

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BENCHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wythenshawe, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 132241

Headteacher: Mr D A Smith

Reporting inspector: Margot D'Arcy  
23158

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 248962

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Benchill Road  
Wythenshawe  
Manchester

Postcode: M22 8EJ

Telephone number: 0161 998 3075

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms A Escreet

Date of previous inspection: N/A

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23158	Margot D'Arcy	Registered Inspector	Art and design	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well pupils are taught? What should the school do to improve?
11096	Margaret Davie	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for pupils. The school's partnership with parents.
23276	Margaret Mann	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Religious education	
16971	Roger Hardaker	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
12112	Gill Carter	Team inspector	Special educational needs English History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27720	Peter Way	Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Geography	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school was formed in September 2000, after the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. It is bigger than most primary schools, catering for 365 boys and girls aged between three and eleven. There are significantly more girls than boys, particularly in the nursery, reception and Year 6. Most pupils attend full-time, including 44 nursery children; another seven nursery children attend part-time. Pupils are taught in classes containing others of the same age. Most speak English as their first language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties (24 per cent) is broadly average. The range of these pupils' special needs includes specific, moderate and general learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are three pupils with severe learning difficulties who have a formal statement in relation to the provision that must be made for them. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (67 per cent) is much higher than average. The area in which the school is situated suffers from significant social and economic deprivation and is part of an Educational Action Zone<sup>1</sup> (EAZ). Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is very low in relation to what is expected for their age. A fairly high proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school other than at the usual admission and transfer times.

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

This is a good and rapidly improving school. Although standards are low compared to national figures, most pupils are learning well in response to good quality teaching. However, there is scope to raise their levels of achievement through improving speaking and listening skills. Pupils' personal development is being promoted very well. Highly effective leadership and management, from the headteacher, senior management team and governors are key features that underpin the school's development. The value for money provided by the school is good.

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

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is driving forward improvement at a very good rate.
- Much of the teaching is good.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well. All are valued as individuals and are fully included in everything that is offered.
- Overall, nursery and reception children receive a good start to their education through high quality teaching and learning experiences.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well and make good progress.
- There are very effective systems for assessing pupils' standards and checking their progress in English, mathematics and science.
- The school works hard at keeping parents informed and encouraging them to be involved in their children's learning.

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

- Standards in speaking, listening and writing.
- The curriculum for design and technology (DT), geography and history to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

As this is the school's first inspection since the infant and junior schools amalgamated in 2000, judgements in relation to improvement since the last inspection cannot be made. However, there is clear evidence from the school's data that standards by the end of Year 6 are much higher than were previously being achieved. Evidence from parents, and school data, also shows substantial improvement in pupils' behaviour during the last two years. A new school building is another, obvious, improvement that has occurred since the amalgamation.

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<sup>1</sup> An area identified as suffering from significant social deprivation and in which some schools are targeted to receive additional funding to improve aspects of their work.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/A	E*	E*	D
mathematics	N/A	E*	E	C
science	N/A	E*	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table shows that test results in mathematics and science were well below the national averages in 2002 and were very low (in the bottom five per cent nationally) in English. What is not quite as evident, however, is the substantial improvement that occurred in all three subjects from the results achieved in 2001. Even in English, there was a significant rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level. Pupils' performance is considerably better when compared with schools in a similar context<sup>2</sup>, but the school recognises that there is still room for improvement. Whilst good teaching in the juniors is promoting good learning for most pupils, the school is still coping with a legacy of very low achievement and pupils' poor self-esteem, which will take time to eliminate. Based on its good knowledge of pupils, the school sets challenging but realistic targets for them to achieve in national tests. However, these are not always realised because some pupils leave before taking the tests. It is not possible to make secure judgements about whether any pattern of improvement is occurring because, as a new school, a complete set of test results data is not available. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in science and reading. However, standards in writing, speaking and listening are weak and progress in these elements is too slow. In relation to all these subjects, the situation is the same for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The results achieved by Year 2 pupils in the 2002 tests were very low in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. In relation to similar schools, these results were well below average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics. Whilst mathematics results were significantly better than those achieved in 2001, reading results remained fairly similar, but writing results declined.

Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and achieve the expected standards in art and design, music, physical education (PE) and religious education (RE). Progress in geography, history and design and technology (DT) is unsatisfactory and standards in these subjects are below those expected. In relation to DT, this is because the subject is not currently being taught in all year groups. In geography and history, skills are not promoted frequently enough and knowledge and understanding are not developing as they should because topics are not taught in sufficient depth.

Most nursery and reception children have made at least good progress in all aspects of their work. However, staffing difficulties has resulted in the progress of one class of reception children not being as good as that of children in the other. The school recognises this and has plans to deal with it.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils like school and understand the importance of working hard. For a minority, however, learning is not a high priority.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Many pupils behave well in lessons and in other contexts where teachers supervise them. Behaviour at lunchtime is not as good.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils are becoming more mature and responsible because of the many opportunities provided for them to develop these positive attitudes and values.
Attendance	Poor. Much lower than the national average. Punctuality is also a problem for some pupils.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and generally meets the needs of all pupils well. Good teaching is more consistent in the juniors and for children in nursery and reception. In Years 1 and 2, teaching varies quite significantly, ranging from excellent to barely satisfactory. Less effective teaching is linked to teachers not expecting enough of pupils, particularly higher attainers. This is seen in teachers' questioning and in the work that they give these pupils, which is often not challenging enough.

There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching for nursery and reception children. Strengths here include the constant promotion of children's skills in the areas of language and communication and personal, social and emotional development. Throughout the school, the teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is good, with numeracy skills and those in ICT also being promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, with literacy lessons closely following national recommendations. However, pupils limited life experiences and weak language skills mean that the content of some lessons is beyond their level of understanding and consequently restricts learning. There are some good opportunities for pupils to practice literacy skills in other subjects, but, in Years 1 to 6, there is no consistent programme for teaching speaking and listening skills, which are weak and hamper pupils' progress in a range of subjects. During the inspection, some particularly effective teaching was seen in art and design, PE and RE. Other strengths include teachers' relationships with pupils, which do much to raise their self-esteem and promote the right attitudes to learning; the way that teachers tell pupils how well they are doing and what they must do to improve; and the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties. There is also very effective use of support staff who make a good contribution to teaching and learning.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Whilst statutory requirements are not currently being met in relation to DT, this issue will be addressed in the near future. There are some weaknesses in geography and history, but strengths in ICT, PE and RE, and in the way that the school includes all pupils in everything that is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff are committed, caring and professional in their approach towards supporting pupils' learning. This aspect is led and managed very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school does not need to make any additional provision for these pupils to enable them to take part in activities or understand lessons.



Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with strengths in the provision for moral and social development. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and to value their own and others' achievements. They have good opportunities to work and play together and to develop as young citizens. Their understanding of cultures different to their own is promoted well in RE, but there is scope to improve this aspect within other subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is an extremely caring school where pupils are valued and well looked after. There are effective systems to check on and promote pupils' academic and personal progress.

The school has and continues to work very hard in establishing its partnership with parents, which is good.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported very well by a hardworking deputy and senior management team. Whilst the effectiveness of subject managers varies from very good to unsatisfactory, some roles are at a developmental stage and the school knows where weaknesses exist.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very well informed. They provide the school with effective support, offering good advice, challenging it to improve and holding it to account for its performance and spending. However, some important policies are not in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This is a school that knows its strengths and what it has to do to improve. Since there are clear strategies and procedures to achieve this, the school's capacity to improve is very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Money is used very well to improve provision in many areas. Very effective use is made of support staff. ICT is used well to support learning, administration and to help set targets to raise standards.

Overall, the number of staff, quality of accommodation, sufficiency and quality of resources are good. The school is very successful in ensuring that it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children's improved behaviour and attitudes to school and the reduction in bullying.</li> <li>• The way that the school deals quickly with any problems or concerns that they express.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children are making good progress and developing maturity.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• Good information is provided about their children's progress and other aspects of school life.</li> <li>• The new school building, which generates a sense of pride in pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority thinks that not enough homework is provided.</li> <li>• A minority is unhappy with the range of activities provided outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. They judge that homework and extra-curricular provision are satisfactory, although the school has plans to improve both of these aspects.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children begin nursery with standards that are very low for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; and knowledge and understanding of the world. Creative skills are below expectations, as are some physical skills, such as handling and manipulating small objects, such as pencils and scissors. Whilst nursery children make very good progress in all areas of learning, their standards are still quite low in communication, language and literacy when they begin the reception class. Standards in all other areas are generally below average on entry to the reception classes. Reception children are organised into two classes on the basis of their age. Children in the older reception class have achieved well and, overall, have made much better progress than those in the younger class. This has been caused by an unstable staffing situation in covering a maternity leave. Whilst the older reception children have benefited from the continuity of having one teacher, the younger children have had many temporary teachers. The school has worked hard to deal with this situation, but many aspects have been beyond their control and overall, it has hindered children's progress. However, during the inspection, these children were learning at least satisfactorily in response to teaching from a very new temporary teacher and the continuity provided by the class support assistant. The situation is now coming to an end. The need to secure the progress of this group of children in the next academic year has been recognised and plans are already in place to deal with this.
2. Whilst much good practice occurs in the nursery and reception classes to promote children's language and communication skills, by the end of reception year standards are still well below expectations. They are somewhat better in the areas of mathematics, personal, social and emotional development, and in aspects of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Overall, however, standards in these areas are still below expectations. In creative and physical development, most children reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year.
3. The results of national tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 2002 were very low in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. The reading results were similar to those achieved in 2001, but the writing results were much lower. In both these aspects, few pupils achieved the higher levels. However, mathematics results showed a significant rise on those achieved in 2001, with the proportion achieving the higher level being almost equal to the national average. In relation to similar schools, the 2002 results were well below average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics. However, the proportion at the higher levels was broadly average in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils' speaking and listening skills as very low and their standards in science as well below average. Inspection evidence supports these test and assessment results. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average. Overall, pupils are learning satisfactorily in reading and science; learning in mathematics is good. In speaking, listening and writing, however, skills are not developing as well as they should. To a large extent, standards and progress in writing are impeded by weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills. Whilst the school has identified the need to develop a programme for this aspect of the English curriculum, there is currently no whole school approach that specifically and consistently, promotes these skills across the curriculum.

