

INSPECTION REPORT

CANON JOHNSON C. E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashton-under-Lyne

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106243

Headteacher: Mr Martin Lowe

Reporting inspector: Mr Robert Robinson
21024

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th May 2003

Inspection number 251747

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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Elgin Street
Ashton-under-Lyne
Lancashire

Postcode: OL7 9DD

Telephone number: 0161 3303169

Fax number: 0161 3319328

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Tom Wragg

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21024	Mr R Robinson Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements What should the school do to improve further?
9224	Mr Mike Vineall 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?
106243	Mrs Kay Andrews Team inspector	Geography History Educational inclusion Provision for children in the foundation stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14851	Mr Graham Laws Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education English as an additional language Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
19041	Mr Roger Linstead Team inspector	English Art and design Music	How well are the pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average-sized primary school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years is situated close to the centre of Ashton-under-Lyne. It is part of the Tameside Excellence in Cities initiative. Pupils come from areas adjacent to the school which include mainly council built and housing association accommodation and owner-occupied, small terrace housing. The school has 204 full-time pupils, 106 boys and 98 girls. About twelve per cent of pupils are from Asian backgrounds though none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Twenty-seven pupils (12 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs which is below average; a very small proportion of pupils has a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have mainly moderate, emotional or behavioural difficulties though a minority have profound learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about 21 per cent which is about the national average. This academic year is the first year children have been admitted to the school at the age of three with the opening of the nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. The headteacher commenced his appointment in April 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Canon Johnson Church of England Primary School provides a sound education for its pupils. Pupils achieve well in the reception class and satisfactorily in the rest of the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall: the leadership by the headteacher is good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well because the teaching is good and provides exciting and stimulating opportunities for learning.
- Standards in science are above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their personal development and their relationships with one another are good.
- The fostering of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- Standards in art and design by the end of Year 6.
- The checking of pupils' progress and the use of the information to assist pupils' future learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in March 1998. The overall trend of the improvement in pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection is above the national average. The following items represent responses to the areas of development identified at the last inspection:

- In science, the school has been successful in improving standards and providing challenging work for the higher attainers; however, this is not the case in English and mathematics. Too few pupils are achieving the higher levels.
- Much developmental work has begun recently to check pupils' progress and to develop the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring and improving standards, although these areas still remain weaknesses.

- The level of unsatisfactory teaching has not been reduced significantly.
- There are now satisfactory policies for most subjects.
- The outdoor provision for children in the nursery and reception classes has been improved significantly.

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	E	C	E	D
Mathematics	D	C	C	B
Science	B	A*	B	A

Key

very high (highest 5% nationally) A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low (lowest 5% nationally) E*

The performance of pupils varies from year-to-year because of differences between the groups of pupils; however, a particularly strong feature is pupils' attainments in science by the end of Year 6. The average trend of results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 since 1998 is above the national trend; however, this is mainly because of the strong performance of pupils in science though an upward trend, similar to the national trend, is apparent in English and mathematics.

Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are below the national average in English and mathematics, although above average in science. No significant variations between the attainment of boys and girls are apparent. In art and design, standards are on course to be below the national expectations. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement of pupils' attainment in physical education by the end of Year 6. In all other subjects, pupils are set to achieve the national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are set to be in line with the national average in the skills of speaking and listening but below the national average in reading and writing. In mathematics, standards are on course to be well below the national average. Standards in science are average. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress and are on course to achieve the national expectations in all the areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, including pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils likely to reach the level expected nationally in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 lack challenge particularly at the higher level; however, the school is likely to exceed these undemanding targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well motivated and try hard to succeed in their work in most lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave appropriately in lessons and around school; however, the behaviour of a few older boys is, on occasions, not of an acceptable standard.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils take an active part in the daily life of the school. They relate well to other pupils and members of staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is good and gives children a firm foundation for work in Year 1. The good quality of teaching in Year 6 helps pupils achieve their best before they leave school. The teaching of English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory, overall. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good in information and communication technology throughout the school, in mathematics and science in the juniors, and in speaking and listening in the infants. There was not enough evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning in art and design, design and technology and physical education. In all other subjects, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching balance weaknesses confirming satisfactory overall quality, with some unsatisfactory teaching which depresses the overall quality of teaching despite some good and very good teaching. In the unsatisfactory teaching, the management of pupils' behaviour is insecure and there is insufficient challenge for pupils at each level of attainment. Generally, teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, and pupils work industriously and with interest. The marking of work is unsatisfactory; it is not consistent throughout the school and often does not show how well pupils are doing or how to make better progress in their learning. On balance, the school meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, it is satisfactory, however, there is no guidance to assist teachers to plan lessons in physical education. Opportunities for activities outside lessons are good. Pupils' learning benefits well from good use of the local community and the school working together effectively with other schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans are appropriate; however, there is insufficient planning for these pupils in some lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils at the school.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for moral, social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for spiritual development. Teachers do not plan specific opportunities to foster spiritual development in most lessons, although time is set aside in personal, social education lessons for pupils to reflect on issues that affect their daily lives.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for the pastoral care of pupils are good. The checking of pupils' attainment and the tracking of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. The way the school monitors attendance and pupils' behaviour are effective.

The school works suitably with parents and they regard the school as offering satisfactory provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good direction for the school, focusing on raising standards. He has identified areas of weakness and created management structures to address them. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles satisfactorily, though they are not monitoring standards sufficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors recognise the need to raise standards and are becoming more aware of their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school improvement plan provides clear direction for the staff and governors. Systems for checking and improving teaching are satisfactory; however, the checking of pupils' learning over time is at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Priorities for improvement have been identified and funded effectively. Additional grants have been used well to provide extra staffing and facilities to assist pupils' learning. The governors apply the

	principles of obtaining best value soundly
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoy school.• The teaching is good.• The school helps children to become more mature and responsible.• Parents find the school approachable.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils' behaviour is not good enough.• Homework is inappropriate.• More information about their children's progress should be provided.• The range of activities outside lessons is insufficient.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents though judge management to be satisfactory overall. With regard to parents' concerns, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, although the behaviour of a minority of older pupils is not always satisfactory. The amount of homework given is appropriate and assists pupils' learning satisfactorily. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. The pupils' annual reports do not provide sufficient information for parents on how well their children are progressing and ways that parents can help their children to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. With the opening of the nursery and reception classes in a new building, attached to the school, this year, the provision and standards have improved significantly because of the good quality of teaching, the effective guidance for teachers and the very good accommodation. In both the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress, including those children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. As a result, children in the reception class are on course to achieve the nationally expected levels in all their areas of learning.

2. Pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 1998, just after the last inspection, were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English have varied significantly and only reached the national average in 2001 but generally matched the national upward trend of standards in the subject. The present group of pupils in Year 6 are on course to be in line with the national expectations in speaking and listening but below the national average in reading and writing; their achievement is satisfactory. In mathematics, pupils' performance improved in 1999 and 2000 and reached the national average in 2001 and 2002. The present group of pupils in Year 6 is likely to be below average by the end of the academic year; however, this represents satisfactory achievements in relation to their national test results at the end of Year 2. Generally, the variation in pupils' performance in English and mathematics reflects the differences in attainment on entry of the pupils to Year 1.

3. Pupils' achieve well in science, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Since 1999 in the national tests, standards by the end of Year 6 have never been less than above average and in 2001 were in the highest five per cent nationally, and in 2002 were well above average. Pupils' performance has been significantly higher than that in English and mathematics and the current group of pupils in Year 6 are set to continue this pattern with above average attainment. The reason for the better results in science than in English and mathematics is because of the overall higher quality of teaching of science in Years 3 to 6, with particular strengths in the teaching in Year 6 and thorough on-going consolidation of scientific knowledge. In addition, the strong emphasis on environmental education and investigative science throughout the school enhances pupils' interest and learning.

4. Standards, by the end of Year 2, since the last inspection, have been below or well below average in reading, writing and mathematics, although, in 2001, standards improved significantly to above the national average. The present group of pupils is set to be in line with the national average in speaking and listening, because of good teaching, but below average in reading, and writing and well below average in mathematics. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily and year-on-year variations, generally, reflect pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1; for example, the present group in Year 2 entered Year 1 with well below average level of attainment in mathematics and below average level of attainment in reading and writing. The main reason for pupils not reaching the national average can be attributed to too few pupils achieving, by the end of Year 2, the higher levels because the teaching does not take sufficient account of pupils' level of attainment.

5. The attainment of boys compared to girls has varied from year-to-year. Girls tend to do better than boys over time but this is not consistent every year. No significant variations were seen during the inspection; however, a significantly higher proportion of boys compared to girls are on the register of special educational needs.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Individual education plans are well constructed and include appropriate short-term targets that are monitored regularly. Almost all pupils gain in confidence year on year. This helps them to maintain satisfactory progress overall. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and given good assistance in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress. In most subjects throughout the rest of the school, higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, although, on occasions, teachers do not plan sufficiently well for higher attainers such as in geography and history. In science, higher attainers make good progress, and talented pupils are given additional beneficial opportunities, arranged through the local Excellence in Cities initiative, to attend classes taught by specialist science teachers.

7. In information and communication technology, pupils reach the national expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well since the recent training of staff and improvements in computer hardware and software; however, there has been insufficient time for the improved teaching to impact on standards. Standards in art and design are below average by the end of Year 6 because pupils have had insufficient opportunities to develop and practise skills in the subject. In all other subjects, pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' good attitudes to learning and the good quality relationships that exist between members of staff and the pupils are the key to much of the good work achieved by the school.

9. The pupils enjoy school and want to attend. Once in class, they soon settle to work and are keen to participate in lessons and become involved in learning. They are particularly ready to talk in a very open, friendly and polite manner. A walk around the playground, at break, provides many opportunities for discussion, a battery of questions and invitations to play games. The children are proud of their school and respect their teachers and are keen to see it improved. This was seen, in particular, with some Year 5 pupils working in the garden, with an adult, on an environmental project. Pupils' good attitudes help to create good relationships and good care for one another.

10. Incidents of oppressive behaviour are rare as a result of pupils' good attitudes and relationships with each other. Mutual dependence, care for others and good respect for each other's feelings and beliefs are apparent. Pupils offer opinions readily and, often, share quite intimate insights of their feelings without fear of ridicule from others. These features of school life benefit pupils' personal development and give them a confidence with which to tackle their learning. Pupils with special educational needs generally have a positive attitude to their work. They join in with whole class activities and discussions. This helps them to improve their speaking and listening skills. They know that their contributions are valued.

11. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, overall; and within the nursery and reception classes, it is very good; for example, in an effective assembly, the younger pupils behaved impeccably and even the nursery children listened to the story with rapt attention. Less than satisfactory behaviour is mainly restricted to Years 5 and 6 where some challenging behaviour of pupils can on occasion disrupt learning. Since the recent introduction of a new policy for behaviour, parents and pupils report that behaviour has improved. There were five exclusions last year as a result of extremely unacceptable behaviour.

12. Attendance is satisfactory and very close to the national average and unauthorised absences are rare. The majority of pupils arrive punctually but the late arrival of a few pupils leads to some pupils missing the introduction of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and has not changed significantly since the last inspection; however, it has several good features, although several shortcomings in teaching impact on learning in Years 1 to Year 6. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, teaching is commonly aimed too much at the middle range of pupils' attainment. As a result, lessons do not always challenge potentially higher attaining pupils. Teachers do not use techniques learned through the national strategies for literacy and numeracy widely enough. As the quality of teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory, pupils' progress depends too much on which class they are in. Teachers do not assess pupils' day-to-day progress closely enough; for example, they do not track the rate of pupils' progress in reading compared with their ages. Similarly in most classes, there is not enough marking of pupils' written work to improve their standards, and pupils' books do not usually have group or individual targets for them to work towards and for teachers to use in measuring progress.

14. Teachers deploy support staff well both inside and outside the classroom to assist pupils' learning. They make effective contributions to the learning of lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. As a result, these pupils make satisfactory progress. In the best teaching for those who have special educational needs, teachers prepare work to meet the precise needs outlined in pupils' individual education plans and when this happens, progress is rapid, although this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

15. Teachers use lesson time well. Learning usually moves promptly from whole-class instruction to group activities with little time wasted. This is often because teachers interest their classes quickly in new learning, give clear directions and carefully prepare interesting resources. As a result, pupils are keen to get to work with stimulating learning materials they have already seen. Good timing also means that pupils enjoy the success and satisfaction of getting their tasks finished each day.

16. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' good knowledge of their subjects and thorough preparation enhance the quality of learning; for example, in a Year 6 lesson on ancient art the teacher began with a computer slide show of pictures and bullet points to make sure pupils remembered and practised Egyptian style and techniques. They then concentrated very well copying shapes and colours to create images of the gods.

17. Teachers are careful to make sure that boys and girls make equal progress; for example, in a good Year 2 literacy lesson, although there were twice as many boys as girls, the teacher ensured that the girls played a full part in all learning. Similarly, the very good teaching of two teachers in a Year 6 literacy lesson enabled a group of lower attaining boys to learn thoroughly the same writing skills as the rest of class.

18. In very good lessons, there is a real sense of excitement, with pupils being fully involved from the start and enjoying making rapid progress. This was the case, for example, in a Year 4 music lesson taken by a visiting specialist teacher. The class worked throughout a whole afternoon sustaining high levels of concentration. Pupils all improved individual and ensemble skills, mainly on a variety of drums, but also on tuned and untuned percussion. The teacher made painstaking rehearsal both challenging and fun. The final performance to

the whole school reflected the teamwork and self-discipline the pupils had been practising. Audience and performers really enjoyed the experience.

19. Teaching is ineffective when pupils do not to experience challenge and stimulus. This was the case in a Year 5 literacy lesson on poetry. Although opportunities were planned to develop speaking and listening skills, the lesson did not succeed because of poor concentration of pupils. This was because the teaching did not ensure everyone was listening at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils did not then give full attention to what they were doing, opted out of group activities at times and sometimes disturbed the learning of other pupils.

20. The overall quality of literacy and numeracy teaching is satisfactory and beginning to raise standards. Teachers follow the national strategies carefully to ensure a good balance of direct teaching, practice of skills and guided investigation; however, over concern to teach literacy lessons too rigidly makes some teachers reluctant to give any further directions to groups of pupils who have started independent work. As a result, younger pupils in these groups do not make as much progress as they should. The use of reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects is satisfactory though sometimes opportunities are missed to improve writing skills in history and geography. Teachers' use of information and communication technology to enhance learning is satisfactory overall; however, teachers are beginning to use the Internet effectively to improve planning, resourcing and pupils' research opportunities.

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

21. The previous inspection reported that the curriculum was satisfactory and it remains so. Many improvements have been made since that time but some of the concerns raised then still remain. The overall curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is broad and balanced, except for physical education, where lack of a relevant scheme of work adversely affects teachers' ability to plan properly for activities across all aspects of the subject, particularly gymnastics. No teacher has qualifications in music and the school is trying to supplement provision by including work with visiting musicians. In particular, teachers from a local comprehensive school make a good contribution to musical development. The school's strategies for teaching literacy skills are satisfactory. The strategy for teaching numeracy skills is also satisfactory, though there is good provision for developing data and grid work in geography and science. The school's use of information and communication technology to enhance learning is satisfactory though increasingly being used to assist learning in other subjects; for example, pupils in Year 6 compiled and made a computer presentation to the rest of the class in a history lesson.

22. Equal opportunities are addressed well in the general life and work of the school; for example, supporting pupils who are fasting during Ramadan. All clubs and activities are open to both boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in the life and work of the school and are helped well to achieve levels similar to other pupils. There are some issues of inclusion still being addressed. The school has a group of low achievers and feels, rightly, this is in part because pupils' needs are not being identified and supported early enough. The special needs co-ordinator has been given time away from the classroom for one term to work with teachers, pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils to try to ensure that these pupils' needs are identified much earlier and appropriate help is given. This includes planning work that is set at the right level for them in lessons.

23. The curriculum for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is very good. It is constantly under review to ensure that children's experiences are rich and vibrant. The programme of work is well planned to provide interesting, exciting experiences across all areas of learning. Lessons include a good balance of direct teaching and independent activities. Provision for outdoor play has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection and children engage daily in physical activities that promote the skills of balance, control and mobility, as well as their personal, social and emotional development.

24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Improving this aspect is a high priority and the curriculum, which has a strong thread of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education running through it, is still developing. The programme of work seeks to raise pupils' self esteem and self worth through activities, such as specific time when pupils are aided to value and care for themselves, each other and the environment.

25. Provision for extra-curricular activities has improved recently and is now good. A significant factor has been the development of good links with the local group of schools involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative, which has led to the establishment of a number of clubs, activities and workshops in music, maths, writing and coaching for sporting activities, such as cricket and football. Older pupils enjoy the lunchtime board games and problem-solving activities organised by the school's learning mentor, as well as cooking, crochet and woodwork clubs. Younger pupils are encouraged to join the after school library club and bring their parents along with them to enjoy the books. Residential and other trips out into the community, such as an adventure day at a local water park and a visit to a Roman museum, are all used to enrich pupils' learning.

26. The school makes good use of the local community to enhance pupils' learning. Strong links have been developed with the local church. Pupils visit the church regularly to celebrate special Christian festivals and a local vicar visits school to take assemblies. The school welcomes volunteers from the local community to listen to pupils read and to coach pupils in sporting activities. A local environmental study centre is used well by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and many local businesses, such as a local pet shop, are also used well to assist pupils' learning. Pupils visit museums, such as a Victorian school and a Roman centre, to find out about topics of study in history. Older citizens speak to pupils about their experiences in the past and coaches from local football clubs provide support in physical education.

27. Links with partner institutions are very good and are having a significant impact on the school's efforts to raise standards. The school is a member of the local Excellence in Cities cluster of schools, which enables teachers and pupils to work together. A neighbouring school, which is a Beacon School, provides help in many areas; for example, to improve provision for children in the nursery and reception classes, to improve the skills of teachers and class assistants. Pupils in Year 4 have benefited from exciting music teaching when participating in workshop sessions with a drumming band organised by a local music centre. Induction into school at nursery age is well developed.

28. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection and reflects the very strong emphasis the school places on this aspect. The parents' view, that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible, is fully justified. Teachers' awareness of spirituality has been raised and spiritual occasions are regularly provided in assemblies and on other occasions during the school day; in specific time set aside for reflection; for example, pupils are encouraged effectively to think and reflect on issues that have arisen in their daily lives and in the world around them. There are occasions in lessons, however,

where good opportunities to foster pupils' awe and wonder of the world around them are missed.

29. Pupils are encouraged actively to care for each other and the school environment and opportunities are sought to discuss and learn right from wrong; for example, pupils wrote their own prayers and displayed their apologies for acts of unkindness that they have committed, which brought them to recognise how important good relationships are in the school community. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility around the school. The school's 'eco-committee', for example, which comprises of representative pupils from Years 3 to 6, brings together ideas that classmates have for improving the school. Their efforts can be seen in colourful flowerbeds, lack of litter and a 'healthy tuck shop'. Pupils are encouraged to support a wide range of local and national charitable causes in order to help those less fortunate than themselves and they do so enthusiastically.

30. The effective provision for pupils' social development gives pupils a good start in the nursery and reception classes, which benefits them as they go up the school. The school has clear aims and principles, which are developed within an ethos of family and Christian values, and a high priority is given to improving pupils' self-esteem and sense of personal responsibility. Pupils are clear that bullying and racist behaviour will not be tolerated. Older pupils say they have been helped a lot recently to deal with their own and others' misbehaviour and the school is now a happier place. Good behaviour is praised and valued in assemblies and in lessons. Class rules are developed in discussion with pupils and most pupils try to abide by them. Residential trips, in Year 6, have been so successful in improving pupils' social skills that they have been extended to Year 5.

31. The school appreciates the need to celebrate cultural diversity and differences, and many new and exciting resources have been purchased. Visiting musicians, such as a Zulu warrior band, involve pupils in music from around the world. Asian parents send in food from their culture for pupils to try and visit to show pupils how to properly dress in a sari. When pupils participate in theme days, such as celebrating the Chinese New Year, their learning excites them when they try Chinese writing, study textiles and pattern making and make colourful lanterns. In assemblies, pupils listen to and discuss music from around the world, such as South American pipe music and Irish jigs. Pupils are also taught to appreciate their own culture and benefit from a wide programme of visits into the local community, to assist learning in geography, music and art, such as when pupils in Year 5 visited a local reservoir and recycling centre. Visitors to the school also make a good contribution, such as when a local person described to pupils his experiences in Ashton during World War 2.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Child protection issues are dealt with well. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that health and safety meets statutory requirements.

33. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour have been updated recently. These effective procedures are clearly having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, as are the good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour and maintaining satisfactory attendance levels. Monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development is satisfactory, albeit relying upon informal procedures. The close knowledge and understanding, by teachers, of pupils assists this significantly.

34. A weakness at the last inspection was the checking of pupils' attainment. Overall, the school has made insufficient progress in addressing the issue as some significant weaknesses remain. The procedures for checking pupils' achievements are now

satisfactory in all subjects except physical education. In physical education, no records are kept; which is unsatisfactory. The information gained from checking pupils' attainments at the end of units of work or through testing at the end of each academic year is not used sufficiently to benefit pupils' learning. No succinct records of pupils' progress, in each subject, linked to the levels of the National Curriculum, are maintained to enable the management of the school to check pupils' progress in order to set targets for future improvement.

35. The identification of pupils with special educational needs is not rigorous enough. The procedures do not provide sufficient information to help teachers plan work for these pupils. Some records of pupils with special educational needs concentrate on what they have been taught and attitudes to learning rather than an evaluation of their progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents express satisfactory support for the school, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The information the school provides for parents has improved and is now good. The prospectus has been rewritten recently and presented attractively, and written in a form easily understandable for parents. Similarly, newsletters and other letters to parents adopt an informative and pleasant tone. The termly curricular information newsheet for each class gives parents good insights into the work to be done by their children in all subjects and guidance on how parents might help in their children's learning. The one aspect of communications with parents that could be improved is the reports of pupils' progress. These are over-descriptive rather than evaluative. They do not include targets for future learning or indicate progress in relation to national expectations, but they do include a satisfactory section on pupils' personal development.

37. The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Several initiatives are in hand to strengthen these crucial links. A small number of parents and other adults help in school and this benefits pupils' learning. Members of staff in the nursery and reception classes work well to encourage and involve parents, starting with a home visit to all new parents. There is no parents' association though plans are well advanced to re-establish the former parent-teacher association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

38. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership. He has identified essential areas for development well and worked with senior staff to effect improvement. The pace of addressing the priorities detailed at the last inspection has accelerated during the past year. The headteacher, following his appointment, re-established the senior management team and conducted an effective audit of the strengths and areas for improvement. The priorities set are most appropriate and well-linked to improving standards.

39. The senior management team works well with the headteacher and fulfils its responsibilities effectively. The roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators remain limited in connection with monitoring standards of teaching and pupils' learning; this was a weakness at the last inspection. The continued development of co-ordinators' responsibilities is central to the improvement plans prepared by the school. The leadership and management of science and information and communication technology are good because of the effective help teachers receive from the subject co-ordinators and senior managers. The leadership and management of physical education are unsatisfactory as there has been insufficient progress made in addressing the weaknesses in the subject since the last inspection.

40. The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily. It has worked alongside the headteacher and other senior staff to formulate a school improvement plan which has an emphasis on raising standards. This school improvement plan is most appropriate to move the school forward and identifies most of the present weaknesses as priorities for development. There is a clear determination to focus much more strenuously on monitoring standards. A longer-term vision is now embodied in a three-year improvement plan of good quality. The governing body is kept well informed by senior staff and this enables them to take on the role of 'critical friend' and play their part in the development of the school.

41. The governing body manages finances prudently and applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. A considerable surplus accumulated over the past few years is now being used to good effect; for example, time is provided for the deputy headteacher to implement new procedures to check the progress of pupils and to improve the standard of teaching further. The special educational needs co-ordinator has been allocated sufficient time to ensure earlier identification of pupils with learning difficulties and to prepare education plans to assist these pupils. Expenditure is closely linked to identified priorities in improvement plans. The school uses specific grants wisely, such as grants from national initiatives and funding from Excellence in Cities. This is exemplified by the improved provision of computers throughout the school, the help lower attaining pupils receive from teaching assistants and the effectiveness of the learning mentor in dealing with behaviour and attendance issues.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

42. The headteacher, staff and governors should take the following action:

- Raise standards of pupils' performance in English and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6* by fully implementing the initiatives detailed in the school improvement plan**. (Paragraphs: 2, 4, 20, 51, 52, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 68)
- Raise standards by the end of Year 6 in art and design by improving learning opportunities for pupils to enhance skills in the subject. (Paragraphs: 7, 76)
- Develop systems to check and record pupils' progress in all subjects and use the information to assist pupils' future learning*. (Paragraphs: 34, 35, 52, 57, 61, 68, 75, 80, 81, 84, 87, 90, 92, 103)

The following less important areas for development should be included in the action plan:

- Improving the consistency and effectiveness of the marking of pupils' work. (Paragraphs: 13, 52, 57, 58, 72)
- Enhancing the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators in monitoring pupils' learning. (Paragraphs: 39, 68, 75, 81, 84, 87)
- Agreeing and implementing guidance for teachers in physical education to assist the planning of lessons. (Paragraphs: 21, 102, 103)

* Staff and governors have already identified these areas for development.

** The main priorities in the school improvement plan 2002-2005 relating to this key issue are detailed under the following headings:

- *Narrowing the attainment gap*
- *Tackling under achievement*
- *Improving the quality of teaching*
- *Development of work related to the Excellence Cluster*
- *Use of information and communication technology*
- *Improving the quality of school leadership, management and governance*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	22	8	3	0	0
Percentage	0	18	55	20	7	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 two, percentage points..

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)	13	204
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	23	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	82 (94))	89 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	89 (100)	89 (100)
	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	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	13
	Girls	12	14	15
	Total	20	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (81)	77 (71)	90 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	23	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (84)	81 (71)	87 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
153	5	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
11	0	0
12	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	451 650
Total expenditure	413 408
Expenditure per pupil	2007
Balance brought forward from previous year	41 751
Balance carried forward to next year	79 993

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	44	7	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	47	8	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	52	14	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	54	15	10	0
The teaching is good.	46	44	4	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	55	15	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	44	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	60	11	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	29	67	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	51	14	1	11

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

43. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment overall, but a minority have attainment levels that are well below those seen nationally. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. Children flourish in this effective learning environment and achieve well across all areas of learning. By the end of reception this year, the majority of children will meet comfortably the early learning goals for children of this age. A minority will exceed them. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection where a number of concerns about provision were evident.

44. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good, sometimes very good. This is because teachers work so hard to present a vibrant, rich and relevant curriculum, and because they assess and monitor children's progress daily in order to provide work that is appropriate for them. It is also because teachers and classroom assistants work very well together to meet the needs of all children.

Personal social and emotional development

45. The children are on course to achieve the national expected standard by the end of the reception class in this area of learning. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well and good progress is evident throughout the nursery and reception class. This is because the teaching is good. Children are eager to come into school, leaving their parents and carers confidently and happily exploring their activities. Overall, children in the nursery are quite immature in their responses to learning and have quite short concentration spans. Teachers keep a good pace in learning and pick up quickly on those who are losing concentration. Children in the reception class, however, easily initiate conversation with visitors and are keen to talk about their learning experiences. They have a very high degree of independence and maturity in their learning, and are able to choose sensibly from the wide range of focussed activities that are available for them. They listen to instructions well and concentrate very well to complete their activities. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the nursery and reception classes because class management skills are so effective. Children whose turn it is to wear 'VIP' badges are fully aware that it is their turn to be responsible for keeping the classroom tidy and setting good standards of behaviour for other children to follow. Boys and girls play and work very well together. Multi-cultural opportunities are woven into everyday activities to ensure children develop a good awareness of diversity, such as when parents' dress staff in colourful saris. Relationships between staff and children and between children themselves are very good. This is because all members of staff have such high expectations of themselves and the children. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in their activities and show off their achievements proudly.

Communication, language and literacy

46. Children are likely to be in line with the expected standard by the end of the reception year in this area of learning because the teaching is good and the children are eager to learn. The majority of children enter the nursery with low attainment in this area, particularly in speaking and listening, and consequently this is a high priority of provision. On entry to the nursery speech is often unclear and vocabulary is limited. Teachers constantly provide good quality opportunities for speaking and listening. They incorporate key vocabulary into all planning and emphasise it in teaching. As a result, and, by the end of reception, children are

articulate, and they speak clearly and confidently. Children who are learning English as an additional language are well supported in their learning and, therefore, they can fully integrate into all activities. Reading skills are developing well. Children in the nursery are developing a love of books and stories, but despite the school's best efforts, only about a third of families support reading at home. Nevertheless, in reception, most children have a good bank of familiar words that they can read. They know single sounds and many can use these sounds to build simple regular words. Books excite them. One boy brought a book about 'Jack and the Beanstalk' saying, 'This is a mean giant - he is scary!' Higher attaining children read simple well-known texts independently, and use key words from their shopping lists, such as three red flowers and two plant pots. Writing skills are also developing well. This is because children are encouraged to write throughout the day, on paper and on the computer. By the end of reception, all children can write their own names and higher attainers can write interesting sentences independently. Children's attitudes and behaviour are of a high standard and this assists their learning.

Mathematical development

47. Teaching and learning is also good in this area and children respond very well to the good opportunities that are provided for them. Most children in the nursery attain standards that are below average at the end of nursery, but because of the good teaching, by the end of reception, children are likely to meet the expected standards. The majority of nursery children are secure in counting everyday objects within five, some more able to beyond five. Many recognise some numbers within five and can count out the number of items to match the number. They are beginning to develop a mathematical vocabulary; for example, full and empty, tall and short. They can join in significant parts of number songs and rhymes. By the end of reception, the majority of children count accurately to ten and beyond. More able children count on and back from a given number and can add and subtract small groups of objects. They count and match images on a dice. In the 'Garden centre', for example, they worked well with an assistant gathering and counting all the items on their shopping list, such as packets of seeds, flowers and potted plants. They counted the number of flowers as they planted their marigolds and distinguished the different colours.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

48. The children are likely to meet the standards expected nationally by the end of the reception year because the teaching is good resulting in the children making good progress in their learning. Teachers provide an environment where curiosity and investigation are constantly encouraged. Activities are exciting and interesting and children are eager to find out for themselves. Children are awed when they see the trays of colourful marigolds they are to plant, and are keen to share their observations with visitors; for example, a child describes a handful of compost as 'squishy'. Reception children are developing scientific skills when they name accurately parts of plants and their various functions and describe thoughtfully conditions needed for plants to grow properly. On a walk around the school, children look for patterns on the pavements, manhole covers and grills. Developing good multi-cultural awareness is a priority and children begin to learn about the wider world when they eat Indian food, provided by a parent and when they celebrate the Chinese New Year and special events from the Christian calendar. The computer is constantly in use and the majority of reception children control the mouse with reasonable accuracy to move pictures and script around the screen and to create their own interesting pictures.

Physical development

49. Pupils achieve well in this area of learning. Standards by the end of the reception class are on course to be in line with those expected nationally because the teaching is good. Improving this aspect has been a priority and significant improvements have been made in teaching and learning since the time of the previous inspection. The play of some nursery children is quite immature, unless an adult is available to direct activities. By the end of reception, children's skills are average. Precise manipulative skills are developed well because children are given many opportunities to handle small tools and equipment. They are adept at using large and small construction toys. Outdoor play provision is good with many varied, purposeful and exciting activities to interest the children, including good opportunities for imaginative play, and children respond very well to this. The majority clearly enjoy physical activity and the rough and tumble of play on wheeled toys and on balancing and climbing apparatus. Older children have good co-ordination and control and move around the space well, interacting with confidence. They enjoy using small apparatus, such as bats, balls and skipping ropes, showing some control and dexterity.

Creative development

50. Children make good progress in this area and are on course to reach the level expected nationally by the end of the reception year. The pace of children's learning is good because of the good quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception class. Teachers encourage children to express themselves creatively through a wide range of media and musical instruments. Individual paintings are bold and colourful. Self-portraits and observational drawings and paintings of flowers and themselves, on paper and on the computer, are mature and delicately detailed. Children find everyday objects to print, and create interesting three-dimensional models. The junk modelling area is often chosen by children because resources are plentiful and assistants give good advice and support. Children become absorbed in their work and results are sturdy and varied. Children proudly show their models, describing them in simple terms; for example, 'a red fire engine'. They use percussion to identify high and low notes and reception children can name a wide variety of musical instruments. Some nursery children lose concentration quite quickly, but older children listen very carefully and use their voices well to imitate the notes they have heard. They use body actions confidently to accompany their good range of songs and rhymes.

ENGLISH

51. Standards of the present group of pupils in reading and writing are below average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. They are slightly better than at the time of the last inspection but are not yet high enough; however, achievement is satisfactory given these particular groups of pupils were below average standards at the start of Year 1 and Year 3. Standards in speaking and listening are as expected for pupils' ages at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 because of effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

52. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but varies too much from class to class ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. There are also too many variations in the quality of teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' achievements in reading and writing. The strengths of teachers' use of the National Literacy Strategy include good knowledge of books and language, effective timing of activities, and a good match of work to the varied needs of different pupils. There are two main shortcomings: the rate of younger pupils' learning commonly drops when they work in independent groups, quite often, the weekly programme prevents pupils writing immediately after the stimulus; for example, a very good start to a Year 4 poetry lesson filled pupils with ideas and enthusiasm for their own work

but they were really disappointed to hear that they would not be writing their poems until the next day.

53. Teachers develop speaking and listening skills of pupils well so that most become confident speakers. They frame and direct questions skilfully, guiding pupils to speak clearly and at length. Good relationships between staff and pupils provide a strong foundation for the development of speech.

54. As a result of attentive listening, pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain confidence in speaking to the whole class. Interesting resources such as good quality, well illustrated, reading books, stimulate pupils to question and comment; for example, Year 1 pupils found a lot to say as the teacher guided them through a story about observing whales. Teachers and teaching assistants read and speak very clearly to their classes. Daily conversations in groups and pairs also develop speech well as pupils discuss their work.

55. Speaking skills continue to develop well in most lessons in Years 3 to 6. This is because teachers know the importance of speech in learning, understand pupils well and so continue to provide interesting speaking opportunities; for example, Year 3 pupils confidently discussed Victorian Ashton, following local research and the study of old photographs. Similarly, because they were really interested, lower attaining pupils in Year 6 found a lot to say as they discussed writing a letter to a space agency about an amazing creature.

56. Progress in reading is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build soundly on the good early reading skills gained in the nursery and reception classes. An attractive and well-organised infant library encourages pupils to enjoy books and reading. Members of staff continue to teach the sounds and shapes of letters well. Higher and average attaining pupils, therefore, recognise an expected range of words, read expressively, and use several methods of working out the meaning of new words as they meet them. They also read regularly at home. Lower attaining pupils read accurately but often so slowly that they do not follow the flow of meaning in text. Teachers do their best to stop the slower readers falling behind, by hearing them read more often or arranging extra help for them in small groups. Pupils of all abilities use indexes and contents pages to pinpoint facts in books. They begin to use dictionaries effectively to check their work.

57. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read text closely. This is because of satisfactory whole class and guided group reading in literacy hours. Teachers match books well to pupils' attainment to maintain progress and nearly all, therefore, read by themselves by the end of Year 6. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 commonly read little outside school. To make up for this fall-off in reading, the school has trained support staff in the use of nationally recommended methods to meet individual pupils' needs; for example pupils who are falling behind get effective extra reading coaching in Years 3 and 4, and further additional help if they need it in Year 5. The school also arranges effective extra lessons to boost pupils' attainment in reading and writing in Year 6. However, there is not enough ongoing checking on the rate of pupils' progress in reading, nor does the school have a programme to develop pupils' library skills; for example, the majority of pupils do not know how to use number systems to find information books in libraries. These are some of the main reasons why reading standards remain below average.

58. Although writing standards are not yet as high as they should be by the end of Years 2 and 6, higher attainers produce good work and most higher attaining pupils write at the level expected nationally by the end of Year 6.

Year 2 pupils write legibly in print without joining letters, leave spaces between words, write in the expected range of forms, use capital letters and full stops correctly and begin to plan

stories. Newly introduced spelling journals are helping to improve standards, but these remain below average. Standards of presentation are satisfactory. However, shortcomings in marking and the setting of targets for pupils to achieve delay the development of individual writing skills.

59. Year 6 pupils write expressively in a good range of types of writing. Higher and average attaining pupils have satisfactory handwriting standards. Lower attaining pupils do not consistently join letters or shape them carefully enough. Pupils show good sentence control in both stories and information writing. However, standards of punctuation are below average because teachers do not give enough attention to it in marking. Pupils enjoy using spelling journals which are slowly improving standards through increased awareness of spelling patterns. Better writers have a good understanding of how to achieve effects, for example, by the use of both suspense and dilemmas in stories. Average and lower attaining pupils use mostly simple sentences, but choose words carefully to create atmosphere in their stories, in phrases, such as 'In she creeps both silently and softly'. However, many pupils are short of words to express themselves fully, partly because they are not reading enough. Another reason is that in the Year 3 to 6 English courses, pupils spend more time on exercises and short bursts of writing than on extended, completed pieces. Their understanding of language and writing techniques, therefore, get ahead of their skills as writers.

60. Moreover, teachers are not making the most of opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects, particularly in geography and history. The use of computers to assist learning English is underdeveloped, though pupils use word processing effectively to improve the accuracy and presentation of their work. The subject makes a useful contribution to developing pupils' understanding of social and moral issues and to their experience of literature from a range of cultures and traditions.

61. Standards have gone up marginally since last year's national tests because of the school's focus, with effective support from the local education authority, on improving the teaching of reading and writing. The big challenges of improving the consistency and quality of teaching and checking of pupils' progress remain.

MATHEMATICS

62. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are below average and well below average in Year 2. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those learning English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. When pupils currently in Year 2 left the reception class, their understanding of mathematics was well below average and remains so. Similarly, the performance of the present group of pupils in Year 6 was well below average at the end of Year 2. Although standards by the end of Year 6 are below average, significant gains towards national averages have been achieved because of good teaching, in particular, in Year 6. Improvements in the subject since the last inspection are satisfactory; standards have risen marginally, although are still below the national average.

63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Years 3 to Year 6. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply the mathematical skills they have learned are often too restricted. This is particularly true in Years 1 and 2 where the teaching does not regularly encourage individual reasoning and experimentation.

64. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally understand how to add and subtract, both mentally and on paper. In Year 1, most pupils are able to add together three numbers below five, although the teaching concentrates too heavily on the answer rather than drawing out from pupils different methods of calculation. In Year 2 pupils work hard and have lots of practice in

addition. Detailed planning gives a solid structure to lessons; however, there is a lack of challenge for higher attainers. In both Years 1 and 2, all aspects of the national strategy are taught, though not sufficiently systematically; for example insufficient emphasis and opportunities exist for investigative work. Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to find different ways to solve mathematical problems. Although teaching in Year 1 and 2 is sound, it lacks inspiration and refinement.

65. In Years 3 and 4, progress begins to accelerate as work matched to different levels of ability is targeted more precisely. Higher attainers are beginning to explore a range of approaches to problem solving and the regular testing of mental strategies begins to emerge. In a Year 3 lesson, the teaching, effectively encouraged pupils to work together to solve problems. By Year 4, pupils are beginning to appreciate how to handle data. They produce and interpret a range of charts and simple graphs. The classification of shapes and measurement of angles is tackled with reasonable accuracy. A good lesson with this year group demonstrated how the teaching instilled methodical approaches to addition though overall pupils have a narrow range of work other than calculations and have too few opportunities to develop their own ways of solving mathematical problems. Occasionally, in Year 5 weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour results in inappropriate behaviour which adversely affects the progress of other pupils. The real strength in teaching and learning is in Year 6. In a very good lesson, the teaching combined a range of strategies to ensure substantial gains in pupils' understanding. The judicious use of praise and humour complemented a lesson that was resourced imaginatively, structured systematically and delivered with panache. As a result, pupils very good gains in their learning.

66. Throughout the school, pupils, generally, present their work neatly and the impact of this; results in. more accurate calculation. In lessons, they enjoy participating in discussions about their learning; for example, in Year 4 pupils came willingly to the front of the class to explain how to set out vertical addition. In Year 6, higher attainers make bold attempts to improve their learning further by completing additional work at a level above that of the majority of pupils.

67. The continued practice of mental strategies provides a sound basis for all aspects of pupils' work. This, particularly, helps pupils with special educational needs that are acquiring a reasonable understanding of place value within the four rules of number. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to assist learning in mathematics.

68. Current practice in checking pupils' progress lacks consistency and rigour. The monitoring of teaching and learning relies too heavily on the headteacher rather than the co-ordinator of the subject.

SCIENCE

69. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above the national average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. Standards at the time of the last inspection were similar at the end of Year 2 but well below average at the end of Year 6. The very good improvement in standards is the result of effective leadership of the subject and good teaching in Years 3 to 6 with particularly strong teaching in Year 6. Pupils achieve well overall, including pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs.

70. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and this assists their learning. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall; though pupils generally behave well; some older boys in Year 5 behave poorly and, occasionally, disrupt the learning of other pupils when the teachers' methods of managing pupils' behaviour are insecure.

71. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, which helps pupils to make good progress in developing an understanding of scientific investigation and knowledge. The pace of learning is brisk in Years 3 to 6. The subject assists learning in literacy and numeracy well in these year groups for example, in Year 3, pupils made good progress in presenting written accounts of investigations and developed a basic understanding of scientific language. In Year 6, pupils produced line graphs and found the average of a set of results. In Years 1 and 2, pupils gain a basic understanding of scientific enquiry but have too few opportunities to record their investigations. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to assist learning in the subject.

72. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In Years 1 and 2, the marking of work is unsatisfactory. The limited amount of recorded work is rarely marked and few comments are made to help pupils to realise how well they are doing and how they can improve. In contrast, the marking of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is good; for example, in Year 3, the written comments clearly explain and challenge pupils to improve, such as, 'in your drawing, your intestines and kidneys are a bit low. Check in our class books'.

73. The teaching develops an interest in the environment and this assists pupils' understanding and enthusiasm for the subject as well as assisting their personal development well. A group of pupils meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the environment and through this pupils gain a much better understanding of the growth of plants by cultivating a wide range of plants in the central open areas of the school. Skilled members of the local community, governors and staff help the pupils to develop their expertise. Pupils take a pride in the work

74. In the best teaching, for example in Year 6, very good use is made of short periods of quick-fired questioning to consolidate and extend pupils' learning of basic scientific understanding. Pupils are highly motivated and keen to answer. Strong emphasis is placed on the correct use of scientific language, such as 'irreversible change' and 'up thrust'. Teaching assistants provide good help for lower attainers. This was apparent when a small group of lower attaining pupils constructed an electrical circuit. The teaching assistant explained clearly and challenged pupils to draw the circuits they had constructed using correct symbols for the battery and bulb.

75. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has led the subject well for several years and worked successfully with the senior management to raise standards. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring pupils' learning is limited, however; the co-ordinator has few opportunities to work alongside other teachers or to examine systematically pupils' work. The procedures for the checking of pupils' attainment at the end of units of work are satisfactory though the information is not used sufficiently to track pupils' progress according to levels of the National Curriculum in order to improve standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

76. Standards, by the end of Year 6, are below those expected for pupils' ages and are lower than those reported at the last inspection. This is mainly because the subject has not had a high enough priority in recent years, and there have been several changes in the curriculum. As a result, there are gaps and some unevenness in pupils' learning; for example, drawing and design skills and pupils' use of colour are not well enough developed by the time they leave school. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in Years 1 and 2, as there were no lessons during the inspection and little work to see.

77. A new curriculum meets both statutory requirements and the needs of the school. Teaching is therefore more confident being sound overall. There is an increasing emphasis on pupils' use of sketchbooks but this is not yet consistent between the classes. Teachers enhance pupils' growing experience of art through arrangements for visits by artists and class visits to workshops at the nearby art gallery. There is also an art group giving pupils opportunities to broaden skills and appreciation within the after-school activities programme.

78. In a satisfactory Year 4 lesson, pupils created lively and colourful collages. They, clearly, enjoyed the work and were eager to talk to each other about what they were doing. Pupils' behaviour and concentration were good and the teacher and classroom assistant gave effective help to individuals. As a result, by the end of the lesson, all pupils achieved the aim of making collages that conveyed a message.

79. In a good Year 6 lesson on Egyptian art, a very clear introduction focused creative work on key characteristics of the period. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language, sustained good levels of concentration and used knowledge of proportion and scaling learned in the previous art lesson to create big pictures, in pastels, of ancient deities. Teachers in both lessons used the Internet effectively to download images, giving pupils examples to work from; however, these pictures were sometimes small and not well produced on the printers.

80. The checking of pupils' progress is informal. The school has no portfolio of assessed work to assist teachers to judge pupils' attainment and teachers' understanding of the levels of the National Curriculum and programmes of study; however teachers are now well placed to develop pupils' skills, appreciation of art and artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. It was not possible to see any teaching; however, pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers show that standards are in line with the national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing skills in the subject. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning is at an early stage of development. The checking of pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work is satisfactory; however, no consistent system of tracking pupils' progress is kept to enable teachers to plan future lessons taking into account pupils' prior learning and development of skills.

82. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching enables pupils to develop skills in marking and measuring, cutting, joining fixing and fastening; for example, pupils in Year 2 designed a cushion and labelled the drawing well before making the cushion from fabric. They secured the back and the front of the cushion carefully together by sewing and then stuffed it with cotton wool before attractively decorating it with sequins and a range of different materials. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build on previous skills soundly. Often the work is linked to learning in

other subjects; for example, pupils in Year 4 designed and constructed a framework for a Tudor house to link effectively to work in history. In Year 5, pupils investigated pneumatics in science and designed and made a model to make an arm move up and down. Higher attainers considered how they could improve the design. In Year 6, pupils were given opportunities to investigate a range of simple moving toys to gain an increased understanding of cam and crank mechanisms. They then designed and made a toy for reception children and evaluated the response of the younger children to the finished toy.

83. The subject assists learning in literacy and numeracy satisfactorily; for example, pupils write design briefs and label diagrams. In Year 5, pupils made photograph frames and investigated the link between the perimeter of the frame with its area. Information and communication technology supports learning in design and technology satisfactorily: for example, older pupils designed a healthy meal and used a spreadsheet on the computer to check out quickly the cost of different options for the meal.

GEOGRAPHY

84. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve soundly. The situation now is much the same as was found at the time of the previous inspection.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan well and provide a wide programme of work across the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have a satisfactory recall of work within their own locality and the wider world. Teachers use the local environment well and pupils can describe in simple terms fieldwork they have undertaken around the area, such as carrying out a traffic survey in the roads around the school and creating a pictograph of ways to travel to and from school. In Year 6, pupils experienced on a residential visit a field study of a village and engaged in role-play to examine issues of conflict within the village. They used a map to navigate their way around the village and after identifying the main features, used a grid reference to place them on their own map. In a topic about water, pupils visited a local reservoir and, thoughtfully, discussed why they are needed and the issues that surround flooding land. Other older pupils, in a project about mountains, considered various texts from mountain adventures to travel brochures, before considering arguments for and against holidays in such an environment. Counting and measuring activities are used well to develop pupils' numeracy skills.

86. Occasionally, where introductions to lessons are too long and pupils are given insufficient time to engage in independent work, the pace of the learning slows and pupils begin to become restless. Otherwise, pupils are interested in their work. Resources, such as atlases, globes and computer programmes are used satisfactorily to assist pupils' learning in some classes; for example, pupils in Year 2 understand that information about similarities and differences can be sought on computer, in books and on maps and photographs. Older pupils gain a better understanding of features of the wider world through using these sources of information. On balance, however, pupils have insufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves and in many classes spend much of their time filling in worksheets that demand very little of them. Pupils' recorded work, as a consequence of this, is often similar for each level of attainment, lacks some depth, and has little additional challenging work for the higher attaining pupils

87. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. This is because the recently introduced guidance to help teachers to plan lessons is having some impact on pupils' learning, and the regular checking of pupils' progress has begun. The checking of

pupils' attainments, however, is more focused on what has been studied rather than on providing information that will help teachers adapt their planning to the needs of individual pupils or on monitoring standards. The co-ordinator has limited understanding of standards in the subject and the quality of teaching.

HISTORY

88. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainments are at the national expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special education needs make sound progress because they are helped to complete their tasks by teachers and teaching assistants, but higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. This is much the same as was observed during the previous inspection, although there have been some improvements.

89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan well for a good range of work across the curriculum. A rigorous programme of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum and results in pupils saying they enjoy work in this subject; for example, pupils in Year 2 talked with enthusiasm and confidence about their work in history and their recall of previous work was satisfactory. Pupils, by the end of Year 2, became adept at using different sources when they studied and compared old and new toys on a visit to a museum and when they engaged in purposeful role-play in a Victorian school room. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of a wide range of historical work and this explains why these pupils were so enthusiastic about the subject. Older pupils, when they compared maps, over time, of their locality and census returns of local streets, recorded their findings in appropriate historical terms. In their study of World War 2, they showed empathy when they reflected on how they might have felt during the Blitz or if they had been evacuated.

90. A good sense of chronology is evident in the work of all year groups. Skills in information and communication technology skills are developed satisfactorily. There are, however, areas for further development. The teaching of the subject is very content-based across the school, with too few opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. Many opportunities to develop literacy skills are missed because teachers often use worksheets that demand little of the pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils. Pupils' work is checked at the end of each unit of work but this information is not properly used to inform teachers' planning in order to provide work that is at the right level for pupils of different abilities, particularly to extend the learning of higher attaining pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to be in line with the national expectations. Improvement since the last inspection is good because the quality of teaching, learning resources and accommodation and the guidance for teachers have improved significantly. As a result, pupils are now achieving well relative to their prior attainment.

92. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator has assisted teachers to develop a better understanding of the subject by providing guidance to help teachers to plan lessons. The subject co-ordinator and senior managers have a clear understanding of the future direction of the subject and there is a good commitment amongst the well-trained staff to improve standards further. Satisfactory systems are in place to check pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work; however, there is no detailed tracking of pupils' progress in developing skills in the subject linked to levels of the National Curriculum.

93. The quality of teaching is good and pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. The

recent introduction of interactive whiteboards into all classrooms has helped teachers to provide larger groups of pupils with a good level of instruction and teaching of basic skills of the subject before the pupils work with capable teaching assistants in the small computer suites; for example, in Year 6 the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively to consolidate and extend pupils' understanding of the tool bar of a computer program and to use the repeat function to write a set of instructions to control a marker on the screen to draw different mathematical shapes. The pupils were very interested and keen to contribute in the discussion. They quickly grasped the way to use the repeat function and the usefulness of the operation to speed up programming. Pupils then gained individual practice in the small computer suite with good guidance from the teaching assistant.

94. The planning of lessons is good; for example, in Year 2, the teaching was well prepared with instruction cards linked to pupils' attainment. The lesson built up well on pupils' previous learning in geography of using a simple program to control the path of a car along a route. Pupils were involved actively in discussion and were all very keen to participate in controlling a floor robot to make it move forward and turn to the left and right. The pupils remembered to clear the memory of the floor robot before correctly entering a series of instructions involving change of direction. The pupils were excited and interested in learning more. The teaching encouraged the pupils to gain a better understanding of turning and language such as 'right', 'left', 'predict'. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching occur when the questioning is to the whole class rather than to individuals which results in pupils calling out. Overall, pupils work hard, behave well and show an interest in their studies.

95. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to assist learning in other subjects. Increasingly, all members of staff are exploring the potential of the interactive whiteboards to provide a wider range of learning opportunities in other subjects.

MUSIC

96. Standards are as expected of 11 year olds by the end of Year 6, as at the time of the last inspection. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in Years 1 and 2. Standards of singing heard in assemblies were broadly satisfactory in both year groups. The school meets statutory requirements for music by following a published scheme of work with increasing use of national guidance. Training and good links with the music department of the local secondary school have improved teachers' confidence and so the quality of learning since the last inspection. There is a new recorder group for pupils in Years 3-6 and percussion resources are now good.

97. Pupils' standards reflect satisfactory teaching over time, although the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen during the inspection was good. The strengths of teaching and learning are pace, confidence, enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to exercise choice and to use imagination and invention. Pupils enjoyed the work in the lessons observed and showed high levels of teamwork and discipline. These lessons also showed that the school has addressed the weaknesses in composing and performing in Years 3 to 6 noted at the previous inspection.

98. In the good lessons, there was a buzz of excitement in anticipation of what was to come. Teachers established high standards of listening from the start. Pupils enjoyed warm ups because of the challenge of the rhythm exercises. They made thoughtful choices of instruments and handled them very carefully. In a good Year 6 lesson, they also valued the opportunity the teacher gave them to change their minds, so as to select a better instrument or beaters to suit the theme of the composition. They quickly picked up the teacher's enthusiasm from comments, such as, 'That's a lovely sound isn't it? It's the wooden keys

that give it that tone!' Teachers give pupils opportunities to learn and practise conducting skills in these whole-class sessions. Such ensemble work teaches pupils the importance of attentive listening and following of directions; however, as they are not working in small groups, many have to spend too much time just waiting before playing their parts.

99. Music plays an important part in sharpening pupils' listening skills and widening their experience of different cultures; for example, in a Year 4 percussion session, the Surdu, Conga and Rapique drums all came from Brazil and the theme was samba. The school is well placed now to raise standards of performance and appreciation further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. No judgement on standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was possible because too few lessons were observed; however, pupils' performance in the few lessons observed was above average. Only two out of three pupils in Year 6 are able to swim at least 25 metres; however, swimming lessons for this year group are scheduled before the end of the academic year and it is expected that the proportion will rise who will reach national expectations in swimming.

101. The main strength of teaching is in games. The school has developed very strong links with local clubs and organisations. Coaches from the local education authority support the outline programme devised by the school. There is also significant contribution from local professional football clubs. The pupils really look forward to their sessions of different sports and clearly benefit from the coaches' expertise; for example, pupils in Year 6 showed good ability in throwing, bowling and catching in their cricket sessions.

102. Teachers plan individual lessons well; however, there is no detailed guidance to assist teachers' planning to ensure that pupils' learning builds upon previous teaching. The last inspection highlighted this weakness. As a result, a proper balance of activities cannot be guaranteed. There is no evidence of structured provision in gymnastics and outdoor pursuits; this is unsatisfactory. The coaches who visit the school check pupils' progress satisfactorily; however, classroom teachers teach most lessons, and there is no consistent recording of pupils' attainments. The school does not maintain its own records of achievement in swimming; this is unsatisfactory.

103. The leadership and management is unsatisfactory because the weaknesses detailed at the last inspection have not been addressed sufficiently; however, the co-ordinator is committed and keen to move the subject on and has identified the areas of weakness in a recent action plan.