

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Stretford, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 133284

Headteacher: Mr John O'Brien

Reporting inspector: Mr Alan Fullwood  
21184

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

Inspection number: 249041

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Derbyshire Lane Stretford Manchester
Postcode:	M32 8SH
Telephone number:	0161 865 7705
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Gregory
Date of previous inspection:	This is an amalgamated school that has not been inspected before.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21184	Mr A Fullwood	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
10965	Mrs P Edwards	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24031	Mrs I Idle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology	
20244	Mr D Morgan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
22157	Mr M Roussel	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	
3942	Mr K Sanderson	Team inspector	History Geography Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</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>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</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>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Ann's Roman Catholic Primary School is an above-average-sized primary school situated in the Trafford area of Manchester. There are currently 369 boys and girls on roll, taught in mainly single-aged classes. There is also a nursery which currently caters for 52 part-time pupils. There are, at present, 42 Foundation Stage children in the reception classes. Currently there are more boys than girls. The school was an amalgamation of the junior and infant schools on the one site in April 2001. It serves the nearby local-authority housing estates but also draw its pupils from further afield. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs or who are eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with national averages. There is little movement of pupils to and from the school throughout any one year. The attainment of children on entry to the school, although wide ranging, is generally in line with expectations for this age group. However, the attainment of the current group of reception-aged pupils on entry to the school was well below the expected level in speaking, listening, and personal and social skills.

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

St Ann's Roman Catholic Primary School is an effective school where pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave. It provides a good education for its pupils and successfully encourages them to develop very good attitudes to learning and to behave well. Since the amalgamation of the two schools, a positive community ethos has quickly been established in which pupils feel valued and secure. The school is led and managed very well. It provides good value for money.

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

- It enables pupils to make good progress and achieve good standards of attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave.
- It has established a positive and effective ethos in which pupils feel secure and valued, and successfully promotes very good attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour.
- It provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- It provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development
- It is led and managed very well by the headteacher and governors.

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

- Teaching and curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring provision and standards.

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

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

The school is an amalgamation of the infant and junior schools which shared the same site and was combined in April 2001. Therefore, as it has not been inspected before no judgement can be made about progress since the last inspection.



## 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	B	B	A
mathematics	N/A	B	B	A
science	N/A	C	D	C

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

The above table shows that in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment in English and mathematics were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Pupils' attainment in science was below the national average for all schools but close to the average for similar schools.

Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of the current group of pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics is above national expectations, and that pupils are making good progress and achieving well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. Pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations and they make satisfactory progress. Standards in other National Curriculum subjects are also in line with national expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress.

National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics to be above the average for all schools and well above the average for similar schools. Teacher assessments in science showed pupils' attainment to be average. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is above national expectations in English and mathematics and in line with them in science. In English and mathematics, pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In science, pupils achieve as well as they should. Standards in other National Curriculum subjects are in line with national expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress.

Children make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage in the reception classes, but their progress in the nursery is unsatisfactory. The teachers' planning lacks clarity and the skills children are to learn are not always clearly identified. Most children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> in their mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress in these areas of learning. Children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills, and in their personal, social and emotional development, but due to their low starting points on entry to the school will not achieve the Early Learning Goals in these areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels, and begin to write simple sentences.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are interested in the activities provided by teachers. They enthusiastically take advantage of the many opportunities the school offers, such as the numerous lunch-time clubs. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils consistently demonstrate care and consideration for others and move around the school calmly and politely. They show respect for the school, the environment and each other's property. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities and enjoy helping with class and school routines. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. This has a positive impact on the way pupils treat one another.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance was well below the national average last year but has improved this year and is now slightly below the national average. This is mainly because of families having to take holidays in term time due to work closures. Sessions start on time and the majority of pupils arrive within the time allowed for registration.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in three lessons in the Foundation Stage classes.

The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, varying between good and unsatisfactory. Generally, teachers' planning lacks clarity, and the skills children are to learn are not always clearly identified. Most children could do better, particularly in the nursery.

The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall and varies from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum and plan interesting and stimulating lessons that promote pupils' learning well.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall and pupils make good progress as a result. Their literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in other subjects of the curriculum. Good assessment procedures are in place and are consistently applied by teachers. The quality of teaching in science is also good, but recent improvements have not yet had time to impact on standards. However, pupils are achieving as well as they should.

Teaching and learning in geography, history, design and technology, art, and information and communication technology are good. The quality of teaching and learning in music and physical education is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good due to the very good support they receive.

Satisfactory use is made of homework to support pupils' learning at home. The quality of marking is generally satisfactory and is good in English. Generally, good use is made of teachers' daily lesson assessments of pupils' attainment and progress to plan future work.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced. The overall quality of teachers' planning is good. There is very good provision of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is satisfactory overall, except in the nursery, where it is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils make good progress due the very good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants in classes and when withdrawn for specialist help.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social development is very good and the provision for their cultural development is good. The Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school places a strong emphasis on raising the self-esteem of pupils, acknowledging their achievements and celebrating their successes. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. The school has effective procedures for monitoring attendance and child protection. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in English and mathematics and are developing in other subjects.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have worked successfully to establish an effective system of management and a very clear educational direction to the work of the school. The role of subject co-ordinators is under-developed, particularly with regard to monitoring teaching and learning, and this is a current target in the school improvement plan. The Foundation Stage lacks clear leadership and direction, and this is affecting standards.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out their responsibilities very well. They monitor the work of the school closely and are very well informed by the headteacher. Governors have worked hard to ensure the successful amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's analysis of pupils' performance identifies areas of success and those in need of further improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms is effectively carried out by the headteacher and the senior management team.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and closely linked to the educational priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The principles of best value are applied well.

The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school's accommodation is very good and learning resources are generally good.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school, are expected to work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils are well behaved and are becoming more mature.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The good leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities the school provides outside of lessons</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for the age of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectation for this age group. However, due to the very good teaching and curriculum provision that they receive, particularly in Years 1 to 6, they make good progress and are on track to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
2. Overall, children make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. Most pupils are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and make satisfactory progress overall. Children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. However, the majority will not achieve the Early Learning Goals in these areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Children's progress in the nursery is unsatisfactory. The teachers' planning lacks clarity and the skills children are to learn are not always clearly identified.
3. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was above the national average and well above average for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of the current group of pupils in Year 2 is above average in all aspects of English and that pupils are making good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1 due to the good quality of teaching they receive. Most pupils listen carefully and, with the encouragement of their teachers, communicate clearly their ideas and opinions. Most read simple, known texts confidently using a range of different strategies. Higher-attaining pupils say which books they have enjoyed reading and which ones they did not like. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Standards in writing are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils can write in a wide range of formats making good use of punctuation and accurate spellings, and present their work well.
4. In mathematics, the results in the Year 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is above national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. More-able pupils make very good progress as they are challenged by the work set for them and very well motivated to succeed. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons are brisk. They challenge and motivate pupils, and increase the speed and accuracy of their mental calculations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their data-handling skills. There was little evidence of them using information and communication technology to promote their numeracy skills.
5. Teacher assessments in science at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 is close to the national average, but that the percentage attaining the higher Level 3 is well below average. The attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations, and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs

make good progress towards the targets set for them. Recent improvements made to the teaching of pupils' scientific enquiry skills mean that they make satisfactory progress in ensuring that their experiments are fair and that they use their knowledge and understanding to make sensible predictions of the likely outcomes of their investigations. However, more-able pupils are not always sufficiently extended by the work set for them and do not make sufficient progress. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in science and satisfactory use is made of pupils' computer skills.

6. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. Most pupils are able to use simple word-processing programs to compose short pieces of writing and change the size and type of the font. They show confidence in producing simple graphs and charts, and can use art programs to produce pictures and designs. Pupils can enter a set of instructions into a programmable toy to ensure that it follows a given route. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities due to the good support they receive.
7. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
8. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6 showed pupils' attainment to be above the national average for all schools and well above the average for similar schools. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are making good progress in all aspects of the subject and attain standards above national expectations. Most confidently put forward their ideas and opinions in class and group discussions and have a wide vocabulary. They listen attentively to their teachers and take on board the views of other pupils in the class. Pupils make good progress in reading due to the good quality of teaching they receive and the many opportunities they have to read at school and at home. Lower-attaining pupils are given good support from teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress as a result. Pupils make good progress in writing due to the very high expectations of their teachers. By the end of the year, most pupils write extendedly in a range of different formats.
9. In the 2002 national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was above the national average for all schools and well above the average for similar schools. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards of attainment are above national expectations and that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils make very good progress and are challenged well by the work set for them. Pupils progress in data handling is satisfactory. Good use is made of homework to extend and consolidate work completed in class.
10. In science, the results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 showed pupils' attainment to be below the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The attainment of the current group of Year 6 pupils is in line with national expectations. Good attention is given to pupils' scientific enquiry skills so that they make good progress in learning about different aspects of the subject and in planning, carrying out and controlling their investigations. This is a recent improvement brought about by a more practical approach to the teaching of the subject. However, the needs of more-able pupils are not consistently met and a

scrutiny of pupils' work shows that these pupils are more challenged in some classes than others.

11. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 6 and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils regularly use computers to organise and present information and numerical data, and to compose pictures using art programs. They are confident in using the Internet to communicate with others and make use of CD-ROMs to access information. Pupils make use of computers in other curriculum subjects, such as history, but this is inconsistent across the school and is a current target for development in the school improvement plan. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not carry out any work in control technology, as teachers do not have the necessary resources. This is a weakness.
12. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good, but, although the National Curriculum is covered, not enough time is given to these subjects to raise overall standards.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans due to the good support they receive from teachers and support staff. Where appropriate, pupils are given individual or small-group support by the co-ordinator or support staff.

