

INSPECTION REPORT

LARK HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 132147

Headteacher: Mr L Fry

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 3-6 March 2003

Inspection number: 248913

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, with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	3-11
Gender of children:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Brummitt
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3108	E Jackson	Registered Inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Science History Physical education	Characteristics of the school The school's results and children's achievements How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9884	M Roscoe	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32073	J Barnes	Team inspector	English Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
28320	R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school was formed in September 2000 from the amalgamation of two primary schools, and has not been previously inspected. It is in the district of Pendleton, west of Salford centre. The area is one of severe economic disadvantage, reflected in the very high proportion of children eligible for free school meals. The number of children leaving or joining the school during the school year is also very high. The school is larger than most primary schools, with 299 children on roll, including the nursery. There is an imbalance of boys and girls on roll, most marked in Year 4 where there are 25 girls and only 13 boys. The number of children from minority ethnic groups, currently four per cent, is rising as the school admits refugee and asylum seeking children, mainly of Czech heritage. Fourteen children receive extra help to learn English as an additional language, whose home languages are Arabic, Czech, French and Turkish. A lower than average number of children are identified with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning and behavioural difficulties, two of whom have a statutory statement of need. Children's attainment at entry covers a wide range, but is generally well below average. The school receives support from its membership of an Education Action Zone, and an Excellence in Cities Partnership.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The staff, governors, children and parents have successfully created Lark Hill Primary from the recent amalgamation of two other schools. It offers a sound education for its children, and the staff ensure that it is calm, welcoming and attractive. It is soundly led and managed, but clearer direction is needed from the headteacher, key staff and governors for the school's continued improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science overall were well below average in national tests in 2001 and 2002. Standards are rising well currently, particularly in mathematics, although fewer children achieve above average levels than might be expected. In 2002, national test results for the school were in line with those in schools in similar social circumstances overall, although writing standards were lower. The teachers and support staff work hard, and regularly provide good learning experiences for the children. Teaching is often good, and occasionally very good or excellent, especially for the younger children. Parents are very supportive of the school, and the children enjoy their work and play here. Although the school receives above average funding for a school of its size, it provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Following the headteacher and deputy head's lead, the staff develop very good working relationships with the children and their parents that lead to children behaving well and having very good attitudes to their learning.
- Standards are rising in mathematics and science, and in aspects of English, in response to above average staffing levels, good teaching, and often good support for children with special educational needs.
- Children's progress in art and design and information and communication technology is good, and they reach good standards for their age.
- There are examples of very good teaching across the school, and teaching and learning are consistently good for children in the nursery and infant classes. Some teaching in Year1 is excellent.
- Provision for children's social development is very good, and it is good for their spiritual and moral development.
- Good use is made of the extra support from the Education Action Zone, and the Excellence in Cities project.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by ages seven and 11, particularly for those children capable of higher than average attainment.
- The leadership of the headteacher, senior management team and governors in providing clear direction for the development of the school.
- How teachers and other staff plan their work based on what they know about the children.
- The management and evaluation of teaching and learning, and the development of a well-thought out curriculum that promotes effective learning.
- Meeting statutory requirements in providing information for parents, and the implementation of the recommendations in the recent health and safety audit by the local authority.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	N/A	2001	2002	2002
English		E*	E*	D
mathematics		E*	D	B
science		E*	E	D

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

The table shows that attainment in national tests in 2001 was in the lowest five per cent nationally in English, mathematics, and science. It was also in the lowest five per cent nationally in English in 2002.

Results in national tests in English for 11 year olds were very low in 2001 and 2002. This was mainly because children's writing skills were very low. Compared to 2001, standards in mathematics rose very well in 2002, so that they were above those in schools in similar circumstances, although still below average nationally. Standards also rose in science, but remained below those in similar schools, and well below average nationally. Currently, standards are rising well for children in Year 6, and they are on track to achieve below average results in national tests still, but likely to be improved on last year's results. In 2002, the school's seven-year-old children's results fell to be in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading and writing, and well below those in similar schools. In mathematics, results were well below average nationally, and below those in similar schools. This cohort of children had been identified by the school as particularly low achieving, and a very high proportion of the age group admitted had left the school by the time of the tests, to be replaced by others of often lower attainment. Children with special needs often achieve lower levels than their peers, but make good progress towards the targets in their learning plans. Those children learning English as an additional language receive good support, particularly from the local authority support team, and make good progress in their learning, often achieving levels

similar to their peers. Attainment in art and design is above average at seven and 11, representing very good progress. Children in Year 6 currently attain average levels in design technology, ICT, music and physical education (PE). Year 2 children also attain average levels in these subjects, and in geography. This represents good progress in their learning. Standards are below average in history and religious education at age seven, and in history, geography and religious education at age eleven. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception class, and this year are on track to achieve close to expected levels in reading, and to have improved to be below average overall. The school has recognised that standards in writing are still too low, and has instituted an extensive programme of development that is already having good effect.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to their school and to learning are very good. They always approach lessons with interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall because teachers and other adults work hard to maintain this standard, and the children respond well.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development is good. Their self-discipline is growing because they understand that they are valued. Relationships between staff and children are strengths of the school.
Attendance	Well below average. This has a detrimental effect on a number of pupils' learning. The school has good procedures in place to help improve this.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception class are good overall, and sometimes very good. This is especially so in the teaching of the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, and number, due to a very effective use of staff, space and resources. All members of staff in the Foundation Stage know the children well, are sensitive to their needs and ensure that they are challenged in their learning. Year 1 and 2 staff generally provide good learning opportunities, and in the Year 1 class taught by the deputy headteacher teaching is often excellent, accelerating the children's learning very well. In Year 2, there is good support for those children with special needs, as there is throughout the school, but teachers' expectations of potentially high attainers is too low. Teaching is more variable for children in the juniors, but is generally good. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, as are English and mathematics, and children's standards are rising. More flexibility is needed in the deployment of staff and the use of time, however. Lesson introductions are often too long, for example. Good use is made of extra support from learning mentors, and staff with specialist skills in art and design and physical education (PE). Children make good progress in their

learning in the information and technology (ICT) suite. This is because a teaching assistant skilled in ICT works alongside the class teacher. The suite is used very well at lunchtime and before and after school, as well as during the working day. Those children learning English as an additional language receive good support, and make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, and meets statutory requirements. Good opportunities are provided for children in the nursery and reception classes, and they are satisfactory for the infants. For the juniors, there is limited opportunity for children to develop their skills sufficiently in all subjects.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Most children make sound progress in their learning. Expectations of the achievement of some of the older pupils are too low, particularly in reading.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. The school includes these pupils effectively in all aspects of its work, and they often make good progress in their learning.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for children's social development is very good, based in the high quality of relationships. Provision for children's spiritual and moral development is good, and it is satisfactory for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its children	Satisfactory. There are strengths in the promotion of good behaviour, and children's personal development. Procedures for assessment of pupils' learning are satisfactory, but improving.

The school has developed good links with the parents, who hold it in high regard. Overall, its work with them is satisfactory. The quality of information provided for parents is mixed, and some statutory requirements are not fully met.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and other key staff set the tone for good behaviour and working relationships well. They also ensure that the school is managed effectively on a day-to-day basis. However, there are weaknesses in the use of evaluative information to set clear direction for the school's further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are generally fulfilled, and governors agree the overall development of the school with the staff. They oversee its work soundly, but do not yet hold the school to account sufficiently.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The staff have a great deal of monitoring information about the work of the school, and children's attainment. This is not yet evaluated effectively enough by those staff with management responsibilities, including subject leaders, to drive forward school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is generally made of financial and other resources, such as the ICT suite. However, whilst statutory requirements for the curriculum are met, the staff have not developed their curricular planning sufficiently to base their lessons firmly enough on children's needs.

Teaching accommodation is good, and the school is well-resourced, particularly for the nursery and reception classes. There are good playgrounds for infants and juniors, but these are not set out effectively for children's play and learning. Good use is made of the resources from the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school, and that parents feel very welcome. • The quality of teaching and learning. • Behaviour, and how their children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How closely the school works with them, and the information they receive. • Homework arrangements in some classes.

The inspection supports the parents' views. It finds that the school has good links with parents, and that homework arrangements are sound. Information for parents could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

1. Results in national tests in English for 11 year olds were very low in 2001 and 2002. This was mainly because children's writing skills were very low. Indeed, only 22 per cent of those leaving the school in those years achieved the nationally expected level. Results in English were also below those in schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. Compared to 2001, standards in mathematics rose very well in 2002, so that they were above those in schools in similar circumstances, although still below average nationally. Standards also rose in science, but remained below those in similar schools, and well below average nationally. It is too soon in the school's life to discern trends in results effectively, but the improvement in mathematics and science helped to lift the school's overall attainment statistics by one level. Much of the school's resources, and those from the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities initiatives, have been directed with positive results towards raising attainment in the three subjects tested at age 11. Currently, standards are rising well for children in Year 6, and although they are on track to achieve below average results in national tests still, this would represent good improvement on last year's results.
2. In 2002, the school's seven-year-old children's results fell to be in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading and writing, and well below those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were well below average nationally, and below those in similar schools. This cohort of children had been identified by the school as particularly low achieving, with many of them having special educational needs. A very high proportion of the age group admitted had left the school by the time of the tests, to be replaced by others of often lower attainment. Again, no trends can yet be discerned for the school, but the staff have worked hard to reverse this falling pattern, and the current Year 2 children are on track to achieve higher levels than last year, although still below average. At both seven and 11, there are far fewer children working at above average levels than average. For example, none of the 51 children in Year 2 was assessed by the teachers as having achieved above average levels in the skills of scientific enquiry, and over a third were assessed as being at least one year behind the expected level for their age.
3. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception class, and this year are on track to achieve close to expected levels in reading, and to have improved to be below average overall. Although attainment at entry to the nursery covers a wide range, it is generally well below average. Due to the good teaching they receive, many children attain close to expected levels in their personal and social skills by the end of the reception year. Many write simple sentences, recognise and name shapes, count to five and beyond, and recognise written numerals. Children extend their understanding of the wider world well, but attain below average levels by the end of reception. Many of them make sufficient progress in drawing and using colour to reach the standards expected for their age, but in other aspects of creative development, such as role play, they are below average. In general, there is insufficient access to large-scale play for children in the nursery and reception classes, and they attain below average levels in balance and control by the end of the reception year.
4. In English, children make satisfactory progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Children in the infants make better progress in listening, and they enjoy stories, and follow instructions successfully. In some lessons throughout the school,

children have good opportunities to talk and discuss their work, but too often the staff accept one or two word answers, and do not expect detailed responses. When paired or group work is encouraged, such as in art and science, there is better development of speaking and listening than in English lessons.

