

INSPECTION REPORT

**THOMASSON MEMORIAL
SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105276

Headteacher: Mr B. Wilson

Reporting inspector: V. Wilkinson
18461

Dates of the primary special school inspection: 9th – 12th June 2003
Dates of the mainstream nursery class inspection: 18th - 19th June 2003

Inspection number: 249315

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special with mainstream nursery

School category: Community special

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Devonshire Road
Bolton

Postcode: BL1 4PJ

Telephone number: 01204 333118

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Elphick

Date of previous inspection: 6th – 9th October 1997

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Brian Sampson 10329	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Graham Pirt 14563	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Michael Holohan 1769		Information and communication technology History Geography Religious education	
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thomasson Memorial is a school for children of nursery age and girls and boys aged 5 to 11 who have a hearing impairment. There are a small but growing number of pupils who have additional special needs such as learning difficulties, physical difficulties and autism. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. When pupils start school their attainment is below average. There are currently forty-four pupils on roll; three children are of reception age. Sixteen pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is average for a school of this type. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and none requires additional support to develop their English. The school admits pupils from ten local education authorities and a significant number of pupils do not live locally. The school has an unusual and flexible approach to meeting pupils' communication needs. They are grouped in classes according to their preferred method of communication and are either taught orally or using Sign Supported English. British Sign Language is also used to support some activities. Over half of the pupils have cochlea implants. The local education authority's services for children with hearing and visual impairment are based at the school and are managed by the headteacher. The school has a nursery class for hearing and hearing impaired children. There is a separate parents' summary covering this provision.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thomasson Memorial is a very good school. Leadership by the headteacher is very effective and has resulted in an excellent commitment from all staff to give pupils the opportunity to develop their potential and to become responsible, well adjusted individuals able to take their place in society. Consistently high quality teaching enables pupils to achieve very well and make very good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is excellent reflection of the school's aims in all the learning opportunities and experiences provided for pupils because of very good management by the headteacher and senior managers.
- Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs, there is excellent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and teachers use very effective teaching methods and strategies to help pupils achieve, particularly in developing their language and communication.
- Excellent links with the community, schools, colleges and other professionals involved in the education and care of pupils contributes very significantly to pupils' academic achievement, their personal development and to raising the profile of the deaf community.
- Very good care for pupils and the very high expectations staff have of them results in pupils' excellent relationships, very good personal development and very positive attitudes to school.
- Provision of very good information leads parents to have very positive views of the school.

No significant areas for development were identified.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected last in October 1997. All the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been successfully addressed. These include:

- A permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- Procedures to check what pupils have learned are now very good overall and excellent in the area of communication.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are now very good.
- The governing body is actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and statutory requirements are met.
- The development of pupils' cultural awareness is now very good.
- Integration with the local primary school is very good and includes academic as well as social opportunities for pupils.

- The school has made significant improvements to the curriculum.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	Very good	A
Reading	A	Good	B
Writing	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

All pupils of reception age and those in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress. By Years 2 and 6 higher attaining pupils achieve standards that are broadly similar to national averages. Teachers place a very significant emphasis on communication, literacy, mathematics and on pupils' personal and social development and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in these areas. Pupils also make very good progress in music. Progress is good in writing, science, art and design, design and technology, humanities, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Pupils with additional needs make as much progress as others because teachers very effectively adapt work to reflect their abilities. There are no differences in the achievement of girls and boys. It is not possible to identify trends in achievement between one year and the next as the number of pupils in each year group is too small. The targets set for pupils in their individual communication plans are met very well because they are challenging but realistic and based on excellent assessment of their communication needs. The targets set for pupils in each subject are achieved well and whole school targets to improve standards and for 12% of pupils to achieve Level 4 by Year 6 are appropriate.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very proud of their school and their achievements. Their interest and involvement in lessons is excellent.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons, at break-times and on visits. They are a credit to themselves and the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very confident to share their views and opinions. They have very high self-esteem and work very effectively together. Pupils take responsibility very well. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.

Pupils' very good attitudes, their self-esteem and their confidence have a very positive effect on the progress they make. No pupils have been excluded in the last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	Aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Very Good

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

Teaching is very good. Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs and they have very good subject knowledge. In all subjects they ensure that there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication. The teaching of basic skills in language and communication are excellent and literacy, numeracy and music are taught very well. Science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education are taught well. During the inspection excellent teaching was seen in English, mathematics and history and very good teaching was seen in all other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' learning and participation. They plan very interesting activities, which encourage pupils to concentrate very well and to persevere even when they find work challenging. There are good opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their work and homework is used well to extend the learning done in the classroom. There is very effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants which contributes very significantly to pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Learning opportunities are very well-planned and very relevant to pupils' needs. Links with other schools are excellent and very good inclusion enables pupils of all abilities to be part of a mainstream school and to join activities in other classes in their own school. The school uses the local and wider community very well to extend and reinforce what has been learned in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development are very well-planned. The personal and social development of pupils is promoted very well throughout the day by the very good role models staff provide and a very good programme of learning. Opportunities for pupils to represent the school in productions and signed singing events help to support and develop their very good social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a very strong sense of community in the school. Very effective procedures and high levels of care for pupils ensure their welfare, health and safety. Their personal development and behaviour are monitored and promoted very well. Systems to check what pupils have learned are very good overall.

The curriculum is very relevant for pupils because it concentrates on developing their communication. Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is excellent and the Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well. The school has developed effective links with parents. It provides them with very good information about their child's achievement and about the life of the school. Parents participate effectively in their children's learning by attending meetings, supporting homework and by extremely good attendance at school functions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads the school very effectively. All staff share, and are successful in supporting a vision and aim for the school, which put the progress and development of pupils first. The deputy headteacher and senior teacher make a very good contribution to developing the school and managing it on a day to day basis.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The chair of the governing body has a very good understanding of the school and the governing body is effective in helping to manage and monitor the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has very good systems to help it recognise areas for improvement and has very good plans to address them. The monitoring of teaching is very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Educational priorities are very well supported through careful financial planning. Money provided by the government to support specific projects is very effectively spent. The school applies the principles of best value well to its developments, purchases and commitments. Staffing, accommodation and curriculum resources are used very well to support learning.

The school judges the effectiveness of teaching and learning very well and the senior management team has good information to support teachers to improve. The school has a very good professional development system for all staff. This includes the identification of training needs, which are met through high quality training opportunities. The expertise of teachers and teaching assistants is an excellent match to the needs of pupils and the curriculum. Learning resources are very good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and the school has a very good quality, newly built, hall. The outside play areas and the nursery classroom and playground are good and have benefited from recent improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. It works closely with parents and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant areas of concern were raised by parents.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views about the school that were expressed by parents through the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL (Nursery Class)

The Thomasson Memorial nursery class is for hearing and hearing impaired children. At the time of the inspection there were thirty one children on roll, five of whom had a hearing impaired. Children attend school on a part time basis; they live locally and transfer to reception classes in mainstream primary schools when they are five. The nursery has twelve part time places for children with hearing difficulties and the nursery teacher is a qualified teacher of the deaf. There are currently five children, with a hearing impairment who attend either full or part time. These children either have a statement of special educational need or are being assessed. When they start in the nursery the attainment of all children is below average. About half of the children speak English as a second language, and several do not speak English at home.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Thomasson Memorial nursery class provides very good learning opportunities for children. Leadership by the headteacher is very effective and consistently high quality teaching enables children to achieve very well and make very good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching and very good planning ensures that children have opportunities to take part in a wide range of exciting activities.
- Very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and very good monitoring of children's learning leads to very good progress in a significant number of areas of their learning.
- A strong staff team work well together, and are very well led by the class teacher to support children's learning and ensure their wellbeing.
- Provides very good information for parents which leads to their very positive views of the school.

No significant areas for development were identified

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There were no issues identified at the time of the last inspection that referred specifically to the nursery.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	By age 5	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	Very good	A
Reading	A	Good	B
Writing	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Children make very good progress in the area of communication, language and literacy. Children who are deaf make also make very good progress in developing their communication because the teacher has excellent knowledge and understanding of this area of special need and uses strategies to support them such as Sign Supported English. Children who speak English as a second language are very well supported and make the same progress as others. All children make very good progress in mathematics. The attainment of all children, despite the very good progress they make, is still below average in communication, language and literacy and mathematics at the end of their time in the nursery because their attainment is so low when they start school. All children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development. By the time children leave the nursery, attainment is broadly average in these areas. There are no differences in the progress made by girls or boys or of children with additional special needs including those with hearing impairment. The targets set for children in each area of learning are achieved well

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy coming to school. They are very well settled and attend sessions happily. Their attitudes to learning are very good and they are interested and involved in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children are very well behaved during sessions and they learn to co-operate well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children respond very well to adults and try hard with their work. They play well together and know how to wait patiently for their turn. Children are very independent and persevere when they find tasks difficult.
Attendance	Very good. Children arrive at school on time and sessions start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5
Lessons seen overall	Very Good

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

Teaching is very good, particularly the teaching of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. This enables children to make very good progress in these areas of learning and consistently high quality teaching enables children to make very good progress in all other areas of learning. The teacher has very high expectations of children's participation and activities are interesting. This encourages children to concentrate very well and to persevere. There is very effective teamwork between the teacher and nursery nurses, which contributes very significantly to children's learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Learning opportunities are very well planned and very relevant. They are very well linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum, which is designed specifically for very young children and because very good consideration is given to promoting the development of language and

	communication across all areas of learning.
How well children with English as an additional language achieve	Children achieve very well. Good levels of support enable them to make very good progress in developing their language and communication.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Children have very good opportunities to develop confidence and independence and to work together. Opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral and cultural development are very well planned and their personal and social development is promoted very well throughout the day by the very good role models staff provide and their high expectations of children.
How well the nursery class cares for children	Very good. There is a very strong sense of community and very effective procedures and high levels of care for children ensure their welfare, health and safety. Their personal development and behaviour are monitored and promoted very well. The school has very good procedures to check how well children are learning.