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

14. The attitudes of most pupils to their work are very good. They enjoy coming to school and are interested in the activities provided by the teachers. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. In the best lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and try their very best. For instance, Year 1 pupils were very eager to take part in their mathematics lesson and listened carefully to the instructions before solving the mathematical problems set for them. Parents agree that the school promotes positive attitudes and values. Children in the nursery are not developing good attitudes to learning, as the teaching does not clearly set out expectations and this affects the progress they make and the standards they achieve.
15. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They know the class rules and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They constantly demonstrate care and consideration for others. The behaviour of pupils in the playground is very good and they move around the school calmly and politely. They show respect for the school, the environment and each other's property. Pupils are courteous and treat staff, parents and visitors politely. They show their acceptance of a clear moral code and know whom to approach if incidents of bullying occur. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem in the school and parents endorse this view. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year. Children's behaviour in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. A significant number of children are attention-seeking and do not understand the need to take turns. Many find it difficult to work well together and show little evidence of a willingness to work in pairs.
16. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Most pupils know that all the adults want what is best for them. This has a positive impact on the way pupils treat one another. Boys and girls of all ages mix freely. They work

and play well together and thoughtfully care for each other; for instance, if someone falls in the playground.

17. The personal development of pupils is very good. They willingly accept responsibilities and enjoy helping with the routines of class and school such as acting as register monitor and serving on the school council. Year 6 pupils all volunteer for responsibilities and are proud to act, for instance, as door monitors and as 'buddies' to the children in the reception classes.
18. Attendance in the last reporting year was well below the national average. Attendance in the current academic year has risen and is now slightly below the national average. Sessions start on time and the majority of pupils arrive within the time allowed for registration.

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

19. The quality of teaching is good overall, and varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. It was good or better in approximately seven out of ten lessons, of which approximately one in five was very good. Teaching was excellent in three lessons. It was unsatisfactory in three lessons in the Foundation Stage classes.
20. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and varies from good to unsatisfactory. It was good in approximately a quarter of lessons and unsatisfactory in approximately one in ten lessons. Generally, teachers' planning lacks clarity and focus and is adversely affecting children's learning, behaviour and progress. The skills children are to learn are not always clearly identified. Teachers do not always identify clearly they are going to teach and what they want the children to learn to ensure pupils' progress, particularly in the nursery. The two very able nursery nurses are not included when teachers plan together. The level of interaction between children and adults is not of a high standard and is not promoting and extending learning both in the nursery and in some lessons in the reception classes. Most children could do better. A large amount of time in the nursery is spent on developing children's physical skills and this time is not always used well as it consists mainly of free play and lacks structure and any clear learning outcomes.
21. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall and varies from satisfactory to excellent. It was good in approximately half of the lessons observed and very good in a third of lessons. Three lessons were judged to be excellent. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good and varies from very good to satisfactory. It was good in over half the lessons observed and very good in a quarter of lessons.
22. In Years 1 to 6, teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and make good use of the school's assessment and tracking procedures to provide suitably-adapted work to meet the differing needs of individual pupils. Good use is made of praise and encouragement to increase pupils' confidence. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in their own learning by teachers clearly identifying what they hope the pupils will achieve in lessons and by evaluating how well these objectives have been achieved. In the better lessons observed during the inspection, teachers ensured a brisk pace to pupils' work by regularly reminding them of the time left to complete a given task. These factors ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their abilities.



23. Teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and make good use of the National Literacy Strategy in planning lessons. Work is adapted well to meet the needs of different ability groups within classes so that all pupils make good progress. Teachers motivate pupils well through their own enthusiasm and lively manner. They fully involve pupils in their learning by consistently making clear to them what they are to have learned by the end of the lesson and evaluating how far they have been successful. Lessons are brisk and pupils are expected to work hard and to behave well. Good use is made of a range of resources to involve all pupils in answering questions. The quality of marking is good and ensures that pupils are praised for their efforts and know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.
24. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall and a significant number of lessons were very good or excellent. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and use it well in planning lessons. Teachers make good use of questioning to develop pupils' mental and oral skills and their understanding of number. A good range of resources is used to ensure that all pupils in the class are involved in answering questions for themselves. All teachers manage the pupils well and promote good attitudes to learning. This has a great effect on their attainment. Good assessment procedures are in place and are consistently applied, and the quality and consistency of teachers' marking are satisfactory. Where teaching is less effective, lessons do not sufficiently challenge and extend more-able pupils.
25. Teaching and learning in science are good. Recent improvements made to the teaching of science, with a greater emphasis on a more practical, enquiry-based approach, are ensuring that pupils develop their skills in carrying out their own investigations as well as building upon their knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the science curriculum. These improvements in teaching have not yet had time to have a significant effect on pupils' standards of attainment or how well they achieve. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of science to organise and plan enjoyable activities which motivate pupils to work hard and give of their best.
26. Teaching and learning in geography, history, design and technology, art, and information and communication technology are good. The quality of teaching and learning in music and physical education is satisfactory.
27. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good and undertaken by support staff, many of whom have had specialist training for the task. Lessons are planned for individuals and small groups using well-chosen resources, and delivered with high expectations but patience and understanding. The result is that pupils appear to enjoy the sessions and make good progress. Whenever possible, these pupils are included in the lessons for their whole class, but monitored carefully and given good support.
28. Satisfactory use is made of homework to support pupils' learning at home. The quality of marking is generally satisfactory and is good in English. Good use is made of teachers' daily lesson assessments of pupils' attainment and progress to plan future work. Good use is made of pupils' developing information and communication technology skills in literacy and numeracy but the use of these skills in other subjects of the curriculum is underdeveloped.

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

29. In the relatively short time since the amalgamation, the school has worked very hard to produce whole-school policies and planning documents, and this work has developed well. There is now a consistent, whole-school approach to the delivery of the curriculum. It is broad and generally balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is an above-average amount of time devoted to both English and religious education. However, the school is increasingly successful in developing cross-curricular initiatives; for example, the development of extended writing through history and geography and the linking of pupils' personal, social and health education to work in religious education. The curriculum is accessible to all, and pupils are prepared appropriately for the next stage of their education.
30. The quality and range of learning opportunities are at present good and there are several reasons for this. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced and well established. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout. There is very good provision of extra-curricular activities. The overall quality of planning is good. Planning extends over the whole year and across the whole of a pupil's time in school, and sets out clearly what will be taught and when. The school is continually thinking about its planned curriculum and how it might be improved. For example, it is currently seeking ways to create viable links between different curriculum areas.
31. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan activities that give the children experiences in all the areas of learning recommended for their age. However, teachers' understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is at an early stage and this provision has only been in place for a short time. One teacher has only limited understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and this is affecting the progress the youngest children make, even when the teacher is supported well by a very good nursery nurse.
32. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school is keen for issues to be addressed regularly. Aspects are discussed during 'circle time' where pupils are able to sit and discuss matters important to them with their friends and with adults. Requirements relating to sex education are met by the school nurse giving talks to Year 6 pupils on the theme of 'Growing Up', and through aspects of the science curriculum. Opportunities for making pupils aware of the misuse of drugs come when the local police talk to the oldest pupils. Other issues relating to health and safety are developed through the involvement of the Railway Police, and of the emergency services in the 'Crucial Crew' activities.
33. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress. All pupils are monitored from their time of entry into the school, and concerns are discussed with parents at an early stage. When appropriate, a wide range of outside agencies is contacted to assist with accurate diagnosis. With the agreement of parents, a programme of support is devised which may include specialist support from outside the school, and small-group support by the co-ordinator or support staff, and appropriately graded teaching from the class teacher. This is planned for through individual education plans which detail particular targets for improvement. This is currently reviewed termly for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and half-yearly for those in Years 3 to 6.

34. Class teachers are developing a register for all pupils who show a potential talent or gift. The school intends to write individual education plans for these pupils from the start of the next school year, and to arrange appropriate activities and challenges for them and this is a target in the school improvement plan.
35. The school's support for pupils with special educational needs follows the structure laid down in the new Code of Practice, and parents are invited to attend the review of their children's progress and targets in their individual education plans. The targets agreed are discussed with the children to ensure that they fully understand the situation. There is a satisfactory trend of pupils moving out of support as a result of making good progress.
36. There is very good provision for extra-curricular and out-of-school activities. These include football, drama, recorders, singing, computers, 'Healthy Eating', chess, netball and a prayer group. The school also offers cycling proficiency courses, yoga and judo at various times of the year. By these means, the school has been successful in providing opportunities for younger pupils as well as the older ones. It makes effective use of visits to such places as Lyme Park, Eden Camp, Manchester Museum and the local cenotaph.
37. The school makes good use of the facilities within the community; for example, the youngest children have visited the local supermarket. There are good links with the nearby secondary school which include arrangements for the use of its playing field for football competitions. Educational visits are made to museums; for example, Wigan Pier, Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, and the Egyptian Gallery in Manchester Museum. There is further enrichment of pupils' learning through visitors to the school such as a theatre workshop at Christmas.
38. Strong links have been developed with partner institutions. Especially effective are the four 'induction' days which Year 6 pupils have at their secondary school where they meet their Year 7 mentors. This and other visits prepare pupils well for the next stage of education.
39. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and the provision for their cultural development is good.
40. The Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life, and pupils regularly attend assemblies devoted to prayer, doctrine and learning more about Christian behaviour. These values and beliefs help them to respect and understand the beliefs of others. This is reinforced by the hall displays that celebrate the faiths of many other peoples.
41. Teachers successfully increase pupils' spiritual awareness through experiences that awaken them to the awe and wonder in the world around them. A particularly effective moment of this kind was observed in a Year 1 art lesson, when the teacher enabled the pupils to observe the beauty of Monet's painting and helped them understand how he had captured the beauty of creation through the painting. The children's response clearly showed that it had been a special moment for them.
42. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. Their good deeds are praised and their bad behaviour is corrected. All staff demonstrate a consistent attitude to the pupils and provide excellent role models for them to follow. Pupils' understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is strengthened by the knowledge of the school rules and their contribution to their class rules. School assemblies help to

reinforce good behaviour through their 'golden awards' which acknowledge and praise those children that have shown exceptional special endeavour or achievement.

