

INSPECTION REPORT

MATHER STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Failsworth, Manchester

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105649

Headteacher: Miss J Adams

Lead inspector: Geoff Yates

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 January 2004

Inspection number: 256870

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	274
School address:	Mather Street Failsworth Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M35 0DT
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Julia Rule
Date of previous inspection:	28 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mather Street Primary School is a larger than average primary school, with its own nursery, for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. It draws its pupils from the town of Failsworth. The area consists of mainly rented accommodation. At the time of the inspection there were 274 pupils on roll. Children in most classes are organised in mixed age group classes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Fifty-four pupils have been identified as having special educational needs which at around 20 per cent is above average. The pupils receive support for dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. There are four children from minority ethnic backgrounds but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. At the time of the inspection three classes had different teachers from the ones with which they started the academic year. The school received an achievement award in 2002. It is heavily involved in an initiative to improve pupils' cultural awareness. When children start in the reception class, their attainment is well below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2465	Geoff Yates	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language
9883	Brian Silvester	Lay inspector	
22999	George Loizou	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology
7418	Kathleen Rollisson	Team inspector	Religious education Music Foundation stage Personal social health and education
7979	Anthony Calderbank	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mather Street Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils.

The school is led and managed well by the headteacher. There is a very good level of care and pupils benefit greatly from the school's innovative approach to raising cultural awareness. From a well below average starting point pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 the school attained average standards in English. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are good. Governance and the leadership shown by curriculum coordinators are satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good provision in the nursery and reception classes ensures that children get a good start to their education.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils, especially higher attainers, to use their number skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils' spelling skills are unsatisfactory and in some classes pupils' work is not presented well.
- Cultural provision is very good and has resulted in pupils having a very good understanding, for their age, of different cultures.
- The school's monitoring policy needs a more rigorous approach from co-ordinators.
- There is no whole-school approach to the assessment of pupils' work in science.
- Special educational needs provision is of a good quality.
- Pupils have good attitudes, get on very well with each other and most behave well.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning to develop pupils' speaking skills. However, when marking pupils' work they miss opportunities to provide pupils with useful pointers for improvement.
- The school's links with parents and the community are very strong. The strategy put in place to improve attendance has been very successful.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since it was last inspected in 1999. Good improvements have been made in some areas. Attendance is no longer below the national average. Pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology and religious education have improved and are now similar to those found in most schools. However, standards remain below average in mathematics. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good, as is the quality of information that parents receive.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the bottom 5% in the country*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Work seen during the inspection shows that standards of attainment in English are now below average. In mathematics and science standards have improved but remain **below average** by the end of Year 6. In information and communication technology, religious education and history standards are similar to those found in most schools. **From a well below average start pupils achieve soundly overall.** There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils get off to a very good start in the Foundation Stage but despite the very good provision will not meet the expected standards by the time they leave the reception classes.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are sensitive to the needs of others. The school's innovative cultural links with a predominantly Muslim primary school have resulted in pupils having a very good understanding of racial and ethnic diversity for their age. Their attitudes to work are good and they mostly behave well in and around school. Attendance is in line with the national average and most pupils arrive at school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Classroom assistants provide valuable support. Throughout the school the teaching of reading and number is thorough. The teaching of information and communication technology [ICT] has improved and is of a good quality. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their numeracy skills to solve problems or to develop their spelling skills well. Pupils' behaviour is not always managed well in Years 3 and 4. The school provides a **good** curriculum that meets national requirements.

The school's partnership with parents is very good and very good links have been established with the local community and with the schools to which the pupils transfer. The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. However, co-ordinators need to develop their roles in order to ensure the school's monitoring and marking policies are followed more rigorously. While most teachers implement the behaviour policy well this is not always the case in Years 3 and 4. There is also inconsistency in the implementation of the school's marking policy. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body fulfils all its legal responsibilities conscientiously and makes a satisfactory contribution to management and decision-making. Financial management is effective and the school budget is spent appropriately.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents hold very positive views of the school. The majority of children like being at the school and feel they receive the help and support they need.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils, especially for higher attainers, to use their numeracy skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Raise the standard of pupils' spelling skills and also the way some pupils present their work.
- Ensure that co-ordinators adopt a more rigorous role in carrying out their responsibilities.
- Make better use of teachers' marking to provide pupils with pointers to help them improve on previous best.

