

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY FAMILY R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105830

Headteacher: Mrs. M. Roberts

Lead inspector: Mrs. D. Brigstock

Dates of inspection: 7-9 June 2004

Inspection number: 256484

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	206
School address:	Great Gates Road Rochdale Lancashire
Postcode:	OL11 2DA
Telephone number:	01706 640480
Fax number:	01706 632498
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Martin Collins
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Holy Family is a voluntary aided primary school serving the immediate estate of Kirkholt in Rochdale, where there is a high level of drug abuse and vandalism. A well above average percentage of pupils, (over 40 per cent) are entitled to free school meals and pupil mobility in and out of the school is high. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The socio-economic profile of the area is well below average, as is attainment on entry to the school. Over 20 per cent, which is an above average proportion of pupils, have a wide range of special educational needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. In 2001, the school won a Healthy Schools Award and its Investors in People status was re-awarded.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23067	Mrs. D. Brigstock	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Art and Design, Design and Technology
9981	Mr. S. Hussain	Lay inspector	
30457	Dr. D. Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, Geography, History, Personal, Social and Health Education
8316	Mrs. J. O'Hare	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, English, Music, Physical Education

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school's effectiveness is satisfactory** and it provides satisfactory value for money. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as are leadership and management. The school has suffered from significant staff changes over the last two years and this, along with the declining socio-economic background of its pupils, has been a barrier to pupils' achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and her vision for the school, shared by the governing body, is having a positive impact on the ethos for learning and drive for improvement.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4, but unsatisfactory in science in Years 5 and 6 and in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school.
- The good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities effectively contribute to pupils' achievement and self-esteem.
- The results of assessments are not used accurately enough to set targets for each year group.
- Members of the senior management do not work together effectively as a team.
- The level of attendance is below average.

The last inspection, in 1998, judged the school to be effective with some strong features. Since the appointment of the new headteacher 18 months ago, the key issues from 1998, of improving the quality of marking and ensuring that the governors' report to parents meets statutory requirements have been addressed. A new focus of raising standards is in place. Overall school improvement has been satisfactory.

### 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	E	D	B
mathematics	C	E*	E	B
science	E	E	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** As pupil mobility is high, standards are not compared against pupils' prior attainment. The results in the table above show that, although standards in English and mathematics were still below the national average in 2003, the pupils did better than those in similar schools, indicating good achievement by Year 6. Standards in science were well below average. Achievement was good in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics but unsatisfactory in science. Current standards in Year 6 are below average in all three subjects and achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 except in science, where it is unsatisfactory. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Standards in Year 2 are just below average but pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. The weakest area is in writing, where results in 2003 were in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is well below average with a large percentage of children having very poor language skills. Standards in reception are well below average but children achieve well, although few children are on course to attain the national goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year except in physical development, where standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, because of the good support they get.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall.**

**Teaching and learning are satisfactory.** No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Nearly three quarters of the lessons seen were at least good, with some very good teaching, particularly in Year 4. Most lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of resources, which effectively promote pupils' learning. From a scrutiny of recent work, when permanent teachers were absent in Years 5 and 6, expectations were not high enough and this had a damaging effect on pupils' learning. What pupils know and can do is assessed satisfactorily but the results are not yet used effectively, so pupils do not always make the progress they might. The use of assessment to record children's learning is good in the Foundation Stage and here, using it to plan specific activities for groups of children is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment, which provide pupils with worthwhile learning experiences and are an additional spur for learning. The external accommodation of the school is unsatisfactory but the school has this in hand.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The leadership of the headteacher is very good as is the financial management and control in the school. Other key senior staff have not worked together long enough to influence school improvement and this is unsatisfactory. The work of the governors is satisfactory. They meet all statutory requirements and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Management is satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators have a good understanding of their roles and monitor work in their areas regularly but are not yet using assessment data to set precise numerical targets for improvements in their subjects. This is also reflected in school improvement planning and performance management targets. All pupils are included very well in what the school and the local community have to offer.

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

Links with parents and with the community are good. The quality of information provided to parents is much improved since the last inspection, and most parents who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied with their children's education although they were rightly concerned with the number of supply teachers that older pupils have had. Most pupils are happy with what the school has to offer and a very high percentage agree that they have to work hard and that there are adults to turn to if they are in trouble. Several pupils correctly commented on the poor state of the playground.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve achievement in ICT throughout the school, and in English, mathematics and particularly science in Years 5 and 6.
- Use current assessment information to set clear targets for raising attainment for all pupils in each year group.
- Subject co-ordinators should lead, evaluate and monitor their curriculum areas with increased rigour.
- Work more closely with some families to improve levels of attendance.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

*Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Current standards are well below average in reception, improving to below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement varies between classes.

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

- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4 in English, mathematics and science.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in science in Years 5 and 6, and in ICT throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school.

#### **Commentary**

1. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, results in English were below average and well below average in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools they were above average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. The trend for improvement over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend with a marked improvement between 2002 and 2003. Pupils' achievement in 2003 was good in English and mathematics and poor in science. This represents a drop in standards since the last inspection, although comparisons between then and now are unreliable because of the altered socio-economic nature of the local area.
2. The new headteacher has successfully embedded the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, updated staff training in these areas and introduced a comprehensive assessment system to identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding and measure their progress, although these are not used well enough yet to set and track precise targets for each year group. In addition she has brought in consultants from the local education authority (LEA) to improve provision in English and mathematics. Currently pupils are attaining below average standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT and their achievement, from a low base, is satisfactory overall. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not well developed and their vocabulary is restricted, and this holds back their progress, particularly in English.
3. The standards being attained by pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been adversely affected by staff absence. This has also had a negative impact on their achievement in these year groups. These pupils have had several supply teachers and their learning has lacked continuity and sufficient rigour.
4. Conversely, the achievement for pupils in Years 3 and 4, where pupils have been taught by their own teachers, is good, and this is reflected in the standards they are attaining. From evidence in a scrutiny of pupils' work, in some cases, the standards in English and in science are higher in Year 4 than they are in Year 6. Now that permanent staff have returned to school, the opportunity exists for this fall in standards to be rectified.