43. The provision for the development of pupils' social needs is an important part of the ethos of the school. The pupils are encouraged to be polite to each other and to all adults, they are taught respect for people and property, and particularly for each other, by listening when others are talking and helping others whenever possible. Year 6 pupils help Key Stage 1 pupils to read and help them in the dining hall and playground. The pupils hold a school council which, with strong guidance from the headteacher, makes proposals about how the school can be improved. Pupils from all classes have visits to places of interest and meet visitors in the school. Year 6 pupils attend a residential activity centre for a week and this further promotes their personal development as skills of co-operation and independence are tested.
44. The pupils have some good opportunities to learn about their own culture and the culture of others through, for example, the multi-faith displays in the hall, and the African display of photographs and artefacts in a Year 2 classroom. The school is currently involved in raising money to support a school in Cameroon, and pupils have started writing to pupils at the school, thereby increasing their knowledge of other cultures.

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

45. The school provides a caring environment where all adults know the pupils well and value them as individuals. Parents have confidence in the ability of the staff to meet the needs of their children. Teachers closely monitor the personal development of pupils, and parents are kept well informed of any targets for personal development on their children's termly target card. The school places very good emphasis on raising the self-esteem of pupils by making them aware of their individual achievements and positively celebrating these in weekly 'golden' assemblies. This impacts well on pupils' levels of confidence and pride in their achievements.
46. The school's agreed behaviour policy is good. Most staff apply the procedures consistently. The school's policy for bullying is currently being reviewed and a pupil mentor has recently been appointed to support pupils who have any concerns. Staff deal swiftly and effectively with any reported incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour. As a result, pupils develop good attitudes to their learning and this ensures they make the most of the learning opportunities provided for them.
47. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The education welfare officer visits school fortnightly, working closely with staff where there is perceived to be a problem with attendance. The home-school agreement successfully supports the school's policies on attendance and behaviour.
48. The child-protection policy effectively follows the procedures laid down by the area child-protection committee. All members of staff are familiar with these procedures. The member of staff designated to deal with child-protection issues has recently undertaken training. The school has a comprehensive health-and-safety policy and undertakes regular risk assessment. The necessary checks on equipment are up to date. The school maintains very good links with outside agencies, and the arrangements for first aid, including recording accidents and informing parents, are good.

49. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have been developed well and are now good overall. They are excellent in the areas of English and mathematics. Alongside compulsory national tests for Years 2 and 6, optional tests are taken by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. Also, pupils from Year 1 to Year 5 take standardised tests in English, mathematics and reading. All of this 'formal' testing is conducted by the headteacher, ensuring a consistency of approach, and the headteacher also collates and analyses the test results using a computer assessment programme. Each member of staff gets a detailed breakdown of results highlighting general findings, identifying high performers and those needing particular support, trends, gender differences and any patterns in performance in different subjects. Class teachers receive this information at the beginning of a school year as they prepare for a new class. They are then responsible for creating appropriate programmes of work, including different teaching strategies and creating individual targets for improvement. The clear focus is on addressing what the assessment information and analysis indicate. This is very good use of assessment information and this has a positive effect on the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve. Also, as a pupil moves through the school, a more comprehensive picture of attainment and progress is built up. Overall, the school is developing an analysis of results and gaining very useful information in a progressive fashion. In the foundation subjects, the school has developed a system of assessing against key objectives, creating a more 'structured' approach and building on the very good practice developed for English and mathematics. This will ensure that pupils make at least sound progress in these skills.

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

50. The school has established a positive partnership with parents. The majority of parents are pleased with the way the school is educating their children.
51. The quality of information provided for parents is good and keeps them well informed about the work of the school and their children's attainment and progress. The regular newsletters provide parents with useful information about development. The school prospectus and useful information booklet provide a practical guide to the school. Parents receive curriculum information at the beginning of each half term. Pupils' annual progress reports are satisfactory. They detail work covered and progress made with broad targets for development. There are two parent-teacher consultation meetings each school year to discuss the work and progress children are making. The school's homework policy has recently been revised in response to issues raised in replies to a parents' questionnaire sent out by the school. Teachers are willing to meet with parents at any reasonable time. Parents say that staff are approachable and deal with any concerns promptly. The school provides a breakfast club for pupils to assist working parents.
52. Parental involvement in the life of the school is good and this impacts well on pupils attainment and progress. Parents help with reading, extra-curricular activities, swimming and trips. This help is much appreciated by staff. The school, in conjunction with North Trafford College, has organised a course for parents to enable them to support their children's learning at home. The parents' association organises fund-raising events, such as Christmas and summer fairs, coffee mornings and sponsored events to help support the school and enhance pupils' learning.

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

53. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have worked successfully during the first two years of the existence of this new combined infant and junior school to establish an effective system of management. This has already resulted in high standards in pupils' academic and personal development, and a predominance of very effective teaching. The school has clear and appropriate aims, is committed to equal opportunities for all and has succeeded in establishing very good relationships between pupils and staff in a very caring environment.
54. The headteacher has exercised firm but supportive leadership which has enabled him to partly realise his clear vision for the school. Together with the determination and expertise of the governing body, the shared vision of the senior management team, the team spirit of the largely new staff and the hard work of all, he has steered the school through the turbulence of the amalgamation to a position of strength. He recognises that further change is necessary and this is reflected in the new school-improvement plan.
55. The deputy headteacher and the two key stage co-ordinators work well together, give excellent support to the headteacher, and effectively monitor the work of the subject co-ordinators. The subject co-ordinators, many of whom are fairly new to their role, support the other staff, monitor their subject planning and the pupils' work, and are responsible for the development of schemes of work. However, their role is weakened by the lack of opportunity they have to monitor the teaching of their own subject. This impedes the raising of the quality of teaching in particular subjects. The headteacher believes that it is now time to extend their role and has included this intention in the current improvement plan.
56. The Foundation Stage lacks clear leadership and direction and this is affecting standards. Assessment records are in place but are not monitored. Lack of understanding and inconsistent use of these records mean that they do not make a significant contribution to children's learning and progress. Ongoing assessment is not a part of all teachers' planning and they do not have a clear understanding of the needs of different groups within their class. Many children need more challenging work, while others need additional support. The headteacher and senior managers have provided training and given extra support to some staff in the Foundation Stage, including the help and advice of the local education authority's inspectors. However, this has not had the desired effect on raising the quality of provision.
57. The management for the provision of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and diligent, ensuring that all pupils have access to the support that they need. She liaises well with teachers, support staff and other agencies that are available to support these children. As a result, pupils make good progress. Early contact is made with parents and their involvement is sought at every review. The school complies fully with the new Code of Practice.
58. The governors are very effective in carrying out their responsibilities. They are well led by the chairman, who plays an important role in advising and supporting the headteacher. Other governors are active in their monitoring of the school's activities, and have a strategic view of how it should improve. They played a particularly important and successful part in the planning for, and implementation of, the amalgamation of the two separate phase schools. They report annually to parents the school's successes and priorities for the future.

59. The school uses computer technology effectively in its administration, and plans to continue and improve its work in this area.
60. All but one of the main objectives of the last school improvement plan have been implemented and the new plan sets out in appropriate detail the school's priorities for the coming year. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and all staff have undertaken the national computer training. The performance of all staff is monitored carefully and an appropriate programme of further in-service training is in place. However, this is clearly not having enough impact on some staff in the Foundation Stage. New staff are inducted appropriately and are supported by the headteacher and senior staff for as long as is necessary. There is a determination throughout the school to achieve higher standards and the school is well placed to do so.
61. The school has a good number of well-qualified teachers and support staff with a good balance of experience and expertise. The lunch-time staff make an important and valued contribution to the work of the school. The site manager and his staff work hard to provide a clean, tidy and well maintained site. The accommodation is very good and allows all aspects of the curriculum to be taught effectively. The large site has very good outdoor facilities, including an attractive, separate outdoor area for children under statutory school age. The staff provide attractive displays in classrooms and in the public areas of the school celebrating the achievements of pupils. The quality and range of resources to support learning are good overall, particularly in English, mathematics, science, physical education and the Foundation Stage. The resources available are appropriately organised and easily accessible and this allows for their good use in effectively promoting pupils' learning.
62. The governors are well informed about financial and budget-setting issues. The headteacher and chair of finance meet regularly to monitor the budget and provide an in-depth analysis for the finance committee and full governing body. The governors use the budget well in making certain that school improvements are well resourced. As a result, the resources for most areas of learning are good and up to date. The school works closely within its annual budget and has taken strong steps to ensure that it gives value for money in its purchases and services, following local authority and national guidance well to make certain that they provide the best value. For example, the school appointed a site manager who has been active in identifying, with the chair of finance and the headteacher, areas of the school buildings and fabric which need improvements. A priority list is decided upon and the site manager then goes out to tender to ensure that the school gets best value on all contracts awarded. The headteacher is very focused and successful in generating funds and has ensured that all relevant grants are used effectively for their purposes. In addition, he has applied and bid for a range of grants that has made very good improvements to school buildings and resources, enhanced the work of the staff and made a positive impact on the educational development of the pupils in the school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. The governors, headteacher and staff, with the support of outside agencies as appropriate, should:
- (1) improve the provision made for children in the Foundation Stage by:
    - i. ensuring that all staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the curriculum; (Paragraph 31)
    - ii. consistently plan work making appropriate use of ongoing assessments to provide suitable activities to meet the individual needs of the children, particularly in the nursery; (Paragraph 56)
    - iii. better management of this important phase of children's education through clear leadership and increased monitoring of teaching and learning; (Paragraph 56)
  
  - (2) improve the role of subject co-ordinators (as mentioned in the school improvement plan) by:
    - i. increasing their participation in monitoring teaching and learning so that all have a clear idea of curriculum provision and pupils' standards of attainment across the school; (Paragraphs 101, 107, 114)
    - ii. improving the use of pupils' information and communication technology skills across the curriculum; (Paragraph 132)
    - iii. checking that all subjects are given sufficient time to raise standards; (Paragraph 125)
    - iv. in science, ensuring the needs of more-able pupils are consistently met; (Paragraph 106)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	15	43	27	3	0	0
Percentage	3	17	47	30	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### 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)	26	343
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	72

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	57

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	29	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	27	27	26
	Total	44	45	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	94 (89)	92 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	27	25	25
	Total	44	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	90 (89)	92 (98)
	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	32	26	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	26	28
	Girls	22	23	24
	Total	45	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (81)	84 (81)	90 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	26	28
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	49	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (87)	84 (85)	90 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	319	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	6	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	4	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	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	9	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	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)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	26

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## 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	7

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	*
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	£
Total income	*
Total expenditure	*
Expenditure per pupil	*
Balance brought forward from previous year	*
Balance carried forward to next year	*

\*At the time of this inspection detailed financial information was not available.