- Establish a whole-school approach to the assessment of pupils' work in science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements are good in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school they are good overall in reading, ICT, history and religious education. Current standards of attainment are below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets set for them. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The very few pupils from ethnic minorities achieve just as well as other pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are particular weaknesses in pupils' spelling and in their use of numeric skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Work is not presented neatly enough.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in both the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils in most classes make good progress in developing their speaking and reading skills.
- The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in science has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, pupils' investigative and experimental skills in science are not as well developed as other aspects.
- Pupils achieve well in history, ICT and religious education.

Commentary

1. Children enter school with well below average skills. Despite the very good provision they experience in the Foundation Stage most pupils will not reach the expected standards in the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. However, their progress and achievements are good.

Years 1 and 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments taken at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading but below in mathematics. Standards in writing were average. When compared to similar schools, attainment was well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. The trend in the school's results over the previous five years has been above the national trend. This indicates the strategies put in place by the school to improve standards are having a positive effect. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards are below average overall but that an average number of pupils is working at the higher levels.
3. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and speaking and listening is average but below average in mathematics and

science. The school's emphasis on teachers' use of questions to develop pupils' speaking skills has been successful. Pupils' unsatisfactory spelling skills and the way work is sometimes presented both have a detrimental effect on writing standards. In mathematics numeric skills are developed well but pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their knowledge in solving problems.

Years 3 to 6

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2. (25.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.2 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.8 (25.5)	28.6 (28.3)

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

4. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum test results show standards to be average in English but well below average in mathematics and science when comparisons are made with all schools. When the results are compared with those attained by the same pupils at the end of Year 2, they show that the progress made by the pupils was average in English, well below in science and in the bottom five per cent in the country in mathematics. When comparisons are made with similar schools results are well below average in mathematics, below average in science but well above average in English. The school did not meet the target it set for pupils' performance in mathematics but met it in English. The trend in the school's results over the past five years has been broadly in line with the national trend.
5. Inspection evidence shows that from a well below average start pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory. In Year 6 in English, mathematics and science standards are below those normally found. The reasons for this are the same as those stated in paragraph 2. In mathematics there is evidence that standards are beginning to rise and as a result should not be as low as those found in the previous three years. This is because the school has received additional help and the weaknesses in provision are gradually being addressed. Pupils in most classes do not have enough opportunities to carry out experiments for themselves in science. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving the expected level in science since the time of the previous inspection. Despite evidence of differing attainment between boys and girls from the previous year in mathematics no real gender differences were found in the current Year 6 age group.
6. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now similar to those found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are provided with good opportunities in most subjects to use their skills. By the end of Year 6 standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and demonstrate an improvement on those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievements in history are good and standards are in line with those found in most schools. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about achievement or standards in other subjects because of insufficient evidence.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the targets they are expected to work towards on their individual educational plans are specific and attainable. All classroom assistants provide good support. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has innovative links with a predominantly Muslim primary school. This cultural link project is developing mutual understanding and respect for other cultures.
- The pupils' respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is very good.
- Overall pupils behave well and form very good relationships with others.
- Many pupils are enterprising and take responsibility.
- Challenging behaviour in some classes is not always dealt with well.
- The school's strategies to improve attendance levels have been very successful.

Commentary

8. The school has very good links with an Oldham school that is predominantly Muslim. The pupils have presented joint artistic events, been on visits together and held a joint school council. Pupils have a very good appreciation of their own and other cultural traditions. For example, there were displays of pupils' Roman mosaics, Bangladeshi art and decorations for the Chinese New Year.
9. The pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are good. The school's assemblies have clear themes and are planned to develop the pupils' attitudes and values. Representatives of local churches come into school to take assemblies. Religious education has contributed well to the pupils' understanding of Christianity and other religions. Pupils receive lessons in personal, social and health education as well as philosophy. The pupils' understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong is good.
10. The pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community is very good. As well as the cultural link project, many representatives of the local community come into school to speak and work with the pupils. Pupils raise money for local charities.
11. In the Foundation Stage, good attention is given to the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that children feel safe, happy and secure and develop a sense of trust. As a result, they have good attitudes and enjoy school. Children share equipment, take turns and co-operate sensibly. Activities are well organised, relevant and interesting, offering the children appropriate choices, which enable them to develop confidence and a measure of independence in their learning. However, from a well below average starting point most children are unlikely to achieve standards typical for their age in personal, social and emotional development.
12. Pupils' attitudes in the rest of the school are good. They respond well to the high expectations which staff have of their behaviour. Pupils feel that all the school rules are fair and respect their teachers. Overall pupils' behaviour is managed well in most classes. There are some exceptions in Years 3 and 4, however, when challenging behaviour is not always dealt with well because of a lack of consistency in following the school's behaviour policy. During the week of the inspection there was a heavy snowfall on one day that prompted the headteacher to challenge pupils to make snow sculptures at playtime. All pupils worked happily in small groups with no hint of immature behaviour.
13. Systems put in place to improve lunchtime behaviour are very effective. The appointment of pupils as 'playground friends' or 'lunchtime helpers', who organise games and encourage adherence to the school's 'Golden Rules', has markedly reduced incidences of bad behaviour. Bullying is rare. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility, because the school has good systems in place which encourage enterprise and reliability. A thriving school council involves pupils in active decision making. A community link project involving other primary schools promotes pupils' understanding and tolerance. The school is a harmonious community in which every individual is valued. Pupils and parents are happy with the improvements that have taken place.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	200	5	0