4. A similar situation exists, in relation to English, in the juniors and for the same reasons. The school's data shows that, overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in reading, but the development of writing skills is much slower and speaking and listening skills are weak. Both these factors limit pupils' from achieving as well as they could in English and in a range of other subjects.
5. The results of national tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2002 were very low in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. In relation to similar schools, these results were below average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics. Although the 2002 results fell somewhat short of the targets that had been set by the school, this was due to some pupils, who were expected to achieve well in the tests, leaving the school before taking the tests. However, in all three subjects, results rose significantly from those that were achieved in 2001. This came about because more pupils achieved the expected levels in each subject. In addition, in mathematics and science there was a significant reduction in the proportions of pupils achieving below the level expected. Inspection evidence shows that the current group of Year 6 pupils' standards in English and mathematics are well below average and in science they are below. This is mainly because few pupils are achieving at the higher levels and only about half are achieving the expected levels. However, with the exception of the point made above in relation to speaking, listening and writing, these pupils have made at least satisfactory progress over time. The school's data shows that historically, many pupils were achieving very low standards in these subjects. Currently, good learning is occurring in all three subjects in response to an improved curriculum and good teaching.
6. Since the school has only been operational in its present form for two years, a complete set of data is not available to enable the identification of any differences between the performance of different groups, such as boys and girls, or trends in performance over time. However, the school's data showing the results that were being achieved by Year 6 pupils before the amalgamation, clearly illustrates that the 2002 test results are considerably higher than were previously being achieved. The school has set realistic and challenging targets for the current Year 6 group to achieve in this year's tests, but recognises that these will probably not be realised. Once again, a number of higher attaining pupils have left, which will adversely affect the overall test scores. Levels of attainment in different year groups vary, sometimes quite significantly. In Year 5, for example, there is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, so it would seem unlikely that the 2004 test results will show any significant improvement on this year's.
7. Throughout the school, standards in art and design, music, PE and RE are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in these subjects. In geography and history, standards and progress are unsatisfactory because these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth or frequently enough for pupils to retain key knowledge and skills. Standards and progress in DT are also unsatisfactory because in most classes this subject is not being taught. This is due to be rectified in September 2003. Whilst standards in ICT are below national expectations by the ends of both Years 2 and 6, throughout the school pupils are learning well in this subject. This is in response to good teaching and significant, recent improvements to the curriculum and resources.
8. The standards of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with emotional and behavioural problems, are often below those of other pupils. However, they make good progress in response to the well-structured help and support they receive from

class teachers, visiting specialists and skilled and experienced teaching assistants. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make good progress toward the targets that have been set for them because all staff deal very consistently with their difficulties and have high expectations of how they should behave in lessons.

9. The school works extremely hard to improve all aspects of its provision with the aim of raising pupils' standards. It continues to deal with a legacy of very low achievement and pupils' low self-esteem, poor attitudes and behaviour. Whilst test results at this point in the school's development are not approaching national standards, there is a clear commitment to improvement and an ethos of success. Consequently, the school's capacity to further raise standards is very good.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory and improving. They enjoy and take part in many activities enthusiastically, particularly sports. When they arrive in the morning they waste no time getting on with their day, quickly storing their things, ready to start work. In a Year 1 class, for example, pupils swiftly settled to their handwriting practice and spent a good amount of time focused on improving their skills. Most understand the importance of effort and hard work because this principle is a fundamental part of the school's ethos and is continuously reinforced by teaching staff. There is, however, a small minority for whom learning is not a high priority. These pupils are often slow to get going with their work and question its relevance. In a few lessons, pupils are rude and show little respect for the teacher, their own work or that of others. The result is that the work they produce is of a much lower standard than should be expected.
11. Behaviour in most lessons is at least satisfactory. Pupils are friendly to visitors, making an effort to introduce themselves and chat. They hold doors open for adults and are usually polite, remembering to say please and thank you. When supervised by teachers at playtime, pupils behave well but behaviour at lunchtime is not as good. This is particularly evident when pupils line up to wait for their meals. Here there is considerable pushing and shoving and arguments erupt. A minority in a number of year groups has not yet developed good enough work habits to maintain concentration or work independently. This occasionally causes disturbances, preventing them and others from learning as much as they could. The school has worked very hard, and successfully, to reduce incidences of bullying, which records show had been very high. Incidents are now rare and pupils feel confident that it would be dealt with quickly and effectively should it happen. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour since the school began in 2000. This can be seen in the reduced number of exclusions. Only one pupil was permanently excluded in the last year.
12. Pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Many strategies are being successfully used to help them become more mature and responsible. The school council and prefect and buddy systems all provide valuable opportunities for pupils to have a say in the running of the school, as well as helping out with day-to-day procedures. Pupils take their roles seriously, putting a lot of effort into, as one explained, *"thinking up ideas to help make school a better place."* Their contributions are always highly valued by the headteacher and staff. For instance, some pupils have been allowed to visit other schools to get ideas about how to make the new outdoor environment interesting and helpful to learning. The school council organised the opening ceremony for the new school building, compiling the guest list and sending invitations. On the day, they made the occasion special by giving speeches and showing visitors around the site. Guests at the opening praised pupils' confidence and good manners.

13. Pupils respond positively to opportunities they are given to work together in lessons. They help each other and share well. In a Year 6 PSHE (personal, social and health education) lesson, for example, they worked really well in groups, considering whether the school rules are fair or not. Teachers are very good role models in the friendly and professional way that they deal with one another and with all of the children. Overall, however, pupils' ability to work independently is not well developed, with many finding it very difficult to complete tasks without adult support.
14. Pupils with learning difficulties are fully involved in all aspects of school life and are nearly always as keen and motivated to achieve as others. They particularly enjoy being taught in small groups outside the classroom, where they can clearly see their own progress against the small, easily measurable, targets that are set for them. This also does much to raise their self-esteem and attitudes to work.
15. Despite good systems to monitor and promote attendance, this remains well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is also higher than normally found. The small number of parents who do not respond when asked to give reasons for their child's absence account for most of the unauthorised absence. Illness accounts for much of the recorded absence, but a significant factor is also the number of pupils who are taken out of school during term time for family holidays. Punctuality is also an issue. Too many pupils arrive late in the morning particularly in the first five minutes of the day. A very small number regularly arrive twenty or thirty minutes late, which has a detrimental impact on their learning and disrupts lessons.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the infant and junior schools amalgamated. This has resulted from a rigorous and determined programme of monitoring, aimed at improving teaching quality. The success of this is clearly evident in pupils' improving standards, attitudes and personal development. The overall quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, 99 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better, with 45 per cent being good, 19 per cent very good and one per cent excellent. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson, which was linked to some poor behaviour by pupils. Throughout the school, there are strengths in the teaching of ICT, art and design and mathematics.
17. Teaching in the nursery is consistently good and frequently very good. This allows children to make good gains in all aspects of their development. During the inspection, there were some distinct differences in the quality of teaching and learning between the two reception classes. In one class teaching was consistently satisfactory, whilst in the other there was a high proportion of very good teaching. Strengths in the Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup> include teachers' very good knowledge of how young children learn and high expectations of what they can achieve. Children's personal, social and emotional development and their language and communication skills are promoted very effectively each day in a range of contexts.
18. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, but varies considerably. There is some high quality teaching of literacy and numeracy, but some that is just satisfactory; overall, numeracy is taught better than literacy. The differences in teaching quality are linked to teachers' expectations, particularly of higher attainers. This is evident in the way that they match or adapt work to pupils'

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<sup>3</sup> Includes children in nursery and reception classes.

differing attainment. In some classes, this is done very well, with all pupils being constantly challenged through questioning and written or practical activities. Where teaching is less effective, questioning is weak and all pupils are given virtually the same work, pitched mostly to average attainers. Lower attainers are often helped to complete this by good support from additional adults. However, higher attainers often find the work too easy, frequently finish quickly and then generally complete more of the same or undertake a task unrelated to the objectives of the lesson. There are strengths in one Year 1 class in the way the teacher constantly promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills. Overall however, good, direct teaching of these skills is inconsistent throughout Years 1 to 6.

19. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, including some good and very good teaching of literacy and numeracy. Good teaching was seen in all year groups, with particular strengths in PE and RE. Teachers plan lessons well, making effective use of assessments of pupils, and evaluations of previous lessons, to amend lesson plans and modify work. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils, taking time to ensure they understand what is required from them. Teachers often revisit these objectives during the course of lessons and again at the end. This works well because it keeps pupils focused and helps them to understand how well they are learning. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is evident in their explanations, demonstrations and questioning, all of which provide good challenge and support for pupils. A good range of methods is used to keep pupils interested and motivated. The setting arrangements in English and mathematics are working well, enabling teachers to match work closely to pupils' needs. This is promoting good learning and helping to improve standards.
20. Throughout the school, there are strengths in teachers' relationships with pupils. Most teachers expect a lot from pupils, in terms of both effort and behaviour. They know that every lesson counts, but convey this urgency in a well-balanced way, making learning interesting and enjoyable. They clearly like pupils, treat them fairly and work consistently hard to promote their self-esteem. This is paying off in terms of pupils' improved attitudes and behaviour. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and groups, promoting social skills and personal development.
21. Good use is made of support staff. These individuals are often involved at the planning stage and are always well briefed about their roles, for example about the questions to ask pupils, the vocabulary to promote and the extent of intervention they should provide. The assessment/feedback sheets that they complete during their work with groups provide valuable information for teachers about how well each pupil has coped with the tasks. Support staff make a very positive contribution to assisting teaching and promoting pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties.
22. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is almost always good. In class, work in English and mathematics is generally well matched to their needs, with further support given by teaching assistants. In other subjects, such as history or geography, special work is not always provided, but additional adults usually ensure that pupils have help to understand and complete their tasks. Good use is made of the high level of expertise of visiting teachers and the educational psychologist to enable staff to tailor programmes very precisely to pupils' learning needs. Visiting professionals also contribute significantly in staff training, which helps to improve the quality of teaching and support for these pupils.
23. Throughout the school, classroom displays provide very good support for learning. There are for instance, examples of work at different levels of the National Curriculum,

to help pupils understand how well they are learning and what to aim for. On many occasions, teachers and pupils were seen referring to very good literacy and numeracy displays to support teaching and learning.

24. Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils about their work shows that they know them very well. It strikes the right balance between celebrating and encouraging their efforts and giving them achievable targets and developmental points to help them improve. Marking in mathematics is good throughout the school, but it is more variable in English and science. Some is very good but too much is cursory. Overall, however, the strengths in relationships between pupils and teachers and the good quality of verbal feedback give pupils a good insight into how well they are learning. Homework is used satisfactorily to support the work done in class.

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

25. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in a stimulating and relevant curriculum. Since the amalgamation, much work has been done to develop subject planning that is linked to National Curriculum requirements for all year groups, ensuring that knowledge and skills are built on systematically. National guidance is being used well to develop this aspect. Given the major challenges that had to be faced upon amalgamation, including addressing significant issues about pupils' behaviour, attitudes, teaching, standards in basic skills, and weaknesses in the curriculum, choices had to be made about determining the precedence with which individual subjects would be developed. Priority has rightly been given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with the raising of standards in these subjects being seen as the most important issue to resolve. Some subjects, such as DT and art and design, have not yet come 'on line' in terms of being the focus for development. Whilst learning experiences in art and design are satisfactory, the curriculum for DT is not meeting National Curriculum requirements because very little of this subject is taught. There is a detailed action plan to support the implementation of DT from September 2003 and this should resolve the current weakness.
26. Learning experiences in most other subjects are at least satisfactory, with provision in ICT, PE, RE and that for children in the Foundation Stage, being good. There are however, some weaknesses in the way that geography and history are planned and implemented which are having an adverse effect on pupils' standards and progress in these subjects. Specifically, these subjects are not being taught in sufficient depth and the interval between the termly alternation of each subject is too long for pupils to maintain appropriate progress in the development of key knowledge and skills. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well but there is scope for these key skills to be promoted better across the curriculum. Some good work is being done to ensure that learning in ICT is developed within other subjects. The school is making good use of ICT to support curriculum planning. Systems that allow teachers to plan, modify and evaluate lessons have been implemented for the past six months and though in the early stages of development are being viewed positively by staff. These have good potential, allowing various subjects to be linked and modified to take account of their relevance to pupils' needs, based on assessments of how well they cope with the work. The school meets the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
27. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very good curriculum. It is planned meticulously and takes full account of the national guidance for this age group. Lessons and activities are stimulating, practical and suitable to children's age and

stage of development. A particularly effective feature is the 'outdoor classroom' which gives excellent opportunities for children to extend skills in all of the six areas of learning within a different environment.

28. The school sets great store by providing equal opportunities for all and is currently working very hard and successfully to ensure that this is the case. Pupils with learning difficulties have full access to the curriculum. They receive the support that they need both in class and in small group sessions outside of the classroom. These sessions are usually short and carefully focused to address pupils' individual learning targets. They are organised so that pupils do not miss parts of the same lesson each week. Some class teachers also provide time for older pupils to work independently on their targets in planned sessions once or twice per week which helps them to take some responsibility for their own learning. The school is in the early stages of developing its curriculum provision for pupils who are gifted or talented; pupils in both categories have been identified from nursery to Year 6. Those with talents in sport and the arts are receiving some additional provision through, for example, specific music and swimming lessons and an art club. The school is working to extend provision for this group, with the next phase of development being targeted at meeting the additional needs of gifted pupils.
29. Satisfactory provision is made for PSHE, including sex education and attention to drug misuse. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and well attended by pupils. The school is in the process of extending this provision, which is mostly sport-related. A breakfast club gives some pupils a good start to the day and there is provision for some pupils to take-up additional study opportunities in the morning before school begins. Some visits and visitors enrich the curriculum but funding for these projects is sometimes an issue and limits the scope of what the school can provide. There are good links with a receiving high school to which many pupils transfer at age 11. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the school and Year 7 students regularly return to talk to Benchill pupils about what to expect in high school. There are strong links with local teacher-training institutions that add to the quality of learning experiences in a range of subjects.
30. Provision for developing pupils' spiritual growth and understanding is good. During lessons, there is an emphasis on respect for oneself and others. In assemblies, time is provided for pupils to reflect on many issues of a moral, social and spiritual nature. Teachers consistently use a range of strategies to reinforce self-esteem; for example, pupils' work and efforts are discussed and displayed around the school for others to admire. Achievements are praised in class and in assemblies. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum in science, music, art and design, PE and RE for pupils to be fascinated and delighted at what they discover and to show a sense of wonder in the natural world, human endeavour and their own achievements. This was well demonstrated in a Year 4 art and design lesson when printing blocks were lifted to reveal the pupils' gold and bronze prints. Such moments give pupils the chance to explore feelings and emotions.
31. Very good opportunities are provided for the development of moral values. Pupils are regularly prompted to consider the consequences of their own and others' behaviour. Across the curriculum, there are numerous opportunities for them to consider wider moral issues, such as those that relate to care of the environment. For instance, pupils studying Islam in Year 4 were relating the principles of trusteeship to their own local neighbourhood. Clear expectations are set for pupils in standards of behaviour and responsibility for their own actions, and teachers consistently apply good moral principles in classrooms. Good use is made of 'circle time' in which pupils explore



issues related to their feelings and the broader aspects of living in a society. A poster in the corridor reminds pupils that name calling hurts, while in a classroom another encourages pupils to give a smile to anyone who has lost theirs. Such visible signs of the school's expectations have a beneficial effect on pupils' values.

32. The school successfully fosters a strong sense of community, making very good provision for pupils' social development. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to work with others. For example, when researching in history or investigating in science and mathematics, they frequently work in pairs or small groups. When they do so, they are often reminded by teachers of the importance of co-operating and helping each other to achieve the tasks. The school council provides a good opportunity for those involved to see themselves as important parts of the whole school community. The school continually works hard at encouraging good behaviour and has achieved much success in this area, with the prefect system in Year 6 involving pupils in contributing to maintaining a harmonious ethos within the school community.
33. Whilst provision for cultural development is satisfactory, there is scope to enrich this area. Religious education makes a good contribution to provision in this area. There is a good range of musical instruments from around the world and cultural diversity is also explored satisfactorily within some art and design lessons. Occasional events, such as a book fair and visiting drama group, provide some cultural insights, as does the pen-pal link that some pupils have made with a school in West Virginia U.S.A.

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

34. Procedures for taking care of pupils are very good. The school's ethos provides a very caring environment where pupils and their families are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging and a commitment to the school's future. Awakened pupils' desire to learn and succeed is central to the school's aims. A strength is the high level of care for all pupils. Teachers, including the head and deputy, know them very well individually. For example, the headteacher always seems to know which child just needs a warm welcome or which one needs a word of encouragement when they visit his office to show him their work. Following amalgamation, the school has worked hard to put in place most of the required policies. However, the following policies are missing: a sex education policy, a policy for dealing with the misuse of drugs and a disability access policy.
35. Another strong feature of the school's care is the way in which pupils' contributions and achievements are valued and acknowledged. This is given a high profile and is making a very effective contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem and attitudes to school. Their ideas are carefully considered, for example, when brought up at school council meetings. Pupils are given responsibility for organising teams for sporting activities and the buddy system includes training for them to help each other sort out small misunderstandings. Displays clearly demonstrate the school's firm belief that each child is special by celebrating pupils' achievements and acknowledging their individual talents and strengths. A recent pupil consultation showed that they are generally very happy at school. Nonetheless, the consultation has been used to inform the development plan, ensuring that pupils' opinions are valued and taken into consideration.
36. Pupils are ensured full access to the wide range of opportunities offered by a good number of extra staff in classrooms to support those who need additional help and where necessary, the involvement of outside agencies. Being part of the EAZ gives the school access to a wide range of specialist help. This has been very successful in

ensuring that agencies work together to give pupils the extra help they need. All activities are open to all pupils, safety permitting and good procedures are in place to deal with the gender imbalance in some classes, for example ensuring that boys and girls are paired together for activities as often as possible. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection. He has had training in this role and ensures that all staff are up to date with their own training. There is a good awareness of pupils' healthcare needs and the site is regularly checked to make sure that the building and grounds are safe.