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	369
Number of questionnaires returned	167

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	50	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	44	0	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	46	50	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	52	12	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	44	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	50	13	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	4	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	47	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	40	15	7	9

### **Other issues raised by parents**

A few parents felt that more-able pupils were not as well catered for as pupils with special educational needs.

## **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**

64. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis until they enter the two reception classes, when they attend full time. When the present nursery children start school their attainment is in line with that expected for their age, except in speaking, listening and their personal and social development. Attainment in these areas of learning is below that expected nationally. Children make unsatisfactory progress during their time in the nursery. When the present reception children started school, their attainment was well below that expected for their age in speaking and listening, and their personal and social skills were also well below those expected nationally. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development, physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. The majority is on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 in these areas of their learning. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. The majority of children make good progress in their speaking, listening and personal development in the reception classes, but these areas are still below the level expected by the time they reach Year 1.

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

65. The level of personal, social and emotional development of the majority of children when they start school is below expectations. The teaching in this area is unsatisfactory in the nursery, as the children do not have an established routine. They are not challenged by the activities provided, and the confused organisation within the nursery limits the quality of their interaction with adults. This is not helping children to develop a good attitude to learning. An experienced nursery nurse supports learning very well, but the nursery teacher does not have a clear understanding of the way young children learn and this is affecting the progress they make. A lot of time is given to free play that is often boisterous and lacks direction. The lack of involvement by adults is limiting the way children play together, share equipment and develop good social skills.
66. Children have the confidence to talk to adults and visitors, but they demand attention and do not understand the need to take turns. Circle time, snack time and appropriate stories are used well to help children to understand the need to take turns, but at this stage of the year these skills are still not in place. Children's behaviour is only satisfactory when they clearly understand what they have to do and are supported appropriately by the teacher and support staff. Many find it difficult to work well together and show little evidence of a willingness to work in pairs. Limited progress is made and children enter the reception classes without the skills needed to settle down and work with any degree of independence.
67. In the reception classes, children still do not understand the need to put up their hands when answering teachers and have to be repeatedly told not to call out. The majority is immature and regularly interrupt the learning of others with their demanding and silly behaviour. They do not respond well to each other when playing in the 'café', finding it difficult to share, act in role and care for equipment properly. It is only when an adult is supporting them that they show some respect for each other. Even then, they are very reluctant to tidy 'the café' at the end of the activity. Many children still

find it hard to work independently, although the children in the older reception class are more able to settle to their tasks and work with some independence in their literacy group. These children are also beginning to show a caring attitude towards each other and respond well to their teacher.

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

68. On entry to the nursery, a significant number of children in the present reception classes had well below average skills in speaking and listening. They make good progress in the two reception classes but are still below the standards expected nationally by the time they enter Year 1.
69. Children have sound opportunities to develop their speaking skills through role-play provision in the 'cafés' or 'greengrocer's shop' in all three classes. However, it is only when the adult's interaction in this area is good that children stay in role well as the 'cook', 'waitress', 'customer' or 'cashier.' For example, a student on placement worked well with the older children, assessing their knowledge of a range of fruits as they 'paid for' them in the greengrocer's shop. They showed a good understanding and stayed in role well. The nursery nurse, working with reception children, extended their speaking and listening skills well when she used challenging questions to help them to find parts of a jigsaw; for example, "Look at the end of the piece. Is it straight?" and, "What colour is the pattern in this piece?" These children used their language skills well to explain their activities and tasks. The present organisation of activities limits the amount of adult interaction that takes place and, therefore, opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are missed.
70. Many of the children in the nursery recognise their own name and identify correctly the first letter. About half the class legibly write their name. Some have difficulty in holding and controlling their pencils. They are not given regular opportunities and support to practise, and this is affecting the quality of their developing writing. Analysis of their books shows that many more-able children are not being challenged by the work they do. The lack of assessment information is affecting the progress these children make, as the tasks set do not match their needs. Others are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills on a regular basis. When the youngest children listen to stories, they show enjoyment and are keen to contribute their own ideas but are not given opportunities to do so. The class teacher asks very few questions and is too anxious to maintain the flow of the story rather than responding to ideas and comments offered by the children. This is not encouraging them to observe pictures carefully or developing their thinking skills. Many nursery children select books as part of their free-choice activities and enjoy looking at the pictures and sharing these with others as they sit on the carpet. They know the difference between print and pictures. They handle books carefully, turn the pages from right to left, and enjoy sharing books with adults.
71. Children in the reception classes are beginning to read individually with increasing confidence. The more able children identify the initial sound of words and build up simple words correctly. They know where to find the title of the book and describe the names on the front page as "One draws the pictures" and, "The other does the writing." They give good reasons why particular events happen in the book and that the book is called 'Put it Back' because "It's about a crab and he has to go back in the water." Children enjoy finding the covered word from a piece of text taken from their big book. They successfully identify the first letter sound and the words and know that 'top', 'hop' and 'pop' all rhyme. One child suggested the word 'shop' as part of the

same rhyming group. The older children identify 'crunch' and 'lunch' correctly as rhyming words in their story. Both the reception classes are working in a more formal way in their literacy and mathematical work to prepare them for their lessons in Year 1. This transition is working well as the older children particularly show more ability to work independently for short periods of time. These children are beginning to write simple sentences when inviting their 'buddies' to a picnic. Some are correctly using capital letters at the start of a sentence while others still find it difficult to separate their words, using finger spaces, when writing.

72. Parents of children in the nursery would appreciate the opportunity for them to take books home on a regular basis, as they do in the reception classes. Children in reception read to an adult in school twice a week, each has a reading record diary, and parents add comments to it on a regular basis. This effectively supports the promotion of reading standards.

### **Mathematical development**

73. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of their learning and the majority achieves the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Although progress in the nursery is slow, children in reception make satisfactory progress.
74. Children in the nursery are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to develop their mathematical skills successfully. The majority of children count numbers from nought to five accurately, and some count reliably to ten. Many understand 'one more than' and 'one less than' when cutting and sticking paper sausages into a pan. They identify a circle, square and triangle. Children begin to understand 'lighter' and 'heavier' when they use scales to weigh a range of different fruits. They predict which will be the lightest and heaviest and know that the lightest 'will go up' and the heaviest 'will go down'. Opportunities for further developing their understanding of number are not maximised in the range of activities provided. Children's knowledge and understanding of number are effectively reinforced through songs and rhymes.
75. In the reception classes, children begin to develop a wider mathematical vocabulary, particularly when they compare objects of different lengths. They recognise primary and some secondary colours and simple two and three-dimensional shapes. Children show satisfactory number skills. The younger children count accurately in ones to 30 and count back in twos to ten. Many of the older children count accurately in ones, twos and threes to 30. The older children show a good understanding of counting back and counting on from a given number. They understand the number before and after a given number. For example, when given the number 20 they know that the number before is 19 and the number after is 21. In both reception classes, children show a sound understanding of 'longer than' and 'shorter than' when they sequence five pictures of cats with different lengths of tails. They achieve this successfully, create their own cat picture and describe whether their cat's tail is 'longer than' or 'shorter than' that of the cat given by the teacher. They reinforce this understanding well when working with play-dough to make rolls of different lengths and comparing a range of different objects.

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

76. Children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and, by the time they reach Year 1, achieve the Early Learning Goals in this



area of their development. The theme throughout the Foundation Stage, during the inspection, was Food. Nursery children learn about a range of different fruits. They identify correctly the pineapple, pears, bananas and grapes, and think that both the tangerine and the orange are oranges.

77. Children know that fruits 'come from supermarkets and that 'they are grown', but the nursery teacher does not take this opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding by explaining how they grow and that they come from different parts of the world. Children help to make a fruit salad and use their senses well to taste and smell the different fruits. However, no opportunities are given for them to discuss their likes and dislikes in a social group. The teacher makes sound links with literacy by reading the story of 'Oliver's Fruit Salad'.
78. Reception children are encouraged to predict what will happen when corn is put in the microwave. They know that it will 'get hot and cook' and enjoy describing what they see and hear. They show a good understanding of how they used their senses to investigate. They successfully identify using sight, smell, taste and touch, and know that they had to listen carefully. They show a good understanding of safety issues when deciding how the teacher should lift the hot things out of the microwave. Good instructions are given when children use knives to cut strawberries for their milk shakes and butter their toast. The teacher uses appropriate language to extend children's vocabulary, and her sound questioning encourages them to look carefully at what happens when bread is put into a toaster.
79. Children develop their understanding of how things grow as they plant sunflower seeds. They use a range of construction materials to create satisfactory models, and the focus in the nursery was to make a barbeque. They explain that, "That is where the fire goes", when they have left a brick out. Children have good opportunities to work with both large and small construction materials, but much of this does not have a particular purpose and is not linked to other areas of learning. There is a computer in the nursery and children are beginning to develop mouse skills. Reception children have a lesson each week in the computer suite, but it was not possible to observe this during the inspection. Planning shows that they are developing simple mouse and keyboard skills using paint and text packages. They use their skills to chose a picture from a selection on the computer and change its size.
80. In religious education, they learn about celebrations in other faiths such as Hannikah. The work of the older children shows that they understand how toys move by being pushed or pulled, and many children label the parts of a plant correctly.