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

- The level of attendance and unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Attendance is much improved since the last inspection, because the school is very successful in promoting good attendance. This includes contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, the awarding of individual certificates for good attendance and weekly awards for 100 per cent whole-class attendance. Most pupils arrive on time in the morning and lessons start promptly. Well planned approaches have been adopted to improve punctuality, including an 'early bird' system with a 'before school' club which provides breakfast. This, and an 'after school' club, is also having a positive effect on attendance. In cases of persistent lateness, the school contacts parents. In the previous year the school has had to exclude a pupil for five fixed periods.
- Pupils with special educational needs work well. They have positive attitudes towards their work because they have specific targets to aim for. Pupils are able to persist with their tasks because the work is well matched to their individual needs. They are well integrated into all aspects of school life and receive the help they need. This is especially true of the pupils who have statements.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall. The very good opportunities that are provided for pupils to recognise and appreciate the importance of living in harmony with each other in multicultural British society enhances all aspects of school life.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall but when evidence from previous work is taken into account teaching is **satisfactory overall**. During the inspection it was at its best in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 where a high proportion of the teaching seen was good or very good. In Years 3 and 4 teachers sometimes do not manage pupils' behaviour well. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses, especially in science and in the quality of teachers' marking in most subjects. In the Foundation Stage assessment of what children know, understand and can do is very effective. Teachers and support

assistants work hard and mostly successfully in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met but more challenge needs to be provided for higher attaining pupils in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Spelling skills are not taught well and pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their number skills in solving problems. Work is not always neatly presented.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to develop pupils' speaking skills and reading is taught well.
- Very good assessment procedures are in place in the Foundation Stage.
- There is no whole-school approach to the assessment and the recording of pupils' progress in science.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is good in most classes but there are inconsistencies of approach in Years 3 and 4 that have an adverse effect on the quality of learning.
- Teachers make good use of writing and ICT in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not provide pupils with information about how they might improve.
- Good use is made of teaching assistants.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 [23%]	17[45%]	11[30%]	1[2%]	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

16. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when 14 per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and less than half were good or better. During the inspection just over two thirds of the teaching seen was judged to be good or better.
17. The nursery and reception class teachers ensure that there is a very good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. As a result the quality of learning is good because children are keen to learn and respond well to what is on offer. Very effective planning, assessment and target setting systems are in place and teaching and support staff work very well together as a team. The very good provision in the nursery has been maintained and built upon in the reception classes since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.
18. Overall the quality of learning in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan conscientiously. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their speaking skills. The strategies used to teach reading work very well. Pupils read a variety of texts with confidence. Teachers ensure that pupils write for a good range of different purposes and that they use writing well in other subjects. However, there are inconsistencies in the development of pupils' spelling skills and how they present their work. Both these factors have an adverse effect on the standard of pupils' writing. In mathematics, teachers do not provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to use their number skills in solving problems. For example, higher attainers are given problems to solve that are too easy.
19. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in English, mathematics and ICT and the progress of individual pupils is monitored soundly in these subjects. Test results are carefully analysed and the information is used to set targets and to address areas of weakness. As a result teachers and pupils are clear about what they need to do to raise standards. However, there is no whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in science. Books are marked regularly, and written comments are generally positive and supportive but do not indicate clearly and precisely to pupils what they could next in order to improve their work.

20. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and learn successfully because support assistants are good at helping pupils as they tackle their work. Each of the pupils with additional learning needs has a clear list of individual targets.
21. The teaching of ICT has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is of a good quality. Pupils' make good progress and the quality of learning is good. Good use is made of a visiting music teacher who works with junior pupils every week. All teachers provide homework that is of a good quality.

The curriculum

Overall the school is successful in providing a good quality curriculum and good extra-curricular provision enriches pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good opportunities pupils are given to develop their understanding of racial and ethnic diversity.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision in ICT and religious education has improved and standards have risen.
- Children get a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school has very good links with the community and partner institutions.
- Accommodation is of a very good quality.
- The school has a good match of teaching and non-teaching staff who work as an effective team.
- Some lessons are too long and pupils become restless.

Commentary

22. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and religious education taught in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school environment is well maintained and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Discussions held with pupils demonstrate that they enjoy lessons and like taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported effectively by well-trained support assistants and make good progress towards their objectives. The curriculum meets the requirements of all the pupils on the school's special needs register. It provides well for equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
24. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects such as mathematics and literacy. ICT was seen as a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and this is no longer the case. The school uses ibooks effectively – ibooks are laptop computers that do not need any wires to be part of a network. This makes it easier for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects and makes learning more enjoyable.
25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage of learning are very good and children are able to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences. The very good start children receive in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.
26. Good systems are in place to develop personal, social and health education. During separate lessons, or during times when pupils discuss issues of concern to them, pupils develop a very good understanding of being considerate about the feelings and views of others. Aspects of

health education are dealt with well and the school has won an award as a 'healthy school'. Sex and alcohol education are both dealt with appropriately. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education in the secondary school.

27. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school enhances the curriculum. Many pupils attend after-school and dinner-time clubs that include Spanish, chess, book making, gardening as well as sporting activities. They gain much from these experiences. Staff volunteer time for these activities. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to museums and art galleries. For example, pupils have visited the Science Museum in Manchester as well as the Lowry Gallery in Salford. They have been involved in a number of arts and writing workshops, while visits to theatres provide additional interest for pupils and enhance learning. These visits, together with the school council, make a significant contribution to pupils' social and personal development, raising their awareness of their place in society.
28. The school was built four years ago and the accommodation is of a very good quality. There are large practical areas that are used effectively by teachers and support staff for art design and science activities as well as small group work. Resources are satisfactory overall. Both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 have separate library areas. However, the Years 3-6 library is not well stocked with books. There are two good-sized playgrounds and a football area. The school garden was constructed through the assistance of parents, children. The British Aerospace Corporation provided additional materials and finance for the project.
29. There is a good number of support and teaching staff with appropriate qualifications and training to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a good team spirit among staff, despite recent staff changes, which contributes well to the quality of learning. Teaching assistants work closely with the teachers and effectively contribute to pupils' learning.
30. The school is constantly trying to improve the quality of learning for its pupils. It is involved in a number of innovations. For example, teaching and support staff are involved in a co-coaching scheme that is intended to improve planning and teaching opportunities and so help raise achievement. Teachers are good at developing pupils' questioning skills and high order reasoning and thinking skills.
31. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to all the subjects of the curriculum, but some lessons are too long and pupils become restless. Pupils in a science lesson in Year 2 that lasted for 90 minutes were very keen to learn all about healthy foods and worked well for most of the lesson. Towards the end, however, they grew tired and inattentive.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, is very good. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective child protection procedures are in place.
- Pupils' ideas and suggestions are acted upon through the school council.
- Effective induction arrangements are in place.
- Pupils have good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they progress.

Commentary

32. The arrangements for introducing new pupils to the school are good. Parents are invited to bring their children to spend time in the nursery before they officially start. An introductory talk is given and a booklet is provided about the daily routines. Pupils work in a healthy and safe

environment. Regular safety reviews and risk assessments are carried out. The school has obtained a Healthy Schools and Gold Tooth Award. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and to drink water.

