

INSPECTION REPORT

FIR BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oldham, Lancashire

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105662

Headteacher: Mrs A Hankinson

Lead inspector: Mr J Morris

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st January 2004

Inspection number: 256127

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	160
School address:	Grasmere Road Royton Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	OL2 6SJ
Telephone number:	0161 624 9577
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Grubb
Date of previous inspection:	23/03/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fir Bank is a below average sized primary school. The pupils' attainment on entry and socio-economic backgrounds are quite varied but they are broadly average overall. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils for whom English is not the first language is below average and at the time of this inspection there were no pupils in this category. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average. The rate of pupil mobility is low.

The school received a national School Achievement Award in 2003. It is involved in two local initiatives, which aim to promote cross-cultural understanding and overcome racism. A pre-school playgroup and before- and after-school clubs use the school facilities.

In September 2003, there was a significant reduction in the number of teachers and re-organisation of teaching groups. This was because of falling rolls and a reduced budget. There are currently five classes with two year groups and at least 30 pupils in each of them.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship Special educational needs
9921	Mrs P Blackshaw	Lay inspector	
5902	Mr M Harrison	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Religious education
23475	Mrs K Tomkins	Team inspector	Science Geography History The Foundation Stage curriculum

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Fir Bank Primary is providing a **sound** quality of education at a time when it is experiencing considerable difficulties with staffing and class sizes. Standards have risen faster than nationally over the last five years. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision and standards in mathematics are good throughout Years 1 to 6;
- Although in line with national averages, standards could be higher in science and information and communication technology;
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and personal development are good;
- The headteacher and management team provide good leadership and management;
- Teaching and learning are very good in the Years 1 and 2 class;
- Support staff make a significant contribution in all classes;
- Assessment information is not used well enough to plan what pupils need to learn next in all subjects;
- Time is not used to best effect so that pupils' learning experiences are not as varied and stimulating as they should be;
- The school has good arrangements to seek and act on pupils' views, including the school council;
- Attendance is very good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has paid due regard to the key issues for action. However, it currently finds itself in a very similar position as it was in 1998 and is carrying out a full review of the role of subject co-ordinator, curriculum planning and assessment procedures. All of these were issues last time and, although they are satisfactory overall, they could be better at this time.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Inspectors judge standards to be average and achievement **satisfactory** overall. In the current Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. The school has set targets in line with the results for 2003 in the table. It has a good record of meeting its targets and improving standards at a slightly faster rate than nationally. The headteacher and a teacher on maternity leave, who is working one morning voluntarily, are teaching booster classes during the current term.

The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were average in English and well above average in mathematics. Inspectors judge that currently standards in Year 2 are above average in

English, mathematics and science. These pupils are making rapid progress due to the high quality work of the teacher and support assistant.

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The majority are on target to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, except in physical development where their attainment is below expectations.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall but vary significantly between classes. At the time of this inspection they were satisfactory with weaknesses in the reception and Year 1 class, very good in the Years 1 and 2 class and satisfactory with good features in Years 3 to 6. The number of teachers and classes was reduced in September 2003 due to falling rolls and the resulting reduced budget. The school has experienced considerable teacher absences due to illness and maternity leave this year. The curriculum meets requirements but time is not used to best effect to make links between different subjects and provide pupils with a broad range of learning experiences. This is largely due to the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good** overall. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and punctuality are good. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The school's involvement in local initiatives to develop the pupils' multi-cultural awareness and understanding and to combat racism is a positive aspect of its work. Attendance is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and the two other members of staff with significant responsibilities are **good** overall. They provide stability at a difficult time and play a major role in the identification of correct priorities for improvement and implementation of related action. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and meet all statutory requirements. There are a few effective, established governors and several new governors, who are enthusiastic about the contribution they can make.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents expressed positive views of the school through the questionnaires and in discussion with inspectors. Several parents at the meeting with the registered inspector expressed concerns about staffing, mixed age classes, class sizes and the provision of homework. Parents are extremely positive about the approachability and expectations of the staff and the leadership of the headteacher.

Pupils have, in the main, very positive views of the school and this is reflected in their productive attitudes in lessons and at other times. It was particularly pleasing to see the way that pupils throughout the school involved themselves in purposeful leisure and learning activities during wet play-times. Some Year 6 pupils expressed some concerns through the questionnaires and discussions with them suggest this is because of the changes in teachers they have experienced this year.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- prioritise the raising of standards in science and information and communication technology;
- make better use of assessment information in all subjects to ensure work set meets pupils' needs;

- use time more effectively to increase the rate of pupils' progress and the breadth of their learning experiences.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall and it is good in Years 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2, and above average in mathematics and average in English and science in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in mathematics.
- Although in line with national averages, standards could be higher in science and information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and, by the end of the reception year, the majority of them are on target to attain the goals they are expected to reach. This is true in five of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum, the exception being physical development, in which their attainment is below expectations. This is because of the quality of teaching and inadequacies in outdoor facilities for these children.
2. Throughout the school there are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good work of the special needs co-ordinator and classroom staff. There is good awareness of gifted and talented pupils and they make progress at a similar rate their peers.
3. Pupils in the current Years 1 and 2 class are making significant progress across the curriculum, but particularly in the core subjects, because of very high quality teaching. Over the past five years standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated, due in the main to differences in the abilities of the pupils, but have improved over time at a slightly faster rate than they have nationally. Last year, the results of national tests were average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.8 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.9 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.8 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved at a faster rate than nationally over five years, although there was a significant dip in 2001. This test performance data suggests that achievement is good overall in the core subjects. However, inspection findings are that the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. They achieve well in mathematics, due to consistently good teaching by permanent and temporary teachers. However, in English, science and information and communication technology their progress is only satisfactory, largely because of staff changes and absences. The school has a good record of meeting the targets it sets. This year these are similar to last year. In the national tests last year standards were above average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. The headteacher and a teacher on maternity leave, who is working

part-time voluntarily, are taking booster groups in literacy and numeracy during the current term. If the school meets its targets standards will be better by the end of the year in English and mathematics than they were at the time of this inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (25.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.3 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.0 (28.4)	28.6 (28.3)

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This area is a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Their moral and social development are good and their cultural and spiritual development are satisfactory, making these aspects of their personal development satisfactory overall. The rate of attendance is well above the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are happy, confident and involved.
- Although the provision for other aspects of pupils' personal development is good, their cultural and spiritual development are not planned for and developed systematically.
- The attendance rate is very good, with few children arriving late for lessons.
- There are good arrangements to seek out and act upon pupils' views.