## **Physical development**

81. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of their development by the time they reach Year 1. The secure nursery outdoor play area provides children with very good opportunities to develop their physical skills. A very good range of small and large play apparatus is available. A good covered area enables children to go outdoors and work with larger apparatus even in poor weather. However, opportunities for developing their physical skills are lost because there is no focused teaching taking place. The staff manage and supervise rather than interact with the children to encourage them to explore different ways of moving when using the apparatus provided and joining in their activities, and often only one adult is outside with the children. Children are unsure of how to use the slide and no rules are in place to ensure that only a small group at a

time do so safely. The youngest children do not understand the instruction to “Find a space” when working in the playground. They grab equipment and cannot share, do not play together, kick balls without any thought for others and use the considerable amount of time given for outdoor play as a free playtime. Although a lesson was seen where children were asked to hop on the spot, hop and turn, and hop round the playground, they showed that they had little understanding of this and could not stay focused for many minutes. Too much equipment is set out at any one time. No discussion takes place before the children go outside so they race about and do as they please, and learning opportunities are lost. Teachers’ planning is not clear. The objectives of lessons are not precise enough to make sure that children develop appropriate skills and are appropriately helped to use the very good equipment. Consequently, they do not make as much progress as is possible. The reception children share the outdoor space with the nursery and also use the school hall for one lesson each week. They make satisfactory progress in their physical skills.

82. Children’s fine motor skills are developed satisfactorily through a range of activities. They use rolling pins and cutters when working with play dough and develop good pouring skills when working with the water tray. Plenty of opportunities are planned for children to develop brush control when painting, and the majority uses scissors with confidence. However, many of the younger children still find it hard to hold pencils correctly. Opportunities are available each day for sticking, pasting and working with small and larger construction materials using a range of different fixing methods.

### **Creative development**

83. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of their development and achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Provision is made for them to use crayons, pencils, chinks, glue and paint on a regular basis, but the opportunities provided are too tightly structured and do not allow the children to express their own ideas in their creative work. During the inspection no children were seen sharing their exciting pictures or models with others at the end of sessions. Nursery children use fruit to print within a fruit shape and begin to develop their observational skills when they draw fruit pictures using charcoal. Their creative work is linked well to their story of Handa’s hat when they make their own hat by sticking tissue fruit shapes round the headband. Children work with play-dough to make long and short rolls to link with their work in mathematics and develop the skills of rolling and shaping. Good opportunities are planned for children in the reception classes to look closely at a range of different fruits and use crayons and chinks to create pictures. Some of this work is closely directed and does not allow children to express their own view of the fruit they observe and develop their creativity. The colourful wall displays show that children have opportunities to use food dyes on fabric and watch the changes as colours merge. They look at the ‘Poppies’ picture by Monet and mix well three shades of the same colour in chalk, adding red paint to create their own pictures. Good opportunities are planned for them to develop their skills in tearing and sticking a range of materials to create collages.
84. A range of musical instruments are provided for nursery children and, when they are directed to them, they use them well, working fairly well together in a small group. They understand loud and soft sounds, and know how to create them with support. Reception children have satisfactory opportunities to sing, add actions, listen, clap simple rhythm patterns and create an accompaniment with instruments. The pace of this lesson was good and held children’s interest well. They showed enjoyment and

enthusiasm. Their singing of 'Clap your Hand and Wiggle your Fingers' was quite tuneful and their words were clear. The majority of children play musical instruments in time to the tape and use them sensibly.

## ENGLISH

85. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment either on entry to the school or at the end of Year 2. This reflects the good quality of teaching that they receive, which has a significant impact on the quality of learning.
86. In Years 2 and 6, standards in speaking and listening are above average. All pupils are on track to achieve national expectations by the end of the year and a significant number will achieve above this, particularly at the end of Year 6. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully in lessons and are interested in what others have to say. Good teaching encourages pupils to extend the length of their replies to questions, to develop their own ideas and explain them to others in the class. Teachers make good use of praise and encouragement, valuing each pupil's responses and increasing their confidence in speaking in class, such as when Year 1 pupils suggested different words which rhymed with 'so'. More-able pupils were then encouraged to group these words according to their spelling; for example, 'go' and 'no'; 'row', 'throw' and 'show'; and 'dough' and 'though'. In all year groups, teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to speak during all parts of lessons, both in whole-class and group discussions. By encouraging them to use appropriate vocabulary when explaining their answers, teachers successfully extend pupils' spoken vocabulary and the clarity of their answers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and constantly remind pupils of the need to listen attentively to instructions and the views of others. This is having a good impact on pupils who generally listen well.
87. Pupils in Year 6 generally listen well and are confident speakers who make use of a wide vocabulary when explaining their ideas or the reasons for their answers. They take turns to speak and listen well to other pupils' replies. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were able to identify the metaphors and similes used in a poem and when the author had used personification to describe the sea. Although the discussion was long, pupils listened attentively throughout and the good pace of questioning maintained by the teacher encouraged them to take a full part in the discussion. Teachers' planning identifies the key vocabulary they want pupils to learn in a particular lesson. These words are given good emphasis in lessons and ensure that pupils begin to make use of them when talking about their work; for example when, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils talked about the need for intriguing questions, powerful verbs and exaggeration when discussing persuasive language such as that found in advertisements. Throughout the school pupils make good progress.
88. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils read simple, known texts confidently and use a range of strategies, such as picture, context, and the sound-to-symbol relationship, to read unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining pupils say which books they have enjoyed reading and which ones they have not enjoyed, but many do not have a particular favourite book or author. Generally they say that the last book they have read is their favourite. They correct their own mistakes when their reading does not make sense. Lower-attaining pupils enjoy reading and read confidently simple, familiar texts, but they need a lot of adult support when reading new material. All pupils are aware of how to use the contents and index pages when finding information. By the end of Year 6 the vast majority of pupils read confidently and fluently, and a significant number is achieving above national

expectations. These pupils express strong preferences for certain authors or books and can explain their views. They enjoy reading and also discussing the relative merits of the books, such as the current group books they are presently reading, 'The Hobbit' and 'The Weirdestone of Brisingamen'. Higher-attaining pupils make good use of inference when reading challenging texts and read beyond the literal meaning of the words in the text. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well when reading texts so that they can take a full part in activities.

89. Teachers and teaching assistants manage reading well. All classes have daily guided reading sessions. The range and level of books provide a good challenge. There is a good balance between reading-scheme books, books from children's literature and non-fiction texts. Teachers involve parents in their children's reading through home-to-school reading records, which are generally used well. Good support is given to pupils in Years 1 and 2 whose reading is below average. They are withdrawn on a regular basis for small group support by a well-qualified and knowledgeable teaching assistant, who successfully encourages them by making sure that their learning is fun. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, pupils are familiar with the library system and can confidently explain how to find books. School tracking records of attainment and progress show that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
90. Pupils' standards in writing are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all abilities in Year 2 make good progress and achieve well when compared to their attainment on entry to Year 1. Pupils experience a wide range of writing formats, and their teachers' high expectations are evident in the amount of work they have completed so far this year. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in extending their stories by greater use of description and making use of a developing vocabulary to interest the reader and to develop the plot. They make consistent use of a range of punctuation, including speech marks, and their spelling of familiar words is accurate. More-difficult words are generally spelt phonetically. Pupils' work is presented well, but many do not join their letters. The vast majority of pupils are working at the expected Level 2 and a large minority are achieving the higher Level 3. Work is marked well and pupils' targets are clearly indicated on the front covers of their books. Teachers are always supportive in their comments and frequently inform pupils of what they need to do to improve their work.
91. Pupils' progress in writing in Years 3 and 4 is good as they build upon their good achievement at the end of Year 2. They can write more-extended pieces of work, their writing is more structured and many are now joining their letters. Their spelling is generally accurate, although some Year 3 pupils make mistakes such as confusing the spelling of 'their' and 'there', and 'were' and 'where'. They have had experience of writing in a wide range of different formats and are making greater use of description, and beginning to make consistent use of paragraphs in structuring their writing. Year 5 pupils make good progress in extending their story structure to include better characterisation and more use of description, such as "Hannah crept slowly up the crooked steps and waited silently by the door to catch her breath" or describing a fortress as "enormous but derelict". By the end of Year 6, most pupils write extendedly in a range of different formats, including play scripts and diaries. Like other year groups, they make good use of their literacy skills in writing about Henry Tudor's view of the Battle of Bosworth or how life was different in the 1950s. Their work is well presented and makes good use of imagery, alliteration and personification. Pupils structure their work through the use of paragraphs and they

use a mixture of complex and simple sentences to create atmosphere and engage the reader. Higher-attaining pupils' writing contains good description such as: "She silently keeled over and collapsed" and "a shadow could be seen on the wall, it seemed to be edging nearer and nearer to the door". Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well in writing.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and varies from very good to satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to plan challenging work to meet the needs of different ability groups within classes. They are enthusiastic and lively in their manner and fully involve pupils in what they are to have learned by the end of the lessons. Summary discussions are used to evaluate how successful pupils have been in achieving learning objectives. In the better lessons, teachers use a tight time structure so that pupils work at a good pace and work hard. Good use is made of a range of resources, such as white boards, to involve all pupils in answering questions. The quality of marking is good and ensures that pupils are praised for their efforts and know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.
93. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and sample pupils' work. As a result, they have a very clear idea of strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision and the future development of the subject. Together with the headteacher, the co-ordinators closely scrutinise pupils' performance in national and other tests, and keep a careful track of individual pupils' attainment and progress towards the targets set for them. Where pupils are experiencing problems, a range of support systems are in place, such as the 'Early Literacy Support' programme. Since the amalgamation of the two schools the co-ordinators have worked hard and successfully to ensure that the National Literacy Strategy has been better implemented, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Through training, resources and support for teachers in their planning they have improved provision for the subject, which is reflected in the good standards pupils achieve. The named literacy governor regularly visits the school and, when helping in classes, observes lessons and reports back to the governing body. Resources are good and the two central libraries contain a satisfactory range of books to suit the ages of the pupils. There are good plans to improve library provision in the school improvement plan and make it into a learning resource area.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and most pupils are making good progress. However, higher-attaining pupils make very good progress overall because their work is challenging and they are very well motivated. Pupils with special educational needs and lower and average-attaining pupils make good progress because the work is suitably matched to move them on in their learning.
95. In Years 1 and 2, lessons begin with an oral session to develop pupils' mental skills. Where they are most successful, the pace of the lessons is brisk and they consequently challenge and motivate pupils. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were counting on and back in fives and tens. They were very keen to rise to the challenge of the teacher, who chose different starting points, such as counting in fives from 25 or counting back in tens from 44. The more the teacher challenged them with even harder starting points, the more the pupils rose to the occasion. In another Year 2 lesson, the teacher was challenging pupils to remember their number bonds from 0 to 20. The speed of delivery was very fast and, whatever the teacher said, the pupils quickly came back with the correct answer. For example,