37. The school cares very well for its pupils with learning difficulties. Staff leave no stone unturned to provide the best possible opportunities for pupils. All statutory requirements, such as annual reviews of statements are carried out efficiently. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are held, including class teachers, the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), visiting teachers and teaching assistants. Parents are always given the opportunity to contribute. Visiting specialist teachers offer useful advice on both learning and behaviour and also help with the teaching of pupils that have a high level of need. Frequent visits from the educational psychologist ensure a further, very good level of expertise and support.
38. Procedures to ensure that pupils behave themselves are very good. Dealing with a previously high level of unacceptable behaviour has been one of the school's main priorities. A period of 'zero tolerance', implemented after the arrival of the current headteacher has been particularly successful in dealing with bullying. Both staff and pupils report that behaviour is now much better as a result. Circle time activities provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss topics such as bullying and racism, ensuring that these issues remain a high priority. Lunchtime is well organised with pupils eating on a rota-system so that all get the chance to have their dinner first. Lunchtime organisers have had a good deal of training in behaviour management and about how to organise playground games. Whilst they work hard to ensure that this time is pleasant, many pupils still find it hard to cope with the more relaxed structure of this part of the day.
39. Regular attendance is promoted well. Good systems help pupils and their parents understand how important regular attendance is to academic achievement. Registers are monitored regularly and a first-day contact system is in place. The education welfare officer (EWO) visits regularly to support the school in its aim to improve attendance. The class with the highest attendance is given a mention in assembly each week and the names of pupils who are on target to achieve one hundred per cent attendance are displayed. Pupils are responding very positively to these initiatives and parents report that their children are now pushing them to get them to school regularly and on time. Attendance is reported to parents formally on three occasions during the year and targeted for improvement where necessary. Parents are very aware that the school is keen to discourage them from taking holidays during term time.
40. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is very good. Assessment of children when they begin nursery and the reception classes is very helpful in enabling the school to measure progress during the Foundation Stage. From Year 1 onwards there is a well-structured plan for regular testing that gives similarly good information on pupils' progress and attainment at different points in their school career. The procedures for recording information about progress in English and mathematics are particularly good. Much of the information is recorded electronically and detailed analyses are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, the information is used to set individual pupil and school targets and to organise pupils into teaching groups and sets in Years 5 and 6. All of this is having a good impact on

raising standards. Similarly, the very good analysis of assessment information is allowing teachers to identify pupils who have not made as much progress as expected and to recognise where pupils have exceeded expectations. This encourages a better focus on individual learning needs. A detailed analysis of pupils' response to test questions is used to inform and modify curriculum planning, thereby contributing well to the drive to raise standards.

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

41. The views of the small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting are positive. The school's links with parents are good. A parent consultation has recently been carried out with results analysed and acted upon. In response, a 'parents' council' has been set up and meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss any parental issues or concerns. The language used in newsletters is also being looked at carefully to make sure it meets the community's needs.
42. The information provided for parents is good. They receive regular newsletters that keep them up to date with school activities. Current reports generally give good information about progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as targets for improvement. However, they do not meet legal requirements because some do not report on every subject. Planned changes will ensure this is corrected by the time this year's reports go out. Both the prospectus and governors' annual report give a wide range of interesting information, but both are missing some required details such as absence rates and the school's National Curriculum test results with national figures for comparison.
43. Parents are given good opportunities to discuss their children's progress at three consultation evenings held throughout the year. In the autumn term, this meeting includes a full discussion about what their children will be learning and expectations about behaviour and homework; a written follow-up is provided for those who are not able to attend. Throughout the year, parents receive very good information by way of two interim reports that provide an indication of how their child is progressing in English, mathematics and science. Targets for improvement and information about how good their child's attendance has been are also reported.
44. Good efforts are being made to help parents gain a greater understanding about how to support their children's learning. When their children are ready to start nursery most parents take the opportunity to participate in the transition programmes that are run by the school, such as 'Stepping Stones' and 'Sure Start'. In addition, a number of workshops have been organised, for example, to boost parents' own understanding of computing. A helpful first-aid course has also been provided. Parents are invited to many school functions; the recent Valentines Disco helped to raise funds for radios in classrooms. Parents are also invited to productions at Christmas and Easter and to class assemblies. Although only a small number regularly help in school, there is always a lot of support for one-off occasions and trips.
45. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties are kept well informed and are invited to contribute to annual reviews and their children's individual education plans (IEP's). Visiting specialists also meet with parents at parents' evenings and in special circumstances, the educational psychologist makes home visits.

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

46. Leadership and management are strengths of the school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher considerable improvements have occurred since the amalgamation in September 2000, particularly to pupils' academic and personal standards. The headteacher has established good procedures in key areas, such as planning and assessment and has implemented very effective systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning, which have led to improvements in both. This practice links well with the school's very good system for the performance management of teachers and aids the setting of improvement targets at both school and individual teacher levels. Much effort has also been channelled into improving provision in ICT. The recent opening of the new, very well equipped computer suite has considerably enhanced learning experiences in this subject and is promoting rapidly rising standards. Very good use is also made of new technology to aid curriculum planning, assessment, the monitoring of pupils' progress and development planning.
47. A hardworking deputy and other members of the senior management team support the headteacher very well. The deputy is a key player in the management of the school. Her very good management skills are a perfect complement to the excellent leadership skills of the headteacher. Other senior managers, such as those for the Foundation Stage and pupils with learning difficulties, undertake their roles very effectively and make a valuable contribution. The effectiveness of curriculum management by subject co-ordinators varies. Overall it is satisfactory, being strong in art and design, ICT and PE, but unsatisfactory in history and geography.
48. Under the headteacher's leadership the quality and appropriateness of strategic planning is very good. Throughout the school and within the governing body there is a shared vision about future priorities and how to achieve them and a very good commitment to improve. This vision and the effective teamwork that permeates the school is further strengthened by the very good procedures for supporting new staff particularly newly qualified and temporary teachers.
49. Governors are very active participants in the strategic management of the school and lend extremely good support to the school's improvement. They receive very good information from the headteacher and other staff and are well informed about the school's performance and rate of improvement. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in setting, monitoring and evaluating the priorities for improvement. To this end, the school's development plan is a very good working document to manage change and support improvement. The chair of governors is very well informed and leads a committed and loyal team of governors extremely well. The expertise of the chair of finance makes a valuable contribution to the very good financial management within the school. Additional funding, such as that for staff training and to support pupils with learning difficulties is used very effectively. Indeed, the commitment to ensuring the best possible provision for pupils with learning difficulties has resulted in funding over and above the special grants received to enhance the quality of support available. The school works hard to ensure that it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes. Governors fulfil most of their statutory duties satisfactorily but have not ensured that some of the required policies are in place.
50. There is a good number of teachers to meet pupils' needs. The generous number of support staff are deployed very effectively to meet the changing needs of the school. The level of training for staff involved with pupils with learning difficulties is good. Teachers and teaching assistants alike develop a high level of expertise.

Administrative staff provide a welcoming first contact for parents and visitors and good support for the smooth running of the school.

51. The new accommodation, although still being developed is very good. The building is appealing and very well maintained. Much effort is being put into making the outdoor area interesting. The accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is of a high standard, with a particularly stimulating outdoor area. There are two sizeable halls and a good range of additional rooms for teaching small groups. A separate library is in the early stages of being developed and there is a well-appointed ICT suite. Storage space is, however, somewhat limited.
52. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, with particular strengths in mathematics, music, PE, RE, ICT and for children in the Foundation Stage. There are shortages, however, in DT. Resources for pupils with learning difficulties are good. There is room to improve resources to develop skills in reading for meaning and those that promote speaking and listening skills.

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

53. The school should now:

- (1) Improve pupils' standards in speaking, listening and writing throughout the school by devising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating whole-school approaches to teaching these skills across the curriculum.

*(Main paragraphs 69-74)*

- (2) Raise standards in design and technology, geography and history by improving the curriculum provision for these subjects.

