

INSPECTION REPORT

CHEADLE HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 133326

Headteacher: Miss Christine Meekley

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th May 2003

Inspection number: 251465

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Edgeley Road Cheadle Heath Stockport
Postcode:	SK3 0RJ
Telephone number:	(0161) 428 2476
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Bottomley
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Music Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32367	Joanna Pike	Team inspector	English Science	How well is the school led and managed?
20950	Roger Burgess	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	
22999	George Loizou	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
10120	Phillip Crookall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15 - 16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16 - 17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 - 34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cheadle Heath Primary School has 255 pupils on roll and is an averaged sized school. This includes 35 children who attend the Nursery part-time. The school was formed by the amalgamation of an Infant and Junior School in September 2001. There are therefore no previous valid national test results. The schools were previously inspected as separate infant and junior schools, so no comparison can be made with the previous reports. The school has slightly more boys than girls on roll. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, with poor literacy and numeracy skills; on entry to the reception class, attainment is generally below average. The school lies in an area of largely unfavourable socio-economic circumstances, with above average unemployment in recent years. Over 40 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, well above the national average. The school has approximately the same number of pupils on its list of special educational needs as the national average. However, a significant proportion of these, about two fifths, has moderate learning difficulties. There are also a significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties. There are two pupils with statements of special educational need. No pupils speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school overall which is improving. It has some very good and some outstanding features. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards are generally close to national averages in English and science, and in mathematics in Year 2. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. Very effective provision for moral and social development, very good provision for special educational needs and outstandingly good levels of leadership and management are further strengths. As a result, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables children to make a very good start to their learning in the nursery and reception classes.
- Enables all pupils to make good progress throughout the school.
- Provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Gives pupils strong support in moral and social development, while ensuring learning takes place in a secure and caring environment.
- Provides good teaching, which results in good learning in classrooms.
- Provides outstandingly effective levels of leadership and management, with excellent support and involvement of the governing body.

What could be improved

- Better use of assessment and greater focus on investigation to raise standards in science.
- The use of investigative techniques in mathematics.
- Standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT), where there is still some way to go to reach national averages.
- More emphasis on story writing in order to raise standards in English.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since this is a newly formed school, no comparisons can be made with any previous reports. Inspectors judged that this new school is improving rapidly and has great potential to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards in the 2002 national tests were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science for pupils in Year 6 when compared to all schools. When compared to schools of a broadly similar nature, pupils' national test results were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Inspectors judged current standards of Year 6 pupils' work and performance in lessons to be average in English and science and just below average in mathematics. These findings show a significant improvement across the board. Girls performed better than boys last year in the national tests, largely due to the large number of boys who had special educational needs in the group that year. Currently, inspectors found little difference in the attainment of boys and girls throughout the school. Results in national tests were better for pupils in Year 2 in 2002. In reading and writing, when compared to similar schools, pupils performed at well above average levels. In mathematics, standards were above average. Teacher assessments in science were below average. Given that children enter the school well below average, current progress and former records of national test results show that achievement by Year 6 is good. On entry to the nursery, most children have poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills, and their personal and social skills are also poor. Owing to very good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes, children's learning accelerates and many reach the expected levels at the start of Year 1. The good progress continues in all classes throughout the school. Standards are above average by Year 6 in art and design, design and technology and in music. In ICT, because the new computer suite and equipment have only recently been installed, standards are not yet as high as they should be, although progress is improving rapidly. Standards are average in all other subjects, with good progress. Targets set by governors are challenging and high, but realistic, given inspection findings.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good attitudes contribute greatly to the good learning taking place in classrooms.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school. There have been a small number of exclusions where pupils' behaviour was well beyond the expected boundaries set by the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. They undertake their responsibilities enthusiastically and with maturity.
Attendance	Satisfactory – broadly in line with the national average. A few too many pupils keep arriving late.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good
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Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching and learning are good overall, with many very good features, especially in the nursery and reception classes. This is a great strength of the school, bearing in mind that several staff are temporary, following the amalgamation. The strengths of the teaching and learning are:

- **Very well planned lessons**, especially in the nursery and reception classes, which leads to very good learning of basic skills in literacy and numeracy;
- **Very good management of classes** so that no learning time is wasted through having to correct poor behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour;
- **Good subject knowledge**, especially in English, mathematics, art and design and design and technology. This good knowledge is used effectively to help pupils learn well;
- **Ensuring the work set meets the needs of all pupils** – this enables all pupils to make good progress as their work is adequately challenging for them. Pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural problems or more able pupils are all well supported and make equally good progress; and
- **Teachers know their pupils well**. They have developed very good relationships in the classroom, which lead to better motivation and increased learning. Very good relationships are a very strong feature of the nursery and reception classes.

Where teaching and learning are in need of improvement, which is very rare, the pace of the lessons is too slow and the work provided is not always challenging enough. Overall, however, the good quality teaching is resulting in better learning and improved standards throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good in the nursery and reception classes, and good elsewhere. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good . Pupils with potential difficulties are identified early and given very good levels of support. Progress for these pupils is good overall towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall , especially the provision for moral and social development. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development and a good policy to help combat racism.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good . Pupils learn effectively in a secure environment where health and safety provision is fully in place along with child protection. Assessment procedures are good in mathematics and in English, but they are still being developed in other subject areas.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good . The school has worked hard and successfully to involve parents in the work and life of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher, senior team of staff and governors show exceptionally outstanding leadership throughout the school and are very much responsible for the rapid improvements taking place. There is a shared vision and determination to improve standards and the quality of educational provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are a committed and strong team who know and understand the school well and take an active role in supporting the work of the staff as they strive to improve the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. There is a full review of the way the school is heading and all aspects of the work of the school are kept under constant assessment. This is a school that is honest about its performance and realistic about how to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has excellent new buildings, appropriate levels of staffing and good resources which it uses very effectively for the benefit of all its pupils. There is a constant audit to ensure that the best possible value for money is obtained when spending takes place. ICT is not being used effectively enough at the moment to support learning in all areas of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are happy with all aspects of the work of the school. They are particularly impressed by the way the two former schools had been amalgamated and the quality of leadership and management during the transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small minority of parents are unhappy with the current job-share arrangements in Year 2.

There was a very good response from parents when returning the questionnaire. Almost all comments received were positive and supportive of the school. A small number of parents expressed some concern over the job sharing arrangements in Year 2, which were originally put in place to cover sickness and for a temporary period only. Inspectors examined this thoroughly and judged the current arrangements to be working adequately.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards of work in the school are rising and are broadly average by Year 2 in English, mathematics and science. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and science. This is a notable improvement on the national test results from the previous year.

Strengths are:

1. **Standards are rising in all subjects.** Standards in the 2002 national tests were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science for pupils in Year 6 when compared to all schools. Boys did not perform as well as girls in the national tests last year. Much of this was due to the high proportion of boys in that year group with learning difficulties. This year, in all classes, inspectors found little difference between the attainment levels of boys and girls. When compared to schools of a broadly similar nature, national test results for pupils were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Inspectors judged current standards of Year 6 pupils' work and performance in lessons to be average in English and science and just below average in mathematics. Inspectors also judged standards to be broadly average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2, and similar to those found last year. These findings show a significant improvement across the whole school since the amalgamation.
2. **Currently, pupils' attainment is better in English and science than in last year's national tests.** Standards of speaking and listening have been sustained by Year 2 but have risen to average elsewhere in the school. Most pupils speak clearly and with confidence. Their pronunciation is good and they show great willingness to answer questions in all classes in the school. Reading is also average. Pupils read a wide range of books and keep clear records of their reading, with some parents adding useful comments to help their children make progress. Writing is progressing well and standards are also rising and are currently average. The standard of spelling and punctuation has also risen and is now satisfactory. Pupils begin to use joined up writing at an appropriate age as they progress between Years 2 and 3 in the main. In science, pupils have made good progress in understanding basic scientific skills and principles by the end of Year 2, especially in knowing how to conduct experiments and record them. This work is carefully built upon, with pupils acquiring a good range of understanding of fair tests, animal and plant habitats and forces such as gravity and electricity. Standards are now broadly in line with national averages throughout the school and there is a rising trend of improvement throughout the school as pupils consolidate their basic skills well.
3. **Standards in mathematics have risen throughout the school, especially by Year 2.** In order to raise standards in mathematics, the school has focused its initial attention on more work in numeracy. This has been successful, and younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 now reach national standards, showing a marked improvement on the previous year's national tests. The skills development of older pupils is progressing well, but currently, standards in Year 6 are still below average. The basic skills of numeracy, however, are at an average level, as is pupils' understanding of shapes, how to measure and the calculation of area. Although not a great deal of work is done in handling data, pupils are able to produce bar graphs and other graphs, occasionally using ICT. They know and understand the principles of tallying and converting statistics into graphs or charts.
4. **Given that children enter the school well below average, achievement by Year 6 is good.** On entry to the nursery, most children have poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills, and their personal and social skills are also poor. Many children cannot speak clearly and their articulation is poor. They fail to recognise numbers and most cannot distinguish between different colours. Children have many poorly developed social skills, being unable to put on or take off their coats, or change for physical education. They are not used to co-operating in play, and many have not learnt to share fairly when handling resources. Teachers and assistants focus very effectively on developing these essential skills. Because this very good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes, children's learning accelerates and most are likely to reach the expected levels at the start of Year 1.