5. Standards in reading are very variable, and most children attain below average levels. Many children make good progress, but there is a group of children in each age group who make slower progress than they should, and this is not yet dealt with effectively. Children love books, and read story books better than non-fiction texts. Parents provide valuable support, but the school does not help the children to develop sufficient strategies to help them at the different levels of competence.
6. Writing is a key area for improvement, and this has resulted in better handwriting and spelling for many children. Good support is provided in small groups to help children with sentence structure and the use of interesting and pertinent vocabulary. However, despite the extra work from staff and children, standards are still too low across the school. This is in part because opportunities to use and extend writing skills consistently across the subjects of the curriculum are not exploited sufficiently.
7. Children start school with poor mathematical skills in the main. They make satisfactory progress in the infants, and those children learning English as an additional language often make better progress because of the focused support they receive. By seven, many children achieve the levels expected of their age in number and other aspects of the subject. Standards overall are below average, however, because too few reach higher than expected levels.
8. Good progress is made currently in the juniors. By eleven, most children have reached the levels expected for their age: they compute accurately, and have sound understanding of shape, and measurement. Good links are made with ICT, and many children improve their skills in the suite before and after school, and at lunchtimes. However, the small number attaining higher than expected levels means that standards overall are below average.
9. The majority of children on the special needs register achieve below average scores in national tests at seven and eleven, despite having made good progress since entry into school. Children make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and at least satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6, depending upon the level of direct support they receive. This degree of progress is a result of the good, varied support that children receive in relation to the targets set for them within their individual educational programmes. Targets are often specific, realistic and challenging. They are usually measurable and attainable and reviewed regularly. A minority of independent educational programmes, however, set unclear targets or vague measures to determine when they have been achieved. This is a weakness. When targets are not met, they are sympathetically amended in order to make them more accessible. An evaluation of the targets set has not yet been conducted and this could help the special educational needs co-ordinator to pinpoint weaknesses.
10. Those children learning English as an additional language receive good support, particularly from the local authority support team, and make good progress in their learning, often achieving levels similar to their peers. For example, a recently arrived group of Arabic speaking children works well with a bilingual support worker from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Support (EMAS) group from the local authority. They make good progress, and have settled quickly and confidently into the school. Similarly, Czech speaking refugee children have settled well, and support from the

learning mentors is helping them make rapid progress in understanding, speaking and reading English.

11. Attainment in art and design is above average at seven and 11, representing very good progress. Good support is offered to the staff in teaching art and design from a specialist teacher, and this has raised standards in all aspects of the subject. There are impressive displays of children's work throughout the school. Children in Year 6 currently attain average levels in design technology, ICT, music and physical education (PE). Year 2 children also attain average levels in these subjects, and in geography. This represents good progress in their learning. In history and RE, standards are below average at seven and 11, and below average in geography at 11.

Children' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The school is a lively, happy place, where children like chatting to visitors about their activities. They enjoy their work tremendously. The majority show respect for others, and behave well in and out of lessons. Many children act on their own initiative and often work together in pairs and groups. This is due to the emphasis that the school places on very good social development. It is also due to children' own positive response to the many opportunities that are presented to them during the Breakfast Club and the many other extra-curricular activities that staff provide.
13. Children's attitudes to their school and to learning are very good. They always approach lessons with interest. Stimulated by the very good relationships they have with teachers and other staff, the majority try hard to do their best. Year 1 children were 'totally hooked' in their ICT lesson, for example, and in Year 2, during a mathematics lesson, children enthusiastically answered questions about symmetry. Children are usually cooperative and patient in lessons because most follow the example set by teachers. Most see tasks through to the end. This is evident in the Nursery, where, for example, children respond well to adults' infectious enthusiasm when they investigated the differences between light and heavy objects. Their knowledge and understanding of how the 'wolf' blew down the 'Little Pigs' House' increased because of their good cooperation with the teacher. This was also typical of classes in Key Stage 2 where children's prolonged concentration and initiative in responding to questions posed, helped the learning along.
14. Behaviour is good overall because teachers and other adults work hard to maintain this standard. They expect children's hands to shoot up when they ask questions, and they do. Good provision for moral development is working because most children are polite to adults and they get on well with them, and with each other. Children are trusted therefore to use classrooms for various club activities before and during the school day because they care for property and resources well. Parents feel that behaviour has improved because of the school's arrangements for the 'staggering' of play and lunchtimes. This is true. However, an important consideration is the children's response to school and class rules, which are accepted as fair, and followed by most children because they see the reasoning behind them. The school is well aware of the few children who find it difficult to control their anger. Support is available for them, including from staff employed through the Excellence in Cities initiative. Entry into school and movement on corridors is always orderly.
15. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Satisfactory management and supervision are helping children maintain good levels of tolerance and friendliness. Older children have good choices to make between playing outside, participating in club activity, or helping staff or younger children with their learning.

16. Children always play well together, usually in mixed heritage and single gender groups. During the inspection there were isolated 'angry scenes' amongst a few children. These calmed down as quickly as they started, and were contrasted by the absence of bullying or racism. Exclusions are used as a last resort and are presently at a very low level. This reflects well on the school and on the success of the behaviour and inclusion policies. The principle of 'including' rather than 'excluding' children, strongly influences all decisions made on such matters.
17. Children's personal development is good. Their self-discipline is growing because they understand that they are valued. Many grow confident in their own abilities because of the way staff praise them. For example, many children say that they are the 'brainiest, tidiest and quietist'. Most children say that they can 'think back' to what has been learnt previously in lessons and assemblies. Familiar songs are enjoyed and sung well from memory in assemblies. In lessons most children are not shy to volunteer answers or demonstrate dance actions in front of their peers.
18. Children who are reprimanded accept it with good grace, and will explain the circumstances truthfully, reflecting on their own behaviour willingly and sensibly. Teaching staff and Learning Mentors make time for these interactions so that self-esteem is not damaged. This is paying dividends because it helps children to know how their behaviour has affected others. The next step is to involve children more in drawing up rules for dinner time where some sharp exchanges occur between midday assistants and children. The school is considering the best way to bring this about.
19. Many children take responsibility for themselves, and some Year 6 children devote their free time to supporting learning in classrooms during the first session in the afternoon. Most children obey teachers' instructions because they understand that it is the right thing to do. There are many examples of children becoming mature and responsible. Register and assembly monitors carry out their roles smartly and staff have come to rely on the help Year 6 children provide on the reception desk over the lunchtime period. Independence in lessons is developing well. Without reminders children get into groups quickly during classwork. Most listen carefully to others' contributions during introductions to lessons and during carpet time. Not enough children however are prepared to comment on what others have to say.
20. Relationships are very good because children treat each other pleasantly and with respect. They try hard to obey all the adults who work with them. It is noticeable that children act in socially acceptable ways, especially when speaking to adults. This ensures a relaxed atmosphere in and out of lessons. This view came across strongly during polite discussions with four Year 6 children. They gave examples of what they did for their school and why it was important for them to set a 'be nice to each other' example.
21. Attendance levels are poor and well below the national average. Staff work hard to improve the rate of attendance with limited success. Opportunities are sometimes missed to ask parents to support the regular and timely attendance of their children. There are some children who consistently arrive late each morning and miss the important start to the day.
22. The school places strong emphasis on good behaviour. Children are expected to respond positively in any situation. They are actively encouraged to support each other in the classroom, during physical education and informal times, such as

lunchtime and playtime. This results in children working well together and developing very good relationships with their peers. For those children who do have difficulties with appropriate behaviour in classrooms, or within relationships, the school has strategies and support assistance in place to help them to modify their behaviour. The work of learning mentors, funded through the "Excellence in Cities" initiative, is particularly commendable in this respect. The manner in which they fashion individual programmes to meet specific behavioural needs is rightly highly regarded within the school. Behaviour amongst children with special educational needs is usually good.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school, but varies from being very occasionally unsatisfactory to being sometimes excellent. Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- The effectiveness of the support for children in the nursery and the reception classes
- The high quality of working relationships fostered by the staff with the children throughout the school;
- The management of children's behaviour so that lessons and other activities flow smoothly;
- Children's involvement and concentration on their work;
- The teaching of ICT, making good use of the skills of teachers and support staff, leading to good progress in learning new skills for children throughout the school;
- The use of extra support from staff funded through the Education Action Zone and the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative.

Areas for improvement include:

- Developing staff's confidence in linking the learning of skills and understanding across and between subjects, particularly in developing writing skills;
- Expectations of potentially higher attaining children.

24. Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception class are good overall, and sometimes very good. This is especially so in the teaching of the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, number, and ICT due to a very effective use of staff, space and resources. All members of staff in the Foundation Stage know the children well, are sensitive to their needs and ensure that they are challenged in their learning, including those who are potentially gifted or talented. They work well together as a team, and ensure that there is good continuity between the staff's planning in the nursery and the reception class. The staff provide a range of rich opportunities to develop their language and communication skills. For example, the children have access to a wide range of high quality books, which stimulates their interest in reading and writing.
25. Year 1 and 2 staff generally provide good learning opportunities, and in the Year 1 class taught by the deputy headteacher teaching is often excellent, accelerating the children's learning very well. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, the teacher set the higher attaining Year 1 children the independent task of generating their own addition problems. They worked with numbers up to 20, high level for their age, and had to enter the answers in columns of odd and even numbers. This showed the teacher's high expectations, and gave these children very good opportunities to develop their initiative and independence. The teacher also made very

good use of good quality materials to illustrate the difference between odd and even which was very helpful for those with special needs, and those learning English as an additional language.

26. In Year 2, there is good support for those children with special needs, as there is throughout the school, but teachers' expectations of potentially high attainers is too low. An example from a science lesson is typical of how teachers and other staff do not challenge some children effectively. After a thorough, and overlong, introduction, the teacher set the Year 2 children the task of making a working circuit from given components. Eventually, all the pairs of children achieved the set task which was fine, but higher attaining children were not provided with an additional challenge, such as to light two bulbs, or see what happened if they wired in two batteries. This limited their achievement and progress, and possibly highlights why no children attained above average levels in scientific enquiry last year.
27. Between them, the staff have good subject knowledge for the age groups they teach. There are specialist Early Years, English, mathematics and science staff, as well as other staff with good skills in music, art and design, PE and ICT. In a very good narrative dance session, the teacher's own skill and enthusiasm inspired the children to develop a story expressed through movement very well. Here, children simulated a battle between Romans and Celts with good control and developing menace. This lesson exemplified how effectively learning can be linked between subjects, in this case history and PE. However, where there was unsatisfactory teaching, and little progress in learning, it was related directly to the teacher's weak subject knowledge. In a religious education lesson, for example, the teacher's telling of a story captured the children's attention. When she tried to relate this story to the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before his crucifixion, her lack of specific knowledge about the symbolic importance of this event meant that she was unable to answer relatively simple questions from the children to help them understand further. Similarly, in a history lesson, the teacher had prepared resources to help the children develop their enquiry skills in learning about invading Vikings. However, she failed to capture the children's interest, and many became bored, did not work hard, and made insufficient progress.
28. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, as are English and mathematics, and childrens' standards are rising. Good use was made of a text about volcanoes to help Year 6 children revise language conventions and grammatical features of different texts. Year 1 children used the elements of a story they had read to create their own, using well a related 'word bank' prepared by the teacher. In a brisk mathematics lesson, Year 4 children improved their understanding of position and direction using points of the compass. They played a game to reinforce their skills, well-supervised by the teachers and classroom assistant. This lesson incorporated a good variety of teaching methods and learning styles to encourage children's learning and concentration well. However, more flexibility is sometimes needed in the deployment of staff and the use of time. Lesson introductions are often too long. Also, children with special educational needs receiving extra help, whilst this is often effective, are sometimes given uninteresting tasks, and not challenged sufficiently by the supporting teacher.
29. There is often a weakness in how the staff plan to develop and use children's skills from one subject area to promote their learning in another. Whilst there are good examples of links being made, as in ICT, such skills as speaking and listening are seen mainly as the domain of English, and staff do not consciously plan lessons in history, geography or PE, for example, to focus on them. The chief area for increased

development is in writing, where such aspects as list-making or biography could be further enhanced in design and technology and history or RE.