*(Main paragraphs 93-100)*

In addition to the key issues above, governors should consider the following less important issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- Ensure that the children in the younger reception class are supported sufficiently to remedy the shortfall in progress that occurred this year. *(Paragraph 1)*.
- Ensure that the school has the required policies for disability access, sex education, dealing with the misuse of drugs. *(Paragraph 34)*
- Ensure that reports on pupils' progress meet legal requirements. *(Paragraph 42)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	36	26	1	0	0
Percentage	1	19	45	33	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48	314
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28	217

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	87

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	66

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	26	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	6	13
	Girls	18	18	21
	Total	28	24	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (70)	55 (72)	77 (77)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	12	9
	Girls	19	22	21
	Total	27	34	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (67)	77 (79)	68 (72)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	26	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	15	14	18
	Total	31	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (24)	56 (33)	67 (50)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	11	16
	Girls	10	9	12
	Total	17	20	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	30 (21)	35 (26)	49 (35)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	300	0	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	440

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
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	£
Total income	956,929
Total expenditure	1,053,508
Expenditure per pupil	2,607
Balance brought forward from previous year	163,598
Balance carried forward to next year	67,019

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	362
Number of questionnaires returned	54

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	30	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	26	4	9	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	43	15	7	0
The teaching is good.	50	46	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	46	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	39	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	44	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	35	2	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	39	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	28	17	4	19

## **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**

54. Children enter the nursery in either September or January following their third birthday and transfer to reception a year later. Overall, nursery children make very good progress in all areas of learning in response to consistently good and better teaching, and high quality learning experiences. Staff work as a mutually supportive team for the benefit of all children. Very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage ensure that every aspect of each child's development is meticulously monitored, analysed and promoted. Consistent records show the progress made by individuals and groups and provide very effective support for curriculum and lesson planning.
55. Good induction procedures, which include meetings, visits and a booklet aim to involve parents in their children's learning from the outset and help children to settle happily. Each day, parents are warmly welcomed by staff and encouraged to stay and join in with activities at the start of the session. The nursery is divided into the areas of learning with several smaller rooms for quiet group work and a specific Foundation Stage dining room. Staff use the accommodation imaginatively to support children who need individual help and encouragement, particularly in personal and language development. The attractive outside provision is excellent, being used constantly and very effectively for targeted tasks with specific groups, as well as for free-flow play sessions. This has a very positive effect on children's development and self esteem.

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

56. Overall, children make very good progress in this area. This is seen in their good behaviour and developing personal and social skills. Through stories, rhymes and related activities, nursery children learn to take turns and share. For instance, when building up the sequence of a story, they wait patiently to choose the next object that will depict what happens. Reception children learn to understand and respect other people's beliefs and practices. For example, they show a growing awareness of various festivals such as Diwali, Hannukah and the Chinese New Year. They are beginning to realise that people celebrate in different ways.
57. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and consistently emphasise good manners. They treat children with respect and courtesy, which helps them to feel valued and secure and promotes good attitudes and relationships. Effective use is made of praise and encouragement, which boosts children's self-esteem. For example, when designing and making various vehicles, reception children 'burst with pride' when staff and other children praise their efforts. Skills of independence are continually promoted. Older reception children are more advanced in this area than those in the younger class, not only because of their age but because of the continuity in teaching that they have experienced. Many younger reception children have not yet learned to work and play together agreeably, nor do they sustain attention or concentration as well as older children when listening to adults or working independently. However, all children have good opportunities to gain independent leaning skills by, for example, making choices about some aspects of their work. Nursery children register their names on arrival and enjoy tidying away and sorting equipment. Most reception children are competent in dressing and undressing for PE.

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

58. From a very low starting point, children achieve well in this area as a result of good teaching. Staff constantly encourage children's speaking and listening skills through a variety of effective strategies and devices. These include singing and acting rhymes, games and very good 'pretend play' in which there is thoughtfully planned verbal interaction between staff and children. One good example was when nursery children discovered a photograph album in the class treasure chest that showed pictures of their teacher. The children showed great delight and with good support from adults, used a microphone to ask their teacher questions such as "*How old were you?*". Children also learn to dramatize stories, such as Goldilocks, using face masks and puppets to help them express their feelings about the characters. Most nursery children answer with one word, but staff consistently use sentences for them to repeat so as to extend their attainment in this aspect.
59. The speaking and listening skills of older reception children are developing well. Children are becoming more confident in expressing ideas; for example, in a discussion about tasting, one child volunteered, "*It felt very soft*", whilst another used the word 'tangy', quite precisely. The skills of children in the younger reception class are much weaker, with about half of these children having poor, indistinct, speech. During the inspection, however, some very good staff interaction with children engaged in pretend play in the classroom train station, really helped to promote communication skills.
60. Reading is an area that is developing well, with all children receiving much individual attention. All show a keen interest in stories and handle books carefully. Approximately a quarter of the children in reception read simple books correctly. They have a secure grasp of letter sounds and use these confidently to read unfamiliar words. These higher attainers have the skills expected for their age. Middle attainers recognise some familiar words and make good attempts at sounding out simple ones, identifying some blends such as 'gr' and 'dr'. Lower attainers are developing a good recall of sounds and recognize a few familiar words. A good range of teaching strategies supports the development of early reading skills. For example, children learn to identify words and sounds through games, by looking carefully at illustrations and by being helped to recognise the pattern in the repetitive sentences of simple books.
61. The writing skills of most children are developing well. Higher attainers spell simple words and make very good efforts at writing their own sentences. For example, in describing a meeting with a bear, one child wrote '*I wud go to bed, I wud be sged*' (scared). Middle attainers write lists, for example, a menu. A good number of lower attainers hear the initial and end sounds of words, but are not always able to recognize them in print or write them; they are beginning to copy words written by adults. Writing patterns and letter formation are taught well, although not all pupils hold their pencils correctly. Staff provide notices and captions to encourage reading and communication skills and to extend children's vocabulary. A wide range of word games, puzzles and activities are also used effectively to promote learning in this area.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Overall, teaching and learning in this area are good and most children have made good progress over time. On entry to nursery, few children can count reliably to five or recognize numbers. However, by the end of reception, higher attainers count and recite numbers to 20 and find, for example, two more or two less than 15. They are also beginning to record simple addition problems. All children are learning to make simple repeating patterns, for example, based on numbers and colours of objects and

are gaining a understanding of measures such as length, height and weight through appropriate practical activities. Lower attainers recognise simple shapes and match them accurately.

63. Counting skills and number activities are promoted well throughout each day, both in specific mathematics lessons and in other areas of learning. For instance, in a singing session involving nursery and reception children, carefully chosen songs supported counting, early number skills and mathematical vocabulary. Action songs focusing on forwards and backwards helped the children to understand positional vocabulary. Staff consistently use and encourage children to use the correct vocabulary such as *estimate, predict, compare* and *tally*. Work is adapted well to match children's needs. Even in the oral sessions at the beginning of lessons, questions are modified so that all children are able to participate and achieve success. Children are given good opportunities to use the computer to support their learning. They use programs that promote the development of skills in counting, matching and sorting. Mathematical ideas are also reinforced well in art and design activities where children are helped and encouraged to select the correct sizes and shapes for their models.

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

64. Most children enter school with limited experiences. However, they make good progress once introduced to the wide range of activities provided. Teachers' high expectations and a well-planned curriculum ensure that children quickly learn computer skills. By the end of the reception year, many achieve standards that are above those expected for their age. For example, they load programs, use drop-down menus and efficiently operate the tape recorders in the listening corner. Nursery children choose from a variety of materials and boxes to produce recognizable model vehicles and also learn cutting, sticking and gluing techniques. By the end of reception, children design model vehicles, thinking about the materials that they will use to construct them. They use construction equipment creatively in these tasks and learn skills in using tools, such as handsaws and glue guns, to cut and join materials.
65. Pretend play activities, such as travelling on a train, complete with hats and baggage, help children to understand journeys; this promotes early geographical knowledge and understanding. This work was enhanced very effectively by a recent visit to the airport where children took photographs and learned about different travel destinations and how an airport operates. Historical skills develop through activities in which children talk about recent and past events in their lives and look at photographs of themselves, and known adults, as babies. This work supports early scientific skills as nursery children develop an understanding of how they grow. In reception, children learn to name the main parts of their bodies and make moveable skeletons. They are beginning to realise how they and other living creatures and plants change over time. Reception children also discover their senses and showed great excitement in an activity where they tasted various dairy products. This work linked effectively with the learning about other people's customs, cultures and beliefs, in this instance, the Jewish celebration of Shavuot.

### **Physical development**

66. Most children's physical skills are underdeveloped when they begin school. Although some have had experiences in pedalling and climbing their movements are often poorly co-ordinated. Through good teaching, very good facilities, resources and well-planned indoor and outdoor activities, children make very good progress. By the end of reception, most achieve the expected levels. Children are dressed appropriately for

lessons and teachers ensure there are suitable warm-up and cool-down activities. Teachers point out the importance of these exercises and the children show enjoyment in feeling their 'hearts beating fast'. Children are given very wide ranging and imaginative physical experiences and teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve. For example, in a dance lesson, the children were expected to make a variety of body shapes and find different ways of travelling around the hall. They showed good control and a growing awareness of using the space and avoiding each other. Creativity was promoted well when the children were required to decide how they would move to depict butterflies, bees and tadpoles in response to different types of music. During these sessions, language skills were developed well, with staff encouraging the children to use the correct vocabulary to describe their movements. Teachers show good regard for the children's health and safety and help them to understand how listening carefully to instructions helps to keep them safe.

67. Outdoors, children experiment with a wide range of challenging toys and apparatus. These include bicycles, scooters, go-carts and wheelbarrows for riding, pushing and pulling. An interesting cycle trail, complete with roundabouts, dips and bumps, stimulates children's enthusiasm and supports the development of physical co-ordination skills very well as the children manoeuvre their wheeled toys around the track. The delight on the children's faces as they enjoy this imaginative, attractive environment is a joy to see. Large apparatus gives ample opportunities for climbing, jumping and balancing, whilst skills of dribbling, kicking, throwing and catching are encouraged with the use of obstacle courses, hockey sticks and bats. Staff interact well with the children's play, helping them to gain confidence and skills and promoting language development.