The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points, Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (24.0)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	25.5 (24.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.5 (24.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- In Year 2, in the national tests of 2003, results were well below average for reading, low for writing, i.e. in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally, and below average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools they were below average in reading, well below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were average for pupils attaining the expected levels but few pupils reached above average standards. Current pupils have made significant gains this year, particularly in mathematics, and standards are just below average overall in all these subjects, although their writing is still not as good as their reading. However, their achievement, from a low base is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.6 (13.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.5 (11.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. Although the children's attainment on entry is well below average, particularly in their acquisition of language, they catch up with children nationally at a good rate. Teachers' assessments and findings from the inspection indicate that the attainment of most children is currently below rather than well below average in most areas of learning and that, despite this good achievement, most of them are unlikely to reach the goals expected for them, except in physical education where their attainment is average.
- In ICT, pupils' attainment is below average throughout the school and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils have important gaps in their knowledge as the full curriculum has not been taught until recently. This is unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The school has not kept pace with national developments. Too many pupils in Year 6 are unable to work without adult support and teachers' own knowledge and understanding of ICT skills lack sufficient depth.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs have a wide range of needs and benefit from specific help they receive, particularly in English and in mathematics. Throughout the school, these pupils achieve well and make good progress relative to their abilities, because the school is committed to inclusion and well-trained teaching assistants give good support for pupils' learning. The school has maintained good provision for special needs since the last inspection.

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

Pupils have good attitudes to school. Their behaviour is almost always good and often very good. They are growing in maturity, because the school fosters their personal development well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour help them to learn effectively.
- Very good relationships help the pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- There is good improvement in pupils' cultural education and their moral education is very good.
- The level of attendance for some pupils is unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

9. The headteacher has high expectations and sets very high standards. Consequently, the pupils have positive attitudes to school and are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are beginning to grow in confidence and self-esteem, through the way that they are valued individually. Almost all say that they enjoy coming to school. The level of support for all pupils is effective and ensures that they make the best possible use of their time in school. Teachers work hard to establish a good learning environment. In a significant number of lessons, pupils' attitudes were judged to be very good, indicating how successful the school is in this part of pupils' education. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection, and particularly since the arrival of the current headteacher.
10. The school promotes very good relationships, which encourage the pupils to participate in lessons, to have confidence to ask and to answer questions. In an effective science lesson in Year 1, for example, a pupil asked the teacher for the meaning of the word 'stem'. She seized this opportunity to allow others to contribute and to answer and, by providing further explanation, she enabled the pupils to learn about the function of this plant part. The high expectations set for the pupils result in pupils feeling safe from any form of harassment or bullying. Any reported incidents of are viewed seriously and attended to swiftly and efficiently. In discussion with the pupils in Year 5 and 6, they could not remember any incident of bullying. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal and social education, although they still have a lot to learn in how to communicate their thoughts and feelings because their language skills are limited.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards their work and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing. The good relationships help these pupils to gain self-confidence and self-esteem. The programme currently being implemented for social use of language is beginning to provide additional benefit to pupils' overall learning and to their involvement in the school and its community. During the inspection, a very well trained classroom assistant in this field was observed working with a group, to consider and to overcome any blocks and distractions to learning. This initiative provides good preparation for pupils' future education.
12. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a discussion with pupils in Year 5, it was evident that spiritual awareness is inherent in many aspects of school life and what the school seeks to achieve. The pupils quoted a range of subjects and examples which provide them with opportunities to reflect on the deeper understanding of matters beyond the material. The pupils find the Playground Pals initiative is spiritually satisfying, because they have opportunities to develop personally, by looking after younger pupils or others in need. The school's mission statement - to 'promote excellence in academic, aesthetic and spiritual learning' - is seen in practice throughout the school.

13. The school promotes very good moral development. Strong principles enable the pupils to distinguish right from wrong. The award of merit certificates encourages the pupils to behave well and to apply moral principles in their everyday lives. They are well aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. The pupils provide examples of discussing right and wrong, including instances of cruelty to animals, such as those in a circus. They recall work undertaken in history and in current affairs. They are able to offer views such as 'War can be right in defending your country'.
14. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The pupils like to raise money for good causes and are aware of the plight and suffering in the world. At school, they are provided with good opportunities to care for the younger children and enjoy participating in reading stories to them or hearing them read. Within the community, the pupils entertain the residents of the local hospice and participate in singing at Christmas in the town centre. These opportunities encourage the pupils to develop an appropriate code for living in the school community. The school is planning to set up a school council, but the headteacher sensibly wants to ensure that the arrangements will truly empower pupils, through carefully planned strategies. Pupils that are admitted from other schools quickly settle into the warm and welcoming ethos of the school and are immediately included very well in all the school has to offer.
15. The school has made good improvement in the provision it makes for pupils' cultural development since the headteacher's appointment. Her commitment and dedication to the pupils and the school community are seen in the way that the pupils feel about their own culture, as recorded by them in a motto: 'She makes us stand tall and proud'. In addition, the headteacher has made good links with a local school that has many pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. This supports pupils' cultural development well in both schools. Combined theatre workshops effectively enable the pupils to be more aware of the rich cultural diversity of this country. The impact of this is seen in the way they welcome pupils from an ethnic minority and make them feel very much part of the school community.
16. Currently attendance is unsatisfactory, but it is an improvement on last year when attendance was poor. Action is taken swiftly and effectively, if a pupil's absence is causing concern. The school does all it can to improve attendance and punctuality, but some of the parents do not recognise the importance of regular attendance in ensuring that their children achieve as well as they can.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
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
Black or Black British – African

No of pupils on roll
203
3

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	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 is satisfactory; teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but the use of assessment is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and the range of extra-curricular activities is good but the external accommodation of the school is unsatisfactory. Links with other schools and the community are good. The quality of care given to pupils is satisfactory.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff absence, in the recent past, has had a negative impact on pupils' learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- The quality of teachers' planning is good, as is their use of resources, and these factors make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The management of pupils is good throughout the school, ensuring no time is wasted.
- Teaching assistants and nursery nurses are used very well to support groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- Teachers give clear explanations of what pupils are going to learn and these provide a sharp focus for lessons.
- Teachers do not plan to use ICT well enough to support pupils' learning in any subject.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to set individual and group numerical targets for each class.

### **Commentary**

17. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. In Years 1 to 4, teaching and learning are good with some examples of very good teaching. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory in the recent past. During the inspection, teaching and learning in these year groups were satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but their use is currently unsatisfactory.
18. Since the last inspection there have been major changes in the staffing of the school. Few members of the current staff were present at the time of the last inspection. In addition there have been prolonged staff absences. Some of these absences have been covered by several supply teachers, which has resulted in some discontinuity in learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6. To combat this, the headteacher successfully recruited experienced supply staff, to take responsibility for Year 6. Permanent members of staff returned to work prior to the inspection and the quality of teaching and learning in lessons seen matches that found at the last inspection.
19. Teachers' planning is generally good. The quality of teaching and learning was uniformly good throughout the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, staff write particularly detailed plans, which clearly identify the lesson objectives for each area of learning and cross reference them to the foundation curriculum document. The reception class was taught by a supply teacher during the inspection and the planning for these children was also good. Teachers and nursery nurses, throughout the Foundation Stage, plan interesting activities which centre on a theme for the week, designing, preparing and delivering lessons which are interesting, practical and which motivate children to learn well. For example, in a good lesson in reception with a focus on number, the nursery nurse combined personal and social education plus mathematical learning, when showing children how to 'wash' some clothes in soapy water and hang them out to dry, combining this with counting activities and linking it to a story they had read as a class and to a nursery rhyme. These links to other curriculum areas engage children well, maintain

their interest, and allow them to make connections in their learning resulting in good achievement.