33. Child protection procedures are of a good quality. The headteacher is responsible for the delivery of the policy and does so well. All staff are trained. The school has five fully trained first-aiders. A range of visiting specialists comes into school, including the school nurse, who carries out health checks and contributes to some lessons. Pupils' achievements are monitored and praised in assemblies, to which parents are invited.
34. The way the school monitors and supports pupils' personal development is good. This is mostly because of the way staff attend to the needs of the whole child. Supportive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Great care is taken in ensuring that pupils of all attainment levels receive the support they need. The systems in place for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall. There are examples of very good practice in the Foundation Stage.
35. Pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they progress through the school. This enhances pupils' achievement. In the pupils' questionnaire prior to the inspection, 97 per cent of pupils felt that there is an adult they could go to if they were worried about anything. The school council meets regularly and pursues pupils' ideas. Year 6 pupils on the council represent the younger pupils. Pupils participate in a meeting of school councils from other schools, which takes place in the local council chamber, to discuss issues that affect them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents, the links with the local community and the school's links with other schools and colleges are all **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' annual reports are good. Parents are very supportive of the school.
- The links with the Freefold Community School in Oldham are very good.
- The Parent Teacher Association is active and raises funds for the school to buy resources.
- The school has the full confidence of all the communities it serves. Many representatives of the local community come into school to speak or work with the pupils.

Commentary

36. The information supplied to parents is good. Regular newsletters are sent out and the pupils' annual reports are very good. Parents are very supportive of the school and the Parent Teacher Association raises funds to purchase resources. The information and support given to parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. There are two formal parents' evenings a year. Parents are informed termly about the future curriculum so they can help their children at home. For example, most pupils make good gains in developing their reading skills by researching subjects at home.
37. A number of parents help in school and parents are invited to work alongside their children in subjects such as mathematics and English. Parental classes are also held in the school. This enables parents to understand the methods their children are being taught so they are able to provide additional help at home. Parents are invited to special events and assemblies. The school has a member of staff who works closely with parents and this partnership enables potential problems to be sorted out at an early stage.

38. The school has the confidence of its parents and local community. Many representatives of the local community come into the school to work or speak to the pupils. Representatives of local churches take assemblies and assist with religious education. The school has received some support from the local business community. The cultural link project is very innovative and has been very successful.
39. Pupils think very highly of their school and their teachers. Discussions held with pupils and the results of the pupils' questionnaire demonstrate that pupils of all attainment levels really enjoy attending the school.
40. Most pupils transfer to the Failsworth School. Open days and evenings are organised for parents. Pupils spend a day in the high school prior to transfer and gain a great deal from this experience. A learning mentor comes to meet pupils in Year 6. Students come to the school for work experience and teaching practice. Manchester University is doing research on the cultural linking project because it is impressed with its high quality.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. The leadership and management of other key staff are satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction to the work of the school.
- The school's marking and monitoring policies are not rigorously implemented by co-ordinators.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are included in the life and work of the school.

Commentary

41. The headteacher has pioneered exemplary work with Freehold Community School to bring together pupils from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds in order to break down barriers and forge cultural understanding. Her good leadership has motivated staff and enriched the curriculum. Her positive support contributes much to the shared sense of purpose and commitment within the school and helps to foster a good team spirit. She has a clear view of the improvements she wants to implement and is currently working with a group of other headteachers to introduce and develop an enquiry based curriculum. As a result of this work good improvements have been made to teachers' questioning and pupils' speaking.
42. Since the beginning of the school year, there has been a number of changes to the teaching staff. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher had only been in post and taught her class for a matter of weeks. Two other classes were taught by teachers new to the school, one of whom was on a temporary contract. These changes have demanded a lot of the headteacher and she has met these demands well.
43. The headteacher has ensured that the school has made sound progress overall since the previous inspection with good progress in some areas. For example, standards have risen in ICT and religious education and are now similar to those found in most schools. Improvements have been made to the level of pupils' attendance which is now in line with the national average. The quality of attainment in mathematics is still below average. Teachers' planning is now firmly based on appropriate schemes of work, which follow national guidance. A whole-school approach to assessment has been put in place in English, mathematics and ICT but not so in science. The quality of teaching has improved.

44. Governors are very supportive of the school and they are kept well informed about strengths and weaknesses, mainly through the headteacher's termly reports. They have a satisfactory involvement in the school's strategic planning through the oversight of finance and discussions about the school development plan. They are not afraid to challenge judgements and initiatives. However, a significant number of governors have only just been appointed and training has been organised to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. The hard work and perseverance of two parent governors in following up pupils who were not attending school is to be commended and had much to do with improving this aspect.
45. The school has in place good systems for performance management and some good management processes. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted a more self-critical approach to its work. Information about the school's performance is gained from an analysis of test data, tracking of pupil progress in English and mathematics. This means that areas of weaknesses are being highlighted. However, the school's monitoring policy lacks a rigor of approach from co-ordinators. For example, monitoring has not picked up on the fact that pupils' spelling skills are unsatisfactory and on the inconsistencies in the presentation of pupils' work. These weaknesses should have been picked up on, and action taken.
46. There is a very good ethos throughout the school in which every pupil is valued. The school works hard to try to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in every aspect of school life, and racial harmony and equal opportunity are promoted positively. The management of the support for pupils who have special educational needs is good. All the identified pupils have well written individual plans that are realistic and relevant.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	614,879	Balance from previous year	20,314
Total expenditure	611,113	Balance carried forward to the next	24,080
Expenditure per pupil	2,230		