30. Good use is made of extra support from learning mentors, and staff with specialist skills in art and design and physical education (PE). Children make good progress in their learning in the information and technology (ICT) suite. This is because a skilled teaching assistant works alongside the class teacher, and the suite is used very well at lunchtime and before and after school, as well as during the working day.
31. Those children learning English as an additional language receive good support, and make good progress in their learning. These children are quickly assimilated into the life of the school when they arrive, and are helped by the staff to make friends and socialise. This enables them to gain confidence, and begin to talk to their peers to develop their English speaking skills. They also receive good support from school staff, and from staff in the local authority's EMAS team.
32. There are good working relationships between the special educational needs support teachers, classroom assistants and the teachers to whom they are accountable, which includes the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator as well as the special educational needs co-ordinator. Learning support assistants are often well briefed and form a strong, knowledgeable, dedicated and caring team. They feel very well supported by teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher and each other. They have daily briefings with teachers and, verbally, report back regularly. Support assistants working with specific literacy and numeracy programmes record what children have achieved in a weekly, written report. There is a high level of specialist expertise amongst the staff involved with children with special educational needs and this is kept up to date by the high number of courses they attend. Learning support assistants work with specific classes and teachers beyond any specific programmes such as "Springboard" or "Additional Literacy Support". The majority of support is within the classroom although some children are withdrawn for specific programmes within appropriate lessons.
33. In literacy and numeracy lessons, in particular, activities and tasks are often well differentiated for these children. Teachers know their children very well, are very involved in target setting for them and give very good support through carefully fashioned tasks to ensure that targets are met. The majority of children with special educational are making good progress towards targets on their individual educational plans and this is due to the quality of support afforded to them by all teachers, learning support assistants, children and parents.
34. Children with special educational needs form effective relationships with their peers, who often give very good support within class, and all adults. They feel perfectly secure when contributing to the discussion elements of lessons and teachers positively encourage their contributions. In a concluding discussion within a Year 3 numeracy lesson, for example, special educational needs children were encouraged to contribute and received appropriate praise for doing so.

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

35. The school's curriculum provides all the relevant subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and is satisfactory overall. The school recognises that, immediately following the amalgamation, the curriculum was based on what was seen as best practice in each school with a focus on meeting statutory requirements.

In the two and half years since the amalgamation, there have been minor adjustments but not a review to check that the curriculum is a good match for the needs of the current school. As a result, there is variable practice in implementing the curriculum, and its effectiveness in promoting good learning and standards also varies. In the nursery and reception year groups, teaching and learning reflect the national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum, and children's progress is good. The curriculum in the infants provides satisfactory opportunities for children's learning but the provision in the junior year groups has unsatisfactory features.

36. The overview of the curriculum for the whole school usefully allocates particular subject topics to each half term and the time allocation for subjects is generally sound, except for physical education, so teachers know what to teach. However, this is not sufficient to ensure that children have the expected range of experiences in each subject topic. As a result, the quality of opportunities for children's learning varies from unsatisfactory to good across subjects and year groups. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum is clearly linked to the national guidance and works well, with children making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. In English, the national guidance is also used and progress is steady in the infants. However, it is slow in the juniors as provision for reading is inadequate and children do not have enough opportunity to practise the skills they learn in the literacy hour in other areas of the curriculum. The main weakness, common to several subjects, is the limited opportunity for children to develop their skills, especially their speaking and their investigative skills.
37. Provision for children with special educational needs is good and most make sound progress, often with valuable help from teaching assistants and other adults. Children have access to the full range of opportunities, and the school is strongly committed to equality. Individual plans are drawn up for children on the special educational needs register by the class teacher in conjunction with the special educational needs co-ordinator or outside agencies. They are computer generated through a commercial writer programme. Targets set are often attainable and realistic and very well focused but some need to describe more clearly what children need to do to achieve the targets set. Each specifies a review date. The special educational needs co-ordinator has no class and has a timetable for classroom support throughout the school. Overall, plans are good, held on computer and available only to authorised personnel. Two children have statements of special educational needs. Both receive their full entitlement of support detailed in the statement.
38. However, there are aspects of the school's day to day practice that lead to some inequalities. For example, although the organisation of children into class groups and sets generally works well, sometimes the older children in mixed age classes are those whose attainment is lower than it could be. The expectations set for them tend to be too low for their age with no provision to accelerate their learning. In the absence of a clear approach to teaching reading through the school, there are also children who are good readers who are still on lower levels of the reading scheme and not working at a level they need to improve their standards in English.
39. The school's programme of extra-curricular activities is good. Junior children gain the most benefit from this provision with a daily lunchtime club for the older children and weekly cookery for the lower juniors. There is also a chess club, a drama and dance club which involves children from Year 2 to Year 6, and football and netball this term. Music is well represented by a choir and guitar and recorder clubs with the violin taught by a specialist tutor. There is also some support for homework. Within the

curriculum there is a basic range of visitors, such as the nurse, dental bus, the curate from the local church and a rabbi, as well as the road safety officers. There are few visits to places of interest, although more are planned for the coming terms, including a visit to Croxteth Hall to support work in history and science for children in Year 2.

40. The school has been extremely successful in gaining a very wide range of support from such external agencies as the Local Education Authority, the government and local initiatives. These supplement the school's own provision and together they ensure a good level of provision for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
41. The register of special educational needs also lists children for whom English is an additional language without discriminating between the two groups. As the needs of these groups of children are often very different, this is a weakness. The school has an appointed special educational needs co-ordinator but no designated co-ordinator for children for whom English is an additional language. The school needs to clarify the range of each group's needs and ensure that roles and responsibilities respond specifically to them.
42. The quality of the school's provision for promoting children's spiritual, moral and social development is good. It is satisfactorily promoting children's cultural development. Daily acts of collective worship are of a mainly Christian character and meet statutory requirements. They provide opportunities for prayer or reflection on the flowers that herald the spring or on 'making a difference' with a smile. Children are presented with opportunities to think about values and moral ideas, and compare them with those presented in biblical parables.
43. Provision for children's spiritual development is good. Teachers and other adults consistently praise individual efforts and encourage children to feel positive about themselves. Teachers provide children with knowledge of different lifestyles and beliefs through history lessons, religious education (RE) and assemblies. Some acts of worship include appropriate moments of contemplation. Some have a visual or musical focus in strong support of children's spiritual development. Children are encouraged to experiment with their voices and feel the 'words coming up your neck' in a Year 1 science investigation.
44. The school fosters children's moral development well. Systems of rewards in classrooms and the cheerful interactions between staff and children successfully encourage children to recognise their own individuality and worth. Most understand and follow class and school rules because teachers remind them regularly. Assembly themes such as 'building on solid ground' promote older children's awareness of moral principles. The headteacher and staff provide good role models for girls and boys. They consistently treat all children, other members of the school community, and each other with friendliness and respect. These values are reflected in the positive attitudes and responses of the children who now need to be more involved in rule-making.
45. Provision for children's social development is very good. Constructive and very positive relationships successfully promote their confidence and self-esteem. Songs eagerly sung in assemblies about trying hard or sharing the load, successfully heighten children's social awareness. Teachers expect children to work collaboratively in lessons and give them the opportunity to work together in games, guitar, choir and drama clubs. These activities improve children's cooperation and social interaction skills. Well-established routines enable older children to support learning in the Nursery and Key Stage 1. This allows them to contribute well to the school community. Teachers plan opportunities for

children to consider their personal feelings and how to deal with anger. Children are gaining an awareness of society because of their performances and presentations in local churches and at Salford Shopping Centre.

46. Arrangements for promoting children's cultural development are satisfactory, including preparing them for life in a diverse and multicultural society. The school does not consistently monitor the quality and nature of opportunities for children to extend their cultural development. Work in art and music does not always promote children's awareness of composers and artists of non-western cultures and traditions. Through religious education, assemblies and school displays however, teachers make a worthwhile contribution to children's appreciation of the riches of major world faiths and traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

47. Educational and personal support and guidance for children are satisfactory. Procedures to monitor these are also satisfactory. Staff show good care and concern for children's welfare. They provide a friendly, nurturing environment that is valued highly by parents.
48. There are strengths in the way that the school promotes and monitors children's behaviour in the classroom. Promoting regular attendance is done in part by the learning mentors but this work is not yet fully effective as some parents do not yet see how important regular attendance is.
49. Not enough is done to ensure children's welfare through good health and safety practice. There is an obligation to carry out risk assessments and implement the Local Authority's policy. This has not been done. Systems for checking on all areas the curriculum, the premises and child activity are not in place. Further details have been reported to the governing body for their attention.
50. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Parents are made aware through the prospectus of the school's responsibilities to them in such matters. Staff are informed of procedures through staff meetings, but recent training in this area has not been sought by senior management.
51. The school's arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are overall satisfactory. However, while overall attendance rates have improved since September, some children do not make the progress they are capable of because their attendance remains irregular. Absences are followed up each day, usually with a telephone call. The importance of regular attendance is recognised by the presentation of prizes and certificates. However, this focus is not reflected in the prospectus or in the governing body's report to parents. Registration is an important time each day. Because of lateness, a number of children miss important information as teachers use this time effectively to prepare children well to begin their learning.
52. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. Everyone is clear that inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable. Children know to take their concerns to adults where they are acted on immediately. Currently, midday staff do not take a strong enough role in logging incidents of misbehaviour that occur. Plans are in hand to address this issue.

53. Procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, adding much to children's personal development. Rewards for effort are plentiful, as is careful praise for doing the right thing first time. Sanctions are not designed to ridicule or punish children excessively but to help them make the right choices and get back on track. Learning Mentors play a significant role in helping children to do this.
54. Good systems are in place for promoting children's personal development. Staff provide a good level of personal support and guidance. Classroom and other support staff encourage and guide children well, building self-confidence and supporting learning. There are effective induction programmes for children arriving from overseas and who have little command of English. The school ensures these children settle quickly and make good progress.
55. The school has undertaken a total review of assessment and recording procedures since the amalgamation. The deputy headteacher is co-ordinating this and she has introduced a commercial computer-based assessment package as a base from which to work. She has worked hard to enter child performance data in order to monitor their progress overall, track them individually and by different groupings, such as gender. However, an upgrading of the commercial package that removed all the existing data has inhibited this work. All that currently remains is one hardcopy of the work previously done. The data has now to be re-entered manually, and this mishap has delayed the full use of the system.
56. The school has used the latest national guidance to develop assessment procedures and each subject co-ordinator is currently testing materials with a view to recommending a whole school subject format for the new school year. Assessment, therefore, is at different stages in different subject areas. As English has been a particular subject focus over the past year, assessment is more advanced than in other areas. Here, group targets have been introduced for different age groups in order to give children a better understanding of their own learning. In information and communication technology each child has an assessment book in which they record what they have achieved. This is related to nationally expected attainment levels. In mathematics, teacher assessments are set against a computer-generated assessment system. This has produced both close matches and mis-matches that have promoted further investigation. There has, however, been no monitoring by the co-ordinator to determine how well this has been developing and this is a weakness. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory and developing. It is the area of using this information to guide planning for the curriculum which is under-developed and, therefore, unsatisfactory.
57. Children with special educational needs are well integrated into the caring environment of the school. When a concern is first raised, either by the parent or class teacher, the child is monitored. If necessary, the child is placed on the appropriate stage of the school's special needs register. Children requiring specialist help with speech therapy or with a specific learning difficulty, have the necessary support and guidance provided. The school supports specialist help well and, between reviews, classroom assistants, when and where available, support children in line with the specialist guidance.
58. The register of children with special educational needs is maintained and up-dated regularly by the co-ordinator. The new register, which is held on computer, identifies children who are being monitored although not on any formal stage and children for whom English is an additional language and this is inappropriate.

59. The school places a strong emphasis on identification at the earliest possible stage. This is well justified in relation to the growing number of children on the school's register and the high rate of child mobility. The school fulfils this difficult task effectively. Teachers identify effectively the needs of children new to the school. However, the school does not have an established pattern of procedures for screening children about whom they have concerns.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. This area of the school's work is satisfactory. Most parents are pleased with what the school provides and achieves for their children. Some parents would like more consistent homework and information about what is taught to each class each term.
61. The school, through its open door policy, has developed good links with its parents. These are seen at their best each day as parents of children in the Nursery help to settle them in. The headteacher and staff are available to parents each morning, and there are other opportunities for face-to-face contacts. The school wants to work with parents to raise children's achievement and increase attendance levels.
62. The school reaches out to parents through the headteacher's friendly newsletters. These provide monthly updates on many details of children's achievements or reminders of important aspects of the school's calendar. Through these, parents are asked to be as involved as they want to be in supporting 'writing at home'. The quality of information provided is unsatisfactory however, because it isn't helping to achieve the school's aim of raising the contribution parents make to their children's education. For example, reports on progress do not show what each child knows, understands and can do in each subject. Neither do they indicate clearly what children need to do in order to improve aspects of their work, and crucially what parents can do to help.
63. Published information does not meet requirements fully. The prospectus omits basic admission information and relevant meaningful attendance data. The governor's annual report meets the expected standard, but misses the opportunity to comment about the low attendance levels, or to ask parents to support the school in its efforts to reduce unwarranted absences.
64. The school has plans to increase the amount of information provided for parents because a recent survey revealed these gaps. Many parents contribute to children's learning by supporting their children's reading at home. This is not strongly encouraged, however, nor emphasised as an important activity.
65. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Two-way communication is slowly growing and being strengthened by the work of the learning mentors who are winning the trust and confidence of parents. Recently introduced coffee mornings are encouraging more parents to 'pop' into school.
66. Parents are informed immediately the school has a concern. Members of staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator are involved in parental liaison providing support to those on the special educational needs register. The school has a designated governor for special educational needs who is very knowledgeable, works in the school and is actively supportive. The governing body is kept well informed as a result. Written reports are presented to main meetings of the governing body.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. Management of the school is satisfactory and has some strengths. Leadership has important areas of weakness. Combined, leadership and management are satisfactory. The main strengths are:

- The head and deputy headteachers set the tone for the good working atmosphere in the school, based in good working relationships;
- The successful amalgamation of the two previous schools;
- The management of pupils' behaviour and the promotion of very good attitudes to learning;
- Improving standards in English, maths and science based on good teaching and learning;
- Some coordinators lead their areas well, for example in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, and ICT;
- The deputy headteacher leads well as a classroom teacher.

The areas for improvement include:

- The clarity of direction for the school's development from the headteacher and the Governing Body based on the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes such as standards;
- Appropriate delegation of important aspects of the school's work to other members of staff, including the deputy head;
- The development of a curriculum that both meets statutory requirements and provides coherent learning opportunities for children based firmly on their needs;
- The roles and responsibilities of other key members of staff, including the special needs coordinator.

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and other key staff set the tone for good behaviour and working relationships well. They also ensure that the school is managed effectively on a day-to-day basis. The key to the successful day-to-day working of the school is in the staff's good management of the children. This ensures that they are prepared to work hard, and to behave well in lessons and around the school. Given the school's situation, this is the most difficult and most important of its tasks. It is to everyone's credit, led well here by the headteacher and deputy, that the school is a calm working environment, attractive and welcoming.
69. However, there are weaknesses in the use of evaluative information to set clear direction for the school's further improvement. The school improvement plan is developed as a method to promote development through priorities determined by the staff and governors together. This system has the potential to deliver an accurate and dynamic plan to meet the childrens' needs. However, it is currently not sharp enough, and does not link the various developments being led by different key staff effectively enough.
70. The governors' role in the school is fulfilled satisfactorily. Statutory requirements are generally fulfilled. The governors oversee the school's work soundly, and are kept well-informed by the staff, through the headteacher's reports. They are keen and interested in its work and progress, and many give their time generously to attend meetings, and visit the school in session. However, they do not yet hold the school to account sufficiently for the standards achieved, or the impact of planned developments. Occasionally, they agree targets, such as for the number of Year 6 children to achieve

above average levels in national tests in 2003 that are very unlikely to be achieved. This could be dispiriting for staff and children, and for parents. Some statutory requirements for information to parents are not met, and there is outstanding work following a health and safety audit by the local authority.

71. The staff have a great deal of monitoring information about the work of the school, and children's attainment. This is not yet evaluated effectively enough by those staff with management responsibilities, including subject leaders, to drive forward school improvement. In setting the school's direction, the plans based on this data and its evaluation are not brought together under clear strategic priorities that are precisely aimed to focus on the main areas requiring further development. For example, the chief priority in this year's plan is to raise children's standards of attainment in writing. Details of this are set out in the literacy section, but no other subject area development plan refers to this, or to how work in the subject will help to deliver higher standards in writing. This is in part because the roles and responsibilities of subject and aspect leaders are not sufficiently linked into a coherent management structure that would allow information to be shared more effectively, and accountability for action to be clear.
72. An example of the lack of coherence of the management structure is that the special educational needs co-ordinator is uncertain about the parameters of her role and responsibilities. There is an urgent need for this to be clarified. The co-ordinator has limited experience in this field and is very aware of the need to improve her expertise. This is being addressed as she has attended three courses recently. She does not have a classroom responsibility and in some situations this results in her functioning as little more than a classroom assistant. For example, in a Year 4 numeracy lesson the co-ordinator and classroom assistant had no constructive role. The class teacher had the activities so well organised that additional support was unnecessary. The co-ordinator currently does not monitor the work of school-funded support assistants working with children with special educational needs or determine the nature of their deployment. This is a significant weakness, as it does not maximise support for children. There is a lack of an overview of current support provision and of its effectiveness, and the coordinator does not have the close monitoring support of either the deputy or the headteacher.
73. Similarly, there is no clear responsibility for work with children learning English as an additional language. This results in these children's names being entered inappropriately on the special needs register. These children make good progress in their learning because the staff who work with them are dedicated and conscientious, but there is little evidence to present to governors to assure them of this.
74. Financial resources are directed effectively to the right areas, and financial procedures are sound. Good use is generally made of teaching and other resources, such as the ICT suite. However, whilst statutory requirements for the curriculum are met, the staff have not developed their curricular planning sufficiently to base their lessons firmly enough on children's needs.
75. The school uses money allocated to special educational needs well. The specific budget for spending on learning resources for these children uses funding from a number of sources and is consumed largely in personnel costs. This does not meet the total expenditure on special educational needs. The balance is met from the school's basic budget. This reflects the school's strong commitment to supporting children with special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to raise standards further and continue to improve the quality of education offered, the headteacher, staff and governors, in consultation with the children and their parents, should:

1. Provide clearer direction for the development of the school by:
 - a) deciding what aspects of the school's work and development will be overseen by each of those involved in the leadership process, to include revised role descriptions;
 - b) providing appropriate training, if necessary, to enable them to carry out their responsibilities;
 - c) determining the school's priorities for further improvement based on a thorough evaluation of monitoring and other data;
 - d) ensuring that the plan to achieve these priorities is costed, and is effective in setting out how the priorities will be achieved, linked across all areas of the school's work, with regular checkpoints and measurable criteria, covering a three year cycle;
 - e) agreeing who will be responsible for implementing the different priorities in the plan, who will monitor its progress, and when this will happen.
(Paragraphs 21, 41, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 96, 106, 110, 127)
2. Raise standards of attainment at seven and eleven by:
 - a) ensuring that school development planning includes clear and achievable targets for children's progress across the curriculum;
 - b) putting in place regular monitoring of children's progress in Years 2, 4 and 6 by all subject coordinators to measure progress against the targets;
 - c) linking this work with that to be carried out in Issue 3.
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 23, 27, 85, 108, 124, 128)
3. Put in place an effective and easily manageable system to use assessment and other information about individuals and groups of children to enable teachers and other staff to plan learning opportunities that help the children make accelerated progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 23, 26, 38, 46, 55, 56, 58, 59, 89, 92, 107, 144)
4. Carry out a review of the school's curriculum prior to putting in place a coherent and linked curriculum plan to aid teaching and learning, and ensure that those with management responsibilities check that children are learning effectively what they need to learn.
(Paragraphs 29, 35, 36, 74, 87, 94)
5. Ensure that all statutory requirements are met in:
 - a) keeping parents fully informed;
 - b) implementing an action plan to respond to the recent health and safety audit by the local authority.
(Paragraphs 49, 62, 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	29	19	2	0	0
Percentage	5	17	45	30	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	29	270
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	0	195

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	2	45

English as an additional language

	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	14

Child mobility in the last school year

	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	23	28	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	14
	Girls	21	20	25
	Total	31	30	39
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (63)	59 (76)	76 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	13
	Girls	21	23	21
	Total	32	37	34
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (71)	73 (84)	67 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	24	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	20	23
	Girls	11	12	14
	Total	24	32	37
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	44 (27)	58 (31)	67 (49)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	17
	Girls	9	12	10
	Total	23	28	27
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (44)	51 (49)	50 (56)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	239	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of children per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	362

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of children per qualified teacher	29
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45
Number of children per FTE adult	9.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information*

Financial year	
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To be completed by the school

	£
Total income	
Total expenditure	
Expenditure per child	
Balance brought forward from previous year	
Balance carried forward to next year	

*Liam, please complete table – unclear from financial data given.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

The school had conducted its own survey of parents, and did not conduct another specifically for the inspection. The results of the school's own survey have been used as inspection evidence.