20. In Years 1 to 6, teachers have recently undertaken updated training on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, both by attending courses and by receiving training from consultants attached to the LEA. The results of this training are clear in lesson preparation, delivery and in raised standards, which are particularly evident in Years 1 to 4.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (15%)	20 (59%)	9 (26%)	0	0	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.*

21. In Years 1 and 2, two thirds of the lessons seen were good, including one very good lesson. Teachers' planning took good account of the learning needs of different groups in the class, enabling each of them to achieve well. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1 on writing a story, the teacher used resources she had made as a reminder for pupils of the five parts of a story structure she expected. Her expectations for the finished work were clear, but each group had a different objective to enable them all to achieve well. Different worksheets or reminders written in books had been prepared so that pupils didn't waste time in doing any unnecessary copying from the board. This lesson built on pupils' prior learning well and the planning was based on accurate assessments of each group's attainment.
22. This pattern is repeated in Years 3 and 4, where teachers work collaboratively to ensure that lessons build on what has been learned before, using accurate information from their constructive and evaluative marking to plan the next steps in learning. In Year 4, there is a high proportion of very good teaching which is reflected in the standards that this group of pupils is achieving. From a scrutiny of pupils' books in Years 5 and 6 over the last year, teachers' expectations have not been high enough and there is evidence to show that on occasion pupils covered the same ground. The quality of marking is not as good as in other classes and pupils have less pride in the presentation of their work. The result is that pupils' achievement, and therefore teaching in these classes, has been unsatisfactory over time.
23. Throughout the school, teachers' management of pupils is good. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and evident trust, clearly shown by the pupils' responses to their questionnaire. Staff and pupils listen to each other well. Classroom assistants have particularly good relationships with children. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, because teachers and support staff provide carefully modified programmes that meet their individual needs well. They consistently require the pupils to show high standards of behaviour. Initiatives such as the Social Use of Language Programme are also beginning to make a positive impact on individual pupils' behaviour.
24. Teachers' assessments through marking and through tests at the end of units of work accurately record pupils' attainment in each curriculum area. This is a good system but its use is currently unsatisfactory because it is neither firmly embedded into the school's routines nor used well enough in each year group, either to set targets for improvement or to be included in teachers' planning documents. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 lack the necessary information to plan specific activities for different groups, apart from pupils with special educational needs, who have their own personal targets.
25. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the ICT curriculum are unsatisfactory. The school has not kept pace with development in this quickly growing area of learning and the full curriculum is not taught, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement for pupils throughout the school.

## The curriculum

The overall curriculum provision is satisfactory. The range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum is good. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, well planned and motivates children to learn.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities promotes pupils' personal qualities well.
- The planned use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

26. There has been satisfactory improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced to meet all statutory requirements and it caters appropriately for the needs of the pupils. All subjects are taught and schemes of work for each subject ensure that overall planning is appropriate. The school is now implementing the national strategies for English and mathematics appropriately. A noteworthy feature is the development of French lessons in Year 3.
27. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. New initiatives were put in place by the previous coordinator, particularly in planning and assessment, and these have been maintained. The provision is carefully structured and children are engaged well in activities planned by adults and those they plan for themselves. This results in children having greater ownership of their learning.
28. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good, as it is appropriately adapted for their needs by means of individual education plans. The pupils are set appropriate targets and the teaching assistants and support staff are effective in helping these pupils to access the curriculum.
29. The school's commitment to pupils' equality of opportunity is good. Teachers and support staff usually plan their lessons clearly to provide work for pupils of different abilities in their classes, where they have the information to do so. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and activities. The planning for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school is in the process of introducing of a more structured programme.
30. One of the school's strengths is its good provision of extra-curricular activities, which makes a substantial contribution to pupils' good attitudes and to their standards of behaviour. The provision is well organised with a wide range of sporting and musical activities. Music is a particular strength with a school choir and a brass band. The school looks continually for ways to extend pupils' experiences beyond the classroom, such as when they work with other schools in the area to celebrate a Festival of Light or when they organise concerts in the local hospice.
31. The school now has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and well-qualified support staff to deliver the curriculum. Curriculum coordinators understand their roles and now that the staffing situation has been stabilised, they have planned non-contact time in which to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities such as work scrutinies and lesson observations. The internal accommodation is satisfactory and enhanced well by bright, colourful, and informative displays of work. The external accommodation is unsatisfactory at present. The headteacher and governors have plans to improve the outdoor provision, in particular by resurfacing and fencing the school playground to help guard against constant vandalism. Resources are unsatisfactory overall, with particular deficiencies in English, mathematics, ICT, history, geography and in the school library.

## Care, guidance and support

This is a similar picture to the last inspection. The school makes satisfactory provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with satisfactory support and guidance and is in the early stages of involving them in the work of the school and its development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are introduced to school life well.
- The school works closely with the community in giving advice, support, and guidance on matters of personal development.
- Pupils form very good, trusting relationships with adults because of the school's very strong family ethos.

## Commentary

32. New children to the school are gradually and sensitively inducted. Children have a phased introduction, with their parents into the nursery, and, because both nursery and reception classes share staff, their movement from one class to another is smooth and uncomplicated. During the year, parents are invited to special events such as a 'Teddy Bears Picnic'. They can also take part in a morning session of activities to experience learning routines.
33. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The LEA's procedures are followed and the school works closely with other agencies. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required regarding the school environment and also school trips. The school has done its best to improve the state of the playground and minimise the risks to safety since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors have now appointed a building contractor to make significant improvements.
34. The school works closely with the community to promote health and safety. For example, Years 5 and 6 can take part in the 'Crucial Crew' programme to learn about basic emergency procedures.
35. There is a good link with the Children's Society. For instance, a worker attends the school each week and works with pupils on issues such as 'anger management'. This is an example of the school's inclusive approach to learning as it seeks to remove personal and social barriers to learning.
36. This school has a strong family ethos, underpinned by very good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. This gives pupils confidence in raising any concerns they may have, for example, about bullying. The pupils with special educational needs have very good and trusting relationships with their teachers and support staff, as evidenced during the inspection and from parents' and their children's pre-inspection comments. The loving care that all pupils receive from the headteacher is seen in the way they are valued individually.
37. It is encouraging that pupils were asked about the school's mission statement before changes were made and also their ideas for the new playground. The school has firm plans to develop a school council and increase pupils' involvement in the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the community, including other schools and colleges. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. For instance, information to parents and links in the community are much better.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good procedures to ensure parental satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints.
- Parents are well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress and this helps them to become more involved in their children's learning.
- A very small number of parents condone their children's absence.
- Good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and support learning well.