47. School finances are managed well and good strategic use is made of resources. Financial planning and control are efficient. Great care is taken in ensuring that the school gets 'best value' for money. The most recent audit report found the systems in operation for the purchase of goods and services to be well controlled in most areas. All the recommendations were of a minor nature and have been attended to. Day-to-day spending is managed conscientiously by the school secretary. The bursarial service offered by the Local Education Authority is helping. Financial control and oversight by the finance committee of the governing body are good. Governors receive up to date budget reports.

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Example of outstanding practice

As a response to racial trouble in the area the headteacher, recognising that her school's population did not reflect the local ethnic diversity, has put in place a highly successful project that develops in pupils a genuine respect and understanding of a range of ethnic heritages .

Very innovative and highly successful links with a local school that is predominantly Muslim have been established. The pupils have presented joint artistic events, been on visits together and held a joint school council meeting. Pupils are sometimes taught together in religious education lessons. Pupils have developed a very good appreciation of their own and other cultural traditions. Examples of this are good displays of Bangladeshi art, Chinese New Year masks and the work based on the ideas of Matisse. When interviewed about the project one child said, 'I didn't think it would be good but it is!' Parents commented that the project really promoted

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rich and varied range of activities and resources help children to achieve well across all the areas of learning despite their limited skills on entry to the nursery.
- Assessment of what children know, understand and can do is very effective and information is used well to set targets for improvement.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management which contribute to the good levels of children's achievements.
- Teachers and children receive very good support from dedicated learning assistants.
- The very good start children receive in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.

Commentary

48. Most children begin in the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those typical of their age group. Speaking and listening and personal and social skills are poorly developed for a significant number of children. This is confirmed by initial assessments carried out in the nursery. Most children will not reach the expected standards by the time they leave the two reception classes but will make good progress towards them. Good teaching and learning support ensure that children, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well in all areas of learning. The very good leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are characterised by clear vision, purpose and high expectations. Very effective planning, assessment and target setting systems are in place, and teaching and support staff make a very effective team. The very good provision in the Foundation Stage has been maintained and built upon since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good attitudes to school and enjoy learning.
- The very good provision and effective teaching help children to take responsibility for their own learning.

Commentary

49. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that children feel safe, happy and secure and develop a sense of trust. Most children will not meet the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1, but because of the good teaching, they achieve well, have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Since some nursery children find it hard to concentrate, greater emphasis is placed on small group activities. Voluntary helpers, including mothers and fathers, contribute to the effectiveness of this pattern of organisation. During such times, staff check children's progress carefully and use the information gained to set targets for future work. A 'happy and sad' display of nursery children's faces reflects the importance placed on the development of their self-esteem and confidence. Children's increasing ability to tidy away equipment and to take turns helps them to develop confidence and independence. Challenging provision and

effective teaching methods help them to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, an illustrated sign, which children understand, reminds them that 'sand is not just about building castles'. Good teaching and support for those children who have special educational needs ensure that they learn to form positive relationships with other children and adults, and with support, adapt their behaviour to different events, social situations and changes in routines

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of rich and exciting activities and good quality questioning by all staff ensure that children develop good speaking and listening skills.
- Higher attaining children need to be challenged and given more time to write independently in the reception classes.

