is insufficient difference in the quality of work of the various ability groups. The oldest pupils write at length with plenty of challenge for the higher attainers. However, planning files and examples of written work seen, indicate that topics covered may not always be appropriate for a particular age group; the school plans to review this.
133. The school recognises the need for development of the history curriculum and has made an encouraging start. There is no formal assessment. Recent improvements have included the appointment of a co-ordinator to oversee the work in history, the introduction of a draft policy and the provision of more suitable guidelines to ensure adequate coverage of the National Curriculum.
134. Resources have been significantly developed. There are not yet sufficient resources for the effective use of information and communication technology to support work in history, although pupils do use CD-Roms and access some information from the Internet. The school resources are supplemented by loans from the museum service and the local education authority's collection. The school itself is a useful resource. One class is making a study of the building looking at changes which have taken place over the years. Good cross-curricular links are being made with English although further development is planned. Although pupils visit some places of historical interest, this is an area for further development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

135. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6; across the school the pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. Although at the previous inspection standards overall were judged to be sound, learning was described as uneven across the school with too little use made of the equipment.
136. Significant improvements have been made in the last year. Information and communication technology has become a priority in the school development plan and a separate detailed plan for information and communication technology is providing good guidance on the development of the subject. Regular use is made of information and communication technology for art and word processing. Work on data handling is developing. Currently younger pupils are achieving relatively higher standards than the older pupils who had access to a limited range of experiences in their earlier years in school.
137. Teachers feel that they are becoming more confident in teaching information and communication technology and each class has regular lessons. Laptops and interactive white boards are beginning to be used for class instruction in information and communication technology and in other subjects. Pupils use Internet and e-mail facilities. Control and modelling techniques are underdeveloped. Information and communication technology is not yet used consistently to support work in other subjects and pupils have too little opportunity to practise to become

confident independent learners.

138. A new draft policy has been created and the school is now using the nationally prescribed guidelines which provide appropriate activities and enable pupils' learning to systematically build on previous attainment. The role of the co-ordinator has been significantly developed. There is no formal assessment at present, but samples of work collected are being used to identify gaps in learning.
139. No lessons in information and communication technology were observed during the inspection and so there is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching. The limited range of work seen indicates that some use is made of equipment available in classrooms. Examples of work indicate that, at Key Stage 1, pupils are developing basic mouse skills, can operate simple programs, follow instructions and use keyboard commands. They create simple pictures and represent information they have collected graphically. By the end of Year 2, they have some experience of simple word processing for story writing, of using a programmable vehicle and of programs designed to reinforce English and mathematical skills.
140. At Key Stage 2, pupils draft and edit written work; for example, favourite stories and poems. They use their skills to access information from a CD-Rom and from the Internet to use in other subjects such as history and geography and science. They make pictures and patterns in art lessons. The oldest pupils explore the Internet. They cut and paste when collecting information for research projects. Information and communication technology is used well in literacy lessons, when writing for different audiences, and in particular, when doing formal writing. During the inspection week, pupils produced reports for manufacturing companies on the quality of products they supposedly tested. The oldest pupils are working at levels below what would be expected because of the lack of development of information and communication technology over the past few years.
141. The school fully recognises the growing importance of information and communication technology as a core subject and its role in helping to raise standards across the curriculum. The local schools' cluster business partnership is providing considerable support in the form of a consultant who helps to guide the work and provides staff development. Resources need improvement. At present there are too few up-to-date, reliable computers and insufficient software to adequately support learning across the curriculum. Although the school has a digital camera, it is currently used by staff and not by pupils. The school is well aware of the deficiencies in information and communication technology and has implemented an appropriate programme of improvement.