### **Creative development**

68. Children make good progress in this area. By the end of the reception year, standards are broadly in line with the levels expected. The effective display of children's artwork shows the very good range of learning experiences provided. Children develop appropriate skills in painting, drawing, collage and modelling. There are many opportunities throughout the day for children to sing rhymes and songs. A good range of musical instruments helps children to experiment with sounds and they are beginning to understand the terms *soft*, *quiet*, *quick* and *slow*. By the end of reception, children know the words to a wide variety of songs and hymns and are developing a sense of rhythm. They clap in time with songs and repeat patterns that are clapped by their teachers. Music makes a very good contribution to children's cultural development; for example, at the end of a music session, they sang an Israeli song very gently and with sensitivity. The thoughtfully planned drama and pretend play activities provide many opportunities for children to be creative. Language development is constantly promoted, with suitable captions used in displayed work, which provides a colourful and stimulating environment that promotes cultural and spiritual development very well.

### **ENGLISH**

69. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well below national expectations. Speaking, listening and writing are particular areas of weakness, especially in Years 1 to 5. The problems that pupils experience in spoken language have a negative impact on their standards in writing and prevent many from achieving good standards across the curriculum.

70. Pupils start Year 1 with poorly developed language skills. They lack the self-confidence to speak out and do not have enough vocabulary to extend their sentences or explain things in any significant detail. They quickly learn the conventions of taking turns in conversation and of being quiet while the teacher is speaking, but many do not always engage fully in the listening process and then have difficulties in following instructions for their work. Whilst they learn the new vocabulary that teachers teach them (words like 'phoneme' or 'capital letters'), they are slow to get the idea of speaking clearly, or of speaking differently in different situations. These difficulties continue into Years 3 to 6. Pupils continue to learn new words and ideas, for example that a hyphen brings two words together. However, sometimes there is no real understanding of the meaning because the idea of a hyphen is beyond the understanding of a significant number. Consequently, they cannot easily relate it to any aspect of their learning and therefore assimilate the new words slowly. Nevertheless, when asked to pretend to be characters in a situation to which they can relate, such as parental divorce, Year 6 pupils showed themselves to have no shortage of things to say. This was because they could see the relevance of what they are talking about. Year 6 pupils generally show that they have at least acquired the confidence to speak out, ask the meaning of words and use them appropriately. However, they still struggle to adapt their speech to the audience or situation.
71. During Years 1 and 2, pupils gradually learn to build up words by blending sounds and to recognise words that occur frequently in all books. They get the idea of using the pictures or of reading on to help them understand. Progress is steady but standards are still below average by the end of Year 2. Although a few pupils read at home and have a good store of stories and nursery rhymes that they know, they are in the minority. Most are still reading very simple texts and struggle to read new words. Progress quickens in the juniors and although standards are still below average, improvement can be seen through the school's records of standardised test scores. Most pupils reach Year 6 able to read at least well enough to access most of the curriculum. A few are really keen readers: they belong to the public library and know how to use contents and index pages to find information. They have well-developed preferences for the books and authors they like. However, many pupils read reluctantly, know very few authors and have little experience of using books or the library for research. The school is aware of this shortfall and is making every effort to ensure that, when the new library is up and running, pupils will have significantly increased opportunities to choose their own books and find information independently.
72. Standards in writing are weak. Whilst handwriting is initially a problem for many infant pupils, the school's current focus on this aspect is helping them to gain confidence and develop a clear style with correctly formed letters. Similarly, the difficulties that pupils have in combining letter sounds to form words is being addressed by the provision of structured sessions that focus on word-building. In response, pupils are gradually beginning to try to spell words for themselves and to develop some independence as writers. There is, however, a substantial proportion who are still working well below the expected level. These pupils show limited knowledge of how to spell common words and find it difficult to structure sentences or to use punctuation correctly. Throughout the school, pupils' weak standards in writing are closely linked to their poor language skills. Whilst standards are still well below average by the end of Year 6, pupils show that they are developing more confidence as writers and will attempt written tasks in a range of subjects.
73. Teaching in English lessons provides pupils with good experience of writing in a wide range of styles. However, whilst pupils show that they can comply with the basic format of, say, letter writing or play-scripts, when they come to produce their own



work, their lack of vocabulary and experience of books prevent them from experimenting with language to create character or atmosphere. They do, though, show evidence of progress in their ability to spell, punctuate and extend their ideas logically. Teaching is always satisfactory and during the inspection, a good proportion was good or better. All teachers implement the national literacy strategy effectively and coverage of the required curriculum is good. There are occasions, however, when the content of this work is not relevant to the pupils' developmental stage or interests. When this happens, pupils usually manage to behave well but do not engage fully with what is being taught, which impedes their progress. Lessons containing material that pupils really enjoy or can identify with are noticeably more successful than those that deal with abstract ideas or matters outside their experience. For example, although a lesson on letter writing was taught well, it focused on a text about publishing and book making with which pupils could not really engage so they failed to grasp the relevant teaching points. Overall, teachers capitalise well on opportunities to promote literacy skills across the curriculum. In geography, history and RE, for example, pupils are frequently reminded about layout, spelling and punctuation. In some classes, however, there is an overuse of worksheets instead of a piece of continuous writing. This reduces opportunities for pupils to extend writing skills.

74. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of what is needed to raise standards. This remains a major priority, with a focus on improving standards in speaking and listening already planned for next year. There are good assessment systems with, for example, teachers analysing pupils' writing progress each term to determine standards and identify areas for improvement. The subject has an adequate supply of new and attractive books and materials but there is a shortage of interesting materials for lower attainers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. Standards for the current groups of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are well below average. However, the school's data shows that over time, these groups of pupils have made satisfactory progress. Currently, the quality of learning is good, resulting from recent improvements to teaching and the school's implementation of the national numeracy strategy. The school rightly recognises that there is still scope for improvement and is working hard to secure this through initiatives such as setting in Years 5 and 6 and providing specific work programmes for identified groups. For example, before-school tuition is provided for some pupils identified as needing additional support. Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and enjoy lessons. They behave well and most apply themselves conscientiously to tasks, quickly settling to activities.
76. During Year 1 there is a clear focus on developing counting skills and pupils' understanding of number. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, higher attainers are working competently with numbers up to 100. In adding and taking-away tasks they make effective use of their recall of addition and subtraction facts. However, pupils' confidence and proficiency in mental/oral work is not well developed because their weak speaking and listening skills prevent them from explaining the strategies that they use. Average attainers are gaining confidence in working with numbers up to 20 and lower attainers recognise and write numbers up to 10, making simple calculations using these numbers. Higher attainers halve and double two-digit numbers that end in five and nought and are learning to use simple strategies for multiplying two numbers. For example, they know that to find the answer to two times five you add five to itself. Pupils are developing a range of strategies to help them solve simple number problems. For example, some higher and average attainers reason that one way to

solve the problem of eight take away two is to say what must be added to two to make eight. A good focus on the development of mathematical vocabulary is improving pupils' ability to use this correctly when discussing their work or explaining how they solve problems.

77. By the end of Year 6, higher and average attainers have a sound grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attainers are confident working with four-figure numbers. Whilst their recall of multiplication tables helps them to solve problems, they are not secure in multiplication facts and take some time to work out answers. High and some average attainers apply their mathematical skills to solving quite complex money problems. For example, using a travel brochure they cost a holiday for a family of four, taking account of supplements to be added and discounts offered. Lower attainers show a satisfactory understanding of hundreds, tens and units and use this to solve simple multiplication and division problems with whole numbers. With adult support, lower attainers including those with learning difficulties, calculate the cost of a meal, in pounds and euros, reading the prices from a menu. In the same lesson, higher attainers made good use of a spreadsheet to calculate the price, converting euros to pounds. Higher and average attainers have good knowledge of fractions. For instance, they know that one way to find a quarter of a given number is to halve it then halve it again. They also apply a range of strategies to work out fractional amounts of given numbers.
78. Across the school the quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers' secure mathematical knowledge ensures that basic numeracy skills are taught well. Weekly planning clearly identifies the things that are to be learnt, including key vocabulary and necessary resources. Most teachers make distinctions in their lesson plans and teaching between the differing learning needs of pupils, providing modified or different work to ensure that all make progress. This is not the case in all lessons, however. Occasionally, in both infant and junior classes, higher attainers are not always challenged with work that makes realistic demands on them. Those with learning difficulties make good progress in response to the effective support provided by teachers and support staff. These pupils benefit from an emphasis on the steady and progressive teaching of basic numeracy skills. Where teaching and learning are most effective, pupils are encouraged to discuss their work, using a range of mathematical vocabulary to explain the strategies that they use to solve problems. Most teachers make good use of assessment throughout lessons to check on pupils' understanding. Work is regularly marked and marking generally is of a good standard. In Year 6, it is particularly helpful to pupils, indicating clearly what they have done well and what they must do to improve.
79. Numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum. For example, older pupils' ICT work on spreadsheets and data representation is beginning to make a good contribution to mathematical learning. Some very good use of ICT to promote infant pupils' understanding of multiplication was also seen during the inspection. Due to weaknesses in the curriculum for geography and DT (both of which have good potential for supporting mathematical development) opportunities are being lost to enable pupils to apply mathematical skills in these subjects.
80. An effective action plan is supporting the drive to raise standards. A wide range of assessment information is collected and used well to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils and to aid the setting of targets for improved standards.