Commentary

5. From the time the Foundation Stage children enter Class 1, staff make clear how they expect pupils to behave and routines are effectively established. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to meet the nationally expected goals for personal, social and emotional development. There are high expectations of work and behaviour throughout the school. As a result, pupils generally behave sensibly in class and around the school and settle to their tasks with a minimum of fuss. The behaviour policy works well in practice. This was seen through the frequent rewarding of good behaviour and effective management of persistent unacceptable behaviour. Any incidents of bullying, which are few, are dealt with thoroughly and fairly.
6. In most lessons pupils listen carefully and work hard. When tasks are challenging and well presented, pupils show high levels of concentration and perseverance, as seen for example in a Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson. Support staff are clear about their roles, use their initiative and work closely with class teachers so that pupils, especially those with special educational needs, feel included and that they can succeed. Relationships between pupils themselves and between adults and pupils are positive and constructive. Staff work hard to build and maintain pupils' self-esteem and recognise effort. Good use is made of the 'Happy Book' in which lunch-time supervisors record good deeds and helpfulness. Teachers use the 'Good Work' book to celebrate pupils' achievements in a very positive way. As a result, pupils show confidence and are keen to do well. For example, in one whole school assembly, a group willingly played their brass instruments. On another occasion, all the pupils in Class 5 joined in a dance to retell an Australian 'Dreamtime' story for their parents and the rest of the school.
7. The school council provides real opportunities for pupils to become involved in decision making and improving the school. Officers are appointed and take their duties very seriously. All year groups are represented and ideas, worries and fund-raising activities are discussed, solutions

sought and plans agreed. Pupils willingly take on a variety of responsibilities around the school. For example, older pupils prepare the hall for assembly efficiently. They set out the seating and resources and manage the music centre and over-head projector.

8. The school's involvement in the 'Unity in the Community' project and the 'School Linking' programme provides pupils with experiences that contribute to their social and cultural development. Social skills and moral awareness are taught and reinforced through lessons and across the curriculum so that pupils achieve well in these areas. Some topics, such as the work seen in the Years 3 and 4 class on India, help pupils develop a satisfactory awareness of cultural diversity. Spiritual development is fostered through some lessons and assemblies and is also satisfactory. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these areas as there is no policy or structured approach to support teaching and learning.
9. There are very few instances of pupils being absent from school without good reason. They generally arrive on time so there is little disruption to learning by late arrivals. Only one pupil was excluded in the last school year and this was for good reason.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background

No of pupils on roll
152
2
6

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching in the Years 1 and 2 class is a strength. The curriculum is satisfactory but timetables place too great an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for pupils' care and health and safety are good, as are links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment is just satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the Years 1 and 2 class is very effective and exciting.
- All support staff play a valuable role in ensuring all pupils are fully included in lessons.
- There are some inconsistencies and variability in teaching due to individual teacher skills, staff changes and absences and new class groupings.

Commentary

10. There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning between classes. This is primarily due to differences in the quality of individual teachers' work and staff absences. However, the major re-organisation of classes following a reduction in the number of teachers last July has also clearly had a very significant impact on the school. This was in response to falling rolls and the resulting reduced budget. It means that currently all classes have two year groups and at least 30 pupils. In addition none of the teaching spaces are better than adequate. This is because they are only just big enough and the open-plan structure of the building creates some problems with noise. This makes the teachers' jobs harder and some teachers, particularly in the reception and Year 1 class, have found this a significant challenge. At the same time, governors decided to increase the total hours worked by support staff. Inspection evidence is that this has had a positive effect and that all of the teaching assistants are making a significant contribution to all the pupils' learning but particularly for those with special educational needs or the academically less able.
11. Since the last inspection, considerable action has been taken by the headteacher to identify and build on strengths and identify and minimise weaknesses in the teaching. The local education authority has provided significant support and guidance in this respect. There is a close match between the school's self-evaluation, the local authority's assessment of the school's needs and the findings of this inspection. The school is attempting to take effective action on identified weaknesses at a particularly difficult time.
12. Teaching and learning in the reception and Year 1 class are satisfactory overall but there are some significant weaknesses. This is due in part to the teacher having difficulties meeting the needs of the different year groups. There is a very good, stimulating learning environment with striking displays of pupils' work, good use of the restricted space and good provision of resources. The support assistant is very competent and used well. However, during the inspection many of the lessons lacked pace and drive.
13. Teaching and learning in the Years 1 and 2 class are very good. The teacher and support assistant work very effectively together. The teacher plans lessons very well and classroom organisation is of a very high standard. Lessons are lively and delivered at pace. Very good use is made of resources, including a puppet, to involve pupils in the lesson objectives. Pupils are very interested and involved in all aspects of lessons. During whole class activities they listen carefully to the teacher and respond enthusiastically to the plentiful opportunities for them to contribute. During individual and group tasks they work diligently in silence or collaborate very well on paired or group tasks. Lessons in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology all demonstrated that the staff and pupils all enjoy learning together. Most significantly, the adults are very successful in developing the pupils' vocabulary.
14. Teaching and learning in the three mixed year group classes from Year 3 to Year 6 are satisfactory overall and there are some good features. Staff absences, one due to maternity leave and one due to illness, have caused significant disruption in this key stage following the major re-organisation last September. Half of the lessons seen were satisfactory and the rest were good, apart from one very good numeracy lesson in the Years 4 and 5 class. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books show that teaching in this class is mostly good. Relationships between the teacher and pupils are particularly good. Temporary teachers planned their lessons well and were effective in maintaining order and, in the main, meeting the different needs of different groups of pupils.

15. Procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and to use this information to plan what the need to learn next are satisfactory overall but there are significant weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work. This is a high priority in the school development plan. Strengths are in the core subjects of the National Curriculum and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Information about pupils' attainment and needs, in literacy and numeracy in particular, is used to good effect to group pupils, raise standards and help pupils with particular learning or behavioural difficulties. Weaknesses are in the rigorous assessment of children in the reception year and the development and implementation of a simple but effective means of assessing individual progress in the non-core subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	8	13	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Although 32 lessons were observed, inspectors did not collect sufficient information to make reliable judgements in three of them.

16. Some parents expressed concerns about the provision of homework. Inspection findings are that this is satisfactory. However, there is clearly some variation between classes at the current time. The headteacher is doing her utmost to try to maintain consistency in practice during staff absences.

The curriculum

The curriculum, curriculum enrichment, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities are not as broad, balanced and relevant as they could be.
- The school effectively meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and inclusion is good.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been fully and effectively implemented. The school has given great emphasis to these key areas for some time and with considerable success in raising standards. However, this has meant that the curriculum as a whole has not been planned and delivered to best effect. A lot of time is allocated to literacy and numeracy and this has resulted in some inconsistency in the delivery in other subjects. Key personnel and governors acknowledge this and a full review of curriculum planning is a priority in the school development plan. Good thought is being given to re-organising the curriculum in the light of the current mixed year group classes. In addition, there are 'theme' weeks every term with a focus on design and technology, art and design or music. These attempt, and to some extent succeed, to provide pupils with richer experiences in these subjects.
18. The provision of additional learning opportunities beyond lessons is satisfactory. There are a few clubs organised by school staff and parent volunteers. These, together with residential experiences, provide pupils with additional sporting and creative opportunities.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for this important aspect of the

school's work in accordance with the national code of practice. Pupils' needs and well planned action to help them improve are identified in their individual education plans. There are good arrangements to involve pupils in their own learning and support staff play a significant role in the good progress they make. There is also a good awareness of the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented and satisfactory provision to meet them.

20. The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff. The governors took prudent action in the light of falling rolls and a reduced budget last year. Two teachers were made redundant but all classes now have support assistants every morning and the reception and Year 1 class is supported slightly more. The absence of one teacher on maternity leave and another through illness has resulted in a degree of instability following this major change.
21. Resources are adequate overall and there are some good features in some subjects. For example, the provision of books in the library and classrooms is good and there is a good range of videos and CDs to support work in personal, social and health education and music. Resources for information and communication technology are satisfactory and recently much improved.
22. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are some significant weaknesses. The open-plan structure in two areas of the school means that noise in one class can be a significant disruptive factor for the next class. There have been good improvements to the school grounds and pupils were very involved in planning this development with an outside specialist. Parts of the exterior of the building, particularly the covered outdoor area for the reception children, are in a poor condition. This presents considerable difficulties for the staff and the governors do not have the finances to address these matters.

Care, guidance and support

Care and welfare of pupils is good with a keen awareness and consideration to the health and safety of the pupils. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are satisfactory. The involvement of pupils is good because teachers know their pupils well and listen to and show respect for their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and well cared for and they are encouraged to work hard.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views and effectively influence change.
- Provision for child protection is good.
- Good procedures and regular monitoring ensure pupils' safety both in school and in out-of-school activities.
- Inconsistencies in the use of assessment information and target setting limit teachers' ability to maximise effective support and guidance for individual needs.

Commentary

23. Parents are happy with the care and support their children receive at school. Pupils feel secure and feel there is always someone to call on and as a result absence from school is low. Most pupils seek help from adults in the school but for some, whose class teacher is absent, the class counsellors and the school council are seen as a viable alternative route. The highly valued school council functions well in taking account of pupils' opinions in school decision making. Views expressed are seriously considered and have influenced change, for example, the successful and impressive re-design of parts of the school grounds. Assessment and pupil tracking procedures are not used consistently across the school. As a result, although teachers' knowledge of individual pupils is good, target setting and self-evaluation is not sufficiently embedded to help pupils see how they can improve. Procedures to prepare young children for school are satisfactory.

24. Staff are sensitive to creating an effective learning environment, recognising pupils' achievements through, for example, the 'Good Works' book and the 'Happy Book'. These record successes in work and personal contributions and are celebrated weekly in assembly. Pupils are rightly proud of their involvement in the school council, the weekly newsletter produced by Year 6 pupils and other contributions to the school and the community through their fund-raising activities, for example. As a result, developing confidence is reflected in their learning and progress.
25. Full and careful consideration is given to national and local requirements and guidance on pupils' health and safety. The child protection officer is experienced in the procedures, has good links with external agencies and attends regular training updates. This knowledge is used as a basis for the in-house training of all other staff. Pupils' welfare is an important priority. Necessary safety checks are efficiently carried out with regular input from governors. All staff will be trained in first aid and updated on child protection issues this term.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are good links with parents, who are supportive of the school. The school also has good links with other schools and with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed of the work pupils are doing through meetings, class specific brochures and pupils' homework diaries.
- The school has well-established links with the local church, mosque and chapel and plays a good role in the training of young people for various vocations.
- There are good transfer arrangements with a variety of secondary schools to which the pupils move.