## **MUSIC**

142. At the time of the previous inspection, progress in music was judged to be satisfactory. This is no longer the case. Standards in music are unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils do not currently have sufficient access to all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. In the scrutiny of work it was not possible to find any work in music in any of the pupils' workbooks or folders. The school has set and worked towards a number of important targets during the last two years, as a consequence of which music has been neglected.
143. Currently music is covered through a 20 minute singing practice each week, plus a short music lesson in each class. There is very little evidence of continuity and progression. The main problem is that the teachers, none of whom have a music background, have insufficient guidance over what to teach. A new scheme of work has yet to be written, although teachers are making some use of the units of work in the nationally prescribed scheme. The way that what is taught becomes somewhat arbitrary is reflected in the teachers' planning. In a practical sense, this means that whilst the pupils have opportunities for singing, they have significantly fewer to develop their skills in the composition strand of the subject.
144. In the one lesson that was observed during the inspection that involved singing simple songs, adding actions and clapping the beat, the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory. There were insufficiently high expectations of what the pupils could do and they were insufficiently engaged which led to their being off task and unresponsive. In the act of collective worship



observed, the pupils sang 'Peace, perfect peace' in a tuneful way.

145. All pupils are involved in the annual Christmas production, such as the most recent one called 'The Little Angel', when they sang and played some percussion. The work is adequately resourced and some use is made of collections of some old series of music broadcasts such as 'Music Workshop' and 'Time and Tune'. There are no assessments undertaken in music. The co-ordinator's role is in need of development to ensure that the management of music is directed towards monitoring, evaluating and improving performance. There is a clear need to ensure that the pupils receive an appropriate curriculum which gives them full access to the programmes of study.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. The indications are that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The curriculum is better organised than at the time of the previous inspection with a whole-school plan in place to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement. A subject development plan has been devised by the knowledgeable co-ordinator. The national scheme of work has been introduced which, although helpful, needs more detail with practical suggestions to ensure better continuity and progression. National Curriculum requirements are met with suitable arrangements for swimming. Pupils will have an opportunity to attend outdoor pursuits at a residential education centre to widen their horizons. These opportunities, together with the opportunities provided in extra-curricular activities and inter-school activities such as netball and football, enrich the curricular provision.
147. The two lessons observed during the inspection covered basic skills, although teachers' planning indicates that all aspects of physical education are covered. In the Key Stage 1 lesson observed, pupils were taught to explore and use skills, actions and ideas to play games; for example, they balanced a ball on various body parts. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 2, pupils were helped to understand why exercise is good for health, fitness and well being. Pupils designed a warm-up activity in the hall to improve their performance and then the lesson was transferred to the field where pupils experienced the difference between running quickly and slowly over a variety of distances. Pupils were trained to run at a steady pace. Boys and girls mixed well and naturally. All pupils sustained energetic activity over good periods of time and showed they understood the effect of exercise on their bodies. Most pupils swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 5 and many achieve advanced awards.
148. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory with effective planning and clear instructions allowing all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make sound progress. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was good. The teacher used appropriate vocabulary, referring to suppleness, stamina and strength. The pupils were helped to understand the importance of warm-up exercises. There were high expectations of the pupils' performance. Pupils responded well to the balance of instruction and practice and were given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and the performance of others. The pupils had very good attitudes, behaved well and worked independently and with a partner or in a group. Team spirit was fostered throughout the lesson.
149. Midday playtime games of rounders are well organised by a lunchtime supervisor. Other Key Stage 2 pupils organise their own game of football and share the responsibility of refereeing. There is very good provision for developing pupils' moral and social skills during these sports activities. The weekly extra-curricular football sessions are popular with the pupils.
150. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and leads the subject well. The subject has become more focused since the appointment of the new headteacher. The co-ordinator is aware that planning is underdeveloped. No assessment is in place. Some staff are less confident about the subject and the co-ordinator hopes to address this through future training in order to improve the teaching and learning across the school. The policy has been recently updated. The accommodation is good with a large hall for gymnastics, dance and indoor games. Outside activities are effectively catered for in the playgrounds and the large playing field, which is an asset to the school. The subject is well resourced.