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

77. Children attend nursery on a full time basis for, in the main, three terms before they move to reception. The accommodation in both the nursery and the reception class is spacious and well resourced with outdoor access in both classes. There is a generous level of staffing with both teachers and nursery nurses being very experienced and having a good understanding of the needs of young children. This results in good teamwork and very focused teaching of basic skills and good opportunities for children to use and extend their skills in structured and exciting activities. Children enter the nursery with well below average attainment in all areas of learning and make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes. This level of progress is a direct result of good planning of activities and to the staff's high expectations. However, evidence from previous entry assessment indicates that the levels of attainment of children coming into the nursery vary from year to year across the areas of learning. Although day to day assessment is used very effectively to plan activities there is very little analysis of the levels of attainment on entry and little tracking of progress of year groups across the Foundation Stage. Currently, the children in reception are on track to achieve below the expected levels for their age by five, representing good progress in their learning since entry.
78. The range and quality of learning opportunities provided throughout the Foundation Stage are consistently good. The curriculum has been audited and well planned to match the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum and to be in line with the guidance for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the reception class. The provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is very good. There is good continuity in how the curriculum is planned in both the nursery and reception classes with clear learning outcomes within each year group resulting in good progress across the Foundation Stage. The provision for children with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and gifted children is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good especially in the teaching of the basic skills due to a very structured, the effective use of the staff, space and resources. The engagement of all staff in children's learning promotes confidence and self esteem for the children who enjoy all activities. All members of staff know the children well are sensitive to their needs and ensure that they are challenged.

Personal and social and emotional development

79. The teaching of skills in personal, social and emotional development is good. Staff in both the nursery and reception have high expectations of children's behaviour and of their learning. In most activities children respond and concentrate well and work very hard to please the staff. The tasks are challenging and, therefore, children sustain interest and motivation often for long periods of time. This was evident when the nursery children were using the ICT suite and in numeracy session in reception where children of all attainment levels were fully engaged and involved. Children make good progress in their personal and social skills and most are on track to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. In the nursery the routines are very well established and children respond well to this structure and know how the day is organised and what is expected of them. They follow morning routines well and enjoy

signing in as a way of self-registration. They play well alongside each other and interact well with adults individually but the co-operation between children in small groups and in play activities is more limited. A few children are not confident in contributing to whole group sessions. In the reception class children build well on their personal and social skills due to the good teaching and the interactive activities in the reception area. They work and play very independently both when working alone, with others or with the support of an adult. They develop confidence and contribute to whole class discussions well. They move around the school with great self-control and without fuss. They are beginning to understand that people are different and the importance of friendship. Relationships are a great strength of both the nursery and reception classes with adults setting good examples for children of how they should interact with each other.

Communication language and literacy

80. The teaching of communication language and literacy is very good in both the reception class and nursery and children with poor language skills on entry have many rich opportunities to develop and extend their skills. As a result most children make very good progress in writing across the Foundation Stage and by the end of reception a substantial minority of children are able to write simple sentences about topics that interest them. Many are able to copy sentences and use appropriate words to express meaning and to interpret their experiences and pictures they have drawn. Books have high priority in both nursery and reception and skills in reading and writing are taught simultaneously and developed across all areas of learning. By the time children reach the reception class most are developing an understanding of letter and sound relationships and important key words which are taught systematically. Most children read at home with their parents and with older children in school on a regular basis. Listening and talking are an essential part of all activities throughout the Foundation Stage. For example, in the nursery the enthusiasm of the teacher stimulated the children to talk about what they had found out about a heavy stone and a light feather. In another session the teacher reinforced speech patterns effectively when sharing a book with children by asking, 'What happens next?' and, ' Shall we see what happens?' In a shared writing activity in reception the teacher enabled the children to reinforce and draw on their previous knowledge of language patterns when constructing sentences by making deliberate mistakes which the children had fun in identifying. As a result of this activity many children were able to construct a simple sentence with some using full stops and capital letters correctly. Children's attainment in this aspect by five is below that expected for their age.

Mathematical development

81. The teaching of mathematics in both nursery and reception is very good. In the nursery it is characterised by well-structured small group sessions with very focused teaching which enables adults and children to interact and to explore numbers and mathematical language. For example in the nursery in small group work worked staff worked closely with the children and as a result the children were able to recognise and name shapes, to count to five and beyond and to recognise numerals. Number rhymes are used very effectively in both the nursery and the reception class to develop and extend the children's understanding of numbers using practical materials. The reception class children used real money to buy buns in the 'Baker's Shop' and the skilled teaching enabled all children to be challenged in counting and in using different prices. The teacher's questioning enabled the children not only count but to develop an understanding of how they can check whether they are correct in their calculations. Children's work shows the continuing involvement of the staff in praising

and reinforcing learning and in showing children how they can improve their recording of their understanding. In reception the numeracy strategy is used well to inform the teaching which includes teacher led whole class sessions and small group work in which children are well supported by adults in extending their mathematical skills and strategies in practical tasks well suited to their individual needs. The enthusiasm of the teacher and the children in whole class sessions sometimes means that they last too long. Children's attainment in this aspect by five is below average.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Most children attain below expectations at the end of reception in this aspect, but make good progress in relation to the broad range of skills involved. Because of the high expectations set for them in ICT children make very good progress across the Foundation Stage. This very good progress in ICT is the result of good planning and organisation by Foundation Stage staff and the ICT specialist. The learning environment in both nursery and reception provides a rich context in which children have access to a range of activities in which they can explore, investigate, design, make and find out more about their world, especially through role play. For example In the nursery in the 'builder's yard' and in the reception class in a very exciting medical centre the children have rich play experiences, take on roles and apply skills learned within their focused activities. Children have specific opportunities to investigate objects and different materials and use their senses. For example, in the nursery children looked at the building materials in the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' and were able to explore their weight and shape and could guess how they would respond to the blowing of the wolf. They were engrossed in trying this out and by the end of the session most knew the difference between light and heavy and many understood that it is difficult to move heavy objects by blowing. The children extend their knowledge of the wider world by going on trips, for example to the local park or by having visitors into school such as the school nurse. Throughout the Foundation Stage children have a range of opportunities to play outdoors. For example, children in the reception class laid a trail around the school grounds and hid the class mascot 'Skippy'. Other children followed the trail and were able to find the mascot to their great delight. Children develop keyboard skills, good mouse skills for their age and some understand what to do in order to change programmes and to print their work. They benefit from having several adults to help them extend their skills. They have some understanding that ICT can develop their learning across the curriculum with children in reception making identity badges for the medical centre. Many children will attain the expected levels for children of their age at the end of reception.

Creative development

83. Most children by the end of reception are able to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings using a range of tools including ICT, in painting, drawing, pattern making, designing and making. However, they attain below the levels expected by five. In the nursery children painted self portraits which demonstrated a good understanding of body form, shape and proportion. This was a result of observation and detailed discussion with staff. Throughout the Foundation Stage children show good development in their understanding of colours and the effects of mixing them. In reception children further develop their understanding of form, colour and line, painting both from experience and from observation. A substantial number of the children are on track to reach the standards expected for children of this age in these aspects of creative development. In the other aspects of creative development children make good progress but their attainment by the end of the foundation stage will be below average. Children take part enthusiastically in imaginative role-play in the home

corner, in small world play and in the structured play areas with an increasing ability to communicate their ideas and in interacting with other children. The younger children have more limited opportunities to set up their own play scenarios. Children enjoy singing rhymes and songs within the context of the school day and sing enthusiastically with appropriate actions and movement in assembly.

Physical development

84. Teaching across the Foundation Stage in physical development is satisfactory. They progressively develop their skills in handling equipment, in construction activities and making models and painting using a variety of tools. In the nursery, they have regular opportunities to go outdoors, especially when the weather is temperate and play with a variety of apparatus and push and pull equipment. They use the space well and are aware of others when they move around the school. The range of large construction equipment and climbing equipment is small and limits the range of physical skills being developed. In reception children learn about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They have planned opportunities to play outdoors in areas accessible from the classroom. The use of these areas is limited by the lack of large-scale equipment. Although children have a weekly PE session most children will attain below average in relation to skills in balancing control by the end of reception because of the limited access throughout the foundation stage to large-scale physical activity.

ENGLISH

85. Standards of attainment in English are below those expected for infant and junior children, although there are signs of recent improvement with good progress being made by most children in the infants and steady progress in the juniors. The 2002 national test scores for seven years olds were in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading and writing, and were only slightly better when compared with the scores in schools that have similar economic circumstances. The scores of the more capable children were above those of similar schools in writing, but below in reading. For eleven year olds, the national test scores were also in the lowest five percent nationally, and below those of similar schools, with very limited success by the more able children. There was an upward trend of improvement in the juniors, which has reduced the gap between the school's scores and those of other schools nationally.
86. The school has recognised the need to improve standards and the additional planning, training and hard work of staff is beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of the children's work in lessons. However, many children could achieve considerably higher standards.
87. Standards of speaking for the majority of children are average in the infants, except when speaking to an audience, and below average in the juniors. Most children are capable of speaking to each other and adults in a friendly and helpful way. They communicate their day to day needs and conduct conversations with reasonable ease, although often with a limited vocabulary. They enjoy having stories read or told to them and appreciate the language used to describe the characters and to develop the story line. In lessons, they are ready to answer questions, and in the younger classes children are often given the chance to develop their ideas orally. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson where a video about recycling was used, when children had a query they knew the teacher would pause the tape so they were able to make their points or raise their own questions. They were sensible and did not overuse this opportunity, and clearly explained their questions.

88. However, in many lessons, children are rarely expected to answer in more than a word or two, or to explain their views and ideas in any detail. Many children are very hesitant when they move from their informal language in social and play situations, to more formal speaking where they need to be concise or to use technical vocabulary. Sometimes in a lesson, the children are encouraged to discuss with a partner the work they are doing. This works well on occasions, with lively debate and agreed decisions. Mostly, however, the debate is very limited with one child taking the lead and completing the written task. In practical activities, such as art and music, the children are more confident speakers than in English lessons. A few children are confident and competent speakers, and take delight in using unusual words, such as the six year old in Year 1 who told his teacher that she needed “to use lower case letters when spelling clown.” Planned opportunities for the study of spoken language, and for drama and other performance are too rare to extend children’s skills in spoken language. Limited opportunities are most evident in the junior classes where children at very different stages of learning are usually taught together and the English curriculum is narrow.
89. Standards in listening are at least average, and above average for many children in both infants and juniors who listen carefully to instructions and explanations. The most capable children gain the most from the introductions to lessons, because in most lessons, although the teachers give clear explanations, the time the children are expected to listen is often too long for those who find concentration difficult and their attention wanders. Children are particularly good at listening to each other and, although teachers occasionally have to ask them not to call out in lessons, they generally pay attention to the views of others and give credit to good ideas. In a few classes, children are provided with prompts which are very helpful to those who find remembering instructions or explanations difficult. For example, in an older junior class there were readily available prompts on laminated cards for the children to refer to when undertaking different aspects of English such as persuasive writing. In these classes, although the children usually listened well to the teacher’s initial explanation, they could always check. Techniques such as having older children make their own prompt books to refresh their listening ability, are not yet extensively used.
90. Standards in reading are very variable and for the majority of children are below the expectations for their age. In the 2002 national tests, teacher-assessment of seven year olds indicated reading was poor even for the more able children. There have been significant improvements for many children since the tests. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage. Although standards for the youngest children are often low, there is provision for them to widen their experience of books and language, and also to develop the early skills of recognising sounds, letters are words. Many children respond well to this and are on target to enter the infants with suitable standards for their age. However, there is a large minority of children who make slow progress and continue to have low standards in reading. This difference in attainment between children in the same year group continues through school and is not yet dealt with well by the school’s current system for teaching reading.
91. By the end of the infants, although good progress is made by many children, standards in reading overall are below average. About one in three is children now reaching, or being very close, to the expected standards for their age with a small number in most year groups attaining above the expected standards. The better readers in most year groups are aware of the need to interest listeners and use expression, and occasionally intonation, effectively. Many children are considerably better at reading their fiction books than reading instructions or other texts. Children have a love of stories and books, and almost all are keen to read. Most can retell

stories in the correct sequence and are keen to describe particular events in detail. They recognise humour and enjoy funny books. Reading books are taken home, and most parents help their children's reading by listening to them read aloud regularly and by writing comments in their reading records. Children are rapidly increasing their knowledge of sounds and groups of letters and many can deal with unfamiliar words by applying this knowledge. The more competent children understand what they are reading and make steady progress through the school's reading scheme. However, steady progress is not sufficient for most children to get close to the standards expected for their age.

92. A similar situation continues in the junior classes, but the difference between the most and least competent children widens as they get older. Love of books remains a feature and the majority of children are able to decipher unfamiliar words by applying their knowledge of sounds, letters and the composition of words. The volume of books read by the older children looks adequate, but many children are reading books that provide little challenge to their reading skills and do not advance their knowledge of the styles of different authors, periods of time or types of books. Guidance on their reading is often limited to text studied as part of the national literacy strategy, and not extended to include an agenda for their private reading. The school's reading scheme does not serve the majority of children well as children are often expected to read all the books at each of the levels. Where the texts are too easy, the regular sessions in which the teacher listens to each child read are of limited value, because there are few clues to where the child is having difficulty and needs further teaching of skills or guidance on accessing a wider range of literature.
93. As part of the drive to raise standards in English, the school could usefully reconsider its approach to teaching reading, and ensure that a range of strategies that enable children with different levels of competence to make good progress is in place. The support provided by many parents in taking their children to the library, providing books and sharing reading is valuable, but not always recognised by the school when planning the reading experiences of the junior children.
94. Standards of writing are improving throughout the school but remain below average for the majority of children. Writing has been a focus of school development for some time and the improved presentation and more accurate spelling by many children is a reflection of the attention that it has received. In the infants, about one in three children writes confidently, at length and with reasonable spelling, sentence structures and use of increasingly interesting vocabulary. Children who need extra help, gain significantly from the small group work and systematic teaching provided by the early literacy strategy. This gives them an additional opportunity to talk about their work as well as develop skills such as forming sentences which include basic punctuation. Where extra adults are in the classes, or the class size is small, the more reluctant writers and children with special educational needs benefit from additional help.
95. In the juniors, writing is also improving with some very good examples of narrative writing to be found amongst the work of the more able children. Literacy lessons are used well to improve children's knowledge of different styles of writing, grammatical structures and use of vocabulary. Techniques for writing stories are discussed and practised, with various strategies to encourage children to organise their writing effectively. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, children were studying a text about volcanoes that included extensive information, with statistics, and explanations about the formation of volcanoes. Good preparation of resources by the teacher meant all children had a text that was within their ability to read, and led them to a useful analysis of the strategies used by the writer to produce such instructional texts.

However, good individual lessons on writing are not well supported by an effective system to ensure consistent progress in writing through school. Considering that many children are achieving below the expected standards for their age, the school's approach to developing their writing is not efficient. Many of the opportunities for improving writing lie in applying the skills they learn in the literacy lessons to their writing in other subjects. However, as these links across the curriculum are not yet effectively organised, opportunities such as note taking in geography, concise factual writing in science, and writing in the style of different periods in history, are too rarely planned to link with work in English.

96. The quality of teaching is good. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed and good in over half with very good and excellent teaching in Year 1. The national strategy for literacy is used effectively to guide planning. A strong feature of the teaching is the preparation of resources and careful planning of the sequence of activities that are to take place in the lesson. There is usually a brisk pace to the teaching in lessons but, given the very wide range of children's competence in each class, the learning is often much slower for some children. This is mainly due to overlong introductions to lessons, where the most able children are capable of retaining their interest and concentration, but many other children find they cannot absorb so much information without a break to reflect or consolidate their learning through further practice. In the best lessons, the teachers' knowledge of the subject and the attention given to individual children's strengths and weaknesses when planning activities, were very effective in actively promoting their progress. The school is ready to adapt the national guidance for literacy to ensure that all children have their needs taken into account when their learning is planned.
97. Teachers know their children well and make reasonably accurate judgements of their progress and attainment. Good assessment strategies are being developed, but recent difficulties with the school's information technology have slowed progress towards using the information that is generated. The leadership of the subject has undergone changes recently and is not yet at a point where active leadership is given so that all year groups have the benefit of the school's best practice in teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

98. An analysis of work throughout the school shows that children are attaining levels below those found in most schools nationally. This was confirmed by last year's national test results. In Year 2, these were also below those of similar schools. Boys were performing at a level that was about a year behind that reached by boys in most schools nationally and girls were about a term behind. The results of children in Year 6 were better than those for children in similar schools, however, with far more achieving the higher levels.
99. Children enter the school with poor mathematical knowledge and vocabulary. Given this, progress in the subject is satisfactory for children in Years 1 to 2, including those with special educational needs. Children for whom English is an additional language generally make good progress due to the focused support they receive. Children in Years 3 to 6 make good progress compared with their prior attainment as a result of well-structured work and good teaching. This level of progress is also seen in the work of children with special educational needs and those children for whom English is an additional language. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards across the school are rising, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

100. By Year 2, high attaining children have a secure grasp of number facts and their skill at manipulating numbers mentally is developing well. Practical tasks are used well to develop their understanding of the mathematical ideas of multiplication and division as, respectively, repeated addition and subtraction. Teachers focus on the development of a sound mathematical vocabulary and children understand and correctly use words such as '*subtract*', '*minus*', '*length*' and '*width*'. They identify many two and some three-dimensional shapes and explain some of their properties. Children understand some basic measures; for example, they tell the time on digital and analogue clocks and are developing an understanding of units of measure for weight and length. They have an understanding of simple fractions such as halves and quarters and relate this to doubling and halving numbers. Lower attaining children order numbers to 100 and have a basic understanding of hundreds, tens and units. They add coins to a value of ten pence and understand the concept of halves. The small number of higher attaining children at this age results in standards overall being below the average.
101. By Year 6, most children have developed sound strategies for manipulating numbers mentally as a result of good teacher focus on mental and oral work. They have a secure understanding of the four mathematical operations and the relationship between them. Children's knowledge of shape and space is sound. They understand lines of symmetry, rotational and reflective symmetry, area, volume, ratio and proportion. They explore laws of probability, frequently estimate what answers will be and know connections between fractions, decimals and percentages. They have a sound knowledge of metric units of measurement. Lower attaining children round to one decimal place, have an understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and multiply three-digit numbers by one and simple two-digit numbers. Throughout the school, there is very good coverage of the aspects of mathematics to do with number, shape and measures. There are good links with information and communication technology particularly in relation to co-ordinates work and data handling. Although school targets for children attaining the average standard in national tests are exceeded, overall standards fall slightly below national expectations.
102. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. There was one excellent lesson and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Lesson planning is thorough and learning objectives are shared with children. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use open-ended questions well to stimulate children's thinking. All teachers give children opportunities to explain the strategies they use and, in the light of their answers, adjust their questions to provide relevant challenge and opportunities for all to achieve success. The very good lessons were also delivered at a pace that maintained the children's interest and generated enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers generally are enthusiastic and make learning interesting. A Year 4 class learning the points of the compass, for example, played the 'Spaceship Race' with great enthusiasm and concentration and Year 6 children enjoyed an angle estimation activity that provided challenge within a mathematical setting. All teachers make very good use of resources and use and promote mathematical vocabulary very well. In a Year 2 lesson on symmetry, for example, children were given mirrors to help them determine where lines of symmetry ran. One resource that could be better used is the support given by teaching assistants. Marking is often has comments that are encouraging. In most classes, however, there are very few comments structured to help children improve their performance and this is a relative weakness.
103. Children have very good attitudes to the subject and participate fully in lessons. They answer questions and explain strategies, without fear of being wrong or ridiculed by others for giving wrong answers. Most take a pride in their work and present their

work in an organised and tidy way. Due to the inclusive nature of lessons, children are totally involved and sustain concentration well.

104. Numeracy skills are also being effectively developed within other subjects. For instance, in art and design children learn about symmetry and pattern and shape; and in design and technology, measuring skills are developed. Information and communications technology is beginning to have an impact and is used by the subject co-ordinator to deliver booster sessions provided for targeted Year 6 children on three mornings each week .
105. The capable co-ordinator, who is a leading mathematics teacher, affords very good subject leadership. Since September 2002, when she took the post she has reviewed the numeracy policy, carried out an audit of resources and demonstrated mathematical activities to other staff. She monitors teachers' planning and children' work and has observed teaching. She is currently developing a system for assessment and record keeping. Consideration is currently being given to the introduction of setting, already in place for literacy, for Year 5 and 6 children in order to raise standards.
106. Since the formation of the new school, provision in mathematics has been good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for subject improvement. She is meeting with considerable success as teaching is good across the school and standards are rising.