Commentary

26. Parents responded to the questionnaire in large numbers and in a positive manner. Results indicate that they are supportive of the school and feel that their opinion is sought and that action is taken as a consequence. Those who attended the parents' meeting stated that they find the staff, particularly the headteacher, approachable, and feel well informed. Several parents at the meeting understandably expressed concerns about the size and mixed age composition of the classes and staff absences. However, all but one of the respondents to the questionnaire stated that the school is well led and managed and everyone agreed that they feel comfortable approaching the school if they had a problem or complaint. Parents are provided with good information about the school including meetings to discuss curriculum matters, such as literacy, and class-specific brochures which tell them which topics are being taught each half-term and how they can help their children to make progress. Most are able to track their child's steps forward through the homework diary. Annual reports give good information on pupils' academic learning and on their personal development and provide for two-way dialogue between parents and the school. They are sometimes less successful in stating what individuals need to do next.
27. Opinions are sought each year through a survey to all parents as well as particular consideration of parents' views if an initiative is being planned. The school tries its best to satisfy conflicting opinions. For example, several people commented at the meeting that the teachers should set more homework. However, 98 per cent of parents' responses to the questionnaire said that the homework given by teachers was adequate. There is an active 'Friends of Fir Bank' committee that publishes a termly newsletter and runs social and fundraising events. A number of parents volunteer to help in school and their support is welcomed and valued.

28. The school has established links with local places of worship and these are visited by pupils as part of the religious education curriculum. Peripatetic music teachers, a theatre group and various other specialists visit the school and enhance other aspects of the curriculum. A local school with Technology status supports the school in its work in design and technology. Fir Bank joins with other primary schools in sports events, lets part of its premises to a play-group and has developed productive links with many of the eight secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. In the last half-term of the school year the school adopts a curriculum for the Year 6 pupils, shared with the secondary schools, to ease their transition to their new schools. The school provides placement opportunities for NVQ work experience trainees from both Oldham and Rochdale Colleges, is a member of the Oldham Education, Business and Guidance Services Association and partners Manchester Metropolitan University in providing training for future teachers. The school is a member of the 'Unity in the Community' project designed to combat racism and help pupils to grow up peacefully and in harmony within a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the headteacher and senior colleagues are good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of teaching by the headteacher has had a significant impact in improving standards and adding value to pupils' education, as shown by national tests over the past four years.
- Within the context of a reduction in the number of classes and teacher absence, the headteacher and senior staff are effective in providing a secure framework within which re-organisation has been managed well, temporary teachers are supported and educational continuity for pupils is made possible.
- The senior staff are clear about what needs to be done in order to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of mixed-aged classes and they are developing subject leadership teams with enthusiasm. However, staffing changes mean that this is taking longer than expected to establish and is not yet effective in developing provision.
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

29. The governors take an active part in helping the school to meet the needs of its pupils. They help the school to address specific issues and lay down the general direction of the school's work. In setting challenging objectives for the performance of the headteacher they help to focus the school's activities. They have a clear role in school improvement through their input to the School Development Plan. Governors' monitoring activities show an awareness of the school's needs and achievements. They are also aware of their own improvement needs and they have created a plan to increase the role they play. There is an effective mentoring system for the induction of new governors and many governors undertake useful individual training. This is particularly significant given that there are several very new governors. Having governors linked to subjects and to classes increases their knowledge and influence. However, they are still largely dependent on the headteacher's analyses of progress. Governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met.
30. For financial reasons, due to falling rolls, the school has not been able to replace the deputy headteacher and another long-serving teacher who left last year and this has placed additional management burdens on the headteacher and two senior staff. It is due to their hard work that there is a supportive atmosphere for supply staff and a positive climate for learning. Managing learning has been made additionally more difficult by the long-term absence of two other teachers in this five class school. The school's well-developed systems in inducting newly qualified teachers and its role as a provider of training for trainee teachers mean that it could

absorb the necessary changes without major disruption and those responsible are to be congratulated.

31. Since the last inspection the headteacher has focussed the school on raising standards in English and mathematics. By monitoring teaching and learning and recruiting additional expertise through the local education authority and elsewhere, she has helped teachers to improve pupils' performance at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 at a faster rate than nationally. This involved developing and using the expertise of subject and other co-ordinators. However, the school now finds itself without the benefit of these teachers and recognises that a system which depended on individuals is vulnerable to absence and changes of staff. They have now sensibly devised subject leadership teams, spreading expertise and experience across a number of people. Senior staff are enthusiastic and have responded well to this. They are aware of what needs to be achieved but in most subjects the new system of curriculum management has not begun due to the absence of some permanent staff.
32. The school has useful and informative monitoring procedures which it uses to evaluate its own work. This, combined with good analysis of comparative performance data from internal and external tests, acts as the starting point for the school's development planning. The end result of this process, the School Development Plan, contains a manageable number of initiatives supported by appropriate actions. Importantly it measures its own success by the increases in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and these, in line with the school's aims and values, define the priorities within the plan. This well-rehearsed system means that the school's self-evaluation document prepared for the inspection closely matches the inspectors' judgements in most areas of its work.
33. Formal performance management is securely in place and linked well to professional development and school improvement planning. Teachers' own responsibility for the progress of pupils in their charge is highlighted through formal half-yearly meetings with the headteacher and contributes to the school's overall success in raising standards. Such analysis of pupils' performance enhances the school's ability to apply best value principles. For example, support staff are effectively deployed and supported and their good performance justifies the higher spending incurred as a result of the increased number of classroom assistants. The recent audit showed that financial management is good and the few minor points for improvement have been adequately addressed.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	370,503
Total expenditure	374,478
Expenditure per pupil	2,103