## **Commentary**

38. Parents have a high regard for the school and its work. The headteacher is very approachable and makes a point of meeting parents as often as possible, for instance, at the start and end of the school day. Any complaints are dealt with fairly and effectively.
39. Parents are well informed about the school through the nursery brochure, newsletters and booklets. Much information is given about provision for pupils with special educational needs and forthcoming work in the curriculum in each class. Workshops are held on the importance of play, 'Jolly Phonics', literacy, reading and national tests (SATs). Pupils' annual reports are helpful and informative. Strong features include target setting and pupils' comments. However, the school has a tendency for using educational jargon that creeps into a few reports and also the school prospectus. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress. They are pleased with the provision for their children.
40. Although parental involvement with the school is generally satisfactory, a few parents do not fully support the school's efforts to raise attendance. For instance, they take holidays in term time occasionally and this has a negative impact on their children's learning.
41. The school has developed many good links in the community. The church makes a good contribution to spiritual development through leading services and mass regularly. Sports clubs provide pupils with good opportunities for coaching in football and rugby skills. Accomplished artists regularly work with pupils and lead art, dance and drama lessons and activities. The link with the Rochdale Arts and Heritage Centre supports cultural development well.
42. Pupils' awareness of other cultures, values and beliefs is well supported through its link with a local school that has many pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The school acts as a work experience provider for trainee teachers and also puts much back into the community in other ways. For instance, pupils often raise money for charities and the school choir performs regularly in the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher provides very good leadership and a very clear educational direction for the school. Leadership of other key staff is unsatisfactory. Management is satisfactory, as is the governance of the school. The high staff turbulence, falling socio-economic background of the pupils, and the below average level of attendance are significant barriers to raising pupils' achievement.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and the governors have a very clear vision for school improvement and have re-written the school aims to reflect this.
- The leadership of the headteacher, during the absence of key staff, and in the face of high staff turbulence, is very good.
- The senior management team have not worked together effectively as a team.
- The school's financial management and control is very good.



- The quality of recent staff training and development is very good, and instrumental in the raised standards that are so evident in Years 1 to 4.
- The school's commitment to inclusion and racial equality is very good.
- The use of assessment to set numerical targets to raise standards further in each year group is not yet effective enough.

## Commentary

43. On her appointment the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body and involving staff and pupils appropriately, re-wrote the school's mission statement to reflect higher aspirations for achievement whilst maintaining the school's strong Christian ethos. This effectively re-focused the leadership of the school on raising standards. Since her appointment, the headteacher has led and improved provision in English, mathematics and special needs very well. At the same time, she has provided very good up-to-date training in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and introduced a comprehensive assessment system. She has also arranged for experienced supply staff to release subject co-ordinators for additional training in a leadership programme and to fulfil their monitoring roles. These initiatives have boosted staff morale and the self-esteem of pupils and, in a relatively short space of time, have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the school, particularly up to, and including, Year 4. Due to staff absence these initiatives are not yet firmly embedded into Years 5 and 6 and this is reflected in the achievement of this group of pupils.
44. The headteacher has accessed very good support from the LEA and forged improved links and relationships with parents and a wider community of schools than at the last inspection. The high aspirations of the headteacher have ensured improved provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and, in consequence, the needs of most pupils are well met. The school has developed a good and effective race equality policy, which reflects the governors' strong belief in this aspect of pupils' social and cultural development. The commitment of the headteacher and governors in this regard is clearly apparent. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were judged to be good overall with very good leadership by the headteacher. The leadership of the headteacher is still very good, but overall the leadership and management of the school is now satisfactory because the senior management team, through absence, is less effective now than then.
45. The governors work as a united team, and their commitment to the school is clear. They are well informed by the headteacher of the attainment and achievement of pupils compared to other schools. They have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the principles of best value, as evidenced by their knowledge on the best way to improve the external accommodation of the school. Regular visits to the school and involvement in lessons by some governors, including the Chair, also help them to get a satisfactory feel for what is happening in the school. Their work is satisfactory overall as their role in strategic school improvement planning, and thus holding the school to account for below average standards, is still developing. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
46. The school's financial control and systems are very good. The bursar manages all the day-to-day financial procedures, reporting to the governors and the headteacher as and when required. This level of efficiency removes a considerable burden from the headteacher, enabling her to focus on raising standards of teaching and learning, whilst keeping her well informed of the school's financial position on a regular basis.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	576,603	Balance from previous year	46,144
Total expenditure	574,582	Balance carried forward to the next	48,165
Expenditure per pupil	2789.23		

*Following previous staff turbulence, the governors have decided on a carry forward of at least £20,000 to guard against any future staffing issues. Additional money has been earmarked for improving resources, particularly in the library.*

47. A new co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2 has been appointed but does not start until September 2004. The other two members of the senior management team returned to school just prior to the inspection. Although the headteacher appointed another member of staff in a temporary role as co-ordinator for Years 1, 2 and the Foundation Stage, these key staff in the senior management team have not worked together in a planned and consistent way for some time. Therefore, their work towards improving the school's provision is unsatisfactory. This situation was out of the school's control, but the effect has been minimised as much as possible by the headteacher's use of consultants from the LEA. Subject co-ordinators understand their roles and have a planned monitoring programme, which includes written feedback to members of staff on the standards of pupils' work and strengths and weaknesses in provision, and this is improving teachers' expectations and pupils' standards. However, their subject action plans do not contain targets that are precise enough for them to measure pupils' progress from one year to the next. This is also a weakness of the school improvement plan. Although the school's new assessment procedures are in place, the results of assessments are not yet consistently used to set specific success criteria for each year group. In addition, the results are not yet used effectively enough to set performance management objectives concerning pupil performance for individual classes, and this is why management is satisfactory rather than good. The headteacher is well aware of this need, and plans to make these changes as soon as enough assessment information, for each year group, has been collected and analysed.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. Provision for nursery aged children and those of reception age is good. The Foundation Stage comprises 20 part time nursery children and 24 reception children in separate classes, although they do share the outdoor learning area in a planned programme. Overall, the attainment of the youngest children entering school is well below the level expected, and lower than at the time of the last inspection. On entry to reception, attainment for the majority of pupils remains well below average. Although a few children are likely to gain the nationally expected goals in all areas by the end of their time in reception, it is unlikely that this will be the case for most children, apart from in physical development where standards are likely to be average. However, children show good achievement over their time in the Foundation Stage and improve their abilities and skills from well below average on entry to below average by the time they enter Year 1.
49. The quality of teaching and learning in all areas of learning, in both the nursery and in reception, is good overall and this good quality teaching is the reason for all children's good achievement. Teachers' long term planning for the curriculum is good. These plans are detailed, particularly in the nursery, and have a clear focus on how the children should make small steps in their learning. The arrangements for assessing what children know, understand and can do are being used systematically to help teachers plan suitable activities. These provide children with sufficient and appropriate challenge and purpose to develop specific skills, build on prior learning and also motivate them to learn. Records kept by adults give sufficient information for it to be clear exactly *which* children have achieved *what* in each area of learning.
50. Current induction arrangements help children to settle into school well. The accommodation is spacious, light and attractive. Resources, particularly the outdoor area in the nursery which both classes share, are good and easily accessible to all children. Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. The previous coordinator, having re-vitalised the provision, has recently left the school. During the inspection, the reception class was taught by a supply teacher. However, the well-trained and experienced team of nursery teacher and nursery nurses, together with the diligence of the supply teacher, ensured that the Foundation Stage ran smoothly. The criticisms from the last inspection have been dealt with and good improvement has been made. Links with parents are good and help children to feel valued and secure.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships between staff, children and parents.
- Routines are well established.
- Children take responsibility for resources well.

#### Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are good and most children achieve well in this area of learning. Staff enjoy good relationships with all children and ensure they feel happy and secure in school. Staff greet parents as they enter school and share information about the children. Both parents and children know the classroom routines well, and even the youngest children separate happily from their parents or carers and immediately follow classroom routines, for example, walking to the painting table, and putting on an overall without being prompted.

52. In the reception class, many children play alongside each other without communicating through speech. Nevertheless they share resources sensibly and take turns to use equipment. Adults insist on high standards of behaviour and provide children with good role models. Resources are arranged so that children can access them independently and replace them appropriately. Older children are given many opportunities to work in focused groups, often led by adults, where they learn to consider each other's feelings. It is likely that only a small number of children will attain the goals expected in this area of learning because their social skills and attitudes towards each other, although improving at a good rate, remain very immature. This judgement is verified by assessments from the school.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Role play is used well to promote speaking and listening skills.
- Stories and drama effectively promote children's language skills.
- Children's language skills are well below average and, on occasion, the formal literacy activities are too difficult for them.

### **Commentary**

53. Teaching and learning overall are good, as is achievement. Most children enter the nursery with very poor speaking and listening skills, and are not used to voicing their thoughts or explaining what they feel. Teachers are well aware of this, and activities are carefully planned to develop these skills through a wide range of experiences including role-play, which make learning fun. For example, in the nursery, the staff set up the role-play area with a 'seaside' theme. The teacher successfully worked with the children to teach them new words such as 'goggles' and 'dinghy,' encouraging them to use language about the seaside when, for example, making sandcastles.
54. In reception, the teacher used drama and puppets very well to encourage children to tell the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Children took confidence from speaking through the puppets, adding expression to their voices when taking on the roles of the main characters, and made clear gains in their learning. By the end of the lesson, almost all the children could re-tell the story in the right order and apply different voices to the characters. However, as a follow-up to this activity the children were asked to think of rhyming words for 'goat.' This activity was too difficult as their vocabulary was not wide enough and only the highest attaining children could recall words such as 'coat' or 'boat.'
55. Higher attaining children are beginning to read and write with some independence. With encouragement from the teacher and modelling from big print, they can write sentences such as "This is mummy BiLLmy gout. She luvliy." (This is Mummy Billy Goat Gruff. She is lovely). They can re-tell a well-known story and know the sounds that the letters of the alphabet make. Lower attaining children write a series of letter shapes and are able to 'read' their sentences back to the teacher. This is good achievement from a low base. Children enjoy looking at books and try to tell stories through looking at the pictures. There has been a real improvement in literacy skills since last year's assessment results and children's skills in writing and reading in particular have improved a lot. Their achievement is good. However, it is unlikely that most children will attain the goals expected for them. In order to raise standards further, children's speaking and listening skills need to be a focus for further development.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good array of interesting, planned activities that stimulate learning.
- In reception, children's counting skills are good for their age.

## Commentary

56. No lessons with a mathematical focus were observed in the nursery, although children were briefly observed searching for shapes in the sand and practising writing numbers using chalk.
57. In reception, teaching and learning are good, as is achievement. In one good lesson seen, children 'washed' clothes in a tray of soapy water and then hung them on a line to dry. They counted and labelled the clothes on the line by pegging numbers onto them and this practical, fun activity promoted their learning well. By the end of the group's work time, through helping each other and being prompted by the nursery nurse, the children could sequence numbers 1 to 10 correctly. The highest attaining children make up their own simple number games and take turns to roll a dice before practising writing the number shown. They can recognise numbers to 100. This represents very good achievement in counting. Staff have high expectations of the children. In the mathematics corner, staff have made a large number jigsaw of a hundred square. Several children were observed trying to do this jigsaw by matching the numbers on their jigsaw pieces to the square and they were clearly pleased when a picture of a treasure island emerged. Printing repeating patterns using paint and corks also captured their interest. 'Talking' computer games aided children in learning mathematical language such as small, medium and large when finding shoes in a 'shoe shop'. Learning to write and order numbers is a strong area of the curriculum and the majority of children appear likely to attain the standard expected in counting and in learning to use simple patterns. However, due to their lack of language skills it is unlikely that most of them will be able to use the vocabulary expected for their age to add, subtract or to solve simple mathematical problems.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan activities with 'themes' that help children to focus on their learning.
- Children do not have access to a sufficient variety of computer activities.

## Commentary

58. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is achievement. Adults provide many opportunities for children to explore and investigate the world around them. Children in the nursery explore materials such as sand, chalk, play dough and water, and use their senses to find out about collections of shells, pebbles and seaweed brought in by the staff. They learn, through experimenting, how to blow through tubes to make water move from one place to another, and which containers hold water and which leak. In the role play area, prompted well by adults, children learn about the seaside. Throughout the week, activities are linked to a theme such as the seaside in the nursery, and this results in children making links with their learning and achieving well.
59. In reception, children worked with the teacher to find out how bubbles were made. This was a good lesson which was building on some prior work on blowing bubbles, and resulted in children making their own bubble prints. Throughout the activity, the teacher posed questions to make the children think. She asked them why they thought bubbles burst, one of them replying,

“because they must be full of water and then they are too heavy.” The teacher then led the children to discover that this was not the case, without damaging the child’s self-esteem.

60. Despite this range of interesting and well-planned activities, it is unlikely that most children will attain the goals expected for them in this area of learning because their experiences of the wider world are very restricted.
61. Children in the nursery and in reception have access to simple computer games which they know and on which they practise learning in, for example, mathematics or in language. Since the coordinator left, timetabled lessons in the computer suite for groups of children have been discontinued and, although children can use simple paint programs to draw pictures, and they can use a mouse to click and drag objects around a screen, their skills are not improving quickly enough because they have no specific time when they are taught to use ICT.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided for children to learn a variety of physical skills.
- The outdoor area in the nursery is used well to promote learning.