The nursery class has developed effective links with parents. It provides them with very good information about their child's achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management of the nursery class by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has established an excellent commitment from all staff. The nursery teacher supports the vision and aims of the school, which puts the progress and development of children first. The deputy headteacher and senior teacher make a very good contribution to developing the nursery class and managing it on a day to day basis.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The chair of the governing body has a very good understanding of what goes on in a nursery class.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has very good systems to help it recognise areas for improvement in the learning opportunities provided for nursery age children and it has very good plans to address them. The monitoring of teaching is very good and includes professional development reviews for the nursery nurses.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Educational priorities are very well supported through careful financial planning. Money provided by the government to support specific projects is very effectively spent. The school applies the principles of best value well to any nursery class developments, purchases and commitments. Staffing, accommodation and curriculum resources are used very well to support children's learning.

The school effectively evaluates how good the nursery class is. Systems to judge the effectiveness of teaching and learning provide the senior management team good information to support teachers to improve. The school has a very good professional development system for all staff. This includes the identification of training needs, which are met through high quality training opportunities. The match of teachers and nursery nurses to the needs of children and the curriculum is excellent. Learning

resources are very good. There have been very good improvements to the nursery classroom and playground.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like the nursery and teaching is good.• The nursery class is well led and managed.• Staff in the nursery class work closely with parents and they feel comfortable about approaching them with questions or problems.• They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No significant areas of concern were raised by parents.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views about the school that were expressed by parents through the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children start in the nursery class, there is a broad spread of ability, but overall attainment is well below average in all areas of learning, except physical development where it is just below. About half the children speak English as a second language, and several do not speak English at home. These children are very well supported and they make very good progress.
2. All children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy because the teacher has excellent knowledge and understanding in this area of development and because she uses strategies such as Sign Supported English for those who are deaf. The use of communication systems such as these and teaching strategies for children with a hearing impairment ensures that all children are very well supported to become effective communicators. All children make very good progress in the area of mathematical understanding. However, attainment is still below average in communication, language and literacy and mathematical understanding at the end of children's time in the nursery. This is because children start from a very low level. There are no differences in the progress made by girls or boys or children with additional special needs. All children make the same progress because of the high levels of effective support they receive and consistently high quality teaching.
3. All children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development and they make good progress in physical development. By the time children leave the nursery, attainment is broadly average in these areas.
4. Pupils' attainment is generally very low on entry to the school particularly if they have not benefited from nursery experience at the school or if they have been admitted following time in a mainstream school. A significant number of these pupils have little if any internalised language and limited communication skills. They make very good progress and are successful in all subjects because the school is extremely good at addressing this area of need. There are no differences in the progress made by girls or boys or pupils with additional special needs. There has been very good improvement to standards since the last inspection because of the improvements that have been made to teaching, the curriculum and assessment.
5. Pupils' work and discussions with them indicate that by the end of Year 6 higher attaining pupils achieve standards that are broadly similar to national averages in all subjects. Attainment is below that expected for their age when learning is

related to abstract concepts which require the understanding and use of complex language, for example, some of the concepts explored in religious education lessons. However, pupils' progress is good in terms of their past learning and achievement.

6. The school collects very good information about pupils' achievement and progress, which it uses to compare their attainment with other similar schools and past results. However, the sample groups within the school are very small and this makes direct comparisons with this information difficult. The information gathered by the school indicates very good levels of progress for the majority of pupils between Year 2 and Year 6, with a small number of pupils moving from Level 1 to Level 4 of the National Curriculum. Monitoring the performance of those pupils who do not make such rapid progress is being developed further to show more clearly the small steps in improvement these pupils make. The information the school has about pupils' progress enables teachers to set targets which are specific to year groups and individuals. These targets prioritise the areas of most need and very effectively promote achievement, particularly in the development of pupils' language and communication skills.
7. The school is very careful that pupils are taught in class groups that use communication strategies that are suitable for them. This helps to ensure that pupils are given very good opportunities to make progress. Pupils' communication skills are assessed extremely thoroughly and the deputy headteacher, in consultation with teachers, establishes a language and communication programme for each pupil. These plans very clearly identify pupils' abilities and outline strategies to meet their needs and to improve their skills. They make a significant contribution to the very good progress that pupils make.
8. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils who are developing new communication skills. For example, those developing oral skills following a cochlea implant are able to spend time in both oral-aural and signing environments until they are able to achieve successfully in either or both. Very good consideration is made of pupils' preferred method of communication when teachers plan the groups they are put into and this also contributes to pupils' success. Pupils make very good progress in lessons because of the very effective support they are given by teaching assistants. For example, when they reinforce what the teacher has said and ask pupils questions about their work.
9. Pupils are able to make good or very good progress in all subjects because teachers consider their communication and literacy needs at all times and set suitable targets. These enable pupils to make very good progress in developing their language and communication and reading, mathematics, numeracy skills and music and they make good progress in writing, science, art and design, design and technology, humanities, physical education and religious education.
10. Pupils' very good progress is a direct result of the excellent knowledge and understanding teachers have of their special needs and how to address them and the way in which the curriculum has been adapted to reflect their needs. The programmes of work for each subject appropriately reflect pupils' abilities and enable them to make very good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children of nursery age have very good attitudes and they flourish because of the caring atmosphere of the school. They develop confidence and are very well settled. Children leave their parents and carers happily at the start of the day. They learn to become independent and to take responsibility, for example, there are good routines for tidying up, which enable them to undertake tasks such as wiping the tables and washing up. Children are caring towards each other. Those who are hearing are particularly helpful and supportive towards those with a hearing impairment and they become aware that everyone has different needs. Children's social and moral development is very good and they are very happy to take turns and to share equipment. Children's self-esteem is high because it is sensitively promoted, and they are aware of their achievements because adults positively reward them with lots of praise. Children show very good attitudes to their learning, behave well and are interested and involved in every activity.
12. Pupils' personal development and the attitudes and values they develop are a significant strength. Attitudes to learning are very good and contribute very significantly to the progress they make. The school has maintained this very positive outcome since the last inspection. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their school, and their interest and involvement in lessons and play is excellent. During a Year 4 history lesson the teacher 'acted' the role of a Victorian mill owner and pupils 'played' the cowering worker children. It was quite amazing to see the extent to which pupils become so involved in a role play activity. Pupils' very good attitudes, their values and their personal development is the direct result of the very strong influence of the school community. Pupils are clearly very proud of their school and are very keen to show visitors what they are doing.
13. Behaviour is very good and this reflects the findings of the last inspection. There have been no exclusions within the last year. Pupils behave very well in class, at play and lunch and walking between lessons. They also behave extremely well when they are on visits and are a credit to themselves and the school. Pupils are polite and courteous. They sign or say 'Good morning' and 'Thank you' without being prompted and they stand back and hold doors open for adults and other pupils. Pupils respect the school environment and help to keep it tidy, litter and graffiti free. There are very few incidents of bullying and no racism or sexism. Pupils demonstrate great respect for each other and have a very good understanding of how inappropriate behaviour can lead to arguments. Pupils know that not everyone is brought up in the same way and that they do not always have the same beliefs and values.
14. Pupils respond very well to responsibilities they are given and to the very high expectations adults have of them to undertake tasks and to learn to be responsible for themselves and aspects of school life. Pupils show a great deal of initiative checking their own hearing aids first thing in the morning and most visit the audiologist independently to sort out any problems. Monitors are given specific jobs, which they carry out very well, for example, they look after plants, the sports equipment, the music room and library and they tidy the play equipment trolley and the drawing and colouring box. Pupils take it in turns to collect and return attendance registers and to take the dinner register to the office. Everyone is expected to clear up after a lesson and most pupils do so without being asked.
15. The relationship between pupils is excellent. Pupils get on extremely well together in lessons or outside at break time. They play co-operatively and they clearly enjoy each other's company, playing ball games together, chasing each other or merely having a conversation. Pupils show a great deal of care and consideration for

others and will offer help or support if one of them is hurt, for example, by sitting with them until they recover. Pupils respect all staff and have excellent relationships with them. Pupils comment that they can turn to any adult in the school for help, information or support and they say that adults are 'always smiling'.

16. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Attendance compares very well with the national figures for mainstream primary schools. Pupils clearly like coming to school and, barring a hold-up by the transport, the majority are on time and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching for children under five is very good. There is very effective teamwork between the teacher, the nursery nurses and the teaching assistants and this ensures that all children have very good opportunities to learn and make progress. Because the teacher provides good guidance for staff they are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are able to support teaching and learning very well. During activities adults constantly provide opportunities for children to develop and improve their language and communication skills. For example, verbal prompts help children to share what they know and the effective use of questions enables them to 'provide more information'. There are constant reminders for children to use the communication skills they have and this contributes significantly to the progress they make. The teacher and nursery nurses provide very effective support for children who have English as a second language and this enables them to make good progress. Adults provide very good role models during activities and effectively help children learn how to play.
18. Teaching is very good because teachers very carefully consider pupils' communication and literacy needs in every lesson. Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and they insist on high standards and very good levels of participation. This helps pupils to work hard and concentrate very well. The teaching of basic skills in language and communication are excellent and literacy, numeracy and music are taught very well. Science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education are taught well. During the inspection excellent teaching was seen in English, mathematics and history and very good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, history, music, personal, social and health education, physical education and religious education. Almost all lessons were judged to be good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
19. Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and a very good understanding of any additional learning difficulties that pupils have and this enables them to prepare learning in a way that helps pupils to be successful. Teachers also have very good subject knowledge and understanding. Through the teaching methods and strategies they use they are extremely effective in promoting pupils' language and the development of their communication skills. Activities are very interesting and pupils persevere even when they find work challenging. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop skills that enable them to be effective learners. Teachers know that pupils, even those who are oral, need to learn visually and they are very careful to ensure that they pay attention and learn how to interpret and use the cues and prompts they are

given. Literacy skills are taught exceptionally well. Pupils try very hard to answer questions in detail because teachers prompt them very effectively by asking questions which help them to provide more information. Teachers also provide very good opportunities for pupils to read for information and to write for different purposes. For example, they write poetry, lists, letters and instructions and they have very good opportunities to undertake pieces of extended story writing. There is a very consistent emphasis on correcting pupils' signing and adults model complete sentences for them so that they become fluent. Teachers ensure that pupils who are not fluent communicators have enough time to contribute to discussion and to answer questions. This helps them make very good progress.

20. The deaf instructor makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and to the development of their personal and social skills by providing them with access to British Sign Language, through story sessions, singing and drama and by working alongside teachers in the classroom. There is very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants and they are very effective in supporting small groups or individual pupils during lessons. Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development.
21. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and they use their knowledge of them and assessment very effectively to plan work at a suitable level. Pupils have a very good understanding of their own learning because teachers use praise to help them identify what they have achieved. For example, teachers mark pupils' work to provide supportive comments for them. Pupils are given very good opportunities to identify work they are proud of so that it can be included in their Record of Achievement and they also select pieces of work to be presented at their annual review. These opportunities make a significant contribution to developing pupils' awareness of their achievements. The comparisons they are encouraged to make between the pieces of work selected from earlier years help them recognise the progress they have made.
22. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. For example, by using computers, by taking part in question and answer sessions or by investigating for themselves. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson pupils found out what happens when you mix bicarbonate of soda and vinegar and what happens if you double the amount of each. Activities such as these ensure that pupils are very keen to participate and that they develop very good learning skills. Pupils concentrate very well and work very hard even when they find the work challenging.
23. Teachers ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to work collaboratively. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked very well together sorting balloons by colour and by the picture printed on them. Excellent relationships with staff help pupils to be very confident to share their views and to answer questions very well. The confidence that adults promote in pupils is reflected in the very effective way they take part in discussions and group work.
24. Teachers help pupils to become more effective learners by teaching them skills that help them to organise themselves and their resources and to pay attention. These skills enable pupils to be successful in lessons. Teachers use homework well to extend pupils' understanding and to provide opportunities for them to practise what they have learned. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 the teacher effectively uses the adjectives pupils have listed for homework

as part of an activity to sort them into groups of words for describing feelings and characteristics.

25. Lessons are very well paced. A significant amount of work is covered although teachers are very sensitive to pupils' needs and recognise when they are finding it difficult to concentrate and maintain the pace. A very good range of teaching methods is used and teachers respond very well to pupils' individual needs. Learning objectives for each lesson are shared and teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning about. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to recall past learning at the beginning of the lesson so that they can use it more effectively in new situations and this enables them to make connections between the teacher's explanations and what they had learnt in the last lesson.
26. Numeracy skills are promoted very well in subjects such as science and design and technology. Computers are used well for pupils to research information in subjects such as history and during the inspection pupils in Year 2 confidently send e-mails and talk about using 'search engines' to help them find information. Pupils frequently use computers to word process finished pieces of work.

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

27. The curriculum is very good. The school has very effectively implemented the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) modules of work and the programme of learning for religious education reflects the local education authority's approved syllabus well. There is a very good programme of learning for personal, social, health and citizenship education. The learning planned for children under five is very good. There has been good improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection when it was judged to be good.
28. The curriculum has been very effectively adapted to reflect pupils' needs because they are given excellent opportunities to develop their communication and literacy skills. In all subjects teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills and subjects such as history are used very effectively to develop skills in writing. The very strong emphasis on communication and literacy across the curriculum also makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly their self-esteem because they become very confident to express their ideas and feelings and to share their understanding. The curriculum is enriched by the excellent support provided for pupils by the deaf instructor and by the very good opportunities the school provides for pupils to work and play alongside pupils in mainstream school.
29. There is a very good plan of what pupils will learn throughout their time at the school and this is organised so that learning is themed across a number of subjects. Teachers use subject plans very well to help them prepare activities. The curriculum is very effective in meeting pupils' needs because it provides them with a wide range of stimulating activities that they are keen to participate in, because pupils are interested and successful they concentrate well and make progress. Pupils' interest and involvement in lessons contributes significantly to the very good progress that is made by pupils admitted to the school after Year 2.
30. Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is excellent. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well. This enables teachers to

plan work that reflects pupils' individual abilities and ensures that they have very good opportunities to build on past achievement. Teachers also provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and their computer skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 become familiar with the on screen prompts of the 'Talking Book' software when a computer is used for the story 'The Hare and the Tortoise'.

31. Pupils are grouped according to their communication needs. This helps teachers to provide the right communication environment for a pupil and helps them to plan very effectively for their learning. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to spend time in other groups if they need to. For example, a pupil may belong to a signing group but have some lessons in an oral class.
32. The residential trip to Waddow Hall provides a very good opportunity for pupils to participate in activities such as tennis coaching and it makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Very good links with the local community ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to participate in activities such as charity events. The school challenges pupils in a range of imaginative ways, to develop self-confidence, for example, when they are involved in dramatic and musical productions which are performed at the school but also in places such as the local shopping Centre and the Bridgewater Concert Hall in Manchester. At lunchtime there are good activities, such as the chess club. Links with a local football club give pupils the opportunity to develop skills through working with a professional footballer.
33. There are also activities which provide very good opportunities for pupils to raise the awareness of the local and wider community to issues that affect deaf people. Through a wide range of activities such as distributing bumper stickers to the mayor and the Director of Education and giving signing classes to the staff of a local primary school, pupils develop their skills in communication and develop very good confidence. Visits to places of interest are an important part of the curriculum, for example, pupils' learning in history is enhanced by the study of local historical homes and geography is made more interesting by a series of walks and field trips. However, activities after school are limited by transport arrangements.
34. The school has excellent relationships with mainstream schools, colleges and with other services providing care for pupils. Within the school pupils are integrated into different groups for lessons when alternative experiences are beneficial, and pupils as individuals and groups join lessons and playtimes at the local primary school. For example, a small number of pupils join the mainstream school for science, history and physical education lessons as well as playtimes. There are also very good opportunities for pupils from both schools to join together for stories and singing. These sessions are very effectively supported by the deaf instructor who signs for pupils. Mainstream pupils also come to Thomasson Memorial School for lessons and a successful mathematics session was seen for pupils of reception age. The school has very close links with the secondary school where there is a hearing impaired unit and with the ten local education authorities who place pupils at the school. The school is very successful in supporting students from secondary schools and colleges placed with them on work placements and the head and deputy headteacher run a significant number of well subscribed training courses for other professionals. In addition the school has very effective links with children and families through the peripatetic support service for children with sensory impairment, which is based at the school and

managed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

35. The school provides very good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when opportunities were judged to be good. Pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through planned events and the effective use of opportunities, which arise in lessons. School and class assemblies include elements of worship as well as opportunities for pupils to reflect upon events in their own lives and in the wider community. Lessons in religious education give pupils an insight into different religions and their understanding is enhanced by visits to local places of worship and by visitors to the school, for example, by members of the Jewish community. Opportunities that arise in lessons are used well to help pupils to consider issues of a spiritual nature, for example, in English an exciting description of the fire of London led Year 5 pupils to sympathise with the victims. The school places a very good emphasis on helping pupils to understand other people's problems and there are very good opportunities for pupils to be involved in charity events. For example, reception age children dress in red for "Red Nose Day" and pupils perform carols to raise money for the local hospice. These opportunities ensure that pupils' spiritual awareness is developed and expressed in a range of practical ways.
36. Pupils' moral awareness is developed very well because the school makes a concerted effort to ensure that they know the difference between right and wrong. Adults provide very good role models for pupils and the school is a community in which pupils feel valued and this helps them to value each other. Very good opportunities are provided by the school to promote pupils' social development. In lessons they are expected to plan and work together, for example, putting on a play in history, designing a model town in geography and giving a concert for the builders of the school hall are all examples of how pupils learn social and independence skills in a practical way. Visits out of school are a regular part of the curriculum and they are also used very well by teachers to provide opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. The school's dramatic productions and concerts are very effective in developing pupils' ability to work as a team and to take personal responsibility. The very good personal, social and health education programme, the responsibilities pupils are given and a well structured system of stars and certificates for good behaviour also contribute very effectively to the development of pupils' self-awareness and social skills.
37. Pupils' cultural development is very well promoted by the opportunities they are given to learn about different cultures both past and present. In history pupils learn about the local area and people's lives by visiting local museums and historical sites. There are also visitors to the school, for example, an artist who provided a dramatic reconstruction about the life of a 19th century factory worker. Pupils' knowledge of other countries and the cultures associated with them is developed very well by using artefacts and special events such as Australia Day, which enabled pupils to investigate the country in depth. A particular strength of the learning opportunities provided by the school is the very good experiences pupils are given in art, music and drama. For example, a visitor from the National Gallery has worked with pupils to create pictures and an African drummer has led an exciting workshop in music and dance. The school's dramatic productions such as 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Cinderella' give pupils very good opportunities to act and perform music. The school has very strong and very effective links with the local and national deaf culture. There are past pupils working in the school and