Commentary

50. On entry to the nursery, many children are unable to express themselves clearly and often use single words and gestures to convey meaning. Most children will not meet the expected standards by the end of reception. However, because teaching is good and all staff are knowledgeable about extending children's communication and language skills, they make good progress and achieve well. Challenging and exciting experiences lead to the discovery of new vocabulary. A water tray filled with ice cubes, toy penguins, polar bears and other Arctic creatures provokes the definition of words such as 'freezing' and 'melting'. Nursery children know that the word 'hibernate' means to 'sleep for a long time' as they experience the delights of snuggling like 'furry' animals inside a large model of a hollow tree. During story and discussion times, the quality of questioning is good in all classes in the Foundation Stage and accelerates children's language development. The teaching of phonics and early reading and writing skills are imaginative. In the reception classes, children make their own books about the jungle and learn to sequence a story. The provision of a sand tray, which becomes a swamp or a jungle island, of listening and writing centres, and the wide repertoire of songs and rhymes, help children to develop their literacy skills. Overall, reception children achieve well in reading and are encouraged to write words and sentences unaided. Sometimes, however, higher attaining children need to be challenged and given more time to write independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Purposeful activities contribute to children's achievement in understanding number, shape and measure.
- Children achieve well, even when they are working on unsupervised activities, because of the very good teaching, planning and organisation for independent learning.

Commentary

51. Early indications are that most children will not meet the expected standards by the end of reception but because of the good teaching they will develop good mathematical skills and achieve well. Provision for mathematical development is always carefully planned. Purposeful play activities, number rhymes and songs, contribute to children's knowledge and understanding of number, size, shape and measures. In the nursery, children weigh, and

order the weight of dolls in the 'baby clinic' after bathing, dressing and feeding them. Patterns of 'cold' colours are painted on paper circles and pictures and models are designed and made, using different shapes. Many reception children are able to count numbers to 10 accurately and some can count to 20. Opportunities are taken to extend this during outdoor play as children throw beanbags on hopscotch squares and use other playground resources of high quality. They learn to buy and sell plants and flowers in the market garden. Teachers provide good challenge and have high expectations. Even when children are involved in unsupervised activities, they make good progress because of the high quality of resources and provision for rich and exciting activities. For example, some higher attaining children are learning to generate their own sums by 'counting on' from numbers using a number line. Other children are able to follow simple instructions such as 'how many?' In another activity, children 'fish' for magnetic numerals in the water tray, which they place on laminated cards to make up simple sums, such as $6+4=10$. These good features of the planning contribute to children's achievement by encouraging independent learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The exciting range of activities and good teaching, stimulate curiosity and develop observation skills.
- The very good provision enables pupils to develop an awareness of the community in which they live and to make comparisons with other places in the world.
- Good opportunities are provided for the exploration of tools and techniques.

Commentary

52. Most children enter school with a very limited knowledge of the world around them. Although they are unlikely to reach the expected standards on entry to Year 1, the good teaching ensures that they achieve well and make good progress. The exciting range of activities, stimulate curiosity and develop observation skills. Children develop an awareness of the community in which they live. For example, in the nursery, they learn how to enter information on a computer database and complete immunisation and other forms concerning the 'health' of the dolls in the 'baby clinic'. As children learn to handle and bathe the dolls, put on their nappies, dress them, feed them and take them for walks, they are able to talk about their experiences. Good opportunities are provided for the exploration of tools and techniques. In the reception classes, as part of a jungle topic, children design and construct a large cave for the jungle animals. To help children learn how to operate a range of technical equipment, including computers, large symbol cards are used depicting the signs for 'stop', 'play' and 'switch on' etc. A walk around Failsworth helped children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the environment. They learn to describe simple features of the community in which they live and compare and contrast water from the canal with other water, such as that from rivers, taps and waterfalls.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for outdoor play is very good. Activities extend the achievements of children in the reception classes by building on earlier learning.

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. However, they are unlikely to attain the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. The imaginative and effective provision and use of resources for outdoor play provide very good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. As a result they make good progress. Children display increasing control, co-ordination and confidence during physical activity using a wide and varied range of large and small equipment, which is in very good order. A covered section, which houses a plant and flower shop and other structured play activities, provides a safe outdoor environment which is very well organised and in constant use. Suitable emphasis is placed on ensuring that activities extend the achievements of children in the reception classes by avoiding mere repetition and by building on earlier learning. All children play outdoors with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They make good progress because activities are challenging and extend not only physical skills, but also those in other areas of learning. Both indoors and outdoors, nursery and reception children paint, draw, construct and learn to handle and manipulate a wide range of tools and materials safely, and with increasing independence.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative planning and the good knowledge and understanding of educational development in the early years, which all staff share, contribute significantly to children's good achievement in this area of learning.