SCIENCE

107. Standards in science are improving throughout the school. This is because:
 - The subject has a secure place in the timetable, and all aspects are covered;
 - The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was often good;
 - The staff are providing opportunities for the children to develop their investigational skills in many lessons;
 - Children enjoy their work, behave sensibly, and concentrate well. All of them are fully involved.

Areas for further improvement are:

- An agreed whole-school plan to raise standards of achievement;
- Further staff training in how to encourage children to develop independent investigational and enquiry skills, and understand the principles of fair testing.

108. In Year 2, many children have a sound understanding for their age of how plants grow, and the main features of their own and other animals' bodies. They experiment with natural and man-made materials, exploring forces such as magnetism. In a well-prepared lesson on electricity as a force, many Year 2 children showed reasonable knowledge of stored electricity and its uses, although the teacher's style of drawing ideas from the children is a little protracted at times. Before the children could test the equipment set out for them, the teacher asked them to complete a worksheet about electrical devices. This was relatively easy, and the children showed admirable restraint in following the teacher's request not to touch the equipment until she gave them permission. All the children constructed a working circuit, although many had to try a number of times: some did not know that the plastic holder is an insulator, and would not allow the bulb to light if the wire was connected to it. Higher attaining children had the same task as other children, and opportunities were missed by the teacher to extend their investigative skills by providing them with further challenges. A majority of the children make satisfactory progress and achieve as expected, but

fewer than is usual achieve beyond this, in part because the teachers' expectations are not high enough. Those with special needs achieve below average levels, but are effectively supported and make similar progress to their peers. Children learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others, and are fully involved in all activities.

109. By Year 6, many children have a satisfactory knowledge of the human body, the parts of plants, and how food chains operate. They have some understanding of forces such as electricity, magnetism and gravity, and know that friction is a resistant force. They learn to use appropriate equipment such as filter paper in separating solids and liquids, and measuring instruments such as stop-watches, force meters and thermometers with increasing accuracy. In conducting investigations, however, few of them are well advanced in deciding for themselves the equipment or method they will need to carry out a test they have devised to answer their own scientific questions. For example, in working out what effect the thickness or length of a piece of wire might have on the brightness of a bulb in a circuit, none of the groups in a Year 6 lesson discussed how they would measure the brightness before they changed a wire. Few could explain that the electricity they were using was stored in the battery. These children behaved well, and cooperated effectively in mixed groups. However, their general knowledge and understanding in the subject is below average, and their investigative skills are not well developed.
110. The quality of teaching and learning observed was good. Children investigated the relative size of the moon and the sun as viewed from earth in Year 5, dissected the parts of a flower in Year 4, and experimented with body sounds in Year 1. In all these activities, teachers had good control, and managed the children's behaviour and involvement effectively. They had a reasonable working knowledge of the subject at the level they were teaching in the main, but occasionally restricted the children's thinking by not exploring ideas further. This is also the case in developing the children's skills of scientific enquiry. All the work seen involved questions posed by the teacher, with the method of testing hypotheses also given. There is little evidence in saved work that children have sufficient opportunities to work out for themselves how to set and answer their own questions in a general field of enquiry, such as magnetism or growth of plants. The staff are currently using an assessment sheet to record children's progress in the different topics undertaken at different stages. However, no immediate use is made of the information to redirect children's learning. For example, that a child fully understands circuitry by seven does not trigger extension activities, and when a child of the same age does not understand, this is recorded, but no action taken immediately to help them understand.
111. There are two coordinators who oversee the work in the infants and the juniors satisfactorily. They both have particular skills in rural science and biology, but have not yet made the best use of these skills in promoting the subject in the school.

ART AND DESIGN

112. The standards in art are good with attainment at the end of both key stages being above expectations. This is due to the good teaching across the school, the good leadership, the range and quantity of resources, the impact of externally funded specialist teaching and the whole school commitment to high standards.
113. Seven year olds are confident in their use of media and materials and use a range of techniques in painting, drawing and pattern making. They work from their imagination, from observation and use the paintings of famous artists, for example Van Gogh, to

inspire them in their own paintings of landscapes and portraits. They are skilled in using sketchbooks to try out ideas and to evaluate the work of artists and their own work. They make good progress in most elements of art, especially in their awareness of line, form and pattern but progress is more limited in three-dimensional work.

114. Eleven year olds work well with a broad range of materials and media and use a range of starting points and objects as inspiration for their work. These include historical and religious artefacts, paintings, drawings, music and computer generated images. They use their sketch books well to collect ideas about the focus of their work. For example, they developed a range of sketches of the Medusa before completing paintings and clay masks which show individuality and imagination. They are making good progress in developing a range of techniques in handling clay, but their fine drawing skills are less well developed.
115. Progress across the school is good from the foundation stage to the end of Year 6. This progress is clear in a whole school focus on the illustrators of children's books, and in the development of skills using different media and techniques. The work of illustrators was sensitively copied, interpreted within their own choice of subject and the techniques used were identified and developed in their own work.
116. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good towards the end of the juniors. In the infants, teachers use sketchbooks well to enable children to experiment with techniques and evaluate works of art. They also annotate children's work and identify how it can be improved. One of the features of the good teaching across the school was in the discussion of a range of media and the demonstration of techniques by teachers. For example, in a Year 3 class, the teacher explained very clearly what the children were expected to do, discussed the use of soft pencils for drawing, explained how to use the pencil in drawing shells and emphasised the use of close observation. This ensured that the children were clear about the task and the skills they would be using.
117. Where teaching is very good, lessons are well structured with plenty of time for children to try out techniques. Teachers ensure that resources are well organised and children have good access to them, and they effectively demonstrate appropriate techniques. In a mixed Year 5/6 class where children had limited experience of working with clay, the discussion of the qualities of clay and the good demonstration of the techniques enabled the children to translate their design into a tile which was decorated by intricate relief patterns.
118. From discussion with children it is clear that art is one of their favourite subjects. They have very positive attitudes and sustain concentration even in lessons where they find drawing difficult. They are self-critical and are encouraged by teachers to identify how to improve their work.
119. The learning opportunities in art are well organised through a comprehensive scheme of work. The regular auditing of planning and of curriculum coverage by the coordinators ensures that aspects that are not well developed are addressed. As well as a good range of learning opportunities, the children are given time to develop their skills and this has a very positive impact on not only the quality of their learning but also the quality of the finished products. The impetus provided by a specialist teacher through EAZ funding has been capitalised on well by the school. However, there is limited evidence of children using the wider environment for inspiration or of regular visits to art galleries.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Throughout the school, design and technology alternates on the timetable with art and design. Sometimes the unit of work in the subject may be integrated with other work so does not necessarily appear independently on the timetable. Children cover the full range of National Curriculum requirements for the subject and their attainment meets national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, cover the same work and the progress they make in the subject is satisfactory.
121. By the end of Year 2, children are beginning to develop their ability to use simple tools to cut and shape materials such as fabric, paper and card. They assemble, combine and join materials and consider weight-bearing attributes. Children choose the most suitable materials and tools to use for each project. In Year 1, they have made model houses from cardboard boxes whilst those in Year 2 have designed and made model vehicles and glove puppets. Discussion with children from Year 2 showed that they still remembered much of this work and could, for example, describe the function of an axle. Evaluation of work with children aged seven and under is done in discussion with their teacher.
122. Food technology is covered well in Years 3 to 6. The design, creation and evaluation of food dishes provide good opportunities to consider the rules of hygiene when handling food. Annotated design briefs by children in Year 3 showed the care and preparation they had taken when producing Christmas biscuits. Children in Year 4 had designed both pizzas and the boxes in which they could be delivered. Sweets and chocolate logs have been designed and made by children in Year 5 whilst those in Year 6 had made tropical fruit "smoothies" and biscuits displaying faces of an ogre. They also made good links between their work in history and design and technology when they contrasted Ancient and modern Greek menus, and prepared a meal using the foods available to an Ancient Greek chef. Non-food projects have included a mask of Medusa and designs for buggies and trucks. None of the evaluations were sufficiently analytical for children to be able to build on the work, however, and this is a weakness.
123. No teaching was seen during the inspection but the evidence provided by completed work shows that teaching is at least satisfactory and that children take a pride in their work. The joint co-ordinators believe that children find producing design briefs difficult and that staff lack confidence in delivering the subject. They are working with a local Beacon school to produce a new scheme for the work to be covered through the school. This will use projects based on textiles and food technology as well as construction to cover the subject. To ensure that resources will be available, they are carrying out an audit so that gaps can be made good and are planning a series of staff training opportunities to cover both mechanical and structural skills.
124. The subject is popular with children throughout the school and this should be enhanced by the improved subject provision envisaged by the subject co-ordinators.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Standards of attainment in geography for seven-year-olds are as expected for their age group and children make steady progress. For eleven-year-olds, standards are below those expected; children's progress is too slow, particularly in developing the necessary skills to support geographical enquiry. The school's policy for geography is to use the national guidelines for the subject as the basis of what is offered to children. However, lessons are often planned around commercial videos which, although of

good quality, do not provide a basis for planning with the full range of geographical experiences in mind. Most teachers, including the co-ordinator, have only basic expertise in the subject, and so are rarely able to provide suitable additional experiences. As a result, children do not make suitably brisk and consistent progress through the school, which is the main reason for the low standards by the time children reach Year 6.

126. Nonetheless, teaching in individual lessons is satisfactory and helps children to have a reasonable knowledge of some aspects of geography. In lessons in Year 1, children were studying the human environment and how recycling helped to reduce the drain on the world's resources. They discussed the meaning of the word, and learned how recycling plants can re-use waste glass. They occasionally asked pertinent questions, such as, "Why do we make so much rubbish?" and one class reached the point of recognising that repairing and reusing materials could start with their own actions and did not rely entirely on industrial recycling plants. In a Year 3 class, understanding was developing about the differences between towns and villages, with reference to the use of land, the height of buildings and how physical features such as rivers and hills affected how human features such as roads. In a Year 5 class, this was developed further with the study of a particular town on the north-west coast of England, and how occupations and industries had changed over time and why.
127. Children were interested in all these lessons, but their progress was restricted by their limited skills. The older children were particularly disadvantaged by their limited skills in using geographical vocabulary such as compass directions, rivers, canals, streams, coastal features, motorways, and by having few fieldwork skills such as using maps, globes and plans. Their specific knowledge was also weak, for example in knowing the main communication routes and locations in England. Without the steady development of the full range of geographical skills from year to year, the teachers' efforts in individual lessons are having only limited impact on the children's progress and standards of attainment.
128. The leadership of the subject has been low key since the school amalgamation as the subject has not been a priority. The guidance that has been provided has not been successful in improving standards of attainment, and as the subject is not monitored, the school has little knowledge of where improvements are needed. This is a subject ripe for further direction, as most staff and children already work hard in lessons.