there have been visits from past pupils to explain what life was like in the school during the Second World War.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when procedures were judged to be satisfactory. There is a named person for child protection and all staff members have had relevant training. There is very good liaison between the school and the other services providing care for pupils. Procedures for children 'looked after' by social services are very good.
39. There are frequent safety inspections of the whole site and risk assessments cover a very wide range of eventualities and are of very good quality. Evacuation of the building is practised regularly, escape routes are accessible and well marked and emergency, flashing lights and alarms are checked regularly. All pupils from Years 5 and 6 receive 'Crucial Crew' training annually to teach them how to deal with emergencies.
40. There are very caring and efficient routines for accidents and several members of staff are trained in first aid. The administration of medicines is very well managed and the school makes very good use of other professionals such as the school nurse, educational psychologist and speech therapists. There is an audiologist on the staff who makes a very significant contribution to ensuring that pupils' hearing difficulties are very well monitored and a part time technician helps to maintain pupils' hearing aids. The very good support of the audiologist and technician ensure that pupils are able to participate effectively in lessons and to make the best of the opportunities they are given.
41. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying. Pupils are very aware of the school rules and they understand the system of rewards and sanctions. They try hard to get stickers for good work, attitudes and behaviour and are proud to receive badges and certificates. They are particularly proud to receive the headteacher's award in the celebration assembly. Sanctions are very rarely required but include giving an apology and missing privileges. When issues do arise, pupils are encouraged to resolve the problem through discussion. If a pupil has behaved inappropriately s/he is expected to produce a 'sorry card' which is given to the offended person whether this is to another pupil, a member of staff or the parent of a pupil. For pupils who have more difficulty with their behaviour the school uses a very good system of behaviour charts, which are used with the knowledge and co-operation of parents. The school's anti-bullying policy is clear and unequivocal but rarely needs to be used. The school appropriately monitors any incidents of bullying, racism and sexism. Pupils are given the confidence to report any incidents through discussions at assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons. Staff members are well trained to nip any potential situations in the bud. The personal development of the pupils is well monitored and supported by the school. The school helps pupils to grow in confidence and show good levels of self-discipline and confidence.

42. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and this accounts for the very good increase in attendance over the last two years. Registers are well marked and are effectively monitored by the school secretary. There is very good liaison between the school and education welfare officer.
43. The school has very good procedures for checking what pupils have learned, for monitoring their progress and for reporting to parents on their child's achievement and personal development. Procedures to check what pupils know and understand are excellent in the area of language and communication and are very good in English, mathematics and science. They clearly detail the progress that has been made and identify the next steps of learning. Pupils' progress in other subjects is monitored well against the learning outcomes identified for each 'topic' or 'module' of work. Information about pupils' achievement is used very well by teachers to adapt work so that it matches individual needs and reflects the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. The very good systems for checking pupils' achievement and the way teachers use the information contribute significantly to the very good progress that pupils make.
44. The statutory procedures for pupils who have statements of special educational need are very well met and the learning opportunities, teaching methods and resources detailed in the statements are provided by the school. The annual review report for each pupil provides detailed information about the progress that has been made towards the targets set and it clearly outlines the progress they have made in each subject. The organisation of the annual review meeting is very good. Pupils are given very good opportunities to contribute to the meeting by submitting a piece of work they are particularly pleased with or by writing about their achievements during the year. The outcomes of the meeting are shared with pupils through discussion with the class teacher.
45. Pupils' work is effectively sampled by subject co-ordinators at the end of each topic to review the progress made by individual pupils and the suitability of the subject plans. This sampling of work is also used very well to check that teachers have a shared understanding of the criteria they use to judge levels of attainment. The school is currently revising the procedures it uses to monitor pupils' progress. The colour coding system, used previously, did not provide a sufficiently clear profile of pupils' performance and it has recently been replaced in English and mathematics by a more effective system. Monitoring, by the deputy headteacher, of pupils' language and communication is excellent. Detailed records and video evidence are maintained to highlight the improvements made by individual pupils. The school is appropriately beginning to use the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 'P' level assessment procedures within the nursery group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, through the parent questionnaires and discussions during the inspection, clearly indicate that they feel this is a very good school. Parents made very positive comments about all aspects of the school's work and the inspection agrees with all of the positive views expressed.
47. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their child's progress, is very good. All parents receive a copy of the prospectus and annual governors' report, which is very informative and complies with all statutory requirements. The annual review report for each child provides very good

information about each subject, which is written in a way that is easy for parents to understand. Reports clearly state what a child can do and they give realistic targets for future learning. The school provides an open day and evening when parents can come and see their child's work and meet the teachers. There are regular newsletters, which are friendly and informative. All parents have signed the home/school agreement. The school provides an interpreter for its parents who do not speak English and has also produced a Basic Signing Guide for parents. Parents say that they find the home-school diary a very useful way of keeping in contact with the school and many sign the diary to say that they have helped with homework. Several parents are also governors and members of 'The Friends of Thomasson School'. They help to arrange Christmas events to raise money for the school. The school has effective links with its parents and this has a good impact on pupils' learning.

48. The contribution of parents to children's learning is good despite the very long distances that many live from the school. They are very keen to provide food for birthday parties and they also make a very great effort to come in and support the many school plays and concerts. There are a small number of parents who help in school with routine jobs such as photocopying. Parents play a big part in helping with the charity events the school supports.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Leadership and management of the school are very good, which is a good improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be good. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership that has created a team committed to helping pupils make progress. Teachers and support staff share a vision for the school, which aims to achieve excellence on behalf of the pupils. Because staff are committed to achieving the school's vision there is an excellent reflection of the school's aims and values in its work and the progress and development of children are put above all else.
50. Management of the school on a day to day basis and over the longer term is very good. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and they complement each other's strengths very well. The headteacher, assisted by the deputy, also manages the local education authority's Sensory Support Service and the mainstream nursery. Although this considerable workload does not prevent the school having very good outcomes, it does, because of time constraints, restrict how much is written down about the very appropriate plans for the school's future.
51. There are very good systems for judging how effective the school is and for checking on, and improving teaching and learning. These procedures are largely undertaken by the headteacher and other senior teachers although subject co-ordinators, particularly those who manage English and mathematics, have also monitored their subjects. This has provided useful information to help the school and teachers improve. Co-ordinators in other subjects have identified that they would benefit from more consistent opportunities to monitor teaching so that they can contribute more effectively to planning future developments.
52. The governing body has introduced the statutory national scheme to improve the performance of teachers very well. The targets for teachers are very well related to the development plans for the school. There is a very good system, which enables teaching assistants to have a professional development review.
53. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties well. There has been satisfactory improvement in their work since

the last inspection. Governors are provided with very good information about the school's performance through the headteacher's annual reports, reports from staff about their roles and developments in their subjects as well as from the informal visits that they make to the school. The Chair of governors is extremely knowledgeable about the school and is a very strong and effective member of the governing body.

54. The school's development planning process is very effective in bringing about school improvement. Significant information is gained about the school's strengths and weaknesses by consulting staff, pupils and parents. This understanding is used to set appropriate targets for improvement. Although the written development plan only covers one year there is considerable planning for the future by the senior management, governors and staff, which occurs through well planned meetings. The school has a very clear idea of how improvements will take place, what it wants to achieve from developments and how it will judge that it has been successful.
55. The day to day management of the delegated budget is very efficient. However, budget details are not provided to the school in a way that makes it easy for the headteacher to separate the costs of the school from those of the support service and mainstream nursery. Information and communication technology is used very well to manage the purchase and payment of goods, keeping financial records and communicating financial and pupil information to the local authority and government departments. Grants provided by the government, such as National Grid for Learning and Standards Fund have been used well.
56. Accurate financial information is prepared by the office administrator to help the governing body and senior managers make their decisions. The administrative support in the school is very efficient in handling all ordering and payments of goods as well as the numerous other administrative tasks. The school makes very good efforts to ensure that purchases represent good value and it applies the principles of best value effectively, constantly challenging itself to do better and consults with others about how this might be done. It compares the performance of individual pupils over time and the effect the school is having on the improvement they make. The school makes very good use of the funding it receives. There is a large contingency in this year's accounts but this has been appropriately allocated to pay for completed improvements to the buildings and resources. The school provides very good value for money, which is an improvement since the last inspection when the value for money provided was judged to be good.
57. There are a good number of extremely well qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and pupils' needs. Induction procedures for new, supply or temporary staff are very good. All the support staff are very well qualified. They provide very good support in a wide range of the school's activities and almost all of them have an area of responsibility across the school. There is a good staff handbook to ensure that all incoming staff members are briefed about important aspects of the school and any support systems that are available. All staff members have job descriptions and very effective staff development ensures that they are able to attend courses they are interested in. There is a clear link between the priorities identified in the school's development plan and the staff development plan. The school provides very good quality training for teachers and support staff, which draws upon the expertise available in the school.
58. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Teachers have made very good use of colourful displays in teaching areas to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils and they work hard to decorate areas of the school with examples of

pupils' work and photographs of their achievements. Although classrooms are appropriate for the size of the class groups, the narrow corridors, stairs and landings and the limited amount of display space are unsatisfactory and do not help to celebrate the high level of work or the very positive ethos of the school. Storage space is very limited and the accommodation for the sensory service and school administration are particularly cramped. There have been very recent modifications to the school buildings and improvements to the grounds. These are of a very high standard and provide a much improved learning area for the nursery and a very good quality new hall. The school grounds provide pupils with good outside playgrounds and a grassed area. The school is maintained very well and kept very tidy and clean by the caretaking staff.