## SCIENCE

81. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are below average. However, the school's data shows that pupils have made satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning satisfactorily in response to satisfactory teaching. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are mostly good. Unfortunately, pupils' limited language skills have an adverse affect on their overall progress, resulting in them having difficulty in explaining areas that they have studied and applying learning to new situations.
82. Overall, whilst teaching is at least satisfactory, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend scientific skills because many investigations that they undertake are too teacher directed. Although teachers need to structure work, because of pupils' limited literacy skills, they are not given enough opportunities to develop investigative skills and devise their own methods for data gathering and recording. Frequently, they are required to fill in prepared charts and grids instead of giving thought to how results should be measured, recorded and analysed. Generally, pupils do not see the wider implications of their experiments or make suggestions about cause and effect. However, during the inspection, a good lesson in Year 3 gave rise to a 'rogue' result in recorded findings and the teacher was able to lead a good discussion about an important scientific principle.
83. By Year 6, pupils are able to measure with a variety of instruments including scales, thermometers and rulers. There is good evidence of numeracy skills being used in science, for example in the work on forces in Year 6, calculating volume and plant growth in Year 3 and measuring hand-spans and the area of feet in Year 2. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT. Pupils generally enjoy the subject and attitudes towards learning are good. They work well in groups and co-operate with each other in sharing thoughts and ideas. Pupils discuss the work that they are doing and are enthusiastic about practical work. Written work is often recorded accurately and neatly showing pupils' good interest.
84. Teachers ensure that there are clear learning objectives for all lessons, which help pupils to focus on key knowledge, skills and understanding. However, the weak language development of many lower attainers results in fragmentary scientific knowledge, making progress more difficult for them. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is not secure enough to provide sufficient challenge for higher attainers, which restricts opportunities for them to extend scientific understanding. Teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour and do well at maintaining interest, especially for pupils with very short concentration spans. In the best lessons, teachers' use of questioning is good and encourages pupils to think through ideas and explain their findings. There are good displays in all classrooms to support the topic being studied.
85. The co-ordinator is clear about the developments that are needed to raise standards. Currently, checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not made. However, there is good analysis of pupils' performance in tests and assessments to inform future planning. The subject action plan shows that science is to be the focus for staff training, particularly in the area of investigation and experimentation. Work is marked regularly, but mostly indicates only what pupils have covered rather than what they have done well and how they might improve. Consequently, pupils do not have enough information to gain a good understanding of their own learning.
86. The curriculum has been enriched through good use of a city learning centre, where pupils benefit from studying science modules taught by subject specialists. Visiting lecturers have also presented talks on 'States of Matter' and 'Forces in Action.' Study trips, such as that to an environmental centre, have had a science focus, as have

projects conducted in conjunction with the EAZ; both have enhanced the curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

87. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. The subject will become a focus for development this year. In preparation, the co-ordinator has concentrated on giving the subject a high profile in terms of ensuring that there are very stimulating displays of pupils' work and that of known artists and designers around the school. There has already been a strong focus on ensuring that teachers really value pupils' work. Pupils have had opportunities to work with community artists, producing, for example, large-scale mosaics and are soon to benefit from the input of ten art students from a local university who will spend time working in the school. A weekly art group, currently for Year 5 pupils, has been started and some good links have been made with subjects such as English, where pupils have again worked with community artists to produce paintings stimulated by poems. Some effective support has also been provided by parents who have produced some high quality murals on corridor walls.
88. By Year 2, pupils have gained a sound understanding of various techniques, including collage, painting, textiles and sculpture. During the inspection, a well-taught and resourced lesson allowed Year 2 pupils to extend their knowledge and skills of still-life painting very well. The teacher questioned pupils effectively to recap on what they had learned previously about this style of art. Pupils' answers were supplemented with additional information about how different artists, such as Cezanne, worked in this way. The teacher stressed the need for pupils to look carefully and draw only what was seen. Since the classroom was well organised so that pupils were sat around a central, 'still-life', focus of various fruits, this helped pupils to appreciate the idea of perspective. The idea was reinforced well when they shared and evaluated their finished paintings, which showed that almost all had produced very individual works due to their different viewing angles. After making their initial sketches, in which pupils focused on achieving the right shapes and proportion, most were able to mix appropriate shades of paint and apply them effectively.
89. Year 6 pupils have produced some detailed artwork linked to their work on Ancient Greece. For example, after studying frescos, the pupils designed and made their own. An environmental visit by Year 6 and Year 4 pupils, resulted in pupils creating natural works of art with twigs, grasses, leaves and stones, in the style of Andy Gallsworthy. In studying the work of various artists, Year 6 pupils have also learned techniques such as smudging oil pastels and charcoal to create an impressionist effect. Similar experiences have been provided for pupils in other year groups with for example, very stimulating works arising from a study of David Hockney, in which pupils juxtaposed strips of photographic images of faces.
90. Teaching is good overall. Most lessons are well organised and resourced and it is clear that teachers have completed background research to ensure that they provide pupils with the right information. Demonstrations to the class, together with good intervention for groups and individual pupils whilst they are working practically, provide effective support for the learning of new skills. Where teaching is less effective, it is due mainly to some weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. During the inspection, this was seen when a teacher moved pupils on through processes too quickly. Some Year 1 pupils had limited time to explore how they could manipulate various materials, which was the main focus of the lesson, because they were required to produce a completed picture before the end. However, in another lesson in

the same year group, much more time was provided for exploration, resulting in far better finished works. In this lesson, the teacher also promoted pupils' spoken language, vocabulary, and spelling skills very well, getting them to describe the materials and discuss how they might be spelt.

91. Throughout the school, the quality of work on display shows that most pupils enjoy the subject and take pride in their work. During the inspection most pupils worked hard in lessons and behaved well. However, in one junior lesson behaviour was poor. This hindered pupils' progress and significantly reduced the effectiveness of the teaching in what was a well-planned lesson. The teacher was faced with rudeness and disrespect from a significant proportion of pupils who made it clear that they had no intention of listening or making any real effort to participate.
92. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a clear view of how to develop the subject in terms of improving both provision and standards. Developing pupils' self-esteem through high quality display of their work, with accompanying captions, underpins the whole process. The subject makes an especially effective contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual and personal development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

93. There is very little teaching of DT in the school. Consequently standards, progress and the curriculum are unsatisfactory. A subject leader was appointed in January this year and has produced a comprehensive action plan for implementation from September. Full implementation of this plan should support the school in addressing the weaknesses in pupils' standards and progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are below national expectations. Pupils do not make as much progress as they should because not all of the planned units of work are taught and the quality of those that are varies from good to poor. Work in books and discussions with pupils indicate that they are very interested in geographical topics and how people have had an impact on the environment. However, there are parts of the curriculum, such as the study of an economically developing area, which are insufficiently resourced and are not being properly taught. Opportunities for trips and fieldwork to provide first-hand experiences are limited, but improving. For example, there is now a visit to the Longdendale environmental centre and the River Bollin to support topics covered in school. Mapwork does not feature as strongly as it should and consequently, by Year 6 pupils do not have a good enough understanding of this key area of the subject.
95. Pupils in Year 6 have been studying rivers, water and mountain environments. There is some good work on Snowdonia and the human impact on the environment caused through tourism and industry. There is also some good work in Year 5 on coastlines and coastal erosion, including diagrams. This shows some understanding of complex geographical terms such as 'deposition' and 'longshore drift', indicating high teacher expectations. Both of these examples show attainment at an appropriate level. However, much of junior pupils' work is brief and confined to low-level worksheets that require undemanding answers.
96. In contrast to most other subjects, pupils' work is not well presented and sometimes unfinished. Opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand information are limited. Pupils in

Year 1 have watched traffic and made a tally chart to record findings, but there is little evidence of good use of the school's own grounds and environment as a resource for investigating geographical questions.

97. The subject leader does not have a clear understanding of the contribution of geography to the curriculum and does not have a view of whether the pupils' standards of attainment are satisfactory or not. Although learning resources are mostly adequate, the plan to purchase globes for each classroom is not based on a proper audit of the needs of the pupils or the demands of the curriculum.

## **HISTORY**

98. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are below national expectations. In part, this is because pupils' poor literacy skills prevent them from researching and recording effectively. More importantly however, weaknesses in the curriculum prevent pupils from achieving as well as they could. Currently, the organisation of teaching time provides insufficient continuity for pupils to develop historical skills. Additionally, in many year-groups, the emphasis is on promoting historical knowledge rather than the key skills of research, investigation, understanding and communication.
99. By the end of Year 2, pupils have some idea of past and present, but find it difficult to explain how their observation of pictures enables them to draw conclusions about differences between these two periods. When they look at holiday scenes from Edwardian and modern beach holidays, their own lack of experience prevents them from identifying effectively with either. Consequently, the teacher has difficulty in drawing out their observations. No lessons were seen in Year 6 but an analysis of pupils' work shows limited understanding of what life in Ancient Greece might have been like and very limited coverage of any topics other than language.
100. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Year 3. The best features of lessons are often practical and realistic. For example, a string time-line in a Year 4 lesson gave pupils an idea of just how long ago the Egyptians lived. High quality books and photographs in Year 3 offered pupils detailed information about Viking Longships. However, in Year 2, pupils' observations of holidays, past and present, were impeded by the use of rather poor quality photocopies and small photographs. Real items, such as an Edwardian and modern seaside bucket and swimsuit would have made much more of an impact. The use of commercially produced worksheets in many year groups tends to curtail opportunities for the sort of extended writing that would help improve pupils' literacy skills alongside those in history. The subject is not being led and managed effectively. The co-ordinator does not have a clear view of pupils' standards, progress or of how the curriculum should be developed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

101. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are below national expectations. However, given the total lack of learning opportunities that many pupils experienced earlier in their school career, they have achieved satisfactorily. Currently, good learning is occurring and standards are rising in response to considerable improvements in teaching and resources.
102. Pupils are responding well to good teaching, which has shown significant improvement following the implementation of an effective training programme.