HISTORY

129. By the age of 11, children attain below expected levels. In discussion, they show limited understanding of chronology, and have below average skills of historical enquiry. However, they enjoy the subject, and in creating an Ancient Greek meal from ingredients available at the time, they showed real enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn how conditions and circumstances have changed from then to now.
130. No work was seen in Year 2, but children have some ideas about the past, and remember studying famous people such as Florence Nightingale, and comparing old and new toys when they were in Year 1. They have a developing understanding of change, and differences between the past and the present.
131. Only two lessons were seen, and in one, the lesson on Greek food discussed above, the quality of teaching and learning was good, whilst in the other they were unsatisfactory, largely because the children were tired, and a number of boys would not respond to the teacher's strategies to engage them. The subject content planning

was fine, to research Viking longboats from a variety of texts, but did not motivate sufficient of the pupils for the lesson to lead to them progress in their learning.

132. The coordinator has recently returned to work following maternity leave, and is keen to develop her own skills, and the profile of the subject in the school. For example, Year 5 teachers want to develop a local history unit further, and she is seeking information and artefacts to support this. Currently, there is no effective monitoring of standards and quality of education, and links with other subjects such as geography are only rudimentary.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Attainment by children throughout the school is similar to that found in most schools. This is a commendable achievement as less than one-third of children, significantly less than in most schools, have a computer at home in order to rehearse and extend skills learned in school. As a result of a well-planned and structured programme of study, progress is also satisfactory. This is true for all children including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
134. A new computer suite has been in use for less than a year but is already making a significant impact on learning both in this subject and the rest of the curriculum. It is well resourced with laptop machines to supplement the desktop computers when class numbers exceed twenty-five. In contrast, the class-based machines are not well used and during the two sweeps carried out during the inspection only one was in active use. The co-ordinator is aware of this and knows that considerable thought now needs to be given so that these computers can also be used to greatest effect.
135. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully covered. Improvements need to be made to the equipment for delivering control technology, as some of the old hardware is not compatible with the new. New sensors are to be obtained, for example. A roamer and logo are already in place as well as a microscope and two digital cameras. The use of the suite to support work in other subjects is already well developed and children use computer encyclopaedias to retrieve information as well as consulting the Internet. In Year 1, children access multi-media storybooks, which improve their reading skills, and in Year 2 much of their word processing also relates to literacy.
136. By the age of seven children are competent in using the mouse and are beginning to develop typing skills using a standard keyboard - identifying letters, capitalising, use of space bar, delete and insert. Children can log on, access programs and use a variety of fonts; use the computer to generate pictures for use in cards and calendars; and paint pictures. By the age of eleven children are able to access programs confidently, load material such as photographs in relation to a multi-media authoring program, save their work and organise and refine information in different forms. They use terms such as "drag", "clipart", "cell" and "icon" with confidence and understanding. Links with other subjects are developing. Older children use computer-generated materials in subjects such as geography, religious education and science.
137. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers know their children well and tasks are appropriately set in order to build on prior knowledge. Children respond enthusiastically to computer orientated learning and are confident when using the machines. They help each other very well and those with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language benefit very well from the support

of their peers as well as support from the teacher, support assistants and technician. Children treat equipment with respect.

138. The subject co-ordinator is not a teacher but an ICT specialist. She team teaches with staff, leading those parts of the lesson that teach computer technology as well as supporting children when they are working independently. She repeats work with groups of less able children who have not grasped the concept being taught as quickly as the rest of the class. She has built up a collection of children's work, which she has now to grade in order to make it a useful portfolio providing evidence of standards for the rest of the staff. Each child has an assessment book in which to record skills they have mastered.
139. The hard work of the co-ordinator and teachers has ensured that child attainment meets national levels despite the lack of computers at home.

MUSIC

140. Standards in music for seven- and 11-year-olds are broadly in line with expected levels but progress in some aspects of music are better than in others. During the inspection one lesson was observed in the infants and two in the juniors. Other music was observed in assemblies, the choir and in instrumental lessons.
141. Seven year olds demonstrate good skills in singing, and they do so enthusiastically in assembly. They make good progress, and in Year 1 children are using their voices in a variety of ways with an awareness of pitch, style and expression. They are developing a good sense of rhythm and pulse. They listen to music carefully and can interpret the mood and feeling and guess what the music might represent. They are beginning to use technical terms when describing how to play instruments. Eleven-year-olds sing with sensitivity, and they adapt their voices to the mood of what they are singing. They sing in tune and with a sense of rhythm. In the lesson observed for Year 6, children were developing good diction and pitch, and could sing in a contrasting rhythm within a chorus and the verse of a song. They understand how to perform a round with alternating rhythms and they are making good progress in understanding conventional notation. Progress in composing is unsatisfactory, however. Children who take part in instrumental lessons are making good progress. Progress within Key Stage 2 is generally satisfactory with better progress being made by children who take part in extra curricular activities such as the choir and musical productions.
142. The children's attitudes and behaviour are good overall with very positive attitudes displayed by children in the infants and good behaviour in the juniors. In a Year 1 class, the enthusiasm of the teacher along with the brisk pace kept children engaged and thoroughly involved. In Year 3, behaviour was good due to the high expectations made clear to them by their teacher. When children lost concentration this was mainly due to some of the activities lasting too long.
143. The teaching and learning observed in the infants were good. In Year 1, the lesson was well structured and planned and included a good balance of musical activities including singing, playing and listening. The teacher had a very lively approach and her enthusiasm transmitted well to the children. The pace was good on the whole, and this kept the children on task and very engaged. The teacher modelled the singing well by using question and answer techniques and used her voice in different ways, which enabled children to explore the range of their voices.

144. In the juniors, sensitive playing and enthusiastic singing by all the staff who were observed provide good examples for the children who respond well. Children are made aware of the importance of posture and breathing which has an impact on their performance, both in lessons and in the choir. In two lessons observed the musical expertise of the teachers enabled the children to develop their knowledge of musical notation and in a Year 3 class the teacher placed very high importance on the children 'listening and watching' which are necessary skills when learning to read music. In the lessons observed, the time was not well managed so that too much emphasis was given to learning skills and not enough time was devoted to instrumental playing or to experimenting with their own rhythm patterns. The skilled teaching of staff in extra-curricular music motivates the children who consequently make good progress.
145. There are changes taking place in the way that music is taught within the school with a move from a specialist approach to encouraging more staff to be involved in teaching music themselves. Visiting specialists are now working alongside teachers successfully and the introduction of the new scheme of work is also providing support for teachers in planning lessons. There has not been any recent monitoring of standards and assessment procedures are currently being developed. Some of the instruments are in need of replacing with a greater range, reflecting a broader cultural perspective. Music makes a positive contribution to the life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This was because the subject is currently under-represented in the school's timetable, partly to support staff training from a subject specialist each Friday, after the inspection was over.
147. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the subject are covered, and children in Years 3 and 4 attend the swimming baths for two terms. Attainment in swimming is reportedly in line with expectations by age 11.
148. In the one lesson seen, the children in Year 4 responded very well to the teacher's enthusiastic approach. They joined in well with the warm-up dance routine, one child leading it for a time. In composing a dance/drama to represent conflict between the invading Romans and resident Celts, the children worked with skill and concentration to follow the musical and rhythmic stimulus, and adapt their movements to its spirit. In creating simulated fight scenes, they achieved good standards for their age in reacting to their partner's moves, and taking the role of either aggressor or defender effectively. The teacher demonstrated, coaxed, suggested and encouraged effectively to focus and improve the children's control and creative response. Boys and girls took part equally, and all pupils were included in this exciting lesson well.
149. The headteacher is nominally the coordinator, and agrees that more time is needed to give the subject its proper status for the children. He feels that staff's skills are developing as they work alongside the skilled teacher, and that this will improve the profile of the subject over the next year. It is more probable that a concerted and monitored plan of improvement would be likely to achieve this end. There are extra-curricular clubs for children in the juniors, including a well-attended dance club, and football and netball for older pupils. The school has reasonable playground space, but the field is pocked with subsidence, making it unsafe for competitive games. It was used during the inspection when visiting coaches from the local rugby club offered coaching for children in Year 5.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Standards In Religious Education are below expected levels in relation to the expectations set out in the LEA locally agreed syllabus for both seven and eleven year olds. This is, mainly due to the previous guidance and scheme of work, which until very recently did not match the requirements of that syllabus and a lack of confidence on the part of some of teachers. Children' progress and the continuity of the teaching and learning have been inconsistent across the school with children not building on their skills within and across key stages. Progress in lessons and in children's work is still inconsistent.
151. The levels of attainment in relation to what children might be expected to know and understand about religions and in relation to their skill development are unsatisfactory. Seven year olds have a limited understanding of important Christian festivals and a superficial knowledge of the life of Jesus. These children do not reflect well on what they have learned nor do they understand the significance of Palm Sunday in the story of Easter. Some eleven-year-olds know about the diversity and unity within religious traditions and understand a little about the special traditions and rituals of Islam including the importance of the Holy Book and how Muslims read it. Other eleven-year-olds understand that the Bible is a collection of books and know about the different forms of writing in the Bible including narrative, letters and poems. There is little indication that children understand the significance of this. Evidence from the lessons and from children' work indicates that there is a lack of depth and range in the way children record their understanding about religions and limited development in the range of skills necessary to understand and evaluate the nature and significance of religious traditions.
152. Within each key stage there are some lessons in which children do demonstrate a deeper understanding and are able to compare and contrast stories and empathise with the characters. This was particularly true in a Year 1 class where many children were familiar with the idea of Jesus as a good friend or helper and could make links between the story of the Good Samaritan and the story of the lost sheep which they had heard previously. In a Year 4 class after two sessions about Jesus and the moneylenders, children were able to talk about their own feelings and those of others. They showed some understanding of sorrow and anger with a few able to identify why Jesus was angry, and why they might also be angry.
153. The quality of the teaching and learning is overall satisfactory and occasionally good. The unsatisfactory elements of the teaching are due to lack of confidence by teachers in their subject knowledge and the inadequacy of the scheme of work in supporting them in their planning. For example, in a Year 2 class the content of the lesson and the follows up tasks were not well related to the main lesson objective. Although the story was well told and children enjoyed the story they could not make the connection between the story told and the story of Palm Sunday. Where teaching is satisfactory or better teachers use questioning well to enable the children to reflect on stories and the feelings of characters and to make links between different stories told. Successful lessons also include follow up tasks, which enable children to reflect on stories and feeling through writing, artwork and role-play.
154. Children are generally very positive during lessons and confident to consider feelings and share their reflections. Behaviour was consistently good and children listened well to stories and engaged in activities and tasks well. Support staff play an important role in supporting children with special educational needs who as a result are able to take a full part in lessons.

155. Religious Education has only recently become a focus for development. Although a new scheme of work has been developed it is not being effectively implemented across the school. This is because there is a lack of confidence by some staff along with inadequate subject knowledge. No monitoring of children's work or teaching and learning has taken place. The school does not make sufficient use of visits and visitors. The local minister takes assemblies and children are sometimes taken to local churches but visits to other places of worship are not yet built into the curriculum.