59. The quality and range of educational resources are very good overall and very well organised. They are very good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education and music. They are good in all other subjects. Resources are very well used by staff in the school to support the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. No significant areas for development were identified by the inspection team.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	34	50	9	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	44
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

* There are 16 full time equivalent children in the nursery

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	32
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.5
Average class size	6

Education support staff: Y R – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 -2003
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	£
Total income	598654
Total expenditure	619198
Expenditure per pupil	14743
Balance brought forward from previous year	39740
Balance carried forward to next year	20,544

Results of the survey of parents and carers - Primary

Thomasson Memorial Special School

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	44
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14			
My child is making good progress in school.	86	14			
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	36			5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	32	5		10
The teaching is good.	86	14			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	23			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	95		5		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10			
The school works closely with parents.	73	27			
The school is well led and managed.	100				
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	86	14			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	18	10		18

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views about the school that were expressed by parents through the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting.

Results of the survey of parents and carers - Nursery

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	25
Number of questionnaires returned	12

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25			
My child is making good progress in school.	50	42			8
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	50			8
The teaching is good.	58	42			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	33	8		8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	33			17
The school works closely with parents.	50	33	17		
The school is well led and managed.	58	33			8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	42			8

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

* Questions about the amount of work children are given to do at home and the range of activities the school provides outside lessons are not appropriate for children of this age. Parents' responses to these questions are not included in the table

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views about the school that were expressed by parents through the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting.

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

The learning opportunities provided for children under five who are deaf

61. The learning opportunities provided for children under five who are deaf are very good. Currently there are eight children who have a hearing impairment in the Foundation Stage. There are five children in the nursery and three in the reception class. Children from the reception class have very good opportunities to spend time in the nursery and in a class with older pupils. This addresses their learning and personal development needs very well and provides opportunities for them to develop very good play skills and to experience more formal learning in preparation for the next stage of their education. Assessment procedures are very good for these children because there is daily monitoring of their responses to activities and there is good evaluation of how effective sessions have been.
62. Staff share information very well and this is used effectively to plan the experiences children are given, which help to promote learning well, supporting children to acquire knowledge and skills. There is a good amount of information written down about any significant achievements children make and this enables the teacher to monitor progress effectively. The teacher also knows children very well and uses this knowledge to plan the next steps in learning very effectively.
63. The nursery accommodation has recently been improved and the classroom accommodation is good and is enhanced by a good quality outside play area. Staff ensure, through the organisation of areas within the classroom that they provide opportunities for imaginative play such as a home corner and creative areas as well as providing a very good range of table-top activities. The classroom provides a stimulating environment to support learning.
64. Children's communication, language and literacy are promoted very well because adults constantly talk to them about their work, encouraging them to respond and to use the communication strategies they have developed. Adults have very high expectations of children to communicate and this results in very good progress for these children.

Learning opportunities for all other children under five

65. When children start in the nursery class, there is a broad spread of ability, but overall attainment is well below average in all six areas of learning, except physical development where it is just below. About half the children speak English as a second language, and several do not speak English at home. These children are very well supported and they make good progress. Teaching is very good and children make very good progress in the development of their language and communication, their mathematical understanding, personal, social and emotional development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development and they make good progress in physical development. By the time children leave the nursery, attainment is broadly average in these areas.

66. There are twenty places available in the nursery, which are quickly taken. There are currently twenty-five children attending. Twelve part time places are reserved for hearing impaired children who normally attend for a full day. Other children attend either morning or afternoon sessions. Many children move to the neighbouring primary school, others go to different local schools. For the majority of the children, the nursery is their first experience away from home. Staff members ease their transition into school by providing a very warm, welcoming and secure environment in which the children feel happy and valued. A member of staff meets parents and children at the door when they arrive each day and the staff members know children and their families well. There are good meetings for parents, and visits for children before they start nursery. Parents stay with their child until they are confident and settled.
67. A very good range of learning activities and experiences are planned, which are very well linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum designed for the youngest children. Children enjoy coming to school, and benefit well from their time in the nursery.

Personal, social and emotional development.

68. All staff place great emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, and the children flourish in the caring atmosphere of the school. Very good teaching and well-planned activities ensure that children make very good progress and are very well settled. Staff members are very good role models, supporting and helping each other as a team, showing the children how to co-operate when they participate in work and play activities, for example, the nursery nurse and children built a wall for the teddy bears in the outdoor area. Children's work is displayed very attractively, and they write their own labels to add value to their efforts and this encourages them to try harder. There are good routines for tidying up, and after baking a cake for the teddy bears' picnic, one child wiped the tables thoroughly while the others washed up. Most children can look after their clothes and remove their shoes for physical activities; the more dextrous can fasten zips and buttons unaided. Social and moral development is very good. Children take turns, share equipment and become aware that everyone has different needs. Every child's self-esteem is sensitively promoted, and achievements are positively rewarded with lots of praise. They show very good attitudes to their learning, behave well and are interested and involved in every activity.

Communication, language and literacy.

69. The majority of the children have limited language skills when they enter the nursery. They have a very limited vocabulary range, many use one-word answers or very brief sentences, and several demonstrate immature speech. Children do not talk readily, so all staff members sensitively draw them into discussion asking questions "What do you think" or "How shall we do this?" to encourage their participation. Children make very good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy. However, staff members occasionally miss the chance to reinforce a new word. For example in a music lesson, one boy said 'tambourine', and the other children could have repeated the word to help them learn and remember it. As children become more confident, they learn to speak to the whole class. Children joined in a role-play session with enthusiasm, and one boy confidently used a squeaky little voice as baby bear, which encouraged the boy playing 'daddy bear' to speak in a gruff tone.

70. All children enjoy listening to stories, and join in with repeated lines, such as 'Wobble Bear'. They enjoy selecting books from the good range available in the nursery. They show good recall of favourite stories such as the Three Bears, and recognise the characters. Children recognise their own name, and link the initial letter with pictures that sound the same. They write labels, which helps them learn that print runs from left to right and has meaning. These activities encourage them to read what they have written, for example when they label the digger on the building site. As yet, many have little recognition of words or sounds beyond their own name.
71. Many children are just beginning to hold a pencil correctly, and are slowly developing control. The more able can copy under words, when writing the ingredients for their sandwich for example, but most children are still at the early stage of tracing lines and curves prior to learning letter formation. An area set aside for writing, drawing and mark-making activities would give them more opportunities to develop and practise their skills on a regular basis. Teaching is very good and children make very good progress, but their attainment is still below average when they leave the nursery because they have a lot of ground to make up.

Mathematical understanding

72. Very good teaching and a very wide range of practical investigations and resources enables children to start counting, sorting, matching, finding patterns and making relevant connections in order to use numbers and recognise shapes. They all make very good progress. A range of practical activities helps them to learn mathematical vocabulary. They count at every opportunity: how many children are present each day, how many cakes are needed, how many teddies there are. Most children join in when the class count and a small number can go beyond 10. Others do not yet recognise the number digits, and do not co-ordinate their counting to objects accurately. They have not yet started to calculate. A nursery nurse asks "Is this the smallest chair?" to help the children learn sizes and the vocabulary of comparison. There are very good displays of 2D shapes, with questions such as "How many corners can you see?" and 3D shapes to hold and feel. Most children recognise a square, a circle, a rectangle and a triangle, but cannot name a cube. The mathematics area of the classroom is very well resourced with a wide range of games, equipment and activities that stimulate children's interest and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Very good teaching, the imaginative use of good resources and a strong emphasis on practical investigational experiences enables the children to make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy observing, counting and discussing the different living creatures, including the frogs, the gerbils and the goldfish. They are eagerly waiting for the day when the duck eggs hatch in the incubator, having recently watched chicks hatch out. Children have planted sunflowers and runner beans, and are amazed that the tiny seeds have gradually grown into such tall plants. Good quality books and pictures help children discover more information about growing. They have looked at the way they, too, have grown and changed over time, from a baby to a small child. The school building has recently changed and developed, and children have watched as the builders worked on site. They have drawn plans for the

layout of their new outdoor area. The digital camera is used very well to record the children whilst they are busy at work.

74. Children use the computer suite every week. There is a wide variation in computer skills, and the nursery has a special small mouse, suitable for small hands. A small number of children have enough control of the mouse to draw a frog face or dress the teddy, using the mouse to click and drag function to position the clothes. Others find it difficult to manipulate. In a purposeful design and technology activity, children designed and made their own sandwiches for the teddy bears' picnic. They made independent choices of bread, used their writing skills to list ingredients, and manipulated the tools well as they spread butter and fillings on their bread. Children learn how major faiths celebrate over the course of the year, including the Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Visitors to the class broaden and enrich the children's experience, including the Fire Service, the Health Visitor and an owl sanctuary.

Physical development

75. All children make good progress through good teaching and well-planned activities. Small physical skills are developed well by a variety of activities when children use scissors, pencils, chalk and tools safely, butter and cut bread and manipulate jigsaws and small world equipment. They show increasing skills with the computer mouse to click on and drag items on the screen. Weekly physical education lessons in the hall give children opportunities to move freely in a large space. They use soft play equipment to climb, roll and crawl, and bats, balls and skipping ropes, learning to control and co-ordinate their movements safely and well. The new outdoor area is a welcome addition, and children love using bikes, scooters and cars, as well as rolling the large tyres, trying to follow a line. The arrival of a new climbing frame will extend the children's experiences of moving at different levels on larger equipment.