Commentary

54. Teachers plan imaginatively and have a good knowledge and understanding of the wide range of skills children need in order to develop creatively in the early years. Children learn to use colour, shape and form, and to experiment with different textures in two and three dimensions. For example, nursery children create attractive winter landscapes, pictures and collages. A large model of a hollow tree provides a focus for learning about hibernation. Staff work alongside children to construct a cave and a jungle island, as part of a jungle topic, and ensure that new vocabulary is used and understood. Children sing favourite songs tunefully and tap out rhythms using a good range of percussion instruments. Reception children enjoyed taking a 'listening walk' during which they listened carefully to sounds in the environment, such as bird song, the rustling of leaves, the hum of an aeroplane and the sound of traffic. Back in school, they represented the sounds they heard in the street by symbols and produced simple compositions, using voice sounds and musical instruments. Attractive photographic records are used to reinforce the learning experiences. Although most children are not in line to meet the expected standards by the start of Year 1, the good teaching and very good provision ensure that they achieve well and make good progress.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in speaking and reading but overall standards of attainment in English in Year 6 are below average.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. However, there are weaknesses in spelling and the presentation of work which have an adverse effect upon the quality of pupils' writing.
- Teachers use questioning very well to develop pupils' speaking skills.
- Teachers' marking does not lead to improvements.

Commentary

55. In the National tests in 2003 pupils in Year 6 attained average standards. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve teachers' questioning so as to develop pupils' speaking and thinking skills, which were weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. As a result pupils are making good progress and achieving well when you take into account their well below average skills on starting school. In lessons, teachers use a wide range of questions to extend pupils' thoughtful answers and develop the discussion further. For example, in an assembly about the 'Prodigal Son', the headteacher challenged pupils' initial response with questions such as 'Then what?' 'What else did he not have?' Much of the work being done to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills is being done in collaboration with a group of other schools within a network learning community and shows the effectiveness of the school's links with its local community.
56. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards in reading are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, taking into account pupils' well below average skills when starting school, they are achieving well overall. Most pupils have good attitudes towards reading and enjoy books. In Years 1 and 2, they use their knowledge of sounds and word building techniques well and confidently to help them make sense of unfamiliar new words. Higher attainers show a good understanding of 'setting' and 'character' as in 'setting is that part of the story which lets you know where it takes place' and 'a character is a person who is in the story or on television.' The home/school reading diary is used satisfactorily to record when pupils have read, but comments are rarely diagnostic. In Years 3 to 6, pupils read with increasing expression, make good progress and achieve well. They are able to express a preference for a particular author and explain why they prefer a certain kind of story. One pupil said she enjoyed books that are 'adventurous or mysterious because they 'make you want to read more and more.' Pupils understand how to use the index and contents page to find information quickly.
57. Standards of attainment in writing are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. The actual breadth of content is satisfactory but pupils' spelling and presentation skills are below average. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to write for different purposes in Years 1 and 2 especially in other subjects. Most pupils write using simple words and phrases and have a sound understanding of basic punctuation. For example, in religious education one pupil wrote, 'My special place is home. When I am there I dance to my CD player' and in science, 'The circuit won't work because one of the crocodile clips is not attached to the light and it hasn't got a battery.' In Year 6, pupils make good use of the knowledge gained studying texts during the Literacy Hour to improve the quality of their own work. They enjoy experimenting with words in order to get the reader's interest, as in 'Grotto was just one

ordinary schoolboy until he walked into the school gates. Zackbeth and Avanya came flying over to Grotto and screamed, Grotto, Grotto, you have to come and have a look in your locker!

58. Teaching in English is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. In the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 it was very good. In Years 3 and 4, the behaviour policy is not being applied strictly enough. As a result, pupils sometimes shout out answers and talk whilst the teacher is speaking. Throughout the school, teachers mark books conscientiously, but written comments do not inform pupils what they should do next in order to improve. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and make good progress. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds generally do well.
59. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has brought about improvements to provision and the quality of learning. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. The co-ordinator has not had sufficient opportunities to monitor pupils' books to ensure that agreed policy for marking and presentation is being followed by all staff.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils' technical vocabulary is extended in science because teachers insist on the use of correct terminology. However, pupils have difficulty remembering many of the new words. They enjoy looking for information in history using the Internet, and they word process some of their work. A survey of written work in other subjects shows that pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their writing skills, but unsatisfactory presentation and simple spelling mistakes lower the quality.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are slowly starting to rise but remain below average.
- Pupils, especially higher attainers, are not given enough opportunities to use their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- Staff have benefited from the help provided by the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always managed well in Years 3 and 4 and this has an adverse effect on pupils' progