

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BOLTON PARISH CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105229

Headteacher: Mrs C Jones

Lead inspector: Mrs R J Schaffer

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 January 2004

Inspection number: 255554

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	207
School address:	Kestor Street Bolton Lancashire
Postcode:	BL2 2AN
Telephone number:	01204 333433
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Wallington
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is close to Bolton town centre, in an area which is marked by social and economic deprivation. This has been recognised nationally and the school receives support through an Education Action Zone. The nursery offers part-time morning or afternoon placements for 35 children. Pupils from the travelling community attend the school when their families are in the area and currently these represent five per cent of the pupils. Almost half the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, and 40 per cent of pupils speak a language other than English at home. Of these, seven per cent are at an early stage of learning English, Asian Pakistani and Asian Indian are the largest minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to the national average. The number of pupils who join the school late in their primary education, in Years 4 to 6, is high. When children start in the nursery, there is a wide spread of attainment, but generally it is well below average. In 2003, the school received the Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills for the second time, the ActiveMark Award for physical education and the Investors in People Award for the third time. In 2002, it received the Golden Owl Award for its website.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23698	Ruth Jane Schaffer	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
1003	Chris Gosling	Lay inspector	
17877	Christine Ingham	Team inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning Mathematics Personal, social and health education English as an additional language
23204	Christina Wojtak	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Geography Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

**Bolton Parish Church of England Primary is a very effective school** and provides good value for money. Pupils' achievements are good. Coming from a low level of attainment, most pupils attain average, or above average standards by the time they leave. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good overall. With committed support from senior managers, the headteacher has established high expectations for all pupils and a very caring ethos based on the Christian faith. Governors make a significant contribution to the school's success.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The standard of pupils' work in science is above average.
- The excellent leadership in the Foundation Stage means that children make a flying start to their education.
- Pupils strive hard in their lessons and have very good attitudes to their work.
- The very good teaching in Years 2 and 6 gives pupils' learning an extra boost so that the standards they reach in national tests in English and mathematics are often above average and in Year 2, well above average.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher sets high standards for staff and pupils.
- The school is very successful in establishing a climate where pupils from all races work and play harmoniously together.
- Staff work exceptionally well as a team and are committed to improvement.
- The teaching of English in Years 3 to 6 is often good or better, however some methods used to teach writing in Years 4 and 5 slows pupils' progress.
- Teaching in subjects such as music, art and design and physical education is good, but the school has not looked at new and innovative ways of using pupils' enjoyment in these subjects to improve their learning and personal development.

The school's well directed plans for improvement are carried out purposefully and this, together with good professional development for all staff, has resulted in very good improvement since it was last inspected in March 1998.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	D	D
Mathematics	D	B	C	B
Science	C	A	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**The achievement of pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, is good.** Children's achievements are very good in the nursery and reception classes. They are on track to reach the goals children are expected to reach, in all areas of learning, by the end of the reception year. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievements continue to be very good. In Year 2, the standard of pupils' work is above average. For three years the school's results in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have almost always been above or well above average. In Year 6, standards are above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. This is similar to the results in national tests for 2003. The reason for standards in English being below those of mathematics and science is two-fold. During Years 3 to 6, a few pupils join the school late in their primary education at an early stage of acquiring English, and some slip back with their English when they make a visit to their country of origin. These pupils do better in tests in mathematics and

science than in English. However, a further reason is that pupils do not make quick enough gains in their understanding of the grammar needed in non-narrative writing in Years 4 and 5.

**The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good** and in consequence, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils show respect for each other and adults. Their behaviour is very good. However, a few pupils do not arrive to school on time and this affects their learning. Although most pupils attend regularly, the school's attendance record is unsatisfactory because it is affected by the long absences of a few pupils.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good and teaching is good.** Some of the teaching in the nursery and reception classes is outstanding and, overall, it is very good. In these year groups, teachers have very good knowledge of how young children learn; children are captivated by very well thought out activities and learn quickly. Throughout the school, teachers use a wide range of effective methods, strategies and resources, including information and communication technology and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their work. The teaching of reading is very good and teachers' subject knowledge is generally high but, in Years 4 and 5, some of the methods used to teach grammar are not always effective. Spelling is not always taught in the same way and so pupils do not develop good habits with their spelling. A notable strength is the calm and happy atmosphere established by staff in almost every lesson. This underpins the pupils' very good personal development as they grow in confidence and independence in their learning. Classroom assistants and bilingual staff give very good support to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English in addition to their home language. Teachers assess pupils' rates of learning well and tasks are well matched to pupils' different needs. However, the quality of marking is not consistent and does not always explain to pupils how to improve their work. The organisation of the accommodation and the very good quality resources contribute well to pupils' learning.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher and senior management set a high standard of commitment. There is a clear understanding of how to ensure that every pupil is welcome and given the opportunity to flourish. Leaders of subjects are effective. They provide good guidance and support to staff and promote their subjects with enthusiasm to pupils through good quality displays, clubs and after-school activities. Governors are very effective in helping the school plan for improvement and monitor and evaluate its work.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the quality of education and the care the school shows to each individual child. They have great confidence in the leadership of the school. Pupils express very positive views and clearly enjoy their time in school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Use the best practice in the school to improve the teaching of grammar, spelling and non-narrative writing in Years 4 and 5.
- Seek ways to develop curriculum planning further and make more use of other subjects to provide learning in English and mathematics.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, standards achieved are **good**. Children's achievements in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are very good. Standards in Year 6 are above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. Pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in science are very good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- In Year 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The achievements of the children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> lay a firm base for pupils' progress in the older year groups.
- The school's results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 have risen faster than the national trend.
- In Year 6, pupils' achievements are boosted and, in some years, this has led to above average results in English and mathematics in national tests, although in 2003 results dipped to below average in English.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress towards the targets set for them.
- In Years 4 and 5, pupils' progress slows in English.
- Statistics show that boys do not do as well as girls in English in Years 3 to 6.
- The achievements of pupils who speak English as an additional language are good because they make very good progress in learning to speak English.

#### Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage start in the nursery class with attainment well below average. At least half are very hesitant speakers and do not form words distinctly, others come with little or no English, as did one small newcomer who started on the first day of the inspection not speaking any English at all. Their achievements while in the nursery and reception classes are very good because of the very good provision. Developing language skills is a priority in this stage and the school is very successful in laying a good foundation upon which other year groups can build. Children are on track to attain the goals set for them by the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, in mathematics, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.1 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.8 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.5 (19.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

<sup>1</sup> This is a nationally recognised stage of learning for children aged three up to the end of the reception year. Children in this stage are expected to cover six areas of learning and they work towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the stage.



- The results in national tests at the end of Year 2 are very good, especially when consideration is given to the level of attainment when children start school. The improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Support for those whose first language is not English is targeted very carefully, as is support for those with special educational needs. Currently, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils and those with average attainment read with good expression and understanding. Lower attaining pupils and those still learning to speak English know their letter sounds and can use them to sound out words. For instance, a lower attaining pupil whose first language was not English knew the sound “th” began the word “thorn”, the meaning of which he had learnt that week. In mathematics, pupils work with enthusiasm on partitioning numbers to 20 because they have learnt to enjoy numbers and to feel confident in using them.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.4 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.2 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- The school does not have a very large number of pupils taking the national tests at the end of Year 6 and so fluctuations in the year-on-year performance of pupils are to be expected. This can be seen in the two years’ groups whose scores are shown in the table above. In 2003, results in English were not as good as the standards attained in 2002. In 2003, there was a good proportion of pupils who joined the school during Years 3 to 6, some of whom were at an early stage of learning English. By the time they took the tests in 2003, they had not had enough time in school to improve their spoken English. As a result, although they achieved well in mathematics and science, their lower attainment in English meant that results in English were below average. This was the case both in comparison to all schools nationally and to those with the same set of results at the end of Year 2. The comings and goings of pupils through the junior years makes the comparison with similar schools less secure than in a school with a more settled population. The long-term absences of pupils who make visits to their country of origin, sometimes lasting up to six weeks, and the similar absences of pupils from the travelling community, affect pupils’ progress. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Despite the dip in English in 2003, the results in national tests in Years 6 in recent years have been commendable. There has been a marked upward trend and this has been greater than the national move upwards in results. Two annual awards from the Department for Education and Skills have recognised this.
- A very good focus on developing science teaching has resulted in standards in science being above average in all year groups. There is very good planning to ensure that skills and understanding are taught effectively through practical investigative work. Pupils gain confidence in thinking for themselves and develop scientific knowledge and vocabulary as they talk to each other about the investigations in hand. Pupils’ interest in practical science work develops their language skills.
- The school recognises the fact that boys’ achievement in English in Years 3 to 6 trails behind the girls. It has begun to look at ways of counteracting this, for instance, through the provision of reading materials that particularly appeal to boys. However, this needs further development through considering what motivates boys to write. In the past, the school spent a great deal of time improving pupils’ skills at story writing. When faced with the non-narrative tasks expected in the tests in 2003, some pupils did not do as well as expected. The school acknowledges that it needs to improve the teaching and range of non-narrative writing.
- The standard of pupils’ work currently in Year 6 is above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. In science pupils set out their own hypothesis for

an investigation and have a good knowledge of scientific facts so that they can judge the effectiveness of the experiments. They tackle mathematical problems well, at the level expected for their age and use a good range of mental arithmetic strategies with confidence. The main weakness in English relates to writing, with some incorrect grammatical structures creeping in to otherwise good pieces of work. Although the teaching of reading through the school is very good, Year 6 pupils have not had the full benefit of these sessions during their time in the younger classes, so they have some reading skills that are below expectations for their age. In Year 6, the standard of pupils' work is very carefully assessed and, in the past, targeted booster teaching in the spring term has made a significant difference to the pupils' performance in the national tests. Booster sessions for this year are well planned and the standard of pupils' work in this target group has already begun to improve.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and those with significant needs make very good progress. Those who arrive at the school with very little English make very good progress in learning to speak English. They rapidly achieve a working knowledge of the language and the development of their understanding and use of vocabulary is very good. Pupils who are at a more advanced stage of learning English make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
8. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. Pupils' achievements are good as they are improving their skills at a good rate, both in lessons set aside to teach ICT and in their work in other subjects.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory behaviour in the juniors. Attendance has not improved; it is **well below average** and some pupils find it difficult to get to school on time. The school has built on the good practice seen at the previous inspection and provides **very well** for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the nursery and reception classes, warm and trusting relationships are very quickly established between adults and children.
- The headteacher sets high expectations of behaviour; these are mirrored by staff, and responded to very well by pupils.
- All adults treat pupils with great kindness and respect and, as a result, pupils have complete trust in those who care for them.
- Because the school values and celebrates different cultures and beliefs, there is complete harmony between the pupils of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Pupils carry out duties very responsibly because the school provides some good opportunities for them to do so, but sometimes adults watch over pupils a little too closely for them to develop initiatives of their own.
- The school has very effectively developed a feeling of community spirit within the school and there are good opportunities outside of the school day and in lessons to develop pupils' social skills.
- Attendance is well below the national average and punctuality is not satisfactory.

## Commentary

9. It is very noticeable, walking round the school at playtime and lunchtime, that pupils behave at these times extremely well. They walk quietly, sometimes chatting to a friend, but always watching out that they do not disturb others. There is eagerness to get outside at playtime, but there was very little pushing or boisterous behaviour. Pupils behave respectfully at assemblies. The school has worked hard to ensure that these are fruitful occasions for pupils to learn moral issues and to join together as a community. All pupils participate fully in listening, praying and singing. The school has made music and singing very important parts of assembly and the manner in which pupils sing, both tunefully and with feeling, is evidence of the good contribution this makes to pupils' spiritual development.
10. Behaviour in lessons and pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. In nearly every class, pupils sit quietly, listen attentively and quickly find their place when tasks are given out. Occasionally, in Year 1, there is some silliness and inattention when lessons have not engaged pupils' interest sufficiently. Those pupils who find controlling their own emotions difficult are provided for very well, often by the support of a well-trained classroom assistant and, as a result, they do not disrupt lessons. Very occasionally, the school has to deal with behaviour that goes beyond the acceptable. When this occurs, as it did with just one pupil in the previous year, the school excludes that pupil for a short period of time. Pupils could not think of an incident of bullying. Parents reported, through the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting, a very small amount of bullying but confirmed that the good procedures in place to deal with it are carried out effectively by staff. Pupils feel very confident that they can talk to their teachers and other adults in the school if they have a worry or concern. During lessons, they listen to the views of others and are generous in their praise when another has done well.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	123	3	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	62	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Information not obtained	3	0	0

11. At the parents' meeting one parent described the school as calm. This calm atmosphere is first established in the nursery and reception classes, where children from very different backgrounds quickly settle to school routines and start to develop good relationships with each other. There are numerous exceptionally good strategies to help children feel safe and happy, and there are high expectations of their participation in classroom routines. Children quickly have a strong sense of belonging and want to take part in everything, including putting away their own resources. Throughout the school, the calm atmosphere is maintained through the

high expectations of behaviour and the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers recognise and praise pupils' efforts so that pupils feel valued. There are well-understood codes of behaviour for the school and for each class. Voices are not raised, but disapproval is shown when appropriate; this results in immediate improvement. Pupils are polite and helpful to visiting to adults.

12. The school celebrates its sense of community in the communal areas of the school, on the school website and in the many books that teachers make about school life and the work of pupils. The headteacher shows pride in what the pupils achieve. The local community and Bolton itself are used effectively to extend the pupils' understanding of social rights and responsibilities. For example, the school council visits the Mayor's office annually and the school choir sings at the Bolton Music Festival. Pupils are keen to join school clubs, of which there is a good variety. The computer club is such a great favourite that the co-ordinator has had to offer provision in blocks of time to different groups of pupils. Sport contributes fully to pupils' social skills and to their self-esteem through good teamwork developed in lessons and in after-school activities. Pupils are given responsibilities appropriate for their ages and they take their duties seriously. The school council is run well so that pupils can put their views forward and they feel that their views are considered. However, adults take on the responsibility of drawing up the agenda for meetings rather than leaving this to be done by pupils. In Year 6, pupils act as monitors at play times when the weather is wet and have responsibility for such things as the tuck shop and play time equipment, but opportunities to give responsibility or to allow pupils to show initiative are sometimes missed, mainly because teachers are over-careful.
  
13. The school makes very good use of the diverse cultures represented in the school population. All the festivals celebrated by families are celebrated or acknowledged in school. There are parties and special assemblies that draw on the knowledge of parents and introduce all the pupils to the special foods or events that are significant in those festivals. Although the school has not formalised its practice by identifying spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities in its subject policies, subject leaders are very aware of the need to promote these aspects through the curriculum planning. In music, for instance, lessons and assemblies make frequent use of music from different cultures. The different way of life of the pupils from the travellers' community is respected and shared with other pupils. Music, art and design and literature are promoted well to develop appreciation and interest in the cultural aspects of life.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

14. Despite very good procedures to encourage good attendance, there are too many pupils who do not attend regularly. The school attendance record is affected by the fact that there are groups of pupils in the school whose way of life interferes with their attendance. These are the pupils from the travelling community and those from families who regularly visit their country of origin for extended holidays. An analysis of the attendance records shows that if these pupils are not included, the school's record of attendance would be similar to the national average. A few pupils persistently arrive late at the school but the extensive efforts by the school to encourage punctuality are helping these pupils to improve. Good use is made of the local welfare service to encourage parents to bring their children to school on time.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

There are some very good aspects to the school's provision and, overall, the quality of education is **good** and has improved since the previous inspection.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good**. In the Foundation Stage, it is very good with no lessons that are less than good. In Years 1 to 6 it is good overall; in Years 3 to 6 one lesson was excellent in English and one unsatisfactory in ICT. A poor lesson was seen from a visiting teacher

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is exciting and innovative so children's learning is rapid.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- Teachers use a wide range of very effective methods, strategies and resources to develop learning.
- Work is generally very well matched to pupils' needs and builds on their previous knowledge and understanding, and this is done especially well in Years 2 and 6.
- The targeted support by classroom assistants and bilingual staff who regularly work in the school is very good; some outside support from local authority agencies is not as effective.
- Teachers in Years 4 and 5 do not always use the best methods to teach pupils how to construct sentences in non-narrative pieces of writing.
- In some classes, marking is not used consistently to improve pupils' work.
- Most teachers make good use of ICT to support learning but, on occasions, teachers' lack of expertise results in pupils not making enough progress.

### Commentary

15. In the Foundation Stage, staff work very well together to provide stimulating and varied activities so that children make good gains in their skills and knowledge. The day is organised very well so that focused teaching sessions are contrasted with well-designed opportunities for children to learn through play. There is often a high level of challenge, and skilful questions encourage learning. Careful observations of each child's progress are brought to planning sessions to ensure that activities provide well for the next stage of learning.
16. In Years 1 to 6, teachers assess pupils' understanding very well as lessons proceed, explaining misconceptions clearly and praising and encouraging good work. There were some very good examples of this, as seen in a Year 6 lesson, when the good progress in reading aloud that had been made by hesitant and shy readers, was assessed and celebrated in the final session. In Years 2 and 6, activities are set that are very well matched to pupils' learning needs because careful account is taken of how well pupils have done in previous lessons. This helps to accelerate pupils' learning. When marking work, teachers in these two year groups set pupils helpful short-term targets; comments clearly explain to pupils how well they have done and provide targets for them to strive for in their next work. However, not all teachers do this consistently; in such cases, marking provides good encouragement to pupils, and points out misconceptions, but fails to help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve. The school sets pupils long-term targets and shares these with parents at termly meetings. This is beginning to be effective in encouraging more parents to become involved in their child's learning, but it is less effective as a tool to motivate pupils on a day-to-day basis because the targets take a long time to achieve.
17. In English, mathematics and science, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the best methods and strategies to develop pupils' skills and most teachers use these. The teaching of science throughout the school is successful because of the focus on well-planned and organised practical activities. In English and mathematics, teaching is successful when a

good range of teaching styles and varied resources are used. In mathematics, the use of ICT, visual aids and competitive games, such as one difficult but enthralling game used in Year 4, frequently enhance learning. In an excellent lesson in Year 3 in English, the teacher asked pupils, who were sitting on the carpet, to act out the meaning of words; there was real enjoyment and excitement in the learning that resulted. Role-play, actions, pictures and artefacts are used with good effect to illustrate and explain. These methods extend and develop pupils' vocabulary, especially for those learning English as an additional language. In the best lessons in English, teachers show a very good understanding of the need to allow pupils to talk, to rehearse what they are going to say before putting pen to paper. In the lessons where this is not done well, pupils make less progress with writing, particularly those who are reluctant writers. In Years 4 and 5, strategies to help pupils understand grammatical constructions are not always well chosen. Methods to teach spelling vary from class to class in Years 3 to 6, and some good strategies, such as using a spelling log, are not used well. One or two teachers miss opportunities to make good use of ICT and the school is working well to support them and improve their skills.

18. The semi open-plan arrangement of classrooms means that sounds, such as the chanting of numbers or a song, can be heard in another working area. Pupils appear not to notice this at all because they are very attentive to their teachers and to their work. They enjoy their work and set about activities with real enthusiasm. This is very much to do with the interest generated by teachers, as well as the very warm relationships that have been established. Teachers expect good behaviour and are firm when they need to be, but most of the time they are very relaxed. Touches of humour are characteristic of most teachers. In the younger classes, teachers' care for pupils' immediate concerns and their encouragement to even the most hesitant pupil is very apparent. Classroom assistants develop very good relationships with those they support. In the area set aside for group work, pupils gather round the classroom assistant or bilingual support worker in the same attentive manner as for teachers. There are often two or three groups working together in this area and, again, there is never any inattention.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	13 (33%)	13 (33%)	9 (23%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need because the emphasis is placed on accelerating learning within a realistic time period. Very good procedures identify pupils with learning difficulties at an early stage and, similarly, the different stages of language acquisition for pupils whose home language is not English. These pupils' progress in learning English is assessed well. Those at an early stage of speaking English are given the intensive support they need to help them gain access to general class teaching. Classroom assistants and bilingual support assistants are very knowledgeable about the work that has to be done and about the pupils they support, and this contributes effectively to the progress pupils make. Bilingual assistants are particularly skilful when using their own language. They watch for the right moment to supply a translation but wait to see if pupils can make their own attempt first. Generally, the school receives good support from outside agencies, for instance, the special service for pupils from travelling communities has helped the school understand the special needs of these pupils. However, two sessions were seen when support by visiting staff did little to enhance the pupils' learning. One of these sessions accounts for the poor lesson shown in the table above. Although school staff had planned with the visitors, difficulties arose because of a misunderstanding of the learning objectives and, in one case, best methods of supporting early efforts at writing for pupils speaking English as an additional language.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **good** quality curriculum that caters for the needs of all pupils. The provision for activities outside the school day is **good**. The accommodation and resources are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a broad range of interesting opportunities for learning.
- Equality of access and opportunity for all groups is very good.
- Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and the arts, effectively contributes to the pupils' learning.
- The high standard of the accommodation and resources significantly supports learning.
- The school has not sufficiently explored ways of maintaining high achievement while capitalising on pupils' interest and enjoyment in subjects such as music, art and design and physical education.
- Insufficient use is made of links with other subjects to develop learning in English and mathematics

### Commentary

20. The school has a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, especially in the Foundation Stage. Time in lessons is used efficiently and lessons start and finish promptly. In most lessons, sufficient time is given to summarise what has been achieved. Planning in many subjects ensures that pupils' learning is relevant to their interests; it often takes account of the fact that children learn in different ways and so makes use of different teaching styles and methods. Good examples of this can be seen in the good planning in science for knowledge and understanding to be developed through practical activities, and, in English, the use of drama. However, in whole-school planning for Years 1 to 6, the school has not fully investigated how learning could be enhanced through a more innovative use of the school day. On occasions, pupils spend a long time at sedentary activities, and the time allowed for subjects such as music and art and design is short. The school has appropriately allocated more time for English, but planning does not make enough use of good links between subjects to benefit learning in English and mathematics.
21. The headteacher and staff are totally committed to ensuring all groups of pupils have full access to the curriculum. This is evident in policy statements, lesson plans and in the full integration of pupils in classroom activities. The literacy curriculum is modified effectively to meet the learning needs of those pupils whose home language is not English, particularly those at an early stage of learning to speak English.
22. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum but are withdrawn for short periods for help to sharpen the skills with which they have difficulty. Individual education plans generally enable staff to plan effectively for pupils to take manageable and measurable steps towards improvement. Planning identifies where help in different subjects, such as ICT, would support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and support staff work together well to provide for the needs of these pupils. Provision is good, and for those with Statements of Special Educational Need it is very good.
23. In the Foundation Stage, children are provided with a very effective and very well planned range of practical and imaginative learning opportunities that ensure they make very good progress in their learning. Using play, as a focus for learning and a way to develop children's communication skills, is a strength. Excellent curriculum plans that make full use of the

national guidance for this age group ensure there is progression in learning in the nursery and reception years.

24. Pupils have access to a good range of school clubs during the year, including sports and the arts. These are also supported by outside groups, such as the town football club and the YMCA. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to outside locations, such as the Lake District, when pupils in Year 6 experience outdoor adventure activities. Many visitors, including a poet, dancers and theatre groups, contribute to the rich and varied curriculum.
25. Accommodation is very good. It is well organised, maintained to a high standard and provides a stimulating learning environment. The flair and the ingenuity of the staff in the Foundation Stage are shown in the excellent organisation of the Early Years Unit. Throughout the school, resources are plentiful and of a high quality; this contributes to pupils' learning.

## Care, guidance and support

The overall quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is **very good**, with the school providing a safe and supportive environment for pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and governors place a very high priority on the standards of care provided by the school.
- Arrangements to enable new pupils to settle in are very well organised and effective.
- Child protection policies are firmly embedded within the school.
- The school checks each pupils' progress and personal development very well
- Guidance for those who are at an early stage of learning English is very good because bilingual staff can allay worries by speaking to these pupils in their home language.
- The pupils have confidence that all staff will treat them fairly.

### Commentary

26. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school takes great care to ensure that the pupils feel safe and secure so that they can learn effectively and make the best progress possible. Teachers and other staff know the pupils well and very often have knowledge of their family circumstances so that problems can be quickly identified and related to the individual pupil's academic progress. When pupils are at an early stage of learning English, staff, who have knowledge of these pupils' home languages, translate explanations and guidance. All staff safeguard pupils' health and safety, for instance, each morning the caretaker ensures that there is no litter, broken glass or used hypodermic needles in the area before the children arrive. The lunchtime assistants use walkie-talkies to inform staff inside the school of any first-aid requirements or of movement of pupils in and out of the school building.
27. The induction arrangements for pupils are very good. Parents commented very favourably on the welcoming atmosphere of the school and the good the relationships between pupils. The school generally has a number of pupils joining during each term and has a sound procedure to ensure that staff keep a close watch on such pupils throughout the school day. There is a 'buddy' system so that other pupils befriend a new pupil. Friendships are quickly established and newcomers become familiar with the school's routines as soon as possible.
28. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and has had a great deal of experience of child protection issues. Staff are trained so they are aware of factors that identify a child who might be a cause of concern, and are well aware of their responsibilities and the actions that they have to take. As a further safeguard, the headteacher has appointed a designated deputy to cover in her absence so that continuity is maintained.



29. In order to monitor pupils' progress thoroughly, the school carefully analyses the results of national tests and its own assessments. The progress of all groups of pupils is carefully considered. This includes comparisons of the achievements of those pupils born in the summer, those from different ethnic groups, and of boys and girls. Information from tests is used to target support where it is most needed.
30. The ethos of the school fosters good relationships. The pupils have confidence that they can approach staff, and that they will be dealt with fairly if they have any problems. The school council is representative of ethnic groups with each class voting for their two representatives. Pupils appreciate the ease of use of the suggestion box where they are able to put forward any suggestion to the council or 'tell teachers anything'.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school maintains **good** links with parents and the community and parents are very satisfied with the standard of behaviour and the quality of education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff make parents welcome in school and, as a result, parents are confident to raise any concerns.
- Parents whose children have special educational needs receive good information on their child's progress.
- Some parents send their children to the school through strong personal recommendation.
- The school's support for parents from different ethnic groups, those who have just arrived in England, and those from the travelling community is very good.
- There is a close partnership between the school, the community and the church.
- The school has, for a long time, experienced difficulty in involving parents in the running of the school.

### **Commentary**

31. As was found at the time of the previous inspection, the school maintains effective links with parents and the wider community that enables pupils to develop and learn. Parents feel welcome in the school so they are able to discuss any problems with teachers. The help from bilingual members of staff in translating for parents from minority ethnic groups makes a big difference in these parents' relationship with the school. Parents believe that any problems they may have would be dealt with fairly by the school. Parents display a great deal of confidence in the school so that several continue to send their child to the school even though they have moved away.
32. The reports the parents receive on their children are very detailed. Many parents feel that the reports have improved over the years, as also have the parents' evenings. Parents are given the National Curriculum targets, towards which their children need to work, at each parents' evening so that they can give their child help at home. This works well in some cases but not so well in others, and quite a number of pupils do not know their targets, because parents are not involved. The school website contains further information for parents, with several classes providing details of the curriculum topics they are working on during the term. There are good links with other schools and satisfactory arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education at the end of Year 6.
33. Pakistani families hold the school in very high regard. They send their children to the school because of the very strong recommendations given to them by their friends. Their children are enthusiastic about coming to school and the parents believe that relationships and behaviour at the school are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very well-known to parents

and is always ready to update them on the progress and the needs of their children. The school has a good relationship with the travelling community and the agency that works with these families has helped the school to develop good procedures to ensure pupils keep up their studies when they are away from Bolton.

34. Links with the Bolton Parish Church are very good. Pupils visit the church to celebrate festivals and the church leaders provide a strong input to spiritual and moral teaching. Local groups are used effectively by the school to support both pupils and parents. Currently, the younger pupils are learning road safety through participating in a local initiative. The local Education Action Zone has been responsible for improving funds and expertise of staff, in particular in ICT. Links with local sports groups and business communities have been used productively to benefit pupils' learning and personal development.
35. The school has identified the need to further develop their relationship with parents in their current improvement planning. This is because, although parents support the school's successful social functions very well, they are reluctant to become involved more actively in the life of the school. Few parents attend the parent/teacher association meetings, but there are signs that, gradually, more parents are willing to become involved. For example, a new parent has offered to re-start the toddler group that had lapsed for two terms.
36. The school is committed to providing encouragement and support to parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly and that instances of lateness are reduced to a more acceptable level.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership, management and governance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership, management and governance are of a high quality because the headteacher, key staff and the governors are perceptive, informed and lead by example, ensuring that the maintenance of good standards remains a high priority.
- The powerful ethos of the whole staff team that gives equal consideration and support to individuals of all abilities, races and background is evident in the energy and generosity of spirit which earns the respect of pupils and parents alike.
- The school runs like clockwork on a day-to-day basis, due to the very effective management systems and the focused efficiency of the office team.
- The school's programme of training and staff development is a very effective tool.
- The targets in the school development plan are well chosen but the criteria for success for some are a little imprecise.

## Commentary

37. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff have been successful in bringing about very good improvement in the issues identified in the previous inspection. Progress has been made on every issue although there is still more work to be done in improving teaching in English in Years 3 to 6. The governing body has played a key role in supporting and challenging decision-making.
38. The headteacher has a high profile around the school. She generates an atmosphere of calm in which pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers and other staff are equally committed. They give very individual support to every pupil. The school puts into practice its mission to provide equally for all pupils whatever their ability, race or background. This is carried out in an atmosphere of genuine concern for each individual. Parents appreciate this.
39. Management systems are very good, particularly procedures for the monitoring of teaching and the analysis and assessment of pupils' performance. In 2003, action resulting from this analysis led to a rise in standards in mathematics in Year 2. The school is making very good use of self-evaluation procedures to identify areas for improvement within each subject area. Subject co-ordinators do this well, linking their findings to the school's overall development plan. Governors play an important part in the school's process of self-evaluation. They work closely with the members of staff to whom they are individually linked, evaluating the progress of developments and discussing plans of action. Consequently, the school improvement plan is a document that draws on the views of staff and governors alike. It is a thorough document that embraces appropriate targets for further improvement. Criteria for success are identified, but in some instances are not as helpful as they could be because they do not measure success by consideration of pupils' achievements
40. The school has always placed a high priority on the training of all members of staff. This has resulted in knowledgeable subject leaders, effective support staff and well-organised lunch time staff. The award by Investors in People has been gained three times. Performance management is effective in focusing attention on raising achievement and identifying where professional development is needed. Governors are fully involved in ensuring that performance management helps the school to move forward.
41. Governors ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met. There is good monitoring of the policies for race equality and special educational needs. The management of special educational needs is good. The provision is well organised; procedures are understood and followed consistently by all staff. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for those from the travelling community is managed well. Support staff are deployed where they are most needed.
42. Finances are very well managed. There is very good monitoring of spending and clear strategic plans to deal with future funds. Currently the school is looking at a fall in the numbers of pupils and has proper strategies to cope. The headteacher and the finance committee work well together to access extra funds for the school whenever possible. This has resulted in improved resources for ICT and extra funding for classroom assistants. The administrative staff are very well organised and carry out a range of tasks that contribute effectively to the smooth running of the school.

### **Financial information for the year April 2002 March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	513,006	Balance from previous year	17,131
Total expenditure	526,087	Balance carried forward to the next	4,050
Expenditure per pupil	2,200		

43. Good procedures are in place to ensure that services and resources provide good value for money. Staff feel valued and, consequently, support the school through their hard work. With a small staff, it is inevitable that some should take on more responsibilities than in a larger school, especially when there are changes to the staffing structure. Currently some members of staff have too many responsibilities but there are plans to address this as soon as possible.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

The children's overall attainment when they start nursery is well below average. Fifty per cent of the children communicate in their mother language and their ability to speak English is particularly low. The children make a flying start in the vibrant and exciting Early Years Unit. Overall achievement is very good and most children are likely to achieve the expected standards in all the areas of learning by the end of the reception year. This is a significant achievement. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive very good support and make very good progress.

Leadership and management are excellent and this results in the high quality of teamwork that ensures the best use of the individual talents of all staff. Bilingual assistants provide particularly good support and make an especially significant contribution to learning in all areas. Teaching ranges from good to excellent and is mainly very good. Curriculum planning is innovative and most planned activities are based on imaginative and practical experiences with a good balance between teacher-directed group work and opportunities for the children to make their own choices. The excellent organisation of the unit and wealth of resources ensure children are totally engaged in their learning activities. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- Caring and supportive relationships promote the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The careful planning of group times, when children learn to talk about themselves and listen to others, effectively provides for children's personal and emotional needs.
- The development of independent learning and confidence is very good.

#### **Commentary**

44. The children enjoy coming to school and they feel very secure in this warm, caring and exciting unit. Due to the very good teaching and structured programme of development, the children achieve well and are likely to reach the expected standards. From the start of their time in the nursery the children are taught how to play, share, and have consideration for others and to take turns and these standards of behaviour are constantly reinforced. As a result, the children are very well behaved and they use the facilities sensibly and with care. Because tidying-up procedures are fantastic, all children participate and follow the staff's very precise instructions with enthusiasm. The staff's very good knowledge of the children is used to good effect to encourage all to take turns in talking about themselves, for example, when the bear is passed around during circle time. The planned involvement of adults ensures children are well organised, managed and constantly supported to make decisions and choices. Cultural awareness is developed through the celebration of significant festivals for each faith and there are well-planned links with religious education.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high priority rightly given to speaking and listening skills accelerates children's learning of English.
- The very good support of bilingual assistants.
- Children quickly learn to recognise words frequently used because of the very original method of teaching them.
- The high quality of the guided reading sessions.

## Commentary

45. The children's achievement is very good, particularly considering their low attainment on entry to the nursery, and most children are likely to reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. The teaching of vocabulary is a particular strength that is developed through a good range of direct teaching, practical activities and role-play. An excellent example was seen during the hairdresser's visit, when staff intervened successfully to encourage language development as the children observed the hairdresser perform a styling operation. Bilingual assistants provide clear translations, which ensure the children understand and enjoy their activities. In a hospital role-play activity, a bilingual assistant continually demonstrated speaking skills in English and, through skilled questioning, engaged the children in purposeful conversation. Consequently, the children quickly develop their confidence to use English.
46. Reading is made an enjoyable and rewarding experience and interest is stimulated by some skilful teaching activities, an outstanding collection of books, and quiet, comfortable areas for reading. Guided reading sessions are enjoyed by the children because teachers generate great enthusiasm for reading, for example, as they shared a book entitled 'Fruit' to find information and then read a story together.

### Example of outstanding practice – an innovative lesson in teaching word recognition

The reception class teacher, with the help of the Foundation Stage team, has devised an innovative and very effective method of teaching the words that children need to commit to memory in order to make a good start on early reading, words such as 'come' and 'there'. The method is based on the children learning an action, performed with their hands or arms, to represent each word. The action for 'come', being obvious with small hands beckoning, must have been easy to devise, but great ingenuity must have gone into thinking up actions for words such as 'there' and 'went'. The teacher holds up a word and the children make the action and read it aloud in short ten-minute sessions each day. When one of these sessions was observed, the children's eager participation was a joy, as they loudly read the words and carefully performed the actions. They knew more than 20 words and actions, and even the slowest learner took part. A wall display of photographs of the children making the actions with the word underneath is an effective reinforcement as children go to it to read a word independently or to point out their photograph.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of the excellent facilities and resources in the mathematics area to support learning.
- Children quickly develop their mathematical knowledge because the high quality practical activities taught to small groups are very well matched to their level of understanding.
- The use of mathematics across the areas of learning gives children plenty of opportunity to practice their skills.

## Commentary

47. Teaching is very good in this area of learning and most children are on course to achieve the expected levels. In carefully focused sessions, staff work systematically to develop the children's early counting and number skills and extend their mathematical vocabulary. Time is also given to allow the children to explore mathematical ideas for themselves in the superb mathematics area. A wealth of mathematical activities is available and carefully organised to challenge children of different attainment. Play activities, like weighing the parcels in the 'Post Office' and exploring capacity in the huge 'bean tray', provide interesting opportunities to develop mathematical skills. The staff intervene when appropriate to take the children's learning forward. Mathematical skills are further developed as staff teach mental strategies, such as 'secret counting', and remind children to keep objects in a straight line to aid accurate counting. As children play in the other classroom areas, there are opportunities to develop mathematical skills. For example, they use construction materials to develop their knowledge of the properties of shape when, following a visit, they attempt to build a church.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The effective use of visits, visitors and role-play to enrich the curriculum.
- Children are encouraged to learn through their senses.
- The development of ICT across all the areas of learning gives children confidence to use computers.
- Very good use of role-play as a learning resource allows children to explore new ideas and new learning.

### **Commentary**

48. Children achieve well in this area of learning and are on course to achieve the expected levels because of the varied and exciting learning opportunities provided. Teaching is very good and the staff promote an atmosphere of wonder which captures children's natural curiosity and interest. Children's scientific understanding develops well through fascinating experiences as they use the exciting sensory area. Moving light and shadows, colour and transparency give children opportunities to become increasingly aware of how light behaves and how they can affect it. As a reception child observed the fibre optic lamp, she said: "Look the light is dancing around". Visits and visitors are linked to role-play successfully to provide exploration and experimental experiences. For example, the children learn about transport as they make a journey on a double-decker bus and visit the 'Bus Wash'. During clothes week, staff and children dress in a wide range of outfits and extend their understanding by acting out a variety of roles. The children's skills in using the control mechanisms on computers are well developed because they have access to computers in each area of learning and ICT is used as an information source across all the areas of learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards because no direct teaching was observed during the inspection. However, detailed planning for physical development, an extensive range of photographs and a very good range of equipment indicate that standards are likely to be as expected.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children have access to a large secure outdoor area.
- The staff are all involved in daily outdoor play activities.

- The nursery and reception children have a weekly physical education session in the hall.

### **Commentary**

49. Each day, staff join in outdoor play activities with the children. To ensure this is purposeful, four zones have been devised each supervised by a staff member. A wide range of skills is developed. In the 'Climbing Zone' the children learn to travel and balance, in the 'Road Zone' they learn to control wheeled toys, in the 'Grass Zone' they develop ball skills and in the 'Tarmac Zone' they develop co-ordination skills as they play with small equipment. Planning for physical development reflects the same excellent attention to progression in learning as in the other areas of learning.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children's achievement is very good because of the high quality teaching.
- Resources are carefully chosen and well prepared to develop a wide range of creative skills.
- Creative activities are used well to provide opportunities for developing language skills.

### **Commentary**

50. The staff have considerable skills in planning creative activities which exploit every situation to develop the children's creative skills. In a well-planned texture activity, while the key learning was to discriminate between different textures, the children also sorted the materials into sets as a result of staff encouragement. Children have daily access to the creative area where planning reflects a clear focus for learning, for example, creating light and dark tones in the painting area. In the music area, the staff modelled sound vocabulary as children played with instruments. Tasks are often challenging, such as making a musical composition, practising and then performing the composition from memory. Staff interaction in role-play successfully improves the quality of the children's play. The children imitate the staff's actions and carry on the pretence spontaneously after the teacher has left.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** although there are a few aspects in need of development.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2 are very good and standards are above average because teaching is very good.
- In Years 3 and 6, teaching is very good and pupils make good progress.
- The use of a daily half-hour slot to teach reading skills to focus groups is very effective in improving pupils' reading.
- Actions, role-play and drama are used effectively to develop pupils' spoken and written English.
- In Years 4 and 5, pupils do not make enough progress in non-narrative writing because the teaching of grammar is not always effective.
- Assessment information is used very well to check pupils' progress and to identify extra support for those pupils whose home language is not English and those with special educational needs.
- The school has not developed a systematic method of teaching spelling in Years 3 to 6.
- There are some good examples of marking being used very effectively to help pupils understand how to improve, but not all teachers mark work so that pupils can see how to improve.
- The co-ordinator provides strong leadership through well-directed guidance that is based on very good subject knowledge and skills as a teacher.

#### Commentary

51. In the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results were well above average in 2003 and current standards are above average. This represents very good achievement. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 work closely with those in the nursery and reception years so that they can build on the very good work and methods used in those year groups. Pupils in Year 1 confidently use letter sounds to help them write the words of simple sentences. By the time they are in Year 2, they spell a range of commonly used words correctly. They write stories that have a proper opening and a sequence of events, that higher attaining pupils can culminate in an ending. In a very good lesson on learning to describe characters, pupils revelled in the list of words they gathered to describe a cruel queen. Those with lower attainment, and those whose English was still at an early stage of acquisition, made progress because they confidently used the letter sounds they knew to write descriptions which were just as colourful as those written by pupils using correctly spelt words.
52. In the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6, the school's results were below average. In the tests for 2002, they were above average. These kind of differences are likely to occur when small numbers of pupils, such as those in this school, sit the tests. In the current Year 6, standards are below average. Most pupils write good imaginative pieces using effective figurative language. However, vocabulary choices in non-narrative writing, the construction of complex sentences and the organisation of paragraphs are all weaker than they should be for a good number of pupils. In Year 6, pupils make very good progress, picking up lost ground from Years 4 and 5. For a few pupils, progress in English in these year groups is slowed because of long periods of absence or, for a few others, because they join the school from another school or country after a lapse in their education. However, in Years 4 and 5, pupils do not make enough progress in non-narrative writing and in using grammar correctly.
53. In Year 3, pupils make good progress, building on the knowledge and understanding gained in Year 2. Their range of sentence structures develops well as does their use of punctuation and correctly spelt words. In Years 4 and 5 pupils make good progress in their reading and in writing stories. However, when non-narrative writing demands more complex sentence structures, pupils often slip up and write ungrammatical sentences or make inappropriate

vocabulary choices. This is particularly the case for those pupils whose home language is not English, and those English speakers who have a limited vocabulary. Year 4 is a very large class and adults are not always available to support when misconceptions occur. In this year group, a lesson was seen when support from an outside agency to pupils at an early stage of learning English was not effective, partly because the class teacher had not made it fully clear what he expected from the support. Grammar is not always taught effectively. Sometimes teachers make use of work sheets that are divorced from a real purpose for writing. The school recognises that teachers in Years 3 to 6 are using a range of different strategies to teach spelling and that development is needed in this aspect. In all year groups, there is a lack of provision for different levels of attainment in the teaching of spelling and pupils are not good at identifying mis-spelt words or using dictionaries.

54. All teachers provide a very effective reading session for half an hour each day. The school has organised these sessions very well so that classroom assistants, including those who are bilingual, are available to support small groups. The school's two libraries are accessible and are used effectively at these times. Activities are varied and suit the age and attainment of the pupils. In each lesson, the teacher focuses on one group whose reading is at the same level in order to assess attainment and teach specific skills. Pupils develop their knowledge of books and authors at a good rate. Although the standard of reading in Year 6 is below average, in other year groups standards are improving at a good rate because of these effective sessions.
55. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is very good and in Years 3 to 6 it is good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, it is generally good and occasionally it is outstanding. In an excellent lesson in Year 3, the teacher used colourful proverbial tales from Africa that completely captured the pupils' imagination. Actions and short moments of role-play were used to great effect to enhance the pupils' enjoyment of the story and understanding of the vocabulary, as, for instance, when they raised their arms to soar like an eagle, their imaginations taking them high over the jungle. The support from bilingual classroom assistants is particularly effective because of the freedom for pupils to use their home language whenever necessary. In a very good role-play session in Year 2, sensitive teaching by the bilingual assistant helped very hesitant pupils to act out the week's story. As she participated in the role-play and spoke in their home language, these pupils gained enough confidence to use the new words of English they had acquired that session.
56. The subject is well led and this has contributed to the good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. The subject leader is very knowledgeable. She is an excellent role model and supports staff sensitively, giving them guidance and encouragement which has had a beneficial effect on the quality of work of weaker teachers. The monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements is carried out to a high standard. On occasions, constraints of time have had an effect on this work and explain the few areas, including the monitoring of visiting agencies, where improvement is still needed.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

57. All teachers encourage pupils to be confident readers and writers. From Year 1 upwards pupils use the skills they learn in English in other subjects. At the end of Year 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can read simple texts. Pupils read instructions on computer screens and elsewhere to help them with their work. Pupils whose home language is not English are encouraged to make spoken contributions in all classes and groups. In subjects such as history, geography and design and technology, pupils' written work sometimes lacks quality because the lack of time for these lessons often results in hurried work or unchallenging work-sheets. Curriculum planning has not focused sufficiently on how pupils' work in other subjects can support their learning in language and literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good** and, consequently, most pupils achieve well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- The staff have a good knowledge of the numeracy strategy.
- There is good provision for the different groups of pupils in the school.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject has been instrumental in the development of good teaching.
- Assessment and tracking procedures are very good.
- The pupils' abilities to use mental strategies, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are well developed.
- There is a lack of pace or rigour in the oral and mental starter sessions, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always inform pupils how they can improve.

### **Commentary**

58. In Year 2, standards are above average and in Year 6, they are average. In the 2003 national tests for Year 2, 50 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level and 50 per cent achieved above the expected level. These results, compared with similar schools, reflect very good progress and improvement. Although the results for Year 6 were not as strong, mathematics has improved from below average in 1999/2000 to above average in 2002 and average in 2003. These results reflect the good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In this school year, very detailed assessment and tracking data show that a similar result is expected. However, this is likely to improve with the considerable additional support provided through booster group activities.
59. Pupils in Year 2 have good number skills and many are working above the expected range for their age. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used their understanding of partitioning to 20 confidently as they made number walls. Year 4 pupils used mental skills to calculate addition of two-digit numbers by correctly using rounding up and down strategies. The use of a very good team game and a lively lesson presentation prompted speedy calculation. In the good range of work seen in Year 6, there are many opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in real-life situations. No differences in achievement were observed between boys and girls.
60. The very good practice demonstrated by the co-ordinator provides staff with a good role model both as a teacher and as a subject leader. He is very knowledgeable and always willing to guide other staff members. All staff have received training in mathematics and teachers are confident in their presentation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils' learning is good as a result of the good quality of teaching. In the five lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was very good in two, good in one and satisfactory in the other two.
61. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons seen, the expectations were high when pupils were expected to complete their tasks and be active participants in group activities. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson on rotation, the structured approach, good demonstrations and support for pupils with special educational needs resulted in almost all pupils understanding the concept by the end of the lesson.
62. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject, confidence to tackle problems and most pupils work hard and concentrate during lessons because of the high expectations of the staff and the lively presentation of most lessons. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when it was deemed to be unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. These pupils are now motivated and achieve as well as those in the other junior classes.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Pupils use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and older pupils begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of their skills. Examples of these activities include using graphs and charts in science, measuring in design and technology and using time-lines in history. However, this is an aspect of curriculum planning that could be developed further. Improved facilities and resources for ICT have helped to develop the pupils' use of mathematics programs to assist their learning.

## SCIENCE

The quality of provision is **good** and improvement since the last inspection is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6, and achievement is very good by the time pupils leave the school.
- The commitment of teachers to investigative learning is having an impact on the development of more independent learning approaches.
- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and practical work has a clear purpose.
- Teaching and learning are good and there are well-planned opportunities for developing scientific vocabulary.
- Not enough use is made of ICT, for example, to measure and record variables in experiments.
- Work is assessed thoroughly, although marking does not always move pupils' thinking forward.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### Commentary

64. Standards are above expectations for the majority of pupils in Years 2 and 6, and achievement is very good, which is very good improvement since the last inspection. The 2003 test results for pupils in Year 6 were well above average with many pupils achieving a higher level. This is because of very focused teaching that challenges pupils and makes them think for themselves. Teachers are giving pupils freedom in controlling their own investigative work.
65. The co-ordinator has a clear grasp of the subject and has made a good start on tackling aspects that need to be improved. National test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2003 show that standards have been well above average for the last two years when compared nationally, and were well above those when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that a smaller group of pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed national expectations than was the case last year, but they are making very good progress. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils talk confidently about the areas of science they have studied and have acquired good knowledge and understanding. For example, average-attaining pupils readily explained how to go out about building a circuit, using correct scientific terminology. Pupils' science skills are above average because they are given good opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations.
66. Teaching is good because the use of assessment, to set targets and to enable science skills to be developed systematically, is thorough. The assessment by teachers of the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 shows that standards were very high in comparison with national expectations. Pupils make good gains in their learning because they build on new and interesting activities that capture their imagination. Lessons are well planned to build on earlier experiences and provide activities that are carefully matched to pupils' previous learning. Teaching assistants are used well to ensure that lower attaining pupils achieve as well as the more capable pupils. Teachers are good at getting pupils to expand the use of correct technical vocabulary. In Year 5, for instance, skilful questioning challenged pupils'

thinking and clarified their ideas when experimenting with vibrations. This enabled the most confident pupils to use their scientific knowledge when predicting what might happen.

67. Although the amount of practical work has increased since the previous inspection, skills of recording are inconsistent and pupils are not always applying the skills learnt in literacy lessons, such as setting out a report with bullet or numbered points. This limits their achievement. Assessment systems have been improved and the use of information to set clear and precise targets for improvement is mostly consistent. Some teachers need to be more rigorous in this new approach to planning future work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards are in line with expected levels.
- Teaching and pupils' learning are good overall.
- Enthusiastic leadership is having a positive impact on improving the quality of provision by removing barriers to improvement.
- Opportunities for the use of ICT across the curriculum are improving and enhanced by the high quality of the ICT suite, however, there is more scope for development of the use of ICT in science.
- The quality of technical help has enhanced provision.
- The amount of experimentation time in some lessons is a little short and does not always allow pupils to accelerate their progress.

### **Commentary**

68. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with the expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are currently similar but there is now better use of ICT in other subjects. ICT is often planned into several lessons per day and the presence of the interactive whiteboards in some classrooms is enhancing teaching in the classroom. A good example was seen in a Year 6 science lesson, where pupils were able to come to the front of the class and interact with the rest of the class. In a Year 1 ICT lesson, pupils improved their reading and writing as they 'dragged' words from a word bank. Pupils are faster and more confident because they are used to typing in their contributions on the keyboard and seeing them projected on the large screen. Older infant pupils log on and off machines independently, edit and print their work. Pupils' achievements are good.
69. Older pupils are adept at downloading information from the Internet and are effectively using ICT as a tool for research and learning in other subjects. By Year 6, many pupils are confident and competent users of computers. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. They use secure search engines to access websites on the Internet.
70. Teaching is good because expectations are high and methods are well chosen, although further training is required when teachers move into a different year group. Another strength in teaching lies in the way that teachers use positive reinforcement. Teachers achieve a good balance between formal instruction and the time allowed for pupils to practise skills. This results in good learning. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and learning is broken down into manageable steps. Skilful questioning fully involves pupils in their own learning and support is well targeted to those who need it most. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are important factors in their achievement in lessons.

71. The leadership is good and strategies to raise standards have been well managed. This is because of the sheer enthusiasm and determination to integrate the subject into learning. The role of the technician and the co-ordinator complement one another extremely well, bringing together technical expertise and an understanding of learning steps. A comprehensive whole-school audit has been carried out so that future training sessions can be planned. The assessment system is used well to chart pupils' progress and to enable teachers to provide relevant follow-up work. Some of the lessons are a little short which can affect evaluation of progress in lessons.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. The use of ICT across the curriculum is stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning for other subjects identifies opportunities for its use. ICT lessons often use work from other subjects as the means to develop computer skills. Literacy skills are improved by the pupils' growing proficiency in word processing and by the use of programs to improve their skills in reading and spelling. Pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet regularly for personal research in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

Only one lesson of **history** was seen and none in **geography**. It is not, therefore, possible to make a judgement about provision. Inspectors looked at the work pupils had done in their books and on display and spoke to the co-ordinator with responsibility for both subjects.

Pupils' work and teachers' planning in **history** indicate that pupils follow a satisfactory programme of study using the national guidance. The school makes use of visits to places of historical interest, and artefacts, such as the model of a Viking village loaned from the museum, to help make history come alive. However, planning is too often based on the provision of historical facts brought about by teachers closely following the national guidance without looking for strategies to link learning to other subjects or aspects relevant to pupils' interest. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, pupils learnt sundry facts about the life of Florence Nightingale but gained little understanding of the relevance of those facts. Work shows that lessons tend to have an over-concentration on facts that are not always within the scope of pupils' experiences and do not develop skills either in history or in literacy. The school has been thorough in ensuring that all aspects of the National Curriculum are included in the work pupils cover from Year 1 upwards, but has not evaluated the usefulness of the learning and skills in the separate units.

Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that, in **geography**, pupils develop skills such as map reading and recognising geographical features in a progressive way as they move up the school. Teachers make use of the local environment for field study. In one lesson in Year 4, that was not observed for a full amount of time, it was evident that pupils were working hard at making accurate measurements in the work on map reading. However, planned links with mathematics and literacy are not fully in place and not enough use is made of ICT to add depth to the quality of pupils' learning.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Only one lesson was seen in each of **art and design** and **music**. Two lessons were seen in **design and technology** and three in physical education. In physical education, a judgement has been made about provision but in the other three subjects, this was not possible because there was too little evidence. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work and looked at evidence of art and design as it was displayed in the school.

In **art and design**, a display of pupils' work from each year group shows evidence of increasing awareness and control in the use of colour, line and shape. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils

improved their skills in observational drawing and painting by using hand lenses to focus on small sections of fruit. However, pupils worked with ready-mixed paint because of the constraints of time, even though they had learnt this skill earlier in their education. Time for art and design is short. Pupils only have art and design lessons for one half of the term and, in consequence, teachers have a limited time to develop skills and the range, and depth of experiences offered from one year to the next is limited. Displays indicate that some work is not challenging enough with teachers controlling outcome too prescriptively. The co-ordinator is keen to promote the subject and the good quality display in her classroom provides a good model for teachers in allowing a good level of challenge while still teaching knowledge and skills, something that is sometimes missing in other year groups.

**Design and technology** is taught in the same way as art and design, occupying a slot of time each alternate half term. Two lessons were seen in Years 4 and 5. As the inspection was at the start of the term, the aim of the lessons was to develop pupils' understanding of the design process and both lessons achieved this aim. In Year 5, the pupils investigated musical instruments as a prerequisite of understanding what would be needed in their design, and in Year 4, pupils considered money containers, which was interpreted rather narrowly as purses, thus limiting pupils' ideas and opportunities to use different materials. Examples of previous work indicate that a satisfactory level is generally achieved although challenge in activities is not high. Teachers make good use of the subject to develop pupils' skills in writing. However, constraints of time clearly affect the quality of work and the school has not used parents or work done at home to develop interest and home links.

Pupils' enjoyment of **music** is very evident from the good quality of singing in assembly. Almost all pupils join in with the hymns and songs. They sing tunefully and with a very good understanding of the mood and tempo of the song. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the subject co-ordinator developed pupils' sense of pitch by singing short, unaccompanied phrases. Pupils listened very attentively. Songs were taught quickly and the session developed not only pupils' musical knowledge, but their skills in listening and speaking. The school choir participates each year in the Bolton Festival of Music and music plays an important part in the development of pupils' spiritual and social awareness.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education **is good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils improve their skills well in lessons.
- A good proportion of pupils take part in the clubs for games, sport and gymnastics and pupils have the opportunity to compete against other schools.
- Membership of 'Schools' Sports Partnership' enabled the school to achieve the ActiveMark Award.

### Commentary

73. In the lessons observed, pupils attained a standard expected for their age and their achievements were good, which is similar to the previous inspection. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils used floor space well to show a variety of jumps from the spot, they ran using dodges and weaves to avoid others, and responded well to the good teaching to raise the quality and difficulty of their balances. These three movements they then put together to make a short sequence. In a Year 3 lesson, similar objectives were carried out at a higher level of competency by the pupils. Both lessons were good because the teachers had sufficient knowledge to challenge the pupils to improve the quality of their work.
74. In a Year 6 lesson, the second in a series on hockey, the pupils worked hard on a cold damp afternoon to develop skills in controlling the ball and passing with a stick. The teachers' very

good subject knowledge was used to good effect to demonstrate, and pupils moved from practising dribbling to learning to pass in fours at a good rate.

75. The co-ordinator for physical education provides very good leadership for this subject through participation in the 'Schools' Sports Partnership', a local initiative to support co-ordinators by providing expertise and resources. The school now offers a greater range of sporting activities than at the previous inspection. These include: football, handball, cross-country running and basketball for pupils in Year 5. The school participates in a small local league that enables the pupils to achieve success, something usually denied them in the larger Bolton Leagues. The gymnastic club won medals in this league, but were not able to compete with the standard in the wider county league. An after-school club is run for pupils in Years 1 and 2 who have some difficulty with controlling their behaviour and this is found to be an effective method of increasing their social skills. The curriculum is well planned but pupils only have one hour-long lesson a week. An hour is often too long for time to be fruitfully used. The school has not looked at ways in which sessions lasting a slightly shorter length of time could beneficially break-up days when most learning has been sedentary.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear policy statement, linked to the school aims, guides staff well in planning lessons.
- There is good commitment to the development of the subject.

### Commentary

76. The school's commitment to developing the pupils' personal, social and health education is clearly guided by an effective policy. The policy ensures that pupils receive appropriate teaching in respect of sex education, drugs awareness and interpersonal skills. Each class has three short group discussion times each week that promote pupils' personal development. Lessons have a clear learning focus. One lesson, for example, dealt with 'safety'. Here, the teacher successfully guided pupils to talk about situations when they felt safe and those when there was anxiety. Good links are made with religious education and social and moral development. The programme has a high emphasis on helping pupils to make informed decisions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6



Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*