Creative development

76. Children meet a very good range of creative activities through good teaching, and they progress well. The music area is very well equipped with bright instruments that appeal to children and encourage them to experiment with sounds. They enjoy songs, recall the words well and have lots of opportunities for singing, for example whilst stirring a cake mixture. Children sing enthusiastically, but not very tunefully as yet! They play "Pass the bag round", a lucky dip game to encourage them to select and play different instruments. Children paint, cut and stick materials for texture and effect on pictures, collages and models. Bright colours are used imaginatively and freely to express ideas, and work is displayed imaginatively. In the role-play area, the children acted as the characters in the Three Bears, and a small number added narrative to their roles. They particularly enjoy dressing up in character, and wearing Goldilocks' blond wig. When playing with the small toys such as the dolls house children do not yet show a wide imagination. Staff members always participate actively alongside the children in imaginative play, encouraging them to talk about their ideas, giving them valuable opportunities for self-expression, to make choices and help language development.

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' achievements in English are very good and they make very good progress. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are very well supported and also make very good progress. The excellent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has helped lead to good improvements in the quality of teaching, planning, learning and assessment. The school uses the framework very effectively to ensure that teachers plan work so that pupils build on what they have already learned. Teachers check pupils' achievements against the objectives in the framework and use this information to plan the next steps of learning so that pupils progress through the strategy at a level that reflects their individual need.
78. Teachers plan very effectively for pupils to acquire language and they provide extremely good opportunities for them to develop communication skills, oral or signing, in all lessons and throughout the school day. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their preferred communication skills and they are very willing and confident to contribute and to learn from their mistakes. They concentrate well and respond keenly to questions asked by teachers and teaching assistants. These opportunities make a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils make in this area. Within all subjects there are very good opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy skills. Teachers use a very appropriately structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing, which enables pupils to make very good progress in reading and good progress in writing. A very significant number of pupils start school with very little language and limited communication skills but they make a significant amount of progress and by the time they are in Year 6, the outcomes of SATs indicate that higher attaining pupils achieve levels that are broadly similar to the national average
79. Teachers listen well to pupils and have very high expectations of them to contribute to lessons. They value pupils' comments and pupils respond confidently to questions because they are praised for their efforts. Pupils are able to give simple reasons and explanations for their answers and are very confident to talk about their work and to share their ideas. School performances and signed singing all provide pupils with very good opportunities to develop their preferred communication skills further. Higher attaining pupils engage the interest of the listener by varying their facial expressions when signing and oral pupils by using interesting vocabulary.
80. Achievements in reading are very good and pupils make very good progress because there is a clear focus by teachers on developing pupils' understanding. Younger pupils learn to follow the text in books and repeat words that the teacher indicates by using sign and speech. Pupils of reception age follow the story 'Bears in the night' with enthusiasm, anticipating events and enjoying the 'scary bits'. Lower attaining pupils are able to use more than one strategy to help them read unfamiliar words. Other pupils are independent readers and by the end of Year 6 are able to read age appropriate books with very good understanding. These pupils use different strategies to tackle information words and are able to discuss texts and comment on characters and events. All pupils are given the opportunity to read to an adult regularly and each class has a good selection of books to encourage pupils' interest. Pupils show great pleasure in books because they have been given the chance to read widely. When they read aloud or sign text to adults, younger pupils try hard to make use of the pictures and the repetition within the story to help them. Older pupils who have speech can read with expression

and they make good use of punctuation because teachers provide them with a good model, for example, by showing them how the voice is raised at the end of a phrase to indicate a question. There is a very good selection of books in the school library, which is used very effectively to teach library skills, for research and for story telling.

81. Pupils' achievement and progress in writing is good. Teachers know how well pupils are learning and plan further work so that they improve their skills. Pupils of reception age produce recognisable letters and lower attaining pupils in Year 1 copy under or over pre-written words and begin to trace and follow letters and lines. The writing of higher attaining pupils is often organised, imaginative and clear. For example, pupils in Year 6 understand and use adjectives to describe the characters in 'The Hare and the Tortoise'. Pupils are given good opportunities to write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. For example, letters, poetry, lists and instructions and pupils confidently undertake longer pieces of story writing. Older pupils make good independent use of dictionaries to support their writing and understanding. Teachers give them good guidance on how to structure stories, for example, pupils construct sentences and, in a few cases, quite complex ones, with appropriate punctuation and they are appropriately sequenced into paragraphs. However, a significant number of pupils have problems with word order because of the different way sentences are structured for signing. Pupils' work is generally well presented with handwriting generally neat and legible. The range and number of opportunities provided for pupils to develop creative writing skills is very good. Writing samples are regularly collected by teachers and used to check standards. Marking by teachers in pupils' books is good and provides constructive comments to help them improve.
82. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Teachers use a very wide range of resources and strategies to promote pupils' literacy skills in all lessons and pupils are encouraged to find information for themselves so that they become independent learners. There is a very clear understanding of the range of ability in each class and work is adapted very well to enable all pupils to fully participate in lessons. Pupils are tested on a regular basis and their records show very good gains in the acquisition of language and communication, reading and spelling. Each pupil has a language and communication programme and targets for English; these are very specific and make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make because they are very well considered by teachers when they plan work. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use computers, which are planned so that pupils get good opportunities to practise their skills. Teachers also use computers very effectively as part of their teaching strategies and this helps to make lessons varied and interesting.
83. The teaching of English is very good. Excellent teaching, by the deaf instructor, was seen for pupils in Years 4 and 5 when they were told the story of 'The Great Fire of London'. The quality of teaching is consistently high, which is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good overall with a significant number of satisfactory lessons observed. Teachers plan very well and prepare a rich variety of activities that make lessons interesting, for example, using a computer to share a "Talking Book" with pupils. Because teachers are very careful to consider pupils' language and communication needs, lessons are suitably planned for the abilities of all pupils and they promote and support very effective learning. For example, teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils and there are very good opportunities for pupils to recall and explain what they

have learned previously because question and answer techniques are used well to encourage pupils to think.

84. Teachers place a significant emphasis developing pupils' concentration and attention so that they can participate effectively. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent with great respect being shown both by pupils to each other and by pupils to the teacher. Teachers are enthusiastic and create a very positive learning atmosphere. There is a very good emphasis on creating an effective learning environment in each classroom and the wall displays are stimulating and provide clues and prompts for pupils to help them learn. Pupils use them very effectively and this enables them to demonstrate a good level of independence when they have individual tasks to complete. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used effectively to reinforce the learning done in lessons.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There are very effective procedures for monitoring teaching, planning and achievement and the outcomes of these procedures are used very effectively to promote improvement. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' language and communication are excellent. Pupils are regularly tested by the co-ordinator, which ensures that there are consistent outcomes and this enables the school to effectively compare pupils' achievements year on year and to measure progress. Resources for the subject are very good. The library book stocks have been improved recently and are very good because they are supplemented by loans from the library service. The school has recently invested in information and technology equipment such as interactive whiteboards and is beginning to use these very effectively to support the development of pupils' communication and literacy skills further. The school has set appropriate targets for raising standards in English and has a suitable plan for achieving them.

MATHEMATICS

86. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with additional special needs, achieve very well and make very good progress because of very good teaching. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and the lesson structure recommended by the strategy, very well. Teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' special needs and very high expectations of what they will achieve. The curriculum is very appropriate giving pupils a broad experience of all aspects of mathematics. Teaching assistants work very effectively alongside teachers, with small groups and with individuals and they make a very good contribution to pupils' achievement. There are no significant trends in the achievement of pupils in Year 6 from one year to the next because the abilities of each group differ. Last year a significant number of pupils in Year 6 achieved at levels similar to the national average for their age.
87. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress in understanding numbers when they work on doubling numbers and higher attaining pupils can count backwards in twos with confidence. The teacher checks pupils' understanding effectively and introduces harder work for a few of them, which challenges them but also enables them to be successful. Pupils in Year 2 increase their understanding of sorting very effectively as they group different coloured Harry Potter balloons into appropriate categories following instructions. A Year 6 class made excellent progress in producing Carroll diagrams when pupils were asked to 'group themselves' into different categories. This activity involved pupils in an exciting and stimulating lesson that leads to clear understanding and very good progress. The teachers ensure that

lessons provide very good opportunities for sharing, taking turns and working co-operatively.

88. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 continue to make very good progress and they are able to recall past learning and use it effectively, for example, by counting in twos and fives, with higher attaining pupils counting to 100 in fives. They name and describe more complex shapes such as pentagon and hexagon and they can define a right angle, using their knowledge of shape to give direction by half and quarter turns.
89. Lessons are planned very well and there is good classroom organisation. Tasks are very well prepared and matched to pupils' needs, which enables them to make very good progress. Teachers plan for the use of computers, question and answer sessions, pencil and paper tasks and investigations. They have excellent relationships with pupils and this encourages them to try hard. Pupils concentrate very well and are usually quite tired by the end of lessons. Because adults constantly praise pupils and explain to them how they have been successful, pupils recognise, and are pleased with, their achievements. Teachers ensure that pupils are challenged by the work they are given but, also, that they are given enough support to be successful. This enables higher attaining pupils to persevere, for instance, when they learn how to sort by three criteria. Because the activities are fun pupils are encouraged to participate; Year 3 pupils clearly enjoy explaining what they have done when they add two figures together in their head. Pupils in Year 3 are given very good opportunities to practise co-ordinates. The grid is projected onto the whiteboard from the computer and this work is followed up effectively with the use of the screen turtle. Pupils' numeracy skills are often reinforced in other lessons and during informal times during the day. For example, in an English lesson when pupils use number order in the contents section of an information book
90. The school has very good systems to check what pupils have learned that are directly linked to the content of the curriculum. Information gained from this system is used very effectively to help teachers prepare work that is well matched to pupils' individual needs and this enables pupils of all abilities to make very good progress. Teachers monitor pupils' learning, mark their work consistently and use questions very well to check if pupils have understood. They have very good knowledge of pupils' abilities and excellent understanding of their special needs, which is used very effectively to plan lessons and prepare work that enables pupils to be successful. Pupils' understanding in numeracy is checked when they are admitted to the school and they are tested each year using the Standard Assessment Test materials. Teachers use this information very well to compare pupils' achievement with that of mainstream pupils and to set appropriate individual targets.
91. The subject is very well led and managed by the curriculum co-ordinator and there is a good subject development plan which clearly identifies priorities that will lead to improvement. The school has set clear targets for continuing to raise standards in mathematics and has drawn up suitable plans for achieving them.

SCIENCE

92. Teaching and learning in science are good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Teachers plan activities well and allow enough time for investigations to be conducted appropriately. They provide good, ongoing feedback to pupils and have very effective systems to check what they know and understand. Pupils are regularly questioned to ensure

that the activity has been understood and this enables the teacher to correct misconceptions and promote learning. Pupils' achievements in science are good and they make good progress. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are well supported and also make good progress. Although by the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress, their attainment is below the national average because they have started from a low level of understanding.

93. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 indicates that they have good understanding of topics such as 'Myself' and they identify and label the major parts of the body and have learned about young animals. Pupils also have good understanding of forces and understand the difference between push and pull. Pupils' work is annotated well by teachers and this enables them to monitor the progress they make and the amount of support they have received.
94. Older primary age pupils build effectively on what they have learned. Their understanding of forces improves and they use a meter confidently to measure the amount of force needed to move objects on different surfaces. Teaching is good and in a lesson for pupils in Year 5 the teacher effectively stressed the importance of 'fair testing'. This enabled pupils to understand how they could compare the outcomes of the tests. Pupils conducted the investigations carefully and recorded their results appropriately noting that the table top produces less friction than the carpet.
95. Teachers plan interesting activities for pupils so that they are very keen to participate in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 watched a chemical reaction when a fizzy sweet was crushed and mixed with water. They observed the reaction in the test tube carefully and predicted what would happen; they recognised that gas was being produced and knew that the pressure would build within the tube if they kept their finger over the top. Good use of questions by the teacher enabled pupils to express their understanding. Pupils behaved very well and showed a good understanding of the health and safety requirements of the activity. Teachers plan well. They clearly identify the learning objectives for each topic that is taught and lesson plans carefully link pupils' individual communication targets to the activities that are being undertaken. Systems to check what pupils have learned are very good and the learning targets identified for the topic are used effectively to check pupils' achievement. Teachers also make good notes to explain the reasons for their judgements and to identify areas of concern.
96. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator takes an active interest in supporting staff and ensuring that the very good range of resource boxes are well maintained and support the curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors the work that pupils have completed at the end of each topic and this enables her to review the appropriateness of the topic and how effectively it has been taught. There is no science room at the school but during the latter part of the summer term older pupils have opportunities to work in a local secondary school science laboratory to help prepare them for their move into Year 7.

ART AND DESIGN

97. It is clear from teachers' planning, records and pupils' work displayed around the school that pupils, including those with additional special needs, make good

progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory.

98. The youngest pupils make good progress and they learn basic drawing and painting skills and start to explore pattern and texture as they create collages and simple prints. They learn about portraits and they have good opportunities to develop their own work influenced by the work of artists such as Picasso. Older pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills further as they learn more about colour, tone and line. They produce still life pictures in pastel and have undertaken three dimensional pieces of work, for example, with sculptures created in card as well as sculptures in the style of Paul Klee and Richard Long. Visiting artists contribute well to the subject, for example, the artist Hamish Rosie has been involved in producing a mural and another, Bridget Crowery, has worked with pupils to paint portraits for a large banner. There are some very good examples of pupils' work on portraits influenced by Raphael, Picasso and Monet.
99. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers organise lessons well and ensure that pupils have opportunities to create art using different materials and techniques such as collage and printing. Curriculum plans ensure that pupils undertake three dimensional work as well as experience different ways of drawing and painting. Pupils also have good opportunities to study the work of known artists, such as Rousseau and pupils' work about this artist was well displayed.
100. Teachers plan well to introduce and extend the range of techniques available to pupils and, in a good lesson, older pupils were given the opportunity to tell stories through textiles when they studied the Bayeux Tapestry to produce their own version. Activities such as these enable pupils to learn how to use a sewing machine to produce their work. Lessons are well paced and activities are varied and this ensures that teachers retain pupils' interest throughout. Good attention is paid to teaching techniques and skills and teachers enhance pupils' learning by ensuring that work is interesting and relevant. There is a small amount of computer use in art but this could be developed further.
101. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator provides good advice and support for other staff when she checks planning and records. Resources for the subject are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Teachers' plans, photographic evidence and pupils' written work indicate that pupils have taken part in a good range of design and technology activities. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when learning opportunities and achievement were judged to be satisfactory.
103. Younger primary age pupils plan their work well and investigate the properties of materials and their suitability for the task. During a topic to make Christmas decorations pupils used fabrics effectively to make Christmas stockings and card to make calendars. They have also used pipe cleaners and cardboard boxes to make a rabbit. Photographic evidence indicates that pupils use a range of hand tools and equipment, for example, they use a saw to make a wooden trolley. The work undertaken by younger pupils is effectively built on because projects become increasingly more complex and there is an increase in the range of materials and

equipment used. Pupils develop their design skills further and this is clearly demonstrated in the processes needed to design and make a slipper. Pupils were given good opportunities to examine a range of slipper designs from different cultures, made from different materials, before beginning to plan their own designs. Pupils carefully considered the materials and their suitability and their design and the finished articles showed creative flair and appropriate design considerations.

104. Older primary age pupils undertook a project on biscuits. During the course of this project pupils sampled the opinions and thoughts of other pupils through a survey and produced a chart showing the most popular flavours. Pupils also 'costed' the different types of biscuits and considered the packaging and presentation so that they could produce their biscuits competitively. Teachers use opportunities such as these very effectively to reinforce pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils make good progress and by the time they are in Year 6 the majority attain the national average.
105. Procedures for checking what pupils know and understand are very good. Learning objectives are clearly specified for each of the topics studied and pupils' achievement is effectively checked against them. The co-ordinator also samples work from across the school to monitor standards and to support colleagues with the delivery of the subject. Resources are good and used effectively to support the subject plans.

HUMANITIES

106. Learning opportunities in history and geography are good and have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. This improvement is due to teachers' enthusiasm, the use of activities such as role play which inspires pupils and the effective use of computers for research and the presentation of work.
107. Pupils make good progress in history and by Year 2 they have a good understanding of how lives and objects have changed and they are aware that people live differently now. Teachers make interesting use of artefacts and this engages pupils in lessons, for example, when they compare old and modern toys and investigate items such as music boxes. These activities give pupils insight and understanding of life in the past. History is made relevant to pupils through other practical activities such as teaching games from the past, for example, hopscotch.
108. By Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of changes in the community and their studies of how buildings are used now compared to the past gives them a good insight into how their community has developed. Teachers ensure that there is a good focus on the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale and a 19th century factory worker, which gives pupils a real sense of the past. Teaching also includes analysis of how the lives of hearing impaired pupils have changed. Visits to the old school building and talks from ex-pupils make this history both real and relevant to the pupils.
109. Pupils also make good progress in geography and by Year 2 pupils have developed an understanding of place and location through activities such as using maps to locate the school, going on trips to the local park and shops as well as longer journeys to cities such as Manchester. Experience of the wider world is

developed through good opportunities to investigate other countries such as Australia, when pupils gain understanding through activities such as writing a “postcard” from Australia or researching the country on the Internet.

110. By Year 6 pupils have a good understanding about the structure of their local community because teachers have planned opportunities for them to find out about the shops, traffic and other amenities. Links with mathematics are strong and pupils produce tally charts and pie charts to illustrate their findings. Teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to use their knowledge in a practical way by designing and building a model of their ideal town. Links with science are also well established as pupils gain an understanding of water supply and the problems of drought in the world.
111. Teaching in both history and geography is good. Drama is used very effectively in lessons. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to undertake research using computers and for them to visit places of historical interest. An excellent lesson about the life of Florence Nightingale made very effective use of role play to help Year 3 pupils develop their understanding by acting out scenes from her life. Similarly, the life of a 19th century factory worker was recreated with understanding and the pupils’ enactment of the demonstration in favour of the Ten Hour Bill was particularly emotive. Teachers make history relevant for pupils through a wide range of effective links with the local community, for example, having ex-pupils of the school describe life in the Second World War made a significant contribution to pupils’ learning and vivid story telling, such as the description of the Great Fire of London in an English lesson engaged pupils’ interest and helped their understanding.
112. The leadership and management of both history and geography are good. Resources have been effectively developed and particular attention has been paid to the use of computers. Systems to check what pupils have learned are good but greater attention needs to be given to the systematic marking of pupils’ work to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how it can be improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. The provision for information and communication technology is good. The recent introduction of a new computer suite combined with staff training and the development of curriculum planning has successfully raised standards since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils’ achievements are good and they make good progress. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are well supported and also make good progress.
114. Information and communication technology plays a significant role in supporting pupils’ learning. The allocation of discrete information and communication technology lessons has been a significant factor in the raising of standards. By the end of Year 2 pupils are very familiar with computers and are capable of using them for a range of purposes. Higher attaining pupils display confidence and skill when undertaking tasks such as word processing written work and composing and sending an e-mail with an attachment. Lower attaining pupils can, independently, use computers to produce written work. They select the font styles, letter sizes and colours they want confidently. All pupils demonstrate ability in the use of computers for research purposes. Basic tasks such as finding words from an on-line dictionary are undertaken with confidence.

115. Pupils achieve well by Year 6 because teachers provide good opportunities for them to develop their skills and they use computers with confidence. For example, pupils demonstrate that they can draft and redraft written work on screen. Their research skills develop well and pupils demonstrate they can use the Internet to find and print information, for example, they find information about mini-beasts to support their work in science. The confidence generated in pupils by the good quality of the teaching is reflected in their ability to use a “white screen” to successfully identify words and draw pictures.
116. Teaching and learning are good for pupils in all year groups. The recent training given to teachers has given them confidence to use the subject and, more specifically, to match its use to the needs of hearing impaired pupils. Teachers challenge and interest pupils, for example, in a lesson Year 2 pupils were required to write an e-mail and send it and Year 6 pupils produced a Power Point demonstration about the Tudors. Pupils benefit from the clear explanations teachers provide about tasks which, combined with the very strong relationships pupils have with adults, gives them the confidence to undertake new learning. Teaching assistants play an important part in ensuring that lower ability pupils make good progress.
117. Information and communication technology plays an increasing and developing role in supporting pupils’ learning in all subjects and the life of the school. The use of digital cameras to record pupils’ work and achievements is well established and in English good use is made of information and communication technology for word processing and the teaching of reading and in mathematics to generate graphs and grids.
118. The subject is well led and managed. Efficient use is made of the new computer suite and the deployment of computers to classrooms enhances the opportunities pupils have to use them. Systems to check what pupils have learned are very good. Curriculum plans are monitored well. The development of resources combined with staff training has successfully raised the profile of ICT in the school and has significantly improved pupils’ achievements.

MUSIC

119. Pupils, including those with additional special needs, achieve very well and make very good progress in music. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be good. Teaching and learning are very good because teachers use the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority’s materials effectively to plan a wide range of interesting activities for pupils and they enrich these through an extremely wide range of experiences that include visits to major concert halls as well as singing in the shopping centre in Bolton.
120. Younger pupils are keen to participate in lessons because a variety of music making activities are used. They copy clapping patterns well and sign and sing songs such as “come on everybody clap your hands”. They sing with great confidence. A significant number of pupils are able to hold pitch and keep a tune well. Older pupils in Year 4 worked very hard, with their teacher and the deaf instructor, to sign and sing “Knack, Knack, Paddy Whack” having great fun trying to sign rapidly to keep pace with the song. When pupils learn new songs such as “Something Spooky”, they soon learn some of the signs and they take great delight in pretending to be ghosts. The teacher and deaf instructor work very well as a team and this helps pupils to make very good progress.

121. Teachers plan pupils' learning very well, taking care to ensure that the words that are used in the songs are appropriate for pupils' language level and this ensures that music and singing in particular plays a very important part in the development of pupils' communication. Teachers know pupils very well and have high expectations of what they will achieve. This ensures that the work planned for pupils is challenging but well matched to their abilities.
122. The curriculum is very relevant. Work is modified very well to take account of pupils' hearing difficulties and this helps to ensure that all pupils learn to enjoy listening to and performing music. Learning opportunities are enhanced significantly by the high profile that is given to music in school productions and performances that are of a very high standard.
123. Resources for music are very good and teachers use them very effectively to enrich the experiences pupils have. The large glockenspiels and sound bars, various drums as well as percussion instruments are augmented by large "sound boxes" that pupils sit on so that they can feel the rhythms through vibrations. There is very good amplification equipment and computers are being used well in the subject. The accommodation is good for music with a designated room for the subject. However, storage is limited.
124. The subject is very well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator who effectively checks teachers' plans to ensure that they reflect pupils' needs and provide opportunities for them to learn in appropriate ways. This regular checking of teachers' plans helps to improve the learning that is prepared for pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Teaching is good and often very good and, as a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning has been maintained successfully since the last inspection.
126. Pupils make good progress because teachers provide opportunities for them to practise their skills, for example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils developed their skills in catching and throwing which helped them to be successful in a game of quick cricket. In all lessons teachers emphasise the need to take turns and to play by the rules and this is accepted well by pupils contributing effectively to their personal and social development. For example, in the Year 2 lesson the first pupil 'caught out' coped very well with the disappointment and accepted the decision without fuss. Teachers provide a good range of interesting activities for pupils, which cover the required elements of the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils participated with great enthusiasm and excitement in a dance lesson working on a party dance from Africa. Pupils followed the teacher's demonstration very well and were keen to rehearse the moves they were shown. Pupils were also given very good opportunities to explore the rhythm of the music by 'feeling' it through the speakers and they were interested to explore how far from the speakers they could 'feel' the music vibrating through the floor. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in physical education lessons, for example, Year 4 pupils counted dance patterns and recognised $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ turns. The enthusiasm that pupils show during lessons is very well managed by teachers who encourage their commitment and enjoyment. By Year 6 pupils achieve standards that are broadly similar to the national average.

127. There are very good opportunities for pupils to join in with lessons alongside their mainstream peers. A group of pupils from Years 1 and 2 took part in a lesson at the neighbouring primary school which was planned to improve their catching and throwing skills. They followed instructions carefully and with their mainstream partners practised hard. Pupils participated in all aspects of the lesson effectively even though little signing was used. Pupils were confident to use the clues around them if they were unsure of the instructions that had been given and they followed the actions of the mainstream pupils. Pupils were fully included in the lesson and performed comparably with those from the mainstream school.
128. There are very good levels of contact with the local community which contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Teachers ensure that pupils are involved in a wide range of sporting activities and they visit local facilities such as the swimming pool and are involved in activities such as football and cricket coaching and they undertake a variety of activities on day and residential visits.
129. The recently completed school hall provides a very good indoor facility and the new soft play resources have enabled a broader range of activities to be offered to pupils within the hall area. The updating and renewal of equipment and resources has supported this development and pupils are now able to use a good range of soft play equipment as well as having access to new floor mats and bats and balls. In the autumn term older pupils go swimming and they achieve swimming awards for their efforts, which are proudly included in their records of achievement.
130. The subject is led and managed well and a good range of activities is included within the physical education curriculum. The co-ordinator offers good support advice to other teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Learning opportunities in religious education are good. Very strong links with the local community, combined with very good use of computers, ensures that pupils take part in a good range of stimulating experiences. There has been good improvement to the subject since the last inspection because the school has successfully developed opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths.
132. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well. Teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop a sense of respect for other people and for different religions. The school provides interesting activities for pupils and effectively draws upon the local community to develop pupils' knowledge by visiting local churches and other places of worship. There are also effective visits to the school by local clergy. Pupils are introduced to the beliefs and customs of a wide range of faiths through a good range of different experiences. For example, pupils find out about the regalia and services of the Jewish religion and visit a Jewish museum in Manchester. These experiences are developed further through visitors to the school from members of the faith. Religious education is used very effectively to promote self-awareness amongst younger pupils when they draw self-portraits showing different emotions. Activities such as this have a significant impact on pupils' understanding of their own, and others', feelings.
133. By the end of Year 6 pupils are able to make good use of computer research to explore the symbols of a range of faiths. Religious education is made exciting and relevant by teachers through computer activities such as writing "The Christmas

Party”, an illustrated tale of Christmas. Opportunities such as these provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills. Teachers make the subject relevant to pupils, for example, a lesson about the Ten Commandments referred to the school rules, which helped pupils to understand. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils’ spiritual awareness when they write prayers for different occasions, such as forgiveness or thanksgiving.

134. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and are used very effectively to develop pupils’ communication skills and widen their vocabulary. Teachers use artefacts well, especially for younger pupils, and this is effective in developing their understanding. Pupils in Year 2 named and labelled a range of artefacts to demonstrate their understanding of religious events such as baptism and marriage. The effective use of computers is illustrated by a lesson for pupils in Year 6 who used them well to research and compare different places of worship. Teaching is successful in capturing pupils’ interest and their understanding is extended through well planned school and class assemblies which link closely with the topics being studied in religious education lessons.
135. The subject is well managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator has been successful in developing curriculum plans that follow the local education authority’s approved syllabus. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are now good. The co-ordinator has made a good start in collecting samples of pupils’ work to monitor their progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

136. Due to timetable arrangements no lessons were observed. Teachers’ plans and pupils’ work indicates that by Year 6 pupils achieve well. Pupils of all ages and abilities make very good progress because the personal, social and health education programme is very good and there are also very good opportunities provided to support pupils’ development throughout the day. This is an improvement since the last inspection when learning opportunities were judged to be good. Sex and drug awareness education is delivered very effectively by the deaf instructor. This ensures that difficult ideas are explained with clarity because she has very good knowledge of pupils’ needs and has excellent skills in signing and interpretation. Learning about citizenship is being incorporated effectively into the existing personal, social and health education programme and the school is beginning to appropriately identify elements in the religious education curriculum that can contribute to pupils’ learning of citizenship.