### **Commentary**

62. Teaching and learning are good, as is achievement. When children start in the nursery they have had very little experience of using scissors or pencils. During the inspection, children were provided with small apparatus, chalks, scissors, felt tip pens and painting equipment to improve these skills and their achievement is good. Likewise they are given many opportunities to climb and clamber over large playground equipment and the highest attaining children use their imagination well to make their play more interesting. For example, one girl, when at the top of the climbing apparatus, decided that she was a princess who needed rescue because her tower was on fire. The nursery nurse quickly rounded up other children to be firemen and put out the ‘fire’. Lower attaining children are restricted in imaginative play by their lack of language, just making animal noises and chasing around when playing with toy dinosaurs.
63. Children in the nursery and in reception learn to take turns and to play safely. For example, staff set up an ‘Obstacle Course’ and, under direction, reception children could take turns to safely complete the course, weaving in and out of poles, crawling through tunnels, taking alternate steps above ground level, and jumping two-footed into hoops. The school provides good opportunities for all of these activities. Most children could confidently ride tricycles around a course. Reception aged children are developing skills of cutting and sticking and are beginning to show increasing control over putting on their coats unaided.
64. It is likely that most children are on course to meet the expected goals in this area of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide a good range of craft activities.
- Children’s painting skills are good.

### **Commentary**

65. Teaching and learning are good, as is achievement for all children. In the nursery, children are given a good range of media to use in focused activities to make pictures or models for their topic. During the inspection they made and decorated fish. Children can always independently access paints, brushes and paper and they clearly value these resources and use them with great care.
66. In a good lesson in reception, children were encouraged to explore the sounds percussion instruments made. The teacher led the class to explore sounds and match them to characters and sounds in the 'Billy Goats Gruff' story, encouraging listening skills at the same time, and this led to good learning. Outside, a group of children worked together, sharing paints, to decorate a large model of the 'Ugly Troll'. All the planned activities link to learning in other areas of the curriculum such as making bubble pictures while exploring how bubbles are made. No dance activities were seen but children did take on the roles of the characters in their story using puppets well. On the evidence from assessment records and previous achievement, it is likely that about half of the class will meet the expected goals in this area of learning, which is below average.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well overall.
- Overall, teaching is good with very good teaching observed in Years 3 and 4.
- The headteacher has effectively implemented the national literacy strategy throughout the school.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply speaking and listening skills.
- There are not enough good quality books, either in classrooms or the library.

#### **Commentary**

67. The 2003 national tests results for Year 6 pupils were below the national average, but above the average for similar schools. The test results for Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and they were very low in writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading were below average, and well below average in writing. During the inspection, the standards of pupils' work seen in Year 6 were below average. There has been a high turnover of teachers in recent years, causing considerable disruption to the continuity of learning for pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a result, while achievement is broadly satisfactory in those classes, it is not as high as in Years 1 to 4. This is the main cause of lower standards, particularly in the current Year 6. However, there is a trend of rising standards, with marked improvement in 2003. In the current Year 2, standards are just below average, and improving well on previous years. Overall, starting from a low level on entry, the pupils achieve well. All pupils are well supported in their learning, including those who experience learning difficulties and those who are more able, through carefully adapted programmes of work to meet their individual needs. Comparisons with the last inspection report cannot be validly made, because of the significant change in the nature of the school's intake.
68. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in the current Year 2 and Year 6. Listening skills are insufficiently well developed in some pupils, as yet. While there are some examples of teachers providing good opportunities to develop speaking and listening, these are not consistent across the school. The headteacher justly recognises the need to improve

pupils' skills of speaking and listening and this is a high priority area for development and features in the School Improvement Plan. The school has focused its attention on raising achievement in reading and writing recently. However, pupils do not have sufficiently well developed language skills, which form the foundation for developing literacy skills. The programme currently being implemented for social use of language is beginning to provide additional benefit to pupils' overall learning and to their involvement in the school and its community. During the inspection, a very well trained classroom assistant in this field was observed working with a group, to consider and to overcome any blocks and distractions to learning. This initiative provides good preparation for pupils' future education.

69. In reading, standards are below average in Year 2 and 6 although there has been a significant rise in standards in Year 2 this year. The teaching of reading is effective, as the school has made this a priority for improvement. The head has put into place numerous strategies and training for staff and these are beginning to pay dividends. Pupils' work was analysed, gaps were identified and effective action has been taken to address weaknesses. In addition, the standards of different groups and boys and girls were also analysed, in order to ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. This is one example of the school's good commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. In consequence, standards are now rising and in Year 6, the pupils are on track to achieve the school targets. However, there is a serious lack of good quality books in the school and this has a detrimental effect on overall standards of reading and for encouraging the pupils to love books. Nevertheless, while hearing the pupils read, it was obvious that they enjoy literature, particularly in Year 3 and 4. This is due to the infectious enthusiasm of the teachers in those two classes.
70. Standards in writing are just below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of writing opportunities including factual, poetry and stories. In Year 2, the teacher helps the pupils to consider different ways of writing, through meaningful marking with comments such as 'Can you think of other time connectives instead of then?' This method of marking is not yet consistently applied throughout the school, as also noted at the last inspection. In Year 3, there are very many opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills, such as book reviews specifically for older pupils. Year 4 pupils put their points of view forward very well in persuasive writing, for example, on why people should not smoke indoors. These pupils achieve very well and reach standards that are above average. Some Year 5 pupils use ICT to draft a letter to the editor, but overall, ICT is underused to support and extend English throughout the school.
71. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good teaching observed, especially in Years 3 and 4. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the overall quality of teaching. They are well informed by the teachers so that they are able to work effectively with pupils of all abilities, providing a good level of support that is well matched to individual needs. Pupils are generally appropriately challenged and respond well to the levels of expectations made. Lessons are well planned and structured, particularly in Years 1 to 5. The pupils are clear about what they are to learn and in the summary sessions, they evaluate what they have learned and how they can improve their work further. Teachers' explanations are informative and clear, which leads the pupils to gain new knowledge and skills. Work is well matched to pupils' different abilities, so that they are suitably challenged. In the best lessons, teaching is lively and enthusiastic. Expectations and levels of challenge are high, as observed in Year 5, when the staff posed challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking. Overall, assessments of what pupils know and can do are accurate. Using these assessments to set and track pupils' progress from one year to the next needs to be further developed.
72. The headteacher leads and manages the subject well. She oversees the provision for English, together with the literacy governor. The headteacher and the local education consultants have monitored lessons and this has led to improvements in standards. The national literacy strategy has been implemented throughout the school and there is now a clear understanding of the school's performance.



## Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school is not sufficiently planning for the development of language skills across the curriculum and so opportunities to develop speaking skills through subjects are missed. There are some good examples where literacy skills are well used. This was seen in science in Year 5, where the pupils recorded their investigations on evaporation and in history in Year 4, where the pupils wrote thoughtfully about 'Justice for All', in connection with Martin Luther King. However, the headteacher recognises the need for teachers to develop pupils' language skills in other subjects as the key area for school improvement.

## Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs make consistently good progress.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with some good teaching seen.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in most years.
- There is insufficient application of mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

74. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are below average for their age. Pupils achieve well by the end of Years 2 and Year 4. However, as a result of recent staff absences, pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory only. Data from recent national test results shows that girls were not attaining as well as the boys. The school has not yet successfully addressed this issue. However, all pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, are supported well and are fully included in all activities.
75. Current pupils in Year 2 have made significant gains in their learning this year. Most pupils count to 100 and are aware of place value in tens and units, recognising the value of digits in numbers. Most, but not all, are aware of subtraction as the inverse of addition, and coins are recognised by almost all. Some of the higher attaining pupils at this age solve mental calculations and problems well, but for the lowest attaining pupils, their lack of reading and comprehension skills inhibits the application of their knowledge. Little work was seen in shape, space and measures as most of the programmes of study for this area take place later in the summer term. The quantity and levels of planned work are appropriate.
76. The lessons observed during the inspection and careful analysis of pupils' work show that a broad curriculum is presented to pupils. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 showed an appropriately high focus on number work, with pupils counting in 10s and rounding to the nearest 10s and 100s. There was one very good lesson on number lines in Year 4 when pupils of all abilities showed how rapidly they could calculate various multiplication and division problems. While mental strategies are often well taught, there is no clear expectation of what pupils should know by the end of each year and of how rapidly they should be able to calculate. There were several examples in workbooks of appropriate problem-solving strategies and challenging mathematical investigations, but evidence suggests that these aspects of the work need further development.
77. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good and occasionally very good features in Years 3 and 4. In the best lessons, teachers' subject knowledge and skilful questioning enabled them to adapt the national numeracy strategy in ways to suit pupils of different abilities. The effective feedback they give to pupils helps them to understand how well they are doing and what they

need to do next. Year 4 pupils achieve very well because of very skilful and challenging teaching, but they do not continue at the same rate of progress in Years 5 and 6 because staff absences have had a pronounced effect on their levels of achievement. Relationships and behaviour are always good. Teachers respect the pupils and value their contributions in lessons. As a result, classroom management is unfailingly good. The sessions at the end of lessons are not consistently evaluative and, as a result, do not provide teachers with a clear picture of pupils' progress during the lesson. Assessment procedures are appropriate, but the information gathered is not used satisfactorily to diagnose areas of further learning. Marking is regular, but it does not always indicate steps for improvement. There are missed opportunities for the use of ICT to reinforce mathematical skills.

78. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory. The subject leader recently returned to school after a period of illness and there has been regular support from the LEA mathematics consultant, which has benefited other permanent staff and provision in these year groups. However, the monitoring of lesson planning, teaching, learning and standards is not sufficiently rigorous. The mathematics action plan, although detailed in many ways, does not contain rigorous and precise targets for improvements in standards. As standards at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection, and the leadership and management have not been as effective, the school's improvement in this subject is unsatisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

79. There are a limited number of curriculum areas where a link has been established with mathematics, though some data collection and handling appears within other subjects, for example, in science. Pupils were observed developing their mathematical skills in some physical education lessons. However, the use of numeracy across the curriculum is not planned well and pupils have too few opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 to 3 and very good in Year 4 because the quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards, by Year 6, are well below average.
- The newly appointed coordinator has made a good start to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, analysing strengths and weaknesses in the subject and taking action to raise standards.
- The results of assessments are not used well enough to track pupils' progress and raise standards.

#### **Commentary**

80. By the end of Year 2, standards, although below average, have risen this year because of better planning and marking. Pupils' achievement, from a low base, is good. By Year 2, pupils receive a good balance of work including learning facts about aspects of the curriculum such as the similarities and differences between humans and animals, and a good focus on improving their investigative skills, and this is raising standards. By Year 4, pupils' achievement is very good. Teachers, particularly in Year 4, have very high expectations and drive pupils' learning forward relentlessly, resulting in standards that, for the highest attaining pupils, match those expected in Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have unsatisfactory achievement and are reaching standards that are well below average and this has been the trend over the last four years. The improvements that have taken place in lower year groups, particularly in the planning of work,

have not taken place here because of prolonged staff absence in both year groups. A scrutiny of work reveals that pupils cover old ground, rather than learning anything new; the quality of marking and of presentation is poor; and all pupils are completing the same tasks regardless of their prior attainment. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection.

81. Just prior to the inspection, the permanent staff in Years 5 and 6 returned, and the quality of teaching in the lessons seen in these groups was satisfactory. In Years 1 to 4, the quality of teaching was good overall, with very good teaching and learning in Year 4. The staff in these year groups have benefited from the changes in the curriculum planning and the higher expectations now demanded for this subject.
82. Good emphasis is placed on investigation, so that lower attaining pupils, who are unable to express themselves clearly, learn in a meaningful way. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher provided pupils with a very good range of different types of magnets and objects for first hand testing, all the time ensuring that pupils used the correct terms 'repel' and 'attract' as names of the forces in action. By the end of the lesson, the class had moved onto measuring forces using Newton meters. All class members worked hard, time targets were set, the vocabulary of forces was constantly reinforced, and pupils' learning was very good as they began to discuss their knowledge and apply it. In the satisfactory lessons seen, the pace of learning was not as quick because the pupils lacked enough practical activity to inspire them to learn as quickly. Teachers relied too much on pupils' listening and observational skills for learning. There is little evidence of pupils using ICT to present, sort, or display their findings. ICT is underused to support learning in science.
83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has been newly appointed and has made a good start in her role. She has already monitored the quality of teaching and learning in all classes except Year 4, and undertaken a scrutiny of work, providing written feedback on her findings. She has introduced a nationally approved scheme of work, which is now in place throughout the school. She has correctly identified the need for better lesson planning that will address the needs of all groups in the classes, and introduced a termly assessment of pupils' investigative skills. The results of these assessments and other tests now need to be used to set targets for attainment that can be measured more accurately, particularly in Years 3 to 6, in order to raise standards. Her leadership has had a good impact on the school's provision in science apart from in Years 5 and 6 where she has been unable to work with permanent staff and, consequently, there has been a fall in standards at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are enthusiastic and willing to learn.
- Analysis of pupils' previous work and discussions with current pupils show that there are important gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- There is not enough use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- Some teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject.
- Resources do not currently enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment.

### **Commentary**

84. The full range of the National Curriculum for ICT has not been taught until quite recently and, consequently, across the school pupils attain standards that are below those expected for their age. This reflects a deterioration in standards since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in

ICT by the end of Years 2 and 6 is unsatisfactory, and there was little evidence in the scrutiny of pupils' previous work of interesting and challenging tasks.

85. Pupils in Year 2 knew the location of certain keys on a computer keyboard. However, when they were using a 'roamer,' a number of pupils had difficulty in sequencing movements by estimating distance and predicting the changes in direction that were necessary to reach a given point. Most pupils lacked familiarity with control devices.
86. Pupils in Year 6 have limited knowledge and understanding of computer skills. Despite teaching and learning in the lessons seen being sound, the progress made in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding is not rapid enough and there are limited opportunities for them to consolidate their learning in other subjects. Pupils are motivated and interested in ICT and some are beginning to explain with increasing clarity what they have learnt and found out about the subject. Pupils in Year 6 do not use e-mail facilities and they have very little understanding of the use of spreadsheets or of the use of control devices. Most are unable to work independently in the ICT suite.
87. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the lessons observed. The school is making valiant efforts to provide booster sessions during lunchtimes and to create smaller teaching groups during the school day. In Year 4, for example, the pupils were divided into two working groups, one with a specialist teacher in the ICT suite and another with a supply teacher in the classroom. Overall, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they lack confidence to plan for a range of modified tasks for the different pupils in their class. As a result, most pupils rely too heavily on their teachers or the teaching assistants and pupils capable of higher standards lack challenge. Teachers are beginning to use assessment to enable them to plan more carefully to meet the needs of individual pupils, but the information that is gathered is not yet used well enough to provide individual targets for improvement. Literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted well enough in ICT to enhance standards of achievement.
88. The subject leader was appointed quite recently, but was absent for part of the year. A teacher with specialist knowledge of ICT will take over as the subject leader in September 2004. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. There is no monitoring of standards, teaching and learning. Although resources have improved gradually, they are still unsatisfactory and this has a significant impact on standards. The ICT suite is small and cramped and this affects teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

89. There is no whole-school approach to the development of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum and the use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Teachers are not planning enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply ICT skills in other subjects and this is having a direct impact on the standards achieved, particularly in English and mathematics.

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was not inspected because of the Voluntary Aided nature of the school. This has been inspected separately in a Section 23 inspection. Geography and history were sampled.*

90. No lessons were seen in **history**, but a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff indicate that the full requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. Year 2 pupils have carried out successful investigations into many aspects of life in the past, including events surrounding the Great Fire of London. Year 4 pupils have produced some very good, attractive work on the Vikings. Year 5 pupils have undertaken studies of Britain since 1948, while Year 6 pupils have compiled some interesting work on the Ancient Greeks.

91. One satisfactory lesson in **geography** was seen in Year 5. A scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff indicate that the full requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. Staff have 'taken' 'Barnaby Bear' on his travels to various destinations, including Wales, Australia and Peru. Year 5 pupils undertake traffic surveys of their locality and Year 6 pupils produce studies of mountains.

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

*Music was inspected in depth and is reported below. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled.*

92. One good lesson in **design and technology** was seen in Year 6 during the inspection. In this lesson there were good links with ICT and science. The teacher used music as a means for pupils to visualise the moving parts of fairground equipment, providing a range of machines which the pupils could explore but not disassemble. From curriculum planning documents and a scrutiny of work, the full curriculum is planned throughout the school. There is a satisfactory range of resources and new equipment for control technology is on order.
93. One very good lesson in **art and design** was seen in Year 2. In this lesson, the subject coordinator clearly had a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Her very high expectations and skill were transmitted to the pupils very well and resulted in their sketches of patterns and shapes outside the building being systematically improved. The pace of learning was swift, and, by the end of the lesson, pupils had transferred some of their work onto printing materials ready for the next lesson. All pupils, including some with behavioural problems, behaved very well and stayed very focused on their tasks, because of their interest and the practical nature of the learning taking place.
94. One good lesson in **physical education** was observed in Year 6. The pupils clearly enjoyed the well-managed session aimed at improving their high and long jump, and javelin throwing. Good attention was paid to health and safety in the lesson. Javelin throwing, however, was not effective, with stiff and ungainly movement. The teacher did not assess pupils' performance in this activity, thereby missing an opportunity for improving their skills. In a lesson in Year 2, the lack of emphasis on improving skills was the major factor in satisfactory, rather than good achievement. The new co-ordinator for the subject has made a very good start since taking up the role in January. She is well qualified in physical education and has already produced an effective policy to guide teachers in this subject.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy music.

### **Commentary**

95. The previous inspection report six years ago judged standards in music to be above expectations, by the end of Year 2 and 6. Since then, the school has undergone numerous changes of staffing, and priorities for school development have consequently changed. Nevertheless, currently, while standards are in line, they are beginning to rise, due to the effective leadership of the headteacher, who is the coordinator for this subject. She feels strongly that music should be integral to the overall education of the whole child. Through her leadership, she has introduced a new scheme of work to ensure that there is full National Curriculum coverage throughout the school.

96. The parish priest uses his musical talents to accompany the pupils in hymn singing. This adds another dimension to pupils' learning. During the inspection, the choir practised assiduously to improve their singing, in an after-school club. They successfully adopted a performing mode, came in on time, after introduction, sang tunefully and with expression, and finished crisply at the end. The quality of their singing is above expectations.
97. The lessons observed were good. In Year 1, for example, the pupils used a variety of instruments to accompany their songs. They maintained the rhythms accurately and performed with obvious enjoyment. They listened carefully to the teacher and were delighted to be able to recognise different sounds of instruments. The teacher effectively extended their learning by posing challenging questions, regarding volume, for example. During the final session of the lesson, the teacher checked with her pupils whether they achieved their learning objective. This strategy provided them the opportunity to assess their own progress.
98. In another good lesson observed in Year 4, the pupils enthusiastically and expressively sang the Viking songs. They maintained a steady beat for the Rowing Song and successfully sustained the long beat for the appropriate duration. The infectious enthusiasm of the teacher completely engaged all the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pace was brisk, and there was not a minute wasted. The lesson contributed well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
99. Music is further enriched through opportunities for the pupils to learn to play instruments such as brass, flute, violin and guitar. The school accesses the Rochdale Music Centre for this tuition, funded from the general budget. The choir sings in the local shopping centre and in the hospice, which contributes well to pupils' social development.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

No lessons were observed, but information gathered from talking to pupils and the assigned co-ordinator indicates that leadership in this area is at least satisfactory. The school gives significant and appropriate attention to pupils' personal development and there are clear plans to further develop this area in the near future. It is promoted successfully within lessons and throughout many areas of the curriculum.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

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