the teacher said, "Thirteen", and pupils quickly came back with, "Seven", and so on. In this lesson the computers were being used for pupils to recognise number sequences and patterns, and use them to find 'hidden' numbers. In the initial introduction the teacher used a large hundred square and, with 'Monty' the snake, covered up some numbers. By working out whether the numbers were in a sequence of single numbers such as seven, eight, nine, or in tens such as 17, 27, 37 or 18, 28, 38, pupils could identify the 'hidden' numbers. Pupils then proceeded to use the 'Monty' program on the computer, and the teacher matched the abilities of all of them to a hundred square best suited to their ability. Some of these were very challenging and yet the pupils were fully inspired and eager to get the right sequences, which a majority did at their own level. All group work was well matched to the needs of all ability groups within the class, including pupils with special educational needs, who receive very good support from the teaching assistants and the teachers. By the age of seven, pupils can count to and from 20, count in tens to and from 100, write in words and change numbers to words, such as 97 = ninety seven, and find missing numbers; for example,  $4 + ? = 10$ , recognise sequences of odd and even numbers and tackle fractions. Younger pupils can recall number facts to ten and use these in calculations such as  $6 + 4$ ,  $5p + 2p + 1p = 8p$ , and  $5 + 5 + 10 = 20$ . All pupils learn skills in calculating money to and from 50p and £1, can use simple measures and graphs, and know the names of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes at their different levels of ability. Although in the better lessons the plenary sessions are well organised, in some lessons they are not always used to give pupils the opportunity to talk about what they had done and learned in the lesson, or to discuss what they will be doing in their next lesson. Good use of practical equipment and interactive displays is seen in classes. For example, a Year 1 class have their own 'Seaside Shop' and buy various items from it, learning to count how much and to give change.

96. Pupils' mental calculation skills are consistently applied across the junior department. Some good examples of mental starters were seen in the Year 3 and 4 class, but some other classes in the juniors did not begin with a mental starter. A good example was in a Year 3 class where there was a very brisk pace, with the teacher giving 'quick-fire' questions on doubles and halves of numbers. Pupils played a 'Bingo' game using doubles and halves such as '80 – half of,' '25 – double' and '35 – double.' This effectively stimulated and interested the pupils so that when the teacher moved on to look at 'near multiples' pupils were quickly identifying them and expressing examples, such as, "A near multiple of ten is 19 because it is near to 20." In other lessons, pupils were consolidating their understanding of relating fractions to percentages and decimals, such as:  $\frac{1}{4} = 0.25 = 25\%$  and looking for reflective symmetry in polygons. A good example of the effective use of short-term assessment was where the teacher had identified through her marking of homework that pupils were not clear about the strategy to use for column addition. However, to rectify this and ensure that pupils were all taught the same method the next lesson concentrated on column addition by 'carrying' below the line. Other pupils were observed comparing between millilitres and litres through practical measurement using a range of containers. This was a well planned lesson where the work was well matched to challenge all pupils of different abilities. For example, the tasks ranged from pupils using a range of containers to sort into more or less than one litre, to comparisons of Imperial and metric measures by using a 'pint' container and estimating how many pints equals a litre and then converting pints to litres and vice versa. Pupils with special educational needs also have tasks that are well matched to their needs, are well supported by learning-support assistants and consequently make good progress over time.

97. The quality of teaching was good overall and a significant number of lessons were judged as very good and excellent. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place in all lessons. Where mental arithmetic sessions are of good quality they aid the development of swift recall of mental strategies. Where mental starters occur regularly, there is a confidence in pupils' numeracy work that affects their overall achievement and they subsequently make more rapid gains in learning. In the best lessons observed, the teachers used good questioning techniques at a range of different levels, backed up by the use of resources such as practical equipment and number lines, to develop pupils' mental and oral skills and their understanding of number. The good start to the lessons sets a brisk learning pace and high expectations, which the pupils responded to during their follow-up work. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is often too slow and there is a lack of challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils. These lessons are uninspiring and do not challenge and extend them. A good feature, which is consistent across the school, is the management of the pupils' behaviour and this aids their attainment and progress. Assessment procedures are in place and are consistently applied, and the quality and consistency of teachers' marking are generally satisfactory.
98. Progress in data handling throughout the school is satisfactory and there are some displays where pupils have collected data and then produced their findings in a range of graphical representation. However, few examples were seen where pupils had gathered their data from investigations and then used computer programs to represent data in graphic form, such as line graphs and pictograms. Two examples of these graphical representations were seen in both the infant and junior information and communication technology suites. For example, in the infant suite pupils had undertaken an investigation into the colour of cars and this was displayed as pictograms, which had been printed out from data entered into the computers. In the junior information and communication technology suite, Year 5 had completed line graphs from investigations they had been undertaking, drawn the line graphs by hand, and then entered their data into a computer program to print out a line graph electronically. However, the school has recognised that the use of information and communication technology in numeracy is in need of development and this has become a priority in the mathematics action plan.
99. The mathematics action plan in the school improvement plan is monitored during the year, with a final evaluation of its success made by the subject managers. New priorities are then set for the new plan and shared in staff meetings. The new targets for 2003-4 include ordering new resources, observing the teaching and learning in lessons, monitoring the progress of problem-solving approaches, and analysing standard attainment tests with new targets set.
100. The taught curriculum is in line with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The subject manager has worked very hard to develop the curriculum and has been well supported by the shadow mathematics manager who is based in Year 5. Subject management is good. Furthermore, the numeracy governor is fully involved in the work of the school and, after formal discussions with the numeracy co-ordinators, a series of visits are to be undertaken to observe the teaching and learning in mathematics and then to feed back to the headteacher and the governors curriculum committee.
101. The quality of resources is good and sufficient to teach mathematics across the school. A published mathematics scheme is used to support teachers in their planning and development of teaching and learning in mathematics. Monitoring has yet to have sufficient impact on developing consistent approaches to the subject or

spread the good practice that exists in the school. However, this has been appropriately highlighted for action in the 2003-4 school improvement plan. The subject policy has been reviewed, with the whole staff consulted on the draft policy before it is submitted to the governing body for approval. Whilst information and communication technology has been targeted for development, the lack of sufficient computers in classrooms makes it difficult for pupils to work independently on mathematical programs at regular intervals.

## SCIENCE

102. Standards in science are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout the school. Those with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
103. Pupils start in Year 1 with an average knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They make satisfactory progress in the development of their enquiry skills; for example, when predicting that sounds get quieter as they move away from them, and testing to find out whether this is correct. They agree that it is not really a fair test as some pupils can hear better than others and there is some background noise sometimes. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their ideas and share their findings. Pupils in Year 2 plan an investigation to find the best growing medium for seeds. They know that seeds need water and light but do not identify air until further questioned by the teacher. They had investigated different areas of the school grounds and were surprised to find that 'things grow in gutters and cracks in the ground.' The majority of predictions were accurate and the good teaching gave pupils time to discuss their ideas together. The majority knows that the 'first sign of growth will be shoots and roots.'
104. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have covered a good range of topics. They have also carried out many investigations to develop their understanding of how to undertake a scientific enquiry. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate which liquids are harmful to teeth, while pupils in Years 5 and 6 predict and test which foods contain fats. They also compare their own meals over a period of a week to decide which are the most nutritious. Pupils in Year 6 show a good understanding of why we need a balanced diet. They know that 'fat gives us energy' but that 'too much fat clogs up the veins taking blood to the heart'. Inspection evidence shows that pupils know how to set out and write up an experiment. They predict well and give good explanations when describing evaporation and condensation. They present their work well, showing good writing skills and the high expectations of their teachers. There is a clear, consistent approach across two parallel classes, and the two-year planning cycle, necessary because of the one class for Years 3 and 4, is working well.
105. Pupils use their literacy skills well when note taking, writing up experiments and writing instructions. Their numeracy skills are clearly evident when they record scientific data using graphs, tables and charts. Pupils use computers to research topics, but there is little evidence of other uses of information and communication technology, such as recording results.
106. Overall, the teaching of science is good but varies from good to satisfactory. It holds children's interest, develops their curiosity and encourages them to think for themselves. Pupils enjoy science lessons and demonstrate this through the very good behaviour seen in a number of lessons. They listen carefully and show a keen interest in lessons. Class teachers have good relationships with pupils and value their contributions. They encourage pupils to work things out for themselves and



allow time for this to happen. Where the very good teaching was observed, pupils were challenged to achieve two tasks in the time available, and careful planning by the teacher enabled this to happen with plenty of time for class and group discussion. Very good use is made of teaching assistants to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs, sustain their concentration during group activities. Lessons are well planned and the skills of enquiry, including observation, are being developed alongside knowledge and understanding. However, the needs of more-able pupils are not consistently met and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that these pupils are more challenged in some classes than others. Teachers' marking is satisfactory. Remarks to encourage and praise pupils are made, as well as some points for further development.

107. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and sample pupils' work but have not had the opportunity to observe other teachers' lessons. The school has previously identified the need to develop pupils' ability to undertake experiments and investigations themselves, particularly the older pupils. They have addressed this successfully as a result of additional training for staff and pupils show a good understanding of how to undertake a scientific enquiry. However, there is inconsistency in how well more-able pupils are challenged and fewer pupils achieve the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 than in English and mathematics. An appropriate scheme of work is now in place and key skills for assessment have been identified. The school uses a nationally agreed scheme with additions to suit its particular needs. Resources for science are good. Assessment at the end of each unit of work takes place, but an effective programme for assessing against key skills will shortly be in place. At present, no targets for pupils are in place.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. The standards pupils reach in art by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations, and they make satisfactory progress through the school.
109. By the end of Year 2, pupils have used a large variety of fabrics and other materials to create collages, and have used a variety of drawing media such as pencils, charcoal, chalks, pastels, felt pens and computer software. They experiment with mixing colours and learn basic skills of drawing and painting. They look at the work of famous artists and imitate some of the features of their styles.
110. In the reception classes, pupils have used computer software to draw pictures of their favourite characters. In Year 1, children mix white with colours, and mix primary colours to produce a range of different tones. They look at famous paintings such as Monet's 'Poppy Field', and try to imitate the style. Some pupils in one lesson seen showed very good observation skills and most successfully created appropriate colours for the task. In Year 2, pupils weave using a variety of fabrics, and print using everyday objects such as cotton reels.
111. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a wide range of creative activities involving many art media to produce two and three-dimensional art works which are well displayed around the school. They continue to develop their observational skills by sketching pebbles and other still-life objects, and study the life and works of famous artists such as Pablo Picasso.

112. Year 3 pupils have created 'mood boxes' by carefully selecting colours and fabrics to line a small box. Year 4 pupils have used their sketch books to draw still-life objects demonstrating good observational skills, and have designed Egyptian and Viking boats to support their history topic. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have made three-dimensional models of Tudor figures which they are clothing in their own designs, based on clothes worn in those times.
113. The teaching of art is generally good, and sometimes very good when teachers concentrate on teaching skills and techniques, encourage accurate observation, and provide a wide variety of media for pupils to use. Most teachers are confident in the teaching of art and expect good standards.
114. The art co-ordinator is very capable and gives good support to the other staff. She is developing a scheme of work which highlights the key skills to be learned. She monitors other teachers' planning, and the work that the pupils produce, but is not yet able to monitor the teaching of art through the school. This impedes the improvement of the quality of teaching. However, the school intends to rectify the situation during the next school year. At present, there is no consistent system of assessing pupils' work in art, but the co-ordinator is developing a strategy based on the key skills. She has a detailed and appropriate action plan, which is focused on improving resources, access to those resources, and raising standards. The school's resources are satisfactory and used well to improve standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is made on limited evidence from three lesson observations, teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' previous work and discussion with the subject leader. A new subject policy and nationally agreed scheme of work are now in place. This shows continuity and progression of skills across the school and allows pupils to build on knowledge and understanding gained earlier in their school life.
116. Pupils in Year 1 have designed and made finger puppets. They have developed their observational skills well when they compared their own house with another. Pupils designed a model house using their knowledge of shapes well to identify rectangles, trapeziums and squares in their designs. They are beginning to develop their evaluating skills well as they compare their finished model with their first design ideas. The teacher extends this well when pupils identify the changes they would make to their models. For example, one pupil decided, "I would change my chimney."
117. In Year 2, pupils' books show that they have made winding devices to get Incey Wincey Spider' up the spout. These devices were not attached to a background to clearly demonstrate how the spider moved up the spout but were held in front of a painted board. All pupils used the same winding device and there is no evidence to show that they were encouraged to explore different materials or techniques as part of their design process. This approach is limiting their opportunities to develop thinking and problem-solving skills. During the inspection, pupils all designed and made a replica of 'Joseph's Technicolor Dreamcoat'. They all used the same pattern to cut out the three parts of the coat, but used their scientific investigative skills well to test a range of different fastenings such as Sellotape, stitching and stapling. They recalled this work well and chose one of the fastenings to join the pieces of the coat together. Pupils show sound stitching skills, but many have difficulty deciding which

parts to stitch together. For example, they stitch across the bottom of the sleeve so that the arm cannot go through. Good support by both the class teacher and the teaching assistant enable them to achieve neat sewing in the right places. Pupils have had good opportunities to explore the patterns they wish to add to the coat. Good understanding of mathematical shapes is seen when they design a repeating pattern, using gummed paper. They use computers well to re-create this and print it out. Some pupils understand that if the pattern is too complicated it will be very difficult to use it on their small coats. Pupils with special educational needs are very well included in all aspects of this work and well supported by adults. The very good teaching encouraged pupils to work hard, enjoy their activity and concentrate well to produce good results.

118. In Years 3 and 4, pupils design and make a picture frame for their favourite photograph. They show a good understanding of the need to make a prototype before making their final frame. They use their scientific skills well to test the stability of the finished frame, working well with a partner and comparing each other's work very positively. Their evaluations showed that 'the frame had to be stable' and that 'it had to lean back at an angle to be well balanced'. Pupils consider carefully where in their home the frame will be and understand clearly that, on a windowsill, a draught could affect it. Pupils develop their social skills well as the teacher places a clear emphasis on their helping each other and being helped by others. They are encouraged to consider the feelings of others when talking about their work and to emphasise the good points of the finished frame. They discuss how to use a hand fan carefully to ensure a fair test and hold it at the same distance and in the same position when testing each frame.
119. Although no teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6, an analysis of books shows that pupils have made mechanisms to make parts of a toy move. The prototypes show a lack of understanding of how to fasten slides and levers, but the more-able pupils achieved this with some success. Their previous work gave them opportunities to work with a range of fabrics when designing and making slippers. Pupils show a clear knowledge of the 'design, make and evaluate' process in their sketchbook work. Their skills in art, science and computers all contribute to improve their work in design and technology.
120. In two of the three lessons seen, the teaching was very good. Teachers show a good knowledge of the subject and link skills from other subjects very well to support pupils' learning. Pupils respond well, work enthusiastically, show a keen interest and have good relationships with their teachers.
121. The leadership of this subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator does not have an overview of the work throughout the school and states that she has only limited subject knowledge. When interviewed she was not aware of how design and technology was to be assessed, but a planned programme of regular assessments against key objectives has been discussed with her and is to be introduced in September. As in other subjects, members of the senior management team discuss with co-ordinators the development of the subject and do not understand her lack of information. No opportunities have been given for the co-ordinator to observe other teachers teach. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

122. Standards of work at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those usually found. Satisfactory progress is made throughout school.
123. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of local places. This is due to effective teaching which places good emphasis on fieldwork. Pupils go on local walks and are encouraged to look at the range of buildings, types of housing and how the land is used. Their ability to draw accurate plans and 'read' maps increases steadily. Local area walks focus on different types of houses, on traffic surveys on the roads around school and on use of 'routes' around the school grounds to locate the 'hidden bear'. Pupils extend geographical skills by plotting routes on maps, and then go on to compare and contrast transport in Stretford with that on a Scottish island.
124. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of the influence of climate upon the lifestyles of people in different parts of the world. Study of the Chereponi area of Ghana helps them recognise that, as a result of climatic conditions, the population there experience hardships. Everyday living, house styles and diet are very different. As one pupil observed "In Stretford we don't have 'dug outs' because we don't have wild animals". The older pupils, as part of their work on rivers, visit Lyme Park to undertake a study. They examine the features of rivers and their effect on the environment. In one particularly effective lesson, pupils used grit, sand, pebbles and earth to construct a 'large hill'. They then poured water on it and watched the 'course(s)' the water took. Pupils observed that 'the water takes the easiest path', 'it goes around something it cannot move' and 'it lifts up and moves small pieces of grit, soil and sand, and as it slows down it drops them'. Discussions and written observations showed a good understanding of key elements of the action and effects of 'erosion' and 'deposition'. Sound progress is made in developing technical vocabulary. The oldest pupils, in their 'local studies', build effectively on previous learning. Good use is made of mathematical skills to collect and represent data about traffic, and of literacy skills to argue "How could the council reduce traffic in Stretford?" Pupils show a sound grasp of issues such as traffic congestion and its effects on residents and businesses.
125. The teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and on occasions was good. Teachers use national guidelines to teach a balanced curriculum and ensure that pupils have a range of field trips and practical activities to support classroom learning. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject and address issues of geographical enquiry and the development of such skills as mapping and field-work techniques, although the time available makes it difficult for all subjects to be studied in the depth required to lift standards. The school has wisely planned a programme of regular assessments against key objectives which will guide the school towards knowing more clearly what pupils have to do to improve and this will be implemented in September.

## **HISTORY**

126. Evidence indicates that pupils at the ages of seven and 11 attain standards that are generally in line with those expected. Progress is satisfactory. From the lessons observed, a scrutiny of displays and work, and discussions with pupils and teachers, it is clear that teachers have enthusiasm for the subject and are able to foster pupils' interest. Teaching was never less than satisfactory, with a good emphasis on using as much real evidence as possible. Teachers successfully develop understanding of 'change over time' with Years 1 and 2 pupils by studying familiar, everyday objects and events. Pupils make their own personal time line, relating to changes over time in

their family life. They compare modern houses to Victorian houses and identify key differences in the windows, roofs and 'style of building'. They study Victorian artefacts such as a 'carpet beater', 'slate', 'skipping rope' and 'quill' and can decide which items belong in which Victorian rooms. Pupils study famous people such as Florence Nightingale, and understand chronology better by ordering the significant events in her life. Literacy skills are used well as pupils write at length about 'what would Florence Nightingale change?'

127. Older pupils develop their understanding of chronology and increasingly recognise that the past can be divided into periods that they study such as the Egyptians, the Tudors, the Victorians, and Britain since the 1930s. They become familiar with a range of primary and secondary source materials and use them to support learning. Teaching motivates pupils well and they show much interest and good levels of application. This was clearly shown in lessons with the oldest pupils. Teachers used a variety of 'artefacts' such as 'snails', 'worms', 'mice', 'scorpions' and 'spiders', role play situations and graphic illustrations to help focus the pupils on how the Tudors tried to use natural remedies to cure illnesses. Good subject knowledge and a mix of clear questioning and explanation helped the pupils to a better understanding of why disease and illness spread quickly then, and also helped them more readily appreciate that some of the 'cures' were not as bizarre as first appeared. They were amazed to find out that some spiders' webs do have antiseptic qualities! In studying Britain since the 1930s comments from teachers such as, "You now understand some of the difficulties faced over rationing," or "You are beginning to recognise the fears people had during the approach to war." demonstrate that pupils are linking information from various sources to reach judgements about how people lived.
128. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in history is developing well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced fact sheets about Egypt using these skills, and the oldest pupils used a powerpoint program to illustrate facets of Tudor life, using text and graphics. The school plans to assess key skills at the end of each topic and this will give teachers a clearer picture of how well enquiry skills are developing. The history curriculum follows national guidelines and gives a structure that teachers find helpful in their planning. Visits such as to Eden Camp (Britain since the 1930s), to Lyme Park for drama-based activities about Tudor life, and for workshops about the Egyptians at Manchester Museum underpin learning and make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The co-ordinator is new to the school and her role and has not yet had the opportunity to make an impact on provision for this subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

129. The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations and they make satisfactory progress.
130. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of most of the common keys of a keyboard, and can use a mouse well, highlighting, dragging and dropping appropriately. They can move the cursor using the arrow keys and by using the left button of the mouse. Most pupils successfully write text, selecting font size, font style and colour. They edit using the delete keys, can compile simple graphs and use a number square to highlight numbers that form numeric patterns. They produce pictures using paint programs. They programme floor robots to obey a sequence of simple instructions. Pupils in reception use tape recorders well, listening to stories and instructions prepared by the teacher, and even recording their own

conversations. They learn basic skills on the computer and assemble pictograms to represent data such as favourite car colours. In Year 1, pupils enter simple text and use clip art to convey ideas. They learn simple programming by instructing each other in short sequences of movements in preparation for using floor robots.

131. By the end of Year 6, pupils regularly use the computer to prepare topic booklets that contain a variety of text styles, fonts sizes and colours with images collected from the internet and CD-ROMs. They use a variety of skills to arrange text and pictures on the page. Pupils use a spreadsheet to enter data, which they display in straight-line graphs. They successfully create and enter formulae that will process data such as the length, breadth, area and perimeter of rectangles to enable them to investigate relationships. They email friends and include attachments. In Year 3, pupils experiment with painting programs and produce warm and cold pictures out of geometrical shapes by choosing appropriate colours. In Year 4, they experiment with repeated patterns using paint programs. In Year 5, pupils produce straight-line graphs to show how temperatures vary through the year.
132. In most classes teachers use information and communication technology to enhance the teaching of numeracy and literacy successfully, which helps to raise standards in these subjects. Teachers also use information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning in other subjects such as, making history fact files in Year 3 to support their history topic on Egyptians. However, this practice is inconsistent and is a current target for development in the school improvement plan.
133. The school's planning correctly addresses all aspects of the subject, and many examples of pupils' work were seen during the inspection. However, no work in the area of controlling devices or programming a screen 'turtle' to draw shapes is currently undertaken by any classes in Years 3 to 6 as the school does not have the necessary software. The Internet is used by some classes as a research tool. At present, there is no consistent system of assessing pupils' work, but the co-ordinator is developing a strategy based on the key skills and this is a target for all subjects in the school development plan.
134. The two computer suites enable half a class at a time to use computers, but not all classes have their own computer. The school plans to rectify this soon and to improve the quality of the computer suites. A technician is employed part time to maintain and improve the facilities, which has had a very positive impact on how much the computers are used and the extent to which the subject is supporting the curriculum. The school has a good range of software, but not all of it has been installed on the computers yet as the technician only works in the school for a short time each week.
135. The quality of teaching is generally good, and, in some lessons seen, very good. All teachers are confident in their understanding of how to use computers to enhance the curriculum and to raise standards, and have a good range of skills and knowledge. The basic skills are taught thoroughly and teachers are increasingly finding profitable ways to use computers and this is having a good impact on standards. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection.
136. The co-ordinator is very competent and works hard to develop the subject in the school. Although the school in its present form has only been open for two years, appropriate planning is firmly in place and the scheme of work is under-going regular and appropriate revision. A policy for the subject is in place and includes appropriate guidelines and advice for using the Internet safely. The co-ordinator gives good

support to other staff and is supported by a shadow co-ordinator in Year 1. She monitors teachers' planning and the work that the children produce. However, at present she is not empowered to monitor her colleagues' teaching, which limits her ability to develop the subject. This is an area for improvement which the headteacher has already identified in the new school-improvement plan. There are no adequate assessment procedures in place yet, but the co-ordinator plans to introduce the assessment of key skills in the new school year. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject should develop and has an appropriate action plan for developing the subject and raising standards even further.

## MUSIC

137. Standards in music are in line with those expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs make good progress.
138. By the end of Year 2, pupils use different musical instruments to create sounds for different weather patterns. In groups, they discuss suitable sounds and when they cannot find a match begin to use voice sounds. Pupils then perform their musical pieces for the rest of the class. Pupils' musical experiences are enriched by activities such as performing a Nativity play when the whole school goes to the church for a music performance. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 experience a satisfactory range of musical activities. Year 3 pupils clap simple rhythms using graphic scores made up of pictures. They work together well as the teacher acts as the conductor. Pupils beat the syllables in a the tune of a popular drinks advert and are able to copy the notes in a conventional musical score. In Year 4, pupils were observed matching rhythms to food words, such as 'baked potato', 'stew' and 'salt and pepper'. They worked well together and were polite in their interactions with others. By the end of Year 6, pupils sing enthusiastically and demonstrate good pitch. They handle musical instruments appropriately and compose short pieces of music. The school choir has been working very hard to build a repertoire of songs with the aim of giving musical performances in the school and in the local community. During the inspection week, the school choir were rehearsing music they had been learning with a visiting music teacher. The standard of singing in this rehearsal was extremely high and demonstrated the skills and qualities of the teacher, who is a professionally trained musician. All pupils in the choir were thoroughly enjoying their singing.
139. Pupils have a good attitude to music and are keen to become involved in further extra-curricular activities, such as singing in the school choir. In the lessons seen, pupils across the school were engaged in a variety of activities involving investigating sounds and rhythms, and putting them together to create their own musical scores. Good examples of graphic scores were seen in displays around the school, and some very sensitive playing of musical instruments was heard in pupils' early performances of their compositions, resulting in some very atmospheric musical sounds. There was some singing in the reception and Years 1 and 2. However, there are missed opportunities to play music to create a reflective atmosphere as pupils enter assembly.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching. The music co-ordinator has specific musical expertise, and advises and supports staff in planning and organising their musical activities as and when requested. However, recognising the need to further develop music across the school, the subject manager undertook an audit of the provision in the school. The results were very encouraging, especially where staff highlighted their interest in developing their skills

in teaching music to the pupils. As a result, staff development in the teaching of music has been highlighted in the school improvement plan for 2003-4.

141. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The scheme of work for Years 1 and 2 is based on national guidelines, and in Years 3 to 6 based on a commercially-published scheme of work. There is a sufficient range of musical resources in the school and as a result of the music audit the co-ordinator has been building up the range and quality of musical instruments. However, although the monitoring of teachers' planning is carried out, there has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to see the planned work in practice through observing teaching and learning and does not have a clear idea of the quality of provision across the school. There are musical links within the community, such as singing to the elderly at Christmas and the choir performing at the Arndale Centre in Manchester. There has been a visit to the school by two musicians called 'Keystings,' who showed the range of string instruments and also let pupils 'have a go' at playing them. There are also effective opportunities for pupils to learn the guitar and keyboards from visiting music teachers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

142. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainments are broadly what are expected in gymnastics, games and athletics. About nine out of ten pupils reach the required standard in swimming by the age of 11, and a significant number achieves more, developing skills in a variety of strokes and going on to learn personal safety and life-saving techniques.
143. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory and in one lesson with the oldest pupils it was very good. Teachers prepare well for lessons, and organise and manage pupils effectively and safely. Pupils are given appropriate 'warm up' exercises. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils are showing sound control of movements and of the use of space. Older pupils demonstrate appropriate co-ordination and control. Year 4 pupils in a gymnastics session clearly demonstrated extension in their movements, with some creating graceful, fluent passages of work. In a very good session with Year 6 pupils, hurriedly re-arranged for the hall due to rainy weather, they all participated in a series of tasks to test endurance, co-ordination, timing and balance. What set this apart from other lessons observed was the degree of challenge offered. Pupils were fully extended. They in turn responded with great enthusiasm and gusto, yet maintained high levels of self-control, and performed the tasks with no little skill, generally showing good levels of fitness. Teachers encourage pupils to co-operate. However, the practice of giving pupils opportunities to observe others, and to comment on and evaluate their own and others' performance, was inconsistent and prevents pupils from improving their performance through the constructive criticism of their peers.
144. Pupils work with enjoyment and enthusiasm in lessons. They change into appropriate clothing and in this they are encouraged by the example set by teachers. The curriculum for physical education is broad and balanced. There are a very good number of extra-curricular activities such as football, netball, judo, yoga, cycling and rugby. The involvement of coaches from Manchester United Football Club, Lancashire County Cricket Club, and Sale Sharks Rugby Union Football Club enhances pupils' opportunities. The school has enjoyed significant success in football team competitions and this motivates pupils well to be team members.