Good progress is also made in developing a wide range of personal and social skills, with increasing degrees of independence being nurtured through various role-play and other well-structured activities. The good progress started here continues in all classes throughout the school and there is an improving trend in skills development.

5. **Standards are above average by Year 6 in art and design, design and technology and in music.** Much of this is due to good teaching and learning in lessons. But also, the school has very successfully capitalised on pupils' interests and enthusiasms in these subjects. This has been achieved largely by providing pupils with plenty of opportunity for exploring and developing their creativity. A good example of this was the building of a large air-raid shelter using design and technology principles to support work in history. The standard of work produced was above average. In music, pupils have good knowledge of technical terms owing to good use of this vocabulary by teachers. They are able to interpret and comment effectively on the moods created by different types of music, as well as developing their creativity well when composing. Art and design work is also above average. Pupils produce imaginative and good quality work in sketchbooks, showing facial features, for example, as well as using shading and texture to good effect.
6. **Targets set by governors are challenging and high, but realistic, given inspection findings.** Given that the school had limited pupil information to use, the school has had to wait until it had a far more realistic view of its pupils before setting targets for the current year. These new revised targets are significantly higher than the previous year and are based on a thorough analysis of what pupils' potential is. Inspectors judged there to have been an improvement all round in the performance of pupils so far this year, making the targets realistic and attainable.
7. **Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets.** The school has focused on the early identification and intervention to support and help pupils identified with special educational needs. This includes pupils with learning difficulties as well as those with behavioural problems. Very good support is available in classrooms. Staff plan effectively and work with smaller groups when appropriate. There is a focus on improving the basic skills in literacy and numeracy, but also good support is given in other lessons such as science and music. The individual education and behaviour plans are of very good quality and enable pupils to move one step at a time in their learning or behaviour modification. The resulting achievements are good. In Years 5 and 6, the school has also identified groups of pupils who need additional help in literacy and numeracy in order to improve their basic understanding and skills. Although not necessarily on the school's special educational needs list, the work done here in smaller groups is valuable in helping these pupils make better progress with more focused teaching.

Areas for improvement include:

8. **Standards are below average in ICT, and in mathematics by Year 6.** Owing to the fact that the new computer suite and equipment have only recently been installed, standards are not yet as high as they should be, although progress is improving rapidly. Year 1 pupils, for example, are currently above the level normally expected for this age group. Given that the skills of ICT are now being firmly embedded in pupils from an early age, the school is hoping that this continual development will raise standards throughout. Inspectors agreed that there was plenty of evidence that this was occurring in lessons. The school also has plans to make good the gap in the syllabus where the element of control and using sensors is not currently being taught. In mathematics, despite the good progress being made in many areas, the oldest pupils are still not confident enough in analysing and interpreting problems, nor in solving them. Sometimes this is due to not understanding clearly enough what is being demanded of them. In other cases, it is due to a lack of practice, with some pupils forgetting to use appropriate strategies.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Pupils' attitudes to school and their work are very good, making a significant contribution to the good learning that takes place. Behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development is very good; they are willing and proud to take responsibility. Attendance is satisfactory but a number of pupils habitually arrive late in the mornings.

The main strengths are:

9. **Pupils' enthusiasm for school and their very positive attitudes to work help them to achieve well. This is a significant strength of the school.** Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are willing to work and try hard in lessons to achieve their best. They are interested in their work, which helps to ensure that they learn well and make good progress in many lessons. In the nursery and reception classes children settle quickly to activities. They form very good relationships with one another and with staff, making very good progress in their personal and social development. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 respond well to the good teaching they receive. They are interested and involved in their work and take a pride in their achievements. They concentrate well and work hard. In a mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils enjoyed adding and subtracting numbers and were eager to answer questions, especially as the teacher made sure that all had a chance to do so. The clubs and activities provided outside lessons are popular and well attended. They provide pupils with the opportunity to develop skills, for example, in music and sport, or learn new ones, such as chess.
10. **The behaviour of pupils is good and helps to ensure that they learn well.** Pupils know and understand the school's "Golden Rules" and almost all choose to comply with them. This means that teachers do not often have to use lesson time to deal with unacceptable behaviour, lessons proceed in a structured way and pupils are able to learn in a calm, purposeful atmosphere. When a pupil does behave in an inappropriate way, the teacher will talk through what happened so that he or she is able to understand what went wrong and how it affected others. Pupils learn through this process to take responsibility for their own behaviour and also develop a growing, mature understanding of the effects of their actions on other people. This, together with the very good relationships that exist throughout the school, ensures that bullying incidents are rare. In many lessons behaviour is very good and pupils show that they can work independently, either on their own or in small groups, allowing the teacher to provide individual attention to others. Around the school and in the playground, behaviour is rarely less than good and often very good. The zoning of the playground for different activities increases pupils' opportunities to play in their chosen way without interrupting the games of others. Pupils show good care for others, for example, by comforting someone who is upset or ensuring that anyone who is hurt receives prompt attention.
11. **Pupils' personal development is very good and they form very good relationships with one another and with staff.** Pupils throughout the school respond willingly and with pride to the many opportunities they are offered to take responsibility. This is a further significant strength of the school. In particular, the school council provides pupils with a real voice for change within the school. Councillors are responsible for putting forward the suggestions of their year group for improving the school and are very proud of their achievements. For example, the use of different playground areas for different types of activity came from the council, together with ideas for playground equipment. The council is currently investigating the feasibility of setting up and running a tuck shop to provide healthy snacks. Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities for helping to run the school office very seriously. In the classroom, pupils of all ages are confident to join in activities and discussions because their classmates listen attentively and with due respect. Teachers and other staff consistently ensure that pupils' self esteem is high and they are therefore keen to produce their best work. The caring ethos that pervades the school makes a good contribution to the very good quality of relationships that pupils enjoy with one another, their teachers and other staff. Pupils like to work with others in pairs or small groups. They share equipment sensibly and take very good care of it. Their pride in the school is evident through the respect they show for the buildings, equipment and the outside environment.

There is one area in need of improvement:

12. **Too many pupils habitually arrive late in the morning.** A significant number of pupils regularly arrives late and this interrupts the continuity of their learning. In particular, a small number does not arrive until midmorning: this has a negative effect on their achievement in English and mathematics as they frequently miss all or part of these lessons. The school has been successful in raising the level of attendance since September by almost two per cent. However, despite its best efforts, the amount of lateness remains too great.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Teaching and learning are good overall, with many very good features, especially in the nursery and reception classes. During the inspection, three quarters of the teaching was judged as good or better, with over a fifth of lessons at least very good or excellent. Almost a quarter of lessons were satisfactory, with a very tiny proportion of unsatisfactory practice. This is a great strength of the school in helping to raise standards and is very much responsible for the improvements taking place between last year's national tests and the current performance of pupils throughout the school. The school is still in a settling down period, with a significant proportion of the teaching in temporary posts following the amalgamation less than two years ago. Progress in establishing a stable and committed staff has been good, with new permanent staff due to take up their appointments shortly. Teaching and learning are strengths of the school.

The particular strengths of the teaching and learning are:

13. **Teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes are very good.** Staff plan extremely well to cover all the legally required areas, while giving children a very broad and interesting range of learning experiences. Of particular note is the very good provision externally, used for developing physical skills, creative activities and for other related lessons. The lessons are arranged to give all children, older and younger, the same sort of experiences, with a focus on developing good levels of independence. All staff work very well as a team. There is high quality teaching and learning in numeracy and literacy, as well as a very strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given very good levels of support and encouragement.
14. **Teachers plan their lessons very well and thoroughly.** An essential element of the good practice being established throughout the school in planning is through teamwork. Staff work hard together to ensure that lessons are of a consistently high standard, that there is a focus on what pupils will learn, and that the process is thoroughly reviewed in the search for improvements. Lessons begin with teachers sharing their intentions with pupils. Often, as in literacy or numeracy, these aims are clearly displayed on the board as a permanent reminder to pupils. This means that pupils are very clear about what they are going to be doing, and teachers usually explain why and how as well. No time is lost. In Year 2 physical education, for instance, the nature and purpose of the warm-up are explored before the pupils begin to exercise their muscles in readiness for more complex dance movements. In Year 1 mathematics, by knowing and understanding the aims of the lesson, pupils share ownership of their learning with the staff, immediately prompting enthusiasm and better learning.
15. **Pupils learn well because management of classes is very effective.** Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour; all classrooms contain displays of the 'Golden rules' and help to reinforce the need for high standards of co-operation and behaviour. When sharing equipment such as musical instruments, pupils take turns with a minimum of fuss. They develop good listening skills and learn the skills of contributing to discussion without interrupting each other. Much of the skills development such as this is reinforced through the personal and social education program throughout the school where pupils use sitting in a circle as a means of learning self-control and clear speaking. Principles of right and wrong are underlined well in religious education, for example, in a Year 4 lesson on the Ten Commandments, which reinforces the school's expectations of good, consistent behaviour effectively. In other lessons such as Year 3 English and Year 6 science, these skills are put into good practice as pupils listen well to instructions and share resources fairly and equitably, wasting no time and tackling their work with interest and maturity.
16. **Teachers know their subjects well and use this knowledge to good effect when helping pupils learn.** Subject knowledge and understanding have been enhanced effectively by staff attending subject-based courses, or by having expertise from the local education authority (LEA) in the school to help in planning and teaching. In music, staff confidence is high, and teachers throughout the school teach the subject well, despite there being no musician on the staff. In Year 6, for example, both classes benefited from input from expert LEA staff. This was supplemented by the timely intervention of teachers who helped to strengthen learning by using good levels of technical language. Staff expertise is good in literacy and numeracy. Lessons focus effectively on what pupils will learn and the skills they will use to learn effectively. In many numeracy lessons this involves

pupils explaining the strategies they have used to reach their answers. In Year 4 English, pupils were helped to understand the story of the 'Fisherman's daughter's tale' as the teacher kept stopping to ask pertinent questions to develop pupils' understanding of the meaning of the text more fully. As a result, later in the lesson, pupils were able to match adverbs effectively, having learnt what they were and how they were used.

17. **Staff ensure that the work set meets the needs of all pupils.** Planning takes full account of the range of different abilities in each classroom. Teachers often amend their initial questioning to take this into account. In the nursery and reception classes, staff use this effectively to help children learn their basic skills, when learning about sorting into groups, or when reviewing their skills in physical education. In a Year 5 lesson in mathematics, the group work enabled all pupils to be fully extended and challenged, with tasks set that were neither too hard nor too difficult for the pupils. This enabled all pupils to make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties, behavioural problems or more able pupils are all well supported and make equally good progress as their peers. Support assistants prepare their strategies well in conjunction with the teacher and have clearly defined roles. They often sit near pupils who are experiencing problems, and help them during the first or final parts of the lesson. This is especially effective in many English and mathematics lessons. At other times, assistants and teachers will focus on helping groups who may be struggling to learn, or who need extra challenges in order to move them forward. Pupils' high standard of work on display in art and design is witness to the success of these strategies. Homework is used to enhance the learning in classrooms to a satisfactory level.
18. **Teachers know their pupils well and establish good relationships in lessons.** They have developed very good relationships in the classroom, which lead to better motivation and increased learning. Very good relationships are a very strong feature of the nursery and reception classes. Staff use praise well to encourage all pupils. Learning was greatly enhanced in a Year 3 lesson in design and technology as the teacher encouraged pupils by rewarding success as pupils learnt about the functioning of a pneumatic system. In a Year 6 lesson in ICT, the teacher quickly established a very good, purposeful working environment by using skilfully prepared questions, which captured pupils' imagination as well as challenging them to think. Progress was rapid as a result.

Areas in need of improvement include:

19. **Some lessons are not as inspiring as others.** Good or better lessons account for about three-quarters of the teaching and learning seen. Almost all of the remainder is satisfactory. In these lessons, the pace is sometimes a little too slow and this results in occasional lapses of attention by pupils. Learning is still satisfactory and new skills and knowledge are acquired. In only a very small proportion of lessons was there any cause for concern, and this was the result of insufficiently good control of the class and of activities which did not inspire pupils. Such occasions are very rare.

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

The range and quality of experiences in the curriculum are very good for children in the nursery and reception classes and good elsewhere in the school. The supportive curriculum provides a secure back-cloth for learning, with very good provision for moral and social development.

Strengths include:

20. **This is a good, well-balanced curriculum and it serves its pupils well.** All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught meeting statutory requirements, with plans to extend the teaching of aspects of ICT in place for later in the summer term. Currently, there is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in other curriculum areas, such as geography, history and music. Religious education is taught following the locally agreed syllabus. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are used effectively to improve learning in English and mathematics as well as across the curriculum in other subject areas. The school has a successful programme for pupils' personal, social and health education that includes the teaching of sex education and raising awareness of older pupils to the dangers of drug abuse. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In one assembly, the teacher encouraged the pupils to reflect and consider the teaching of Jesus on how to

care for others. Another assembly involved the local vicar talking to the pupils on doing wrong but seeking forgiveness. Again, the pupils reflected on the idea of forgiving others. These principles are then followed through the rules of the school and referred to regularly in lessons such as personal and social development, religious education, music and English. The learning environment established is productive and fruitful.

21. **The school makes very good provision for children in the reception and nursery classes.** Children are provided with stimulating experiences and activities that cover all areas of learning. This is a particular strength of the school. Provision for outdoor play is very good and the children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of practical activities. The curriculum is very wide and relevant to the needs of young children. Each of the three classroom areas focus on different aspects of learning, and children rotate between them, gaining a wide range of very good experiences. There is very good emphasis placed on developing the essential skills of numeracy and literacy, while at the same time, helping children improve and develop their personal and social skills, which are poor when they enter the nursery.
22. **There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities.** There are many clubs that take place at lunchtimes and after school and these are well attended by the pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. An average of ten clubs per term is offered and is valued by pupils. The range of clubs is wide and gives pupils time to develop their interests in areas such as sports, music, chess and ICT. Staff volunteer time for these activities. Residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6 give them opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge in physical education and geography as well as enjoying outdoor and adventurous activities. These visits also promote independence and team spirit. Pupils' experiences are broadened through visits to museums and art galleries and competitive events against other schools. All these activities and educational visits make a significant contribution to the provision and development of pupils' social, physical and creative skills.
23. **Equality of access and opportunity are very good, including provision for pupils with special educational needs.** The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all areas of school life and this provision is a strength of the school. Lessons are planned to include the needs of all pupils while planned intervention programmes help underachieving pupils to access the curriculum. Policies on equality of access and opportunity support the school's success in providing good educational inclusion opportunities for all pupils. The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in its very good arrangements for teaching and supporting pupils with special educational needs. The modification of the curriculum for these pupils fully meets the new legal requirements. The school has also made good effective access available for physically disabled pupils.
24. **The school has good links with the community and partner institutions.** The community contributes to pupils' learning and understanding of local issues. The vicar from the local church contributes regularly to assemblies while pupils are actively involved in helping local charities such as the Manchester Kids Appeal. Coaches from Stockport County Football Club regularly instruct boys and girls in developing their footballing skills. Visits to local museums and places of local interest, like the air-raid shelters, support the curriculum. Pupils from Year 6 visited Stockport Study Centre after school to develop their skills in ICT, thereby improving learning in that subject area. The school choir took part in a mass gathering of 10,000 children at Manchester Arena and performed in front of a large audience, broadening pupils' social skills and raising their self-esteem. The school has close links with its neighbouring high school as well as sharing expertise with a beacon school. Links with local schools are good and pupils regularly take part in events that enhance their education such as 'Science Challenge', 'Top Link Sport' and singing their compositions in the Town Hall.
25. **Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and improves the learning environment.** Pupils are taught right from wrong and are given clear moral direction by all staff who encourage and reward good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to develop personal responsibility to make the right choices. Praise is frequently used to improve the pupils' self-esteem and confidence. A well-structured 'Golden Approach' behaviour policy, based on awards and consequences, has been successfully introduced. School assemblies are used to reinforce the right way to behave and good behaviour is rewarded with stickers and public recognition. Pupils take 'circle time' very seriously and use the opportunity to discuss issues that concern them. They all respect the two rules: 'don't criticise' and 'don't interrupt a person speaking.' Pupils understand and observe the school's code of

conduct that is displayed prominently throughout the school. Teachers are able to get on with lessons rather than having to correct behaviour as pupils' response to the rules and moral codes is so good. Provision for social development is very good providing many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. The school council is very effective in promoting pupils' involvement in taking the school forward. Their ideas on how to improve the playground resulted in the purchase of benches and play equipment. Older pupils help younger pupils during playtimes. Other pupils learn office skills during lunchtime and are able to send faxes, file non-confidential documents, transfer calls and answer the telephone. Pupils are encouraged to work well together and they use opportunities to share, and co-operate during lessons, all of which lead to better, more enthusiastic learning. A physical education lesson involving pupils from Year 6 focused on developing tennis skills. Pupils worked well together in pairs and then in small teams, supporting and encouraging each other. Similarly high levels of co-operation and collaboration are provided in lessons in many practical subjects such as design and technology, science, music and ICT. These areas are significant strengths in improving the quality of learning.

The areas for improvement are:

26. **While the overall cultural provision is satisfactory with some good features, the weaker area is in a consistent approach to providing pupils with a wide enough range of multicultural experiences.** For example, the religious education syllabus offers the school the opportunity to explore a much wider range of religions than it chooses to study; there is little evidence of a strong link with other cultures in music or art and design, although some is present. The school is aware of this and intends to make efforts to improve pupils' awareness and understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school is successful in providing a very safe, secure and caring environment in which pupils can learn effectively. The procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid are very clear and are known to all staff. Behaviour is very well managed.

The main strengths are:

27. **Pupils are enabled to learn effectively because the school provides a very secure, caring environment in which they feel safe.** They know that all staff have their welfare at heart and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with very quickly and efficiently. This means that they can concentrate on their work in a happy atmosphere and this contributes to their good learning and to their very good personal development. Pupils know that any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, is not tolerated and that it is dealt with both promptly and firmly when it does occur. Pupils appreciate the system of rewards and value the praise and stickers they receive. They believe that teachers are fair and appreciate the help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. All of this leads to improved learning through greater motivation.
28. **The school has very good, clearly stated procedures in place to ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare needs are met.** Regular health and safety inspections are carried out and teachers pay very good attention to safety in lessons, as for example during circle time in Year 1 when the teacher made sure that pupils moved their chairs sensibly. Risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures comply fully with requirements and all staff are very clear about their responsibilities. Arrangements for first aid are very good. Clear records are kept of all incidents and the action taken. The very good attention paid to the welfare of all pupils means they feel very safe in school and are able to concentrate on their work effectively.
29. **The school has very good systems for managing pupils' behaviour so that pupils are able to focus on their work.** The 'Golden Rules' are clear and the emphasis is strongly on the positive so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers and other staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour so that those who have identified behavioural difficulties are well supported and their behaviour rarely disrupts others in the class. Pupils say that teachers use the reward system fairly, so that they are encouraged to try their best. The school works very hard to keep pupils in school

and has a range of support to offer pupils who are at risk of being excluded. The rate of exclusions is low because they are only used if a pupil's behaviour puts the safety of others at risk.

30. **Procedures for assessment are good.** Much information is analysed to help pupils to improve. The procedures are still quite new and not all staff are fully involved. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are well developed and used to inform planning and set targets. In science, however, these features are less well developed. Assessment in other subjects is also less effective in informing planning, as the school has not yet developed this as far as intended, although there are plans in the pipeline to do this. Analyses of the initial assessment of children on entry, data from the annual national tests in Years 2 and 6, teacher assessments, optional national tests and pupils' work are taking place, contributing well to the setting of individual and group targets.
31. **There are good levels of assessment for pupils with special educational needs.** Staff have designed very good quality individual education plans, as well as very good individual behaviour plans, which have precise and achievable targets. Staff know their pupils well and apply the principles in these plans when designing lessons or arranging group work. Very good use is made of additional classroom support to help these pupils, but also to contribute to ongoing records of progress being made by pupils towards their targets. All statutory assessments are carried out to fully meet the legal requirements in the modified form recently introduced. Extensive support and guidance are sought from external agencies whenever practicable, and the relationship the school enjoys with these agencies is a very profitable one, contributing greatly to the progress these pupils make.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

The school works hard and with very good levels of success to involve parents in its life and work. Parents are very supportive of the school. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent, with the exception of annual reports, which are not sufficiently focused on the progress the pupil has made in each subject.

The main strengths are:

32. **The school works hard to make sure that all parents have very good opportunities to become actively involved in its life and work.** Parents are very well informed about the school's expectations regarding uniform, attendance, punctuality and homework. The regular newsletters are used very well to provide reminders as well as to publicise events and celebrate achievements. The school uses a variety of means to gain parents' views about its work and is open to suggestions for improvements. Parents are welcome into school. Many parents, particularly of the younger pupils, take advantage of the informal opportunities they have at the start and end of the day to discuss any concerns with their child's teacher. Information about the curriculum is provided every term so that parents are aware of what their child is learning and have the opportunity to help at home if they choose to do so. Meetings about aspects of the curriculum, such as literacy and numeracy, are also held. These are not well attended, but those parents who do come, value the information provided. All pupils have a reading record that parents are expected to sign when they hear their child read. This is a good way of sharing information between the teacher and parent about each pupil's enjoyment and skill in reading. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages. A good number of parents help in the classroom on a regular basis and others provide help when needed, for example, by walking to the swimming baths with a class. The school has a thriving friends association that raises money to support its work. Social events arranged by the friends are very well attended.
33. **Parents speak highly of the school.** Those parents who made their views known to the inspection team praised many aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate the very effective way the two former schools have been amalgamated and the very high quality of leadership and management that made it possible. Their support for the school was evident from the large proportion of parents who returned the questionnaire and the very positive views expressed at the parents' meeting.
34. **The information provided by the school is of a very good quality.** The prospectus, governors' annual report, newsletters and other information sent out by the school are extremely well presented and clearly written. All the written information is in accessible language, free from jargon, and

celebrates the school's strengths most effectively. The prospectus is an exemplar of good practice. It presents the information in a well thought out way and is beautifully illustrated with photographs of pupils at work and play. Parents particularly appreciate that letters, newsletters and leaflets are colour coded so that they know what sort of information is contained. Parents are informed at a very early stage of any concerns regarding behaviour, attendance or other issues. The letters sent to individual parents are extremely clear and informative. These include invitations to any special educational needs meetings, and a good number of parents respond positively. Those who choose not to attend are kept fully informed by letter.

There is one area in need of improvement:

35. **Pupils' progress reports do not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make in each subject, nor are the targets set for future improvement always clearly related to the comments made by teachers.** Reports follow a clear format and give information about every aspect of the curriculum for children under five, and every subject for those in Years 1 to 6. However, although the teachers' comments make clear pupils' attainment and their attitude to the subject, they do not focus clearly enough on the progress that has been made within each subject. Targets for improvement are given, especially in English, mathematics and science, but are not always related to the comments the teacher has made. This means that parents may not be clear about why the target has been set or how to help their child achieve it.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher, senior team of staff and governors is outstanding, and is responsible for the rapid improvements taking place following the very successful amalgamation of the two former schools. This is the school's most significant strength in accounting for the good progress being made, the rising standards and the very effective support systems being put in place.

36. **The headteacher has created a clear sense of direction for the school, based on the creation of a shared vision of success for all.** The vision is underpinned by the belief that all pupils can succeed, and that children and learning are the school's priority. The headteacher has worked hard to develop leadership at all levels, which is apparent in all the school does, from the very good quality of subject leadership to the strong role of the school council. Additionally, the headteacher has developed a culture amongst the staff of sharing good practice. This has resulted in the good standard of teaching and learning seen throughout the school. For example, every term all the staff and headteacher 'walk the school', visiting every classroom, to look at how well the classroom is set up to encourage learning. They share good ideas to improve teaching and learning and make sure that school policies are followed.
37. **Governors are excellent and play an active role in raising standards and improving the school further.** The governing body is a committed and strong team and a great strength to the staff and the school. Governors have high but realistic expectations. In order to improve their expertise, they have evaluated their strengths, and sought further training where appropriate. The governors are helping to shape the future direction of the school very effectively. They know and understand the school well, visit regularly with a clear purpose and agenda, and they are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They monitor carefully progress and implementation of policies through these regular visits. There are strong links established between governors and subjects of the curriculum, as well as with special educational needs, and through the very detailed reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. They are well informed on the progress of the school's improvement plan. They ensure their spending decisions are followed up and improvements measured where practicable. The school provides good value for money.
38. **The school rigorously evaluates its performance.** The school has developed excellent monitoring systems covering all aspects, which result in the school knowing its strengths and areas for improvement. Outstanding systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders play a key role in this by checking on their colleagues' planning. As a consequence the standard of planning is good, and is partly responsible for the good progress made across the school. Additionally, subject leaders observe colleagues teaching and look at pupils' work, and this

is contributing to the good teaching in the school. In particular the subject leaders for English and mathematics continuously monitor and evaluate their subjects. Pupils' progress is carefully analysed and appropriate action taken to target and improve learning. Subject leaders have identified appropriate key priorities and have put in place effective strategies to raise standards. A major strength is the effective way these strategies are implemented and monitored. Teacher performance and professional development have been closely linked to the school's priorities, and are helping to raise standards further.

39. **The school is driven by an excellent improvement plan.** This was compiled after consulting governors, staff, parents and pupils. It is outstandingly comprehensive and provides a clear direction for the school, both in the short term and the long term. Careful thinking is apparent in the time-scale for tackling the priorities and their costs. The school's aims and values are reflected throughout. Governors and staff are actively involved in implementing the plan. The plan focuses appropriately on raising standards and educational provision. Current temporary staffing is soon to be replaced with permanent teachers. The number of support assistants is to rise. The budget is carefully and wisely spent, with the carry over being largely the result of some decisions not being able to be fully implemented until after the first year of the amalgamation.
40. **Accommodation is excellent.** The pupils and teachers benefit from new buildings, which are used outstandingly well to raise the rate of learning. The spacious hall is used to house a breakfast club, then used for assemblies, physical education and school lunches. The new computer suite provides an excellent base in which to learn the skills of ICT. Additional areas are used to accommodate small groups for support and extra work. The playground is also of high quality, with imaginative and creative use of space. The excellent outdoor area for children in the nursery and reception classes is instrumental in improving a wide range of skills, including physical and social. A very good office area allows ancillary staff to do their jobs well. The buildings are well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff and set a high standard from which pupils benefit greatly. The buildings are used very imaginatively to display pupils' work, which is greatly appreciated by the pupils, who are keen and eager to try harder and improve their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, and to continue building the new school effectively, the head, staff and governors should now:

- (i) Raise standards in English by providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to undertake story writing, especially in Years 3 to 6;
- (Paragraphs 59 and 100)*
- (ii) Raise standards in mathematics by:
- Continuing to focus on improving the use of investigation as a means of learning;
 - Providing pupils with more frequent opportunities to engage in problem solving activities;
- (Paragraphs 8 and 64)*
- (iii) Raise standards in science by:
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to use investigation as a means of learning;
 - Further develop and refine assessment procedures as a means of improving teaching and learning;
- (Paragraphs 69 and 70)*
- (iv) Raise standards and provision in ICT through:
- Providing more and better software resources so that learning across the whole curriculum might be improved.