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	1,974
Balance carried forward to the next	-3,976

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's achievement is satisfactory. The majority are on target to meet the nationally expected standards for their age by the end of the year in all of the areas of learning, except in physical development where their attainment is below average.
35. Children are admitted to Class 1 at the beginning of the school year in which they become five and they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils in a mixed age class. Children enter school with a wide range of attainment, but overall this is about average in all areas of learning. The majority have attended the playgroup that meets in the school.
36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all areas of learning except physical development, which is unsatisfactory. The main strengths of the teaching seen during the inspection include the very good support given by the teaching assistant and the careful planning and preparation of lessons. Good use is also made of students and volunteer helpers so that all children are included in the activities. The classroom is bright, colourful and inviting and has a wide range of good quality and well-organised resources. As a result, children settle happily and generally enjoy the activities. However, individual children's progress is not sufficiently well monitored and the use of assessment findings to inform planning is unsatisfactory. Consequently, staff do not always know what each child needs to learn next and individual progress is not always as rapid as it might be.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are well planned lessons to develop personal, social and emotional skills but opportunities are missed in other areas of learning to extend or reinforce these skills and to assess children's progress.
- Classroom routines are well established and most children are confident and happy.

Commentary

37. Staff make clear how they expect the children to behave. All children know the routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and generally behave sensibly. When required, the majority sit quietly and listen carefully, for example, when the register is taken. However, when kept on the carpet for too long, a significant number lose interest and become restless. Most show good interest and involvement in their activities and they sometimes show high levels of concentration and perseverance such as when working on the computers. They co-operate well when working in groups and sharing equipment.
38. When given the opportunity, children are keen to take on responsibilities such as getting their own drinks at playtime. They are expected to clear away equipment and generally do so efficiently. However, there are too few opportunities for children to select and use activities and resources independently. Almost all children dressed and undressed themselves independently when changing for a dance lesson in the hall.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of books is available and children are encouraged to take books home regularly to share with their families.
- Children's knowledge of letter sounds and words is not sufficiently well monitored.

Commentary

39. Almost all children speak clearly in simple sentences and phrases. When talking about old and new toys they used vocabulary such as 'bright', 'dull', 'shiny' and 'scratched' correctly. However, opportunities are missed in other areas of learning to enrich the children's vocabulary. The majority are beginning to have the confidence to talk about their experiences and ideas in both large and small groups.
40. 'Big Books' are used effectively so that children are keen to join in reading familiar stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Taking books home regularly further promotes this enjoyment of stories. Parents and children comment on these stories in their 'My Reading Record' notebooks, but there is little evidence of these records being used to suggest to parents what the next steps in their child's learning need to be. The highest attaining children read simple stories fluently and independently. Lower attainers talk about the pictures with understanding and are beginning to recognise a few individual words and letter sounds. However, their progress is not systematically tracked against the national expectations for this age group to identify and plan for the next steps in their learning.
41. With good support from the classroom assistant, most children make reasonable attempts to write a simple sentence independently using their knowledge of letter sounds and shapes to help them. A small number of lower attaining pupils write their names recognisably but struggle to control their pencils and form their letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The activities planned are not always matched well to what children need to learn or do next.
- Staff plan a broad range of practical activities which children enjoy and work hard at.

Commentary

42. When working in a large group on the carpet, children are too often squashed and are unable to be actively involved in what is being taught. As a result they lose interest and become restless. In smaller groups, they are provided with more stimulating tasks that sustain their interest. When exploring repeating patterns, for example, they enjoyed sticking coloured squares and threading beads to create their own designs. In a lesson on naming three-dimensional shapes, good links were made with creative development when children printed patterns with sponge shapes. However, they made limited progress in recognising the three-dimensional shapes as they became confused when, for example, a cube produced a square print.
43. The work in children's folders shows they all learn to count and to write and recognise numbers correctly. Higher attaining children were confident when counting the squares in their patterns. They counted to 10 accurately and made good attempts beyond 10.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

44. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area of learning but the work seen was satisfactory. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects are appropriately covered. In one lesson, good links were made with literacy and art when children worked in the computer suite. They controlled the mouse well as they used a drawing program to produce illustrations of the 'Goldilocks' story they had just read. They were very absorbed and enthusiastic.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no continuous access to a secure and suitably resourced outdoor play area. There is a spacious hall but staff do not make sufficient use of this facility. As a result, attainment is below average and achievement unsatisfactory.

Commentary

45. The school has recognised the need to develop the outdoor play area which currently offers children little opportunity for climbing, using wheeled vehicles or adventurous activity. Regular lessons in the hall are timetabled but in the dance lesson observed the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. This was because the children were sitting listening to the teacher for too much of the time and the activities were insufficiently challenging. No opportunity was given for the children to evaluate their own and each other's work. As a result, the majority made unsatisfactory progress. However, the classroom assistant modelled the movements well and effectively supported a child with special educational needs so that he was successfully included in the lesson. Children develop their manipulative skills appropriately by using a range of tools such as scissors, paintbrushes, pens and pencils and through playing with dough and construction toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide good opportunities to use a range of materials but the activities are too often heavily adult directed.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Children's work is attractively displayed.
- Role play areas are well resourced.

Commentary

46. The children use a wide range of collage materials such as corks, buttons, feathers and a variety of fabrics and papers to make self-portraits, stick puppets and large pictures such as 'The Teddy Bears' Picnic'. They are taught skills and techniques like sewing and weaving carefully. Children's finished work is bright and colourful but shows limited opportunity for making their own choices, developing their own ideas or experimenting with materials such as colour mixing. Staff show they value children's efforts by displaying their work attractively. Creative work supports other areas of learning effectively. For example, good use was made of a painting by Kandinsky to reinforce shape work in mathematics.

47. The provision for role play also makes good links with other areas of learning and includes a well-equipped post office, home corner and hospital. Scales and a till encourage children to weigh items and handle money, whilst x-rays and charts in the hospital increase understanding of how our bodies work. Writing materials encourage children to develop their basic literacy skills. The planning and delivery of musical activities is satisfactory. However, in an observed session there was a lack of real energy and enthusiasm reflecting the significant motivation that young children often exhibit when singing and playing instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing, speaking and listening are above average by the end of Year 2 and have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Years 1 and 2 class and directly contribute to the pupils' good achievement at this key stage.
- Pupil performance data is well analysed and used effectively to group pupils, determine intervention programmes and raise levels of attainment.

Commentary

48. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average in all aspects of English. Achievement is satisfactory from Year 3 to Year 6 and overall. By Year 6 many pupils read confidently with good comprehension and can analyse what they are reading. For example, in one English lesson they showed that they understood the way in which emotive words are used in text to create an effect. They used this knowledge later in the week in a personal, social and health education lesson when discussing what to write on posters intended to dissuade others from smoking or taking drugs. Some pupils have not yet developed these skills and are inclined to assume facts and features in stories rather than use deduction and inference. These pupils are less secure about writers' purposes and viewpoints than expected for their age. They need additional attention to reading skills to develop their understanding.
49. Guided reading sessions take place in every class but there is some variation in how productive they are. Home-school reading logs are used so that parents can work with the school in developing their children's reading skills. There is again a wide variation in the use of these books between classes and between pupils in the same class. These differences often match the different rates of individual progress in reading. Where pupils benefit from very good guided reading sessions and there is evidence of frequent individual attention through their reading records, for example in the Years 1 and 2 class, they make very good progress. In one lesson these pupils were seen to use reference books confidently to discover the meaning of technical words such as 'nocturnal' and 'invertebrate' and to share their findings with others. Others within the class were discussing the different ways that the beginnings, middles and ends of carefully selected fiction books had been written.
50. The presentation of the majority of pupils' written work in the Years 5 and 6 class is satisfactory and is much improved since the start of the year. The majority write stories, reports and persuasive arguments reasonably well. Punctuation and grammar are at a level to be expected for pupils of their age. The use of the 'look, say, cover, write, check' technique when learning spellings has improved this aspect of their work. Throughout the school, pupils are not given sufficient time to practise extended writing. Time could be made available with effective re-organisation. The Years 5 and 6 class, for example, has over a third of the week time-tabled for literacy activities.

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are following a systematic plan, an improvement since the previous inspection, to help pupils improve their writing skills. Years 1 and 2 pupils are building their vocabulary and using new words to describe the appearance, personality and behaviour of characters in their stories well. Many Year 2 pupils' books show that they accurately use speech marks in their work, a feature well advanced for their age. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated their ability to extract key information from longer texts when writing reports and Year 5 pupils wrote some very good explanatory texts on the work of Lord Shaftesbury and Dr Barnardo. Teaching assistants give very good support to the pupils to whom they are assigned. In many cases work is far better differentiated when teaching assistants support a group away from the main classroom. In others, a good variety of approaches to tasks, including information and communication technology, is used. As a consequence pupils with special educational needs, frequently the focus of their support, make good progress.
52. Teachers give pupils ample opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in lessons through whole class and smaller group activities. A good example of this was when, in a Years 5 and 6 personal, social and health education lesson, groups of pupils discussed and then reported back to the whole class on several health issues. In the Years 3 and 4 class, pupils took turns to say what made them sad and what made them happy. Teachers try to give pupils the opportunity to answer questions and encourage them to reply in full sentences but not always successfully. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to speak to wider audiences such as in class assemblies, which parents attend. In one such assembly during the inspection however, pupils had not been sufficiently rehearsed and much of what they said was inaudible. Pupils in Year 2 are articulate and in a very good lesson talked with 'speaking partners' to generate suitable questions for 'The Big Bad Wolf', who later came to visit their classroom. The questions were very well conceived and delivered and showed these pupils to have a good level of ability in speaking and listening.
53. Teachers plan their lessons well, sharing their learning objectives with the class through the use of 'Walt' and 'Wilf', familiar characters to the whole school. They keep the teaching assistants well informed of their expectations. This is a significant factor in the successful input of these members of staff. Pupils respond well when listening to their teachers, persevere to complete tasks and are generally well behaved. Teachers intervene well in lessons to prompt pupils and encourage learning. Completed work is invariably marked but not always in sufficient detail so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Older pupils each have written targets, based on teachers' half-termly assessments of their work, which they strive to achieve. Self-assessment systems are beginning to be introduced so that pupils can judge their own performance against their targets. Classrooms have been made attractive through display and are rich in the key vocabulary related to the topics currently being studied.
54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The team responsible for leading the subject has not yet worked together due to the significant staff absences. The team leader has only recently taken over that role. She has the knowledge, enthusiasm and teaching and management skills to be successful in this role but has not yet been allocated class release time to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. She has inherited a self-review of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and has been thorough in analysing pupil data and so has many prioritised ideas for action within the subject. Teaching rooms, whilst generally adequate, are too small for whole-class teaching with the oldest pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The national literacy strategy has been implemented well and English lessons contain all the elements expected. Literacy skills are developed satisfactorily through work in other subjects although the school is aware that this has not yet been systematically planned to maximise potential. The curriculum revision now being undertaken in the light of the re-organisation of classes intends to take into account the opportunities presented in other subjects to use non-chronological, story and diary writing and to research using the Internet and library.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils make good gains in their understanding of numbers and mathematical concepts and their use in everyday life.
- Teachers follow the national strategy for numeracy to good effect.

Commentary

56. In the national tests last year the performance of pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 was well above average. At the time of the inspection standards were above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Given the high quality of teaching in the Years 1 and 2 class and the provision of booster classes for Year 6 pupils it is probable that standards will be well above average again by the end of the year. Throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities.
57. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are planned well and teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and support staff are used well and make a good contribution. An excellent lesson was seen in the Years 1 and 2 class and a very good lesson in the Years 4 and 5 class. These lessons illustrate all the best features of this school. The planning and delivery were of very high quality and successfully stimulated the pupils' interest and desire to learn. The lessons were well structured and included a wide variety of whole class, group and individual activities. Pupils knew what they were expected to learn, completed set tasks with energy and enthusiasm and understood what they had and what they had not learnt. In the Years 1 and 2 class pupils showed a good understanding of both two- and three-dimensional shapes for their age and were able to find various shapes around the classroom. In the Years 4 and 5 class all pupils made good gains in interpreting data and different graphs and the teacher made this 'real' by giving them examples of charts and graphs used in the real world.
58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection. This judgement is based on the examination of teachers' plans, other documents and discussions with the headteacher and other permanent staff. The school has given a high priority to raising standards in mathematics in recent years and has been successful in this. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, since at that time provision and outcomes were judged to be sound overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is good. Teachers use registration time to reinforce basic number skills and some good use of number is seen in science. The use of computers to extend pupils' understanding of numbers and, in particular, to enter and analyse data, is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 due to the stimulating, high quality teaching.
- Standards are not as high as they could be by the end of Year 6.
- Lessons are clearly planned and structured but most teachers do not take enough account of what pupils already know and can do.
- Support staff make a significant contribution in lessons.

Commentary

60. Standards in science are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Progress across the school is patchy but achievement is satisfactory overall. These judgments represent an improvement for pupils in Year 2 since the last inspection whilst the performance of pupils in Year 6 has improved at a similar rate to that seen nationally. Teachers now use the national scheme of work to plan lessons. As a result, there are better opportunities for pupils to carry out practical scientific investigations, which support and extend their knowledge and understanding.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Discussions and questionnaires show that, in general, pupils enjoy science. This was evident in a very good lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class when the use of real creatures – a snake, guinea pig, stick insect, goldfish and budgies – excited and enthused all pupils. Skilful questioning prompted pupils to use a high level of scientific vocabulary. Through lively discussions the pupils successfully matched the creatures to their groups including warm/cold blooded, diurnal/nocturnal and vertebrate/invertebrate. Teachers across the school make good links in lessons with other subjects, for example, by using pupils' mathematical skills to work out the class's average pulse rate. However, the work in pupils' books shows that opportunities are missed to reinforce literacy skills, especially spelling. Pupils' work is regularly assessed but teachers do not use the results well enough to ensure that pupils are given work matched to their needs. Older pupils are given too little guidance on how they could improve their work and what they should be aiming for. Classroom assistants provide good support in all lessons, including keeping pupils well focused on the activities.
62. Subject leadership has been affected by staff changes and absence so that planned developments have been delayed. The time available for science lessons is not always well managed so that some sessions are too long to maintain a good rate of learning.
63. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards are now higher by the end of Year 2, the scheme of work is well established and assessment procedures are in place. However, the role of the co-ordinator has not yet been developed to include the monitoring of teaching and learning. Assessment information has not been analysed so as to establish how standards could be raised further by the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good keyboard skills.
- There is too much variability in the use of the computer suite and laptops between classes.

Commentary

64. Pupils throughout the school have knowledge and understanding that is broadly in line with national norms. Achievement is satisfactory. A strength is the way in which many of the pupils

in Years 4, 5 and 6 use both hands when entering text. This is significantly better than in many other primary schools. During a very good lesson specifically on keyboard skills, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were quickly learning the difference between the 'CAPS LOCK' and 'SHIFT' keys. A good Years 5 and 6 lesson featured very good links between information and communication technology, literacy and history. However, teaching and learning are only satisfactory overall. This judgement is based on two lesson observations in the computer suite, use of computers in the classrooms, school documentation, displays and discussions with staff and pupils. There is too much variability in the use of available resources and breadth of learning experiences provided. Pupils could do better in relation to their literacy, numeracy and keyboard and mouse skills.

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Resources have improved significantly and the provision of a separate information and communication technology suite and a bank of laptop computers, with timetables for the use of both of these, is proving an effective strategy for delivery of the National Curriculum programmes of study. All staff apart from a relatively new teacher have undergone training through the national new opportunities funding. There is a good subject action plan, for completion by July this year, which has clear, relevant targets to improve the use of resources and staff competence, develop the pupils' key skills, including those with special educational needs, and improve the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. However, standards and teaching and learning are not significantly different from what they were judged to be in 1998.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. This is satisfactory overall. Good use of computers to support work in other subjects was seen in several lessons, including literacy, history and religious education using word-processing software and the Internet. Examination of pupils' work and teacher records shows that pupils have reasonable opportunities to reinforce and extend their numeracy skills through the use of modern technology, particularly in handling data. However, this was not seen in any of the observed lessons.

HUMANITIES

*Religious education and history are reported in full below. No lessons were seen in **geography** and there is insufficient evidence to make any judgements on provision or outcomes.*

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and by the end of Year 2 their attainment is good.
- Religious education is not taught consistently within the school. Older pupils have recorded very little work and teachers' plans and what appears in pupils' books do not always match the content of the subject curriculum planning map.
- The school has established good links with local places of worship which enable pupils to explore buildings and artefacts and understand more of the beliefs of others.
- Assessment systems have not yet been established and marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

67. At the time of the last inspection standards were average overall. Pupils' attainment and achievement have improved since then in Years 1 and 2 but in Years 3 to 6 standards remain average and achievement satisfactory.

68. The school has developed its own scheme of work guided by national and local syllabi. Pupils learn about a variety of world faiths and similarities and differences are explored, explained and valued. Pupils visit places of worship, for example the local mosque, and such activities, alongside involvement in the local education authority's 'Unity in the Community' project, broaden pupils' outlook on the customs, culture and beliefs of other groups within the community. Standing up to some racism in the locality, the school has persevered with its inclusive curriculum, for which it is to be commended.
69. Pupils in Year 2 know a lot about both the Christian and Islamic faiths, for example the circumstances of Jesus' birth, the message behind the story of the Good Samaritan, why Muslims favour symmetrical patterns in their art and why they wash before prayer. In one lesson, the teacher had stimulated their interest by bringing in a prayer mat and asked her class to write about what they knew. One pupil wrote that 'Muslims have to take this mat with them everywhere they go because they have to pray five times a day'. Years 4 and 5 pupils also studying Islam were able to articulate why the Hajj is so important to Muslims and one researched the content of the Ka'ba using the Internet. Other work seen in books and displays indicated that pupils were familiar with Bible stories, had illustrated the Chinese New Year and had visited churches and a Methodist Chapel. Pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class learned about Aboriginal beliefs from a recent Australian visitor. They told a story through dance performed for parents during an assembly.
70. Teaching is very good in the Years 1 and 2 class and satisfactory elsewhere. This judgement is based on lesson observations and evidence from pupils' work. A weakness in the teaching is the feedback offered to pupils through the marking of their work. Some work is not marked at all, some marked only for its correct use of English and some just ticked as seen. No examples of marking that helped pupils understand how to improve were seen. Assessment systems have not yet been established and, therefore, information is not used to inform planning. Teachers do not have an accurate picture of which pupils have and have not understood the ideas and concepts they have been attempting to teach.
71. Daily assemblies contribute to pupils' understanding of religion's place in the world and good opportunities are made to explain the meaning and significance of people's beliefs and how these drive their actions. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning but has not observed lessons.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- The teaching observed in the Year 1 and 2 class was very good.
- Assessment procedures do not give a clear picture of the standards pupils attain.

Commentary

72. The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are average and their achievement is satisfactory. This is a broadly similar picture to that in the previous inspection report. In Year 2 there is insufficient evidence in pupils' books and folders to form secure judgments about standards and achievement. However, in the very good lesson observed in Class 2, the majority of pupils attained standards well above what is expected for that age group and their achievement was also very good. This was due to carefully planned, imaginative and stimulating teaching.
73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall within a range from satisfactory to very good. Good use is made of artefacts such as old toys and Victorian pots to stimulate interest and

support understanding. In one class, the Internet was used well to gain information about the plight of working class Victorian children. Year 6 pupils benefited significantly from a visit to Saddleworth Museum when studying the Victorian way of life. Their literacy skills were reinforced through writing non-chronological reports of their experiences there. Good guidance is given on how pupils should structure and present their work. In some lessons different tasks are planned to match the varying learning needs of pupils. This helps all pupils to complete their work well and make suitable progress. Lessons are less successful when younger pupils, in particular, are kept too long on the carpet without being actively involved so they lose interest in what is being taught.

74. Subject leadership has been much affected by staff changes and absence and is currently unsatisfactory. Little monitoring takes place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to identify what needs to be improved. Assessment procedures have recently been agreed and are beginning to be implemented but as yet staff do not have a clear view of the standards being achieved across the school and how they might be raised further.
75. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A scheme of work, based on national guidance, is now in place and this provides appropriate coverage over time. As a result of this development, more use is made of first hand experiences and real objects to help pupils develop their historical understanding. However, the role of subject leader is still under-developed and assessment procedures have yet to be fully established.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There is insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements on provision, including teaching and learning, or outcomes in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education. No lessons were seen in any of these subjects.

76. In **art and design**, examples on display around the school show that pupils' work is valued and the subject is used quite well to promote pupils' cultural development. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have completed some very good work, using pencil, paint and computers, and inspired by the work of a Bangladeshi artist. However, examples of work seen in Years 4, 5 and 6 were of an average standard.
77. In **design and technology**, evidence from pupils' work, discussions with staff and pupils and documentation shows that the school has taken reasonable action to address the significant weaknesses identified in the last report. There are good links with a school with Technology status. The work seen indicates that the school pays good attention to the planning and designing aspects of the subject as well as developing pupils' making skills.
78. In **music**, the evidence from the observation of assemblies suggests that pupils' singing skills are broadly average for their age. There are lessons in all classes every week. Pupils receive instrumental tuition. A small number of pupils played their wind instruments during an assembly and were noticed to be reading musical notation during an incidental observation of a lesson. Music features in the school productions for parents.
79. **Physical education** is taught for two sessions every week in every class. There are satisfactory activities beyond lessons, including a weekly football training session taken by a parent and participation in matches against other schools. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate in residential experiences including outdoor adventurous activities.
80. Timetables indicate that the first two of these four subjects are not given enough priority in the teachers' planning. To some extent this is compensated by the termly 'theme weeks'. Discussion with staff and examination of documentation shows that the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all these subjects but that formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress, other than through the annual reports to parents, are not fully implemented.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in the subject. Three lessons were observed but only one was graded due to the limited length of time inspectors spent in the other two

81. Indications are that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. The school pays due regard to the national guidance and requirements. A sufficient amount of time is allocated to specific lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Many other aspects of the school's work contribute to the pupils' knowledge and understanding, including lessons in English, geography, history and religious education, assemblies and participation in the school council.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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