Teachers now work confidently in the new ICT suite and make good use of classroom computers to support learning in a range of subjects. They have high expectations, with the result that pupils respond enthusiastically, are well motivated and approach ICT with assurance. Teaching assistants also give effective support, particularly in the ICT suite and make a considerable contribution to pupils' good learning. A highly knowledgeable, part-time technician has made a very good impact on the development of teachers' expertise and confidence, as well as making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to work at computers. In all year groups they are expected to log-on to the ICT network, locate and open programs and save and retrieve files. Whilst infant pupils require adult support to do these things successfully, older pupils, especially those in Year 6, do it as a matter of course. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and also make good progress.

103. During Year 1, pupils become familiar with the parts of a computer, especially the keyboard, and learn to use a range of function keys. They are systematically taught skills and quickly learn how to alter text by, for example, changing the font, colour and size. They write simple captions on the screen and enjoy seeing them printed off onto paper. Year 2 pupils use computers to search for information. With very effective adult support, they log on to the Internet, locate an appropriate site, for example, to seek information about cats and dogs and input an appropriate command to retrieve a range of facts. High and average attainers are growing in confidence in giving computers instructions to make things happen.
104. Year 3 pupils use computers successfully to sort and classify information and to present their findings. They created a database about themselves and then used it to answer a range of questions that they devised themselves. Pupils in Year 4 use the keyboard to input commands to create shapes on the screen. Year 6 create interesting presentations on a range of topics. Whilst lower attainers require a lot of adult support, average and higher attainers largely work independently. Higher attainers add sound and use tools to animate text and pictures. They make good use of computers to support work in other subjects. For instance, in mathematics, Year 5 pupils confidently use software to compare numbers to decide whether one is larger or smaller than another.
105. The school is endeavouring to approach much of the work in ICT through other subjects and overall, this is working well. There is a good action plan to support improvement, which rightly identifies the need to further extend ICT use across the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge and skills can be applied in a range of contexts. There is already some good practice in this area. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and clear about future plans for improving provision and standards. Resources are good, with the new ICT suite being used efficiently and effectively. Computer facilities in classrooms are good. Overall provision for ICT throughout the school is good, with sufficient computers to give each pupil plenty of hands-on experience, which is supporting the raising of standards.

## **MUSIC**

106. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly average. Curriculum planning gives good guidance for non-specialist musicians so that teachers are becoming more confident in their teaching.
107. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had good experiences in singing, listening, performing and composing. They are learning to tap rhythms, paying attention to rests,

very well. They can also differentiate between pulse and rhythm. Year 2 pupils listen attentively to a range of music and can, through actions, show when the music is high or low, for example, when listening to *'The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy'*. Year 1 pupils showed delight and excitement as they anticipated the sound of the cuckoo when listening to that part of *'The Carnival of Animals'*. Pupils have many opportunities to play a wide range of percussion instruments, which they handle respectfully. They follow signals from a 'conductor' well, for instance, to play softly or loudly, but are less successful accompanying singing when performing in groups.

108. It was not possible to see music lessons in Year 6. However, through discussion, observing a class assembly, Balalaika lessons and music in other classes, progress is judged to be at least satisfactory. As pupils get older, they explore musical ideas such as phrasing and dynamics and tap out more complicated rhythms. For example, pupils in Year 3 repeat complex rhythms accurately and although they have not yet learned the names of the notes, they find the cards showing the relevant notation. Year 4 pupils recognize the beginning and ending of phrases in a tune and mark them with suitable movements. When listening to a piece by Mussorgsky, pupils showed good understanding in recognizing the pauses and changes. Instrumental work is extended as pupils work in pairs to create ostinato rhythms and question/answer phrases. They do this well and perform confidently for each other. Throughout the school, singing is the weakest area. In some lessons, teachers are unable to lead tuneful singing. Tuned percussion instruments, such as chime bars, are not used to help pupils to begin on an appropriate note to match the pitch of their voices. Singing in assemblies, although mainly tuneful, often lacks precision and not all pupils join in readily. In practice sessions involving pupils from a range of classes, not enough attention is given by teachers to prompting the skills of phrasing, diction and dynamics.
109. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching in the areas of listening and playing rhythmically. Teachers are generally enthusiastic and follow the new scheme of work meticulously. Resources are good and the new co-ordinator is keen to promote the subject and give it a higher profile in the school. There are no extra-curricular musical activities but pupils regularly perform at assemblies for parents and in Christmas productions. Some talented pupils in Years 5 and 6 are learning to play the Balalaika. Music is played before and after assemblies and throughout the day quiet, reflective music can be heard along corridors and in open spaces. Overall, the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

110. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 1 and 2. During Years 3 to 6, progress is good and is compensating for previous weaknesses in standards, which are beginning to rise. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 receive good quality swimming instruction and achieve sound standards relative to their respective ages. By the time they leave school, almost all pupils can swim the expected 25 metres unaided.
111. Year 2 pupils perform basic actions of travelling, rolling and jumping, taking their weight on various parts of the body, both on the floor and on apparatus. They demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination as they bend, stretch, and travel. When jumping from a low platform, pupils land softly and with appropriate control. They use their skills to create simple sequences of movements and co-operate well when working in pairs or as part



of a group. Pupils are learning simple evaluative skills as they comment on each other's performances and then try to improve their work as a result.

112. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate satisfactory games skills, for example they have acquired basic throwing and receiving techniques, which they use in a range of games contexts. Their performance in dance is at the expected level. Here, higher and average attainers work well individually and in pairs, developing creative dance sequences through interpreting the mood, beat and rhythm of the music. Lower attainers lack confidence in performing and require additional support from adults to developing ideas. They do not respond as rhythmically to music as others and their dance sequences are less complex.
113. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work so that they can improve their performance. For example, in a good Year 1 dance lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to use space well and to maintain a good body shape when moving. She challenged them to think of ways in which they could improve their work. Those who performed well demonstrated their work for others. In less effective lessons, the pace is rather slow and pupils are given less help to develop ideas and less encouragement to improve their performance. In the juniors, teaching and learning are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure; they expect pupils to work hard and to improve their skills through practise and critical evaluation. Lessons begin with interesting and effective warm-up activities and progress to well-planned tasks that help pupils develop and refine skills. For example, a Year 6 games lesson commenced with a rigorous team game that was enjoyed by all and motivated pupils for the remainder of the session.
114. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Overall, the curriculum is good. This has been recognised by the recent receipt of the Active Mark Award by Sport England in recognition of good provision in the field of sports and physical education. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities for juniors enhances learning. A range of sports clubs are organised and these are popular and well attended. Presently there is nothing to enhance the curriculum in this way for infants, but the school is endeavouring to address this. There are good opportunities for juniors to participate in competitive sports against other schools, including football, netball and cross-country running. This gives further opportunity to develop games skills and to meet pupils from neighbouring schools thereby contributing to social development. The school enjoys good facilities, having two sizable halls and good hard-surfaced and grassed playing areas. A good range of equipment is available for use in lessons and this is in good condition.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

115. All pupils make good progress and by the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
116. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the differences involved in belonging to a Christian, Hindu or Muslim family and their respective places of worship. They compare and contrast Christian and Muslim worship, stating that while both may use candles, many Christian churches have stained glass windows and benches whereas mosques have special shoe racks and prayer mats. Underpinning the work in these years is a strong sense of belonging to a special community and an understanding of how people should behave and treat each other. Pupils consider the festivals and

special events in the religions they study. For example, Year 2 pupils describe the role of godparents in a Christian christening. They share their thoughts and hopes for a new baby and enjoy writing these on 'leaves' for their 'hope tree'. Most of their wishes are very positive and include statements such as *'I hope that you do well at school'*, and, *'I hope that you grow up big and strong'*.

117. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the major beliefs, symbols and observances of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jews. Their good grasp of the Sikh symbols, 'The Five K's', is supported well by very good artefacts and classroom displays. Reflection on looking after their own environment links with the Muslim belief that people are Allah's trustees of the Earth. Pupils sensibly discuss the impact of anti-social behaviour on the environment and the messages in the Qur'an that guide Muslims. They have good knowledge of stories from the sacred texts of the Bible, Qu'ran and Ramayana and the various celebrations of the associated religions, such as Wesak in the Buddhist community. Pupils are realising that there are Buddhists all over the world, including Manchester. They read an account of last year's celebrations in Manchester, discussing why different rituals are followed and were keen to find out about this year's celebrations. The subject helps pupils to understand aspects of life in a multi-cultural society.
118. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, as is their lesson planning. Effective use is made of a good range of quality resources to support learning, including artefacts, videos, worksheets and ICT. Pupils record their work neatly and show interest in the subject. The new co-ordinator has made a good start on developing the subject, which makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.