(Paragraphs 8, 20, 65, 77, 82, 87, 88, 92 and 102)

In addition to the key issues above, all of which are included in the current school improvement plan, the governors should also consider including in their future development plan the following minor point:

- Provide more opportunities to enrich the curriculum through including a greater focus on multicultural aspects.

(Paragraphs 26 and 101)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

67

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	14	35	16	1	0	0
Percentage	1	21	52	24	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	220
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	53

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	11	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	24	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (n/a)	90 (n/a)	86 (n/a)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	10	10	9
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (n/a)	86 (n/a)	83 (n/a)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	20	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	13
	Girls	16	17	19
	Total	23	26	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (n/a)	67 (n/a)	82 (n/a)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	131	7	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	77	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	24.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years*	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years*	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

** refers only to one year full year 2001/2 since amalgamation.*

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	643,724
Total expenditure	641,368
Expenditure per pupil	2,510
Balance brought forward from previous year	59,656
Balance carried forward to next year	62,013

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	255
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	34	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	39	5	3	7
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	37	3	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	23	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	63	29	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	36	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	38	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	24	4	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents praised the work of the school and the way it helps pupils make good progress;
- A very small minority expressed some concern over the temporary job share arrangements in Year 2;
- Parents are very happy with the provision and progress of pupils with special educational needs;
- The new breakfast club is a great success; and
- Parents expressed faith in the leadership and management of the school.

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 provision in the nursery and reception classes is a major strength of the school. Children get a very good start to their education and make good progress in all areas of learning.

Strengths are:

41. **The very good provision leads to good achievement.** Staff teach in three very good base areas and an excellent outdoor area. There are two intakes per year in September and January into the nursery and a single intake in September into the reception classes. The curriculum for nursery and reception children is planned to give maximum flexibility, enabling children to learn at levels appropriate to their individual needs. Opportunities to extend children's understanding and experience are very good so that by the time they leave the reception class nearly all are likely to have achieved the expected standards and be working within the statutory National Curriculum. Fundamental to the high quality provision is the leadership given by the highly committed co-ordinator and teachers' and support staff's excellent understanding of young children's needs and how to plan explicitly to ensure optimum progress.
42. **Teaching is very good in all areas of learning.** Teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is excellent. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are nurtured extremely well in the nursery and built on further in the reception class. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants work extremely well as a team, conveying the same very high expectations. No opportunity is wasted to take a child's learning one step further, by asking just the right question or providing a pertinent resource.
43. **Children, including those with special educational needs, receive a very good start to their education in the nursery because they make very good progress in their personal and social education.** They acquire very positive attitudes towards learning in all areas of the curriculum. They enter the nursery with attainment well below average levels. The clear focus, which develops children's social skills through well-established and consistent routines, ensures children explore all the areas of learning. They make very good progress towards achieving the nationally prescribed expected standards for this age group.
44. **Children are confident and secure in school routines by the time they enter the reception class.** They enter the reception class having made above average progress. Very good progress continues because they are taught to organise themselves, listen carefully to adults and each other and have a very wide range of very well planned and relevant activities to support their learning. The very good use of the continuous assessments of children's progress contributes to the very detailed planning which incorporates learning objectives for both individuals and groups.
45. **Relationships are very good.** There is an atmosphere of respect and mutual trust in which children receive very good care. The work of teachers is very well supported by the contribution of classroom support staff. Their clearly defined role and input of their specific strengths make a significant contribution to the children's progress. Links with parents are very good; they are made aware of the progress and needs of their children through daily contact and discussion.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. Teaching is very good. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the personal, social and emotional development of children. Children arrive at school with an air of enthusiasm and confidence, quickly settling into the well-prepared classrooms and routines of the day. They are very supportive of each other, ready to listen to the news and the activities for the session. Children in the nursery listen carefully as they are told about the activities, why they are important and what they can do. They are carefully directed if necessary and show maturity in their choice and their reason for playing with the containers and water or making an observational drawing of a plant. The support assistants and teacher move amongst the children guiding, talking and ensuring they develop vocabulary and further

their understanding. Children use computer programs well; they sustain their concentration very well and are totally involved in the wide range of activities on offer. In reception, the clear introductions to activities at the beginning of each lesson, listening times and the provision of interesting activities are important and valued. The very good interactions and extension which children experience through all areas of learning enable children of all capabilities to make very good progress. When they leave the reception class nearly all children are likely to have achieved the expected standards. This represents very good progress.

47. All children can organise themselves to get changed with limited assistance for physical education sessions. When they are ready, they move responsibly into the hall where they work very well together, sharing and co-operating with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

48. Children are given very many opportunities to develop their skills in this area of learning through very good teaching. High quality planning and consideration of every child's progress ensure that all use the opportunities to enjoy language, books and discussions. By the end of reception, all children are likely to have met the expected standards in this area. In the nursery, well-constructed role-play and creative activities create situations and opportunities where children are constantly engaged in high quality discussions and talking about the experience. The good ratio of adult helpers and classroom support assistants are well briefed so they interact very well and extend children's ideas and vocabulary effectively. Children listen carefully to the story of 'The Runaway Train' and make predictions as to what is going to happen next. When in the book corner they choose a book with care because it is either familiar or the illustrations appeal to them. They use books appropriately and look after them well.
49. In reception, children are enthusiastic and listen carefully to the teacher because they are intrigued by the different and intriguing beginnings to each lesson. They are very involved and interested in all that they do. The good use of their ideas and thoughts by the teacher help ensure children listen and respond carefully. Questions are well directed and higher attaining children quickly recall, for example, the use of a question mark and distinguish an exclamation mark in the text. The variety of activities to follow up the teaching point is very clearly focused and supports the learning intention very well. Children work hard on their assigned activity and the very good use of classroom support ensures they are engaged in their work and make very good progress. Teaching of letter sounds and how to use these to spell is very good. Very nearly all children are confident about tackling unfamiliar words using sounds to help them; they make very good progress. They enjoy selecting books from the well-stocked book corner, reading and sharing their books willingly with an adult. Reading progress is carefully maintained and reading diaries reflect a good partnership with parents and children. Children are well supported in their writing tasks and share their ideas with each other. The very good use of recorded music when learning pulse patterns encourages children to refine their listening skills.

Mathematical development

50. Children make very good progress in this area because their mathematical development is thoughtfully planned and integrated into the range of activities which children encounter in the nursery. By the end of their time in reception, all children are likely to have attained the expected standards because of the very good teaching and learning. They have regular opportunities in a variety of meaningful situations to practise their counting skills. They make patterns and play alongside each other in number games both indoors and outside. When exploring the capacity of containers, they estimate the number of spoonfuls to fill the containers and begin to develop their mathematical language, describing the sizes and whether the container is bigger or smaller and whether there are more or less. They all achieve well through the use of gentle encouragement and the very good support from classroom assistants. Displays in the classroom emphasise the importance numeracy plays in everyday life and are used well by the children to discuss different aspects of their learning in mathematics. The good use of resources, including ICT, enables children to extend their mathematical skills well and supports the children's progress to prepare them for their mathematics lessons when they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. All children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in this area as a result of the very good teaching. By the end of their time in reception, all children are likely to have attained the expected standards in this area. They are provided with extensive opportunities to extend their understanding of the world. For example, very good use is made of the school grounds to develop children's awareness of the natural world and the different colours to be found.
52. The good use of a range of materials, including simple maps and playground routes, helps children recognise how to be safe as they use the large wheeled toys on the 'pretend' road in the playground. Opportunities are created so children can adapt and use a very wide range of materials to explore texture and make models to use in their play situations. They recognise that various models belong to certain situations. In discussion, nursery children determine that lions and tigers will not live in their fields but belong to the jungle or in Africa. The attention to detail given by teachers and support assistants ensures children extend their knowledge about the world they live in. In reception, children have a clear purpose about their learning and discuss their progress at the end of the session, which helps teachers assess how well children have learnt and what they need to teach next.

Physical development

53. All children make very good progress in this area of learning and are on course to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Through a well-planned and-managed range of activities, children are taught how to use cutting tools safely and to good effect. Children are confident when using puzzles, recognising shapes, matching colours and identifying parts of the picture. They build tracks and make interesting structures using building bricks. They describe in detail the purpose of their structures. Teachers move between the activities asking questions, encouraging children to explore and extend their ideas. Children sustain their interest very well, sharing toys and working well together. When writing, they form letters carefully because the teacher has prepared the materials well and children are able to make a very good attempt at copying their names. They use a range of writing tools and are encouraged to hold their writing tools and place their paper appropriately so that letters are well formed. Teaching is very good. There are excellent opportunities for children to use an interesting range of large and small equipment in their outdoor play. The use of the excellent outdoor area is very well planned so that play and tasks are different and cater for a variety of interests. Children are sensitive to each other's needs and use the equipment and space with care. They are encouraged to use large spaces and explore the way they can use it in developing a range of movements. By the time children reach reception, they dress and undress themselves for physical education.

Creative development

54. Very good provision, including teaching, enables children to explore an extended range of creative experiences. All children, including those with special needs, are likely to attain the expected standards in this area by the time they leave the reception class. Children in reception and nursery join together and sing a range of songs. They sing well and in tune, recognising words and rhythms, which they enjoy and incorporate into their singing. They listen carefully for the introduction and join in at the correct point. There are other opportunities to use a range of instruments so that children make their own music and perform in the activity sessions. Children are stimulated with a wide range of ideas; these include exploring different textures of paint, water play, model making, colour mixing, and tactile experiences where different consistencies of liquids run through their fingers and make patterns. In all activities children are encouraged to discuss their efforts and describe what it does by well-focused questions and supportive comment. Children gain increasing confidence and are ready to describe their favourite experience of the day and what they would like to achieve next time. In the reception class, children use the creative opportunities to support their mathematical and language development. The children's achievement of creating different patterns and describing their work in mathematical terms is good. Children take time and care with their work and when it is finished they are very proud of it and eager to share it with others. There are well-planned opportunities so that children make connections in their learning as well as developing a wide range of creative skills.

ENGLISH

Overall standards in English are in line with the national average in Years 2 and 6. This represents good achievement over time, considering pupils' low starting points in the reception class.

The strengths in the subject are:

55. **Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding.** The subject leader is determined to raise standards. She constantly monitors teaching and learning by looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and observing lessons. Thorough analysis of national and school test marks is used to pinpoint how particular groups of pupils need supporting, and swift action is then taken. Excellent guidance is given to teachers and leads to pupils making good progress across the school, including pupils with special educational needs. Although standards across the school are only in line with the national average, this shows good progress from pupils' low starting points when they enter the school. The school has carefully analysed the national test results from last year where girls out-performed boys significantly. Much of this was due to the larger proportion of boys with learning difficulties in the group last year. This year, inspectors noted little difference between the attainment of boys and girls, not only in Year 6, but throughout the school in all aspects of English.
56. **The English curriculum is good.** Pupils learn about how to write for many different purposes, such as letters, reports, instructions, poems and stories. This broad range of writing is carefully structured so that pupils make small, confident steps forward with their learning. This is particularly successful with non-fiction writing, where pupils reach higher standards than with their story writing. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were learning how to write a letter requesting information from the local library. The teacher used a form to help pupils to learn how to set out their letter and what to include. This enabled them to set out their letters correctly and know why the letter had to contain certain information. For instance, they could explain that the address was there so that the recipient could reply. Standards of reading are average across the school. Pupils make good progress from a poor start. They begin to extend their sight vocabulary well, and read with increasing degrees of fluency and confidence. Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. The curriculum across the school, as well as in English, provides frequent opportunities for pupils to answer questions in class. Pupils are asked to explain their answers in mathematics, and to listen carefully in music, for example.
57. **Teaching and learning in English are good.** Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively in their planning and teaching. Activities and resources are carefully matched to the purpose of the lesson and the different abilities of the children. This leads to pupils, including those with special educational needs, making good gains in learning new skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about the way that non-fiction is written, work was carefully matched to different abilities. The higher attaining pupils were able to amend a description about an apple tree, so that it included more useful information and was correctly set out. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were able to identify the key features of a piece of good non-fiction writing. Their progress is good. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy, adapting it to suit the aims of the lesson. Pupils are able to fit new learning into their current understanding, because teachers explain this clearly at the beginning of a lesson. Pupils' learning is further helped by teachers using time at the end of lessons to reflect on what has been learnt.
58. **Pupils behave well and work hard in English, because teachers make learning a positive experience.** Children listen carefully and are eager to contribute in lessons. They are encouraged by teachers to develop confidence in themselves, through praise and celebration of success, such as the attractive displays of pupils' work. They respond to this and are willing to concentrate for long periods of time, even if the work is difficult. Pupils work well with each other, sharing resources and ideas.

An area for improvement is:

59. **Story writing is not as well developed a skill as are other areas of English.** The school has recognised this, and in particular that pupils need better skills in developing and sustaining a story's plot.

MATHEMATICS

Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 2 and slightly below average at the end of Year 6. When compared to similar schools, they are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is good considering the low starting points of children when they enter the school.

Strengths are:

60. **Pupils are making good progress and achieving well because of good teaching.** The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good and sometimes better. Teachers plan thoroughly to ensure that learning is suited to the needs of all pupils. Teachers consider carefully their intended learning outcomes and set clear, specific objectives. Their effective classroom management and organisation ensure that no time is lost and that all pupils are fully occupied, with appropriate resources at hand. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted and is firmly embedded into the planning. This ensures that pupils, whatever their ability, are well catered for and, where available, teaching support is strategically used to support pupils who have the greatest need. The support staff's role is clearly built into the planning. Teachers clearly identify the tasks and actions for support staff to carry out and further provide opportunities for the teaching assistants to assess and evaluate the results of their interaction. This gives all pupils a wide range of opportunities for learning, which often extends into other areas. This occurs, for example, when Year 4 pupils study weather conditions across the world and when Year 5 pupils research patterns in their history census. As a result, good learning, related to everyday experiences in mathematics lessons, is reinforced and consolidated throughout the curriculum.
61. **Teachers use knowledge of their pupils to set high targets and help them improve their standards through good learning opportunities.** Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Staff receive good training and support from the headteacher. This knowledge and support is used to good effect. A principal focus identified to raise standards has been to raise the profile of the oral and mental strategy. This is having a positive effect and is already impacting on raising standards. Teachers use this to challenge pupils at the start of lessons, which encourages, promotes and develops problem-solving and investigative work, an area which the school has identified for development. Pupils are expected to explain their strategies when they solve problems. Pupils in Year 1 develop confidence to explain how they arrived at a particular answer. Questioning across the school is precise and probing. Pupils offer to answer questions but teachers occasionally use direct questioning to ensure all pupils are giving their full attention, as well as to assess pupils' understanding. This was used successfully in a Year 1 numeracy lesson when pupils compared numbers to identify which was bigger and which was smaller. Teachers know their pupils well and set targets commensurate with their abilities. The effective use of appropriately matched work is responsible, in no small measure, for the rapid improvement in standards and good progress all pupils are making, given their respective starting points when they entered school.
62. **Learning is made interesting, challenging and fair.** The good relationships established in class and well ordered routines promote pupils' eagerness to learn. These, together with lessons conducted at a brisk pace, contribute positively to mathematics being seen by the pupils as fun. Good examples of this were observed during the mental starter in Year 2 when pupils were not only enjoying doubling and halving but explaining how they did it. Year 6 pupils confidently work out missing angles in triangles and quadrilaterals. One of the major strengths of teaching in mathematics is promoting pupil confidence to attempt questions, even if they are not sure of the answers. This is also a strong feature of the booster class lessons. An identified feature of mathematical development is the use of resources to provide a visual image of different aspects of mathematics. This visual

impact helps pupils understand both basic and complex concepts and helps pupils learn more rapidly and with greater understanding.

63. **The subject is well led, well organised and well managed.** The subject leader has a very good overview of the subject. She is aware of where the subject is and has established a very clear action plan to address the current areas for development required to raise standards. This includes ensuring staff are confident and work as a team, effective assessment and monitoring, focusing on the mental and oral work at the start of lessons, improving resources to make things more visual for pupils and ensuring that all lessons challenge all pupils. The setting of targets is also integral to raising standards and these are set on effective use of assessment data collected from direct classroom observation, analysis of national statutory and optional test results and results of other tests. A careful scrutiny of work for any apparent weaknesses influences future teaching and planning to support learning in classrooms.

The areas for development include:

64. **Continue to raise standards, especially in Years 3 to 6.** The main areas of weakness, which the school has recognised, are in the areas of problem solving and investigation. These skills are not as well developed as others, and the school is now putting more emphasis on developing these in order to raise standards and the rate of learning.
65. **ICT is used but its use is under-developed.** Many of the programs being used are effective, but the range is insufficient to raise the quality of learning in all classrooms. Currently, an audit is taking place and the school is hoping to make good the current deficiencies in provision.

SCIENCE

Overall standards in science are in line with the national average. This represents good achievement, considering pupils' low starting points when they enter the school.

The strengths in science are:

66. **Good teaching helps pupils to make good progress.** Teachers plan their lessons carefully, matching the aims with appropriate resources and activities. They make good use of teaching methods from the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons start with teachers telling pupils what they will learn, and how this fits in with their previous learning. Pupils are able to reflect on what they have learnt at the end of lessons, when teachers ensure that key points are shared. Teachers use good examples to illustrate points and provide clear explanations. They structure learning effectively, which results in pupils making good gains in their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on electric circuits, pupils started by making a successful circuit to light a bulb, then they learnt how to check for faults when a bulb would not light. Effective questioning is well used to promote learning. In a Year 6 revision lesson about the structure of flowers, pupils enjoyed the challenge of the quick-fire questions, and were able to describe what new things they had learnt. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Good support for children with special educational needs is provided by well-matched activities and effective guidance and support from teachers and classroom assistants.
67. **Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.** Pupils enjoy science. They handle equipment carefully and safely. Teachers make lessons exciting and fun, which helps pupils feel that they can succeed. In a Year 5 lesson about sound, the pupils and teacher shared their fascination when they watched the effects of the vibrations of a tuning fork in water. Pupils took great care with their detailed drawings to show this. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils work well together, sharing tasks and equipment. All of these lead to a better learning environment where progress is accelerated and improved.
68. **Leadership and management are good.** The subject leader has established clear priorities to raise standards. These are based on her good monitoring of science across the school, through lesson observations, looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning.

The areas for improvement are:

69. **Currently, not all aspects of science are covered evenly in Years 1 and 2.** At present pupils do not have as many lessons about physical processes and materials as they do about living things. Neither do they carry out many experiments. This leads to an imbalance in learning and restricts the otherwise good progress being made.
70. **Continue to implement the planned improvements in science.** The school is aware of the need to develop assessment in science so that pupils' progress can be tracked throughout the school, to help teachers target learning more effectively. The subject leader is also aware that there is a need to focus more effectively on improving pupils' skills in exploring and investigating.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The standards of attainment in both subjects in Years 2 and 6 are above average. This represents good achievement over time.

The strengths of the subjects are:

71. **Achievement is good.** In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn basic art and design skills effectively. They develop observational skills as they make good quality drawings of flowers and leaves. They use a variety of media and techniques to create texture and apply these to produce detailed self and other portraits, making good use of shadow to create three-dimensional effects. Good use is made of sketchbooks to record observations and practise drawing facial features. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good use of sketchbooks to record observations, rubbings, paint mixing and experimental work in textures and shading. Good examples appear where sketches of plants and leaves form the basis of designs in block printing, textiles, paint and pencil drawings. In design and technology in Years 1 and 2, pupils learn basic skills effectively. They use a variety of techniques and materials to design and make. Good use is made of workbooks to record the full process of designing and evaluating. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop skills using a wide range of tools and electric motors. They record their ideas in individual booklets such as the "Pneumatics Moving Monster Design" booklet in Year 3. They make good use of these booklets to show the attention given to all stages of the design process. Skills develop well in both subjects, resulting in above average standards overall.
72. **The subjects provide a good, broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils.** Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to explore texture and colour using a variety of materials in art and design. In design and technology, pupils are presented with a range of design problems which allow them to develop their skills. Areas of study include structure, mechanisms, textiles and food. Work is frequently linked with themes and topics in other subject areas. In art and design, block printing, tie and dye, rubbings and collage are used well to create imaginative designs. Work is frequently linked with themes and visits, using the environment to stimulate ideas. Sculpture based on objects such as toadstools and animals in the school playground is used well to stimulate creativity. Pupils respond well to these visits and are able to express their own evaluations of what they have seen. Older pupils extend their experiences effectively with colour and texture.
73. **The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good.** In art and design, mixed media pictures by pupils in Year 1 display a range of techniques involving rubbings, leaf and vegetable prints as well as pressed flowers on appropriate colour washes. Older pupils, in links with a history project, make charcoal drawings of London in the war years and successfully capture the atmosphere of gloom and smoke with 'Lowry' figures walking amongst the dereliction. The Internet provided the source for research on Andy Warhol which stimulated a project of designs based on his style of repeated patterns and using discarded crisp packages and toffee bar wrappings. In design and technology in Years 2 and 6, pupils design and make Christmas cakes with decoration. These are suitably evaluated by their peers in Year 6. In Year 2, pupils make finger puppets to enact the story of "Little Red Riding Hood", cutting, stitching and gluing with felt. In Year 3, pupils make glove puppets showing the progress in the development of these skills. Work in spinning designs produced a carousel driven by an electric motor in Year 6 and, linked with a project on World War II, pupils

constructed a life-sized air-raid shelter and experienced the problems of living in such conditions. Other projects include making musical instruments, examining how various instruments are constructed, and making moving monsters.

74. **Leadership and management of the subjects are excellent.** Strong leadership is provided by the subject leaders who have enthusiasm and drive, and which they use well to guide and stimulate teachers and pupils. Planning and teaching are monitored effectively and good displays celebrate the success of the pupils' work. The leadership ensures clear goals and targets are set to focus teaching.
75. **The quality of teaching and learning overall is good.** Teachers plan their lessons well and provide stimulating and challenging tasks. The pupils response in class is good. They communicate imaginatively and explore and develop ideas with enthusiasm, using good levels of creativity. The standard of behaviour overall is good and pupils are keen to take part, taking pride in the quality of their work. They work well together when required and contribute advice and support each other in practical work.
76. **The resources for teaching are very good.** They include a plentiful supply and range of consumable materials and artefacts to stimulate learning. In addition, the school makes good use of visiting artists to work with the pupils and has won recognition in local exhibitions. In design and technology, there is a plentiful supply of tools and kits to stimulate learning.

The area for development is:

77. **Insufficient use is made of ICT as an aid to learning.** The opportunities presented by ICT to extend art and design and design and technology experiences for pupils are underused. The research potential of the Internet and the facilities of the digital camera are not being exploited.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

Standards in both subjects are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good achievement by pupils.

Strengths are:

78. **There is consistent and good development of skills in both subjects.** The school has recognised the need to develop these areas. To achieve this, promote skills development and raise standards overall, the school has skilfully analysed what needs to be done and drawn up individual action plans for each subject. This focus has already resulted in pupils making good progress. In history, there are many opportunities for pupils to undertake research and produce their own work on topics, such as World War II. This is well supported by a display in the entrance, about which Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably. The school is particularly keen to ensure that history is exciting and provides all its pupils with firsthand experiences, planning visits to places of interest which will support and reinforce their learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 compare present seaside holidays to those of the past, and the school takes them on an educational visit to Blackpool pier. Year 3 pupils attend a living history day at Bramall Hall. Year 6 pupils visited Stockport Air Raid Shelters and then constructed a full-size Anderson Shelter in the school grounds. In geography, pupils learn basic skills of map reading, learn about countries and continents and discuss weather patterns using recorded weather forecasts to reinforce their learning. Year 6 pupils develop an understanding of aspects of Ordnance Survey maps such as contour lines and recognise the importance of these when, for example, hill walking and selecting routes.
79. **Good teaching enables good learning to take place.** Teachers plan both subjects well. Management of classes is secure and no time is wasted through having to manage unacceptable behaviour. This is achieved through lessons being conducted at a brisk pace, effective use of resources and good subject knowledge. In history, for example, pupils researched census forms of Cheadle Heath in 1841. The preparation and very good pupil/teacher interaction create an excellent environment for learning, which promotes enthusiasm and stimulation. The lesson was organised so that pupils worked in pairs, discussed their tasks in a mature manner and set about completing their work energetically. In the plenary session pupils eagerly offered their findings using appropriate

vocabulary. Similarly, in a Year 6 geography lesson, the teacher brought the lesson alive by providing a cardboard model of a mountain, cut into contour blocks so that pupils could see, understand and relate to this visual representation and learn effectively from this 'hands on' approach.

80. **The good management of the two subjects, including visits, enhances learning effectively.** In history and geography, good use is made of places of interest in the area to investigate historical and geographical features. This enhances pupils' learning through firsthand discovery and experiences, such as conducting a Cheadle Heath park survey, drawing conclusions and then planning a children's playground. This enhances and develops their skills of enquiry, as similarly in history, when they visit Styal Mill as part of their comparative study of factories in Victorian times. Such visits and research lead to stronger, more effective learning, whilst bringing the subjects alive.
81. **Both subjects encourage the development of numeracy and literacy skills effectively.** Pupils learn how to draw up tally sheets and use this information to construct bar charts to record information about world climate. This reinforces their mathematical skills in a cross-curricular fashion and helps them to use their learning in an everyday context. In all lessons seen particular emphasis was placed on speaking and listening. These opportunities encourage pupils to convey their ideas and opinions to their peers, who listen carefully and respond appropriately using correct terminology. Their reporting of historical events such as the Great Fire of London by Year 2 pupils helps to extend their writing skills of reporting. Similarly in geography, Year 6 pupils discuss the geographical features of Ordnance Survey maps with confidence.

The main area for development is:

82. **In both subjects, insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance learning.** This is basically due to the fact that there are few suitable software resources available to help pupils research or to learn new skills. Such resources are currently being examined critically in an audit with a view to improving their quantity and quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are below average. This is due to the fact that the school has only acquired the necessary resources to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The strengths of the subject are:

83. **Achievement is good.** From the early stages, pupils learn to use correct technical language with understanding. They log on with their individual password and select appropriate folders and programs on the screen. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a good level of keyboard skills and are able to insert punctuation and breaks in text and enter data into a database to produce graphs. This is developed further in Year 3, as pupils learn about 'fields' and compare graphs in different formats such as bar charts and pie charts. Older pupils make good use of 'clip art' to enhance title pages for work on 'Ancient Greece'. Year 6 pupils are familiar with several publishing programs and slide presentations. Newspaper headlines recall the Rhode Island fire disaster and posters for 'Red Nose Day' show high quality design skills.
84. **Learning is good and is being greatly enhanced by the recent acquisition of high quality hardware resources.** The recent establishment of a suite of 20 personal computers linked, with classroom based computers, to a network, has provided the school with excellent teaching and learning resources. The use of an 'active screen' in the suite enables class demonstrations to take place easily. The facilities have led to rapid progress in the development of ICT skills. Pupils are able to compile folders of their learning as each is assigned a personal folder on the computer network in which work may be saved for further development or as a permanent record of progress.
85. **The quality of teaching in the new suite is good overall ,with some very good practice.** All members of staff have received appropriate training. Teachers show confidence and a good level of competence in using the technology, particularly after only a short time. This augers well as expertise increases. Teachers plan their lessons effectively and the pupils respond well, treating the

equipment with care and pride. They are developing new ways of communicating and explore and develop ideas with enthusiasm. The standard of behaviour overall is good and pupils are keen to take part, taking pride in the quality of their work. Pupils work well together when required, contribute advice and support each other.

86. **Leadership of the subject is very good.** Despite the fact that the school has not yet reached national standards, there are clear and progressive development plans in place. These show how and when all omissions from statute are to be rectified, with plans to improve the purchase of new software for supporting other subjects. The learning process is now being effectively monitored and current inspection evidence shows pupils gaining in knowledge and skills, with a rising trend of improvement.

Areas for development are:

87. **Currently, standards do not reach nationally expected levels.** Standards of work are below expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is partly a reflection of pupils not having been taught basic skills consistently and progressively in the past, as well as a reflection of the lack of resources in certain areas.
88. **There are still some shortages of resources, especially software.** In a number of subject areas, although ICT is being used to a small extent, suitable software for use in lessons is inadequate. This restricts the potentially better learning in those subjects.

MUSIC

Standards in music by the end of Year 6 are above average. This represents good achievement overall.

The main strengths of the subject are:

89. **Good teaching allows pupils to develop their creativity well.** Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are carefully prepared to give pupils plenty of opportunities to experiment with instruments and to explore sound. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, by playing a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, pupils listened to the sounds and then suggested what they reminded them of – suggestions included good descriptive vocabulary such as ‘caterpillars crunching’ or ‘rattlesnakes’. This also made a very good link to helping pupils develop their literacy skills. In Year 6, pupils began to classify sounds into comfortable and uncomfortable as they began to distinguish between harmonious chords and dissonant ones. Pupils in Year 6 also began to write and think creatively about what the music suggested, by listening to classics such as ‘Morning’ by Grieg. One pupil, for example, said it sounded like the dawn breaking. Not only does the lesson structure allow for creativity to be developed, it provides many good opportunities for social skills to be developed. Pupils work very well collaboratively, taking turns in sharing the instruments and offering suggestions. They learn respect, how to listen effectively, as well as not to interrupt or try to hog the discussion. Many pupils with learning difficulties or behavioural problems enjoy music because it gives them opportunities to explore their own ideas and contribute effectively to group discussion. This enables them to make as good a rate of progress as the rest of the class.
90. **Teachers focus effectively on skills development.** Pupils are encouraged to handle and use instruments whenever possible. In all lessons, all pupils were given opportunities to handle instruments and experiment with sound. Once pupils had begun to listen carefully, they were encouraged to identify specific notes or follow a rhythm using symbols to indicate specific groups of instruments. Pupils have learnt effectively to distinguish between rhythm and pitch, and in Years 1 and 2, all pupils are able to make the distinction between fast and slow as well as high and low. Older pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are able to sing unaccompanied and effectively in two parts in assemblies, producing a satisfactory sound with good levels of timing. The skills of interpreting music are firmly embedded into the teaching methods, enabling pupils to make good progress in exploring their own ideas and imagination. This allows higher attaining pupils to make good progress in developing their ideas, both in interpretation and composition.

91. **The subject is effectively organised, managed and led.** Teachers are confident when in the classrooms, with much of this due to a syllabus which has been designed to take account of the legal requirements yet recognising the capabilities of staff and pupils. The local education authority has been lending its support effectively by its staff working alongside pupils and teachers with a view to raising standards and progress. This has been and still is a very successful venture, building confidence in pupils and teachers alike. The subject leader ensures that planned lessons are of high quality, and that they are modified and improved upon wherever possible. There are further opportunities to learn a wide range of musical instruments such as guitar and brass. Pupils are beginning to take part in local musical events. The overall result is a subject where pupils achieve well and reach better than expected standards.

The area for improvement:

92. **Currently, little use is made of ICT in music.** The school recognises this, and hopes to provide opportunities for further development in the future.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Standards in physical education are average throughout the school. This is good achievement over time.

The strengths of the subject are:

93. **The curriculum is well planned and encourages the pupils to be physically active and self-confident.** They are given a wide range of experiences that focus on developing skills and attitudes that develop healthy lifestyles. Each class has three sessions of physical education every week and all areas of the National Curriculum are covered. Specialist coaches from outside the school teach a wide range of games successfully. The high level of expertise shown by these instructors has a positive impact on pupils' development of skills, such as controlling a ball with their feet. In Year 4, pupils instructed by two coaches from Stockport County Football Club show an increasing accuracy when running and controlling a football. An impressive range of extra-curricular activities gives all pupils the chance to further develop skills in games. Pupils are developing an awareness of the importance of playing as a team when engaged in competitive team games. Pupils in both Year 5 and Year 6 are able to go on residential visits where they experience outdoor and adventurous activities such as canoeing. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 go to the local swimming baths and most are able to swim a minimum of 25 metres by Year 6.
94. **Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils learn well.** During lessons, pupils respond to instructions and try hard to do their best. High expectations, good lesson planning, good relationships with pupils and awareness of pupils' needs were common features in many lessons seen. Teachers involve pupils directly in lessons and challenge them to improve their performance. Year 2 pupils develop a range of dance activities and interpret effectively the pitch and rhythm of music through movement during a well-paced lesson. The teacher encourages pupils to contribute ideas and they respond by changing and contrasting speed and direction. All the time the teacher is encouraging the pupils and they manage to link together four different movements ranging from 'heel to toe' to 'gallops.' Most of the pupils enjoy the challenge and remain interested throughout the lesson. Good standards of teaching were also seen in a Year 6 games lesson when pupils were taught to improve their hitting skills using a racquet and ball. The lesson was well planned and pupils showed an increasing accuracy when hitting a ball to their tennis partner. They were well taught how to strike the ball to get the required speed and accuracy. They worked individually and then in pairs. The teacher demonstrated correct racquet grip and pupils responded by trying hard to improve their skills. Pupils were well motivated and continue to practise during the lesson. Everybody was involved. At the end of the lesson, the teacher successfully encouraged the pupils to discuss what they have achieved and what they must do to improve further.

95. **Accommodation is excellent and allows physical education to be taught effectively.** The large school hall, playground and grassed areas provide plenty of space for teaching. The playground is divided into three zones and is marked out for different games. Pupils are able to play different team games effectively, where they develop a sense of competition and fair play, which contributes effectively to their social and moral development.
96. **There are good links with the local community that enrich the curriculum opportunities for pupils.** The school is involved with local professional football clubs who provide football coaching for pupils. The local high school provides hockey coaching for older pupils. Both these opportunities enhance provision and help to improve the learning of all pupils in these areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Standards are in line with those expected for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Examination of pupils' work, displays and discussions with younger pupils indicate their knowledge and understanding of the subject meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Strengths are:

97. **Learning is good in some areas of the curriculum.** In Year 2, pupils understand the Christmas story and that the local church they have visited is a place of worship. They recognise different faiths have their own traditions, learning about some of the similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity. By Year 6, pupils recognise other beliefs and some traditions of other faiths, particularly Hinduism and Judaism, and compare them with Christianity. They have very limited knowledge and understanding about other faiths such as Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. Pupils' knowledge about other religions is in line with the core requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, this does offer suggestions for further learning about other religions. Pupils are not relating religious traditions and beliefs to the way people who follow a particular religion choose to live their lives.
98. **Pupils contribute well to the discussion in the lessons.** In a Year 5 lesson, their contribution to the challenging questions from the teacher indicates a clear understanding of the different styles and types of writing to be found in the Bible and they are able to give modern-day examples. They recognise the significance between different accounts of the story. The quality of discussion is good; pupils listen carefully to each other. The emphasis on giving information and developing pupils' understanding through the teacher using clear and focused questions is good. In good lessons the teacher provides suggestions to extend pupils' ideas in paired and group discussion and gives a set time for this to be accomplished. These strategies enable pupils to contribute to the lesson effectively.
99. **Pupils with special educational needs work hard and are well supported by their teacher and classroom support assistants.** They assist pupils to draw conclusions from the discussion and contribute well to the report back session, which clearly focuses on what they had learnt from the theme. They make very good progress in relation to their starting points.

Areas for improvement include:

100. **The quality of the limited amount of written work examined does not reflect the standards pupils exhibit in their discussions.** Recording their learning in written form is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is marked but comments to let pupils know what they can do to improve are limited. Presentation does not reflect pupils' knowledge and understanding.
101. **There are limited opportunities to gain an understanding of the diversity and richness of different cultural traditions.** Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and the scheme of work supports their teaching well. The school makes visits to the local church but there are few opportunities to visit different places of worship. This restricts pupils' awareness of other faiths, cultures and traditions. The school has a range of resources, including video material, which is satisfactory and used well but these do not extend sufficiently to the cultural heritage and traditions of other faiths.

102. **The use of ICT is very limited** and does not expand the skills pupils can use in researching information about all religions. The subject leader assumed responsibility for the subject in September 2002. The review of the syllabus has been implemented and there is now a start to monitoring work in the subject with a view to highlighting the areas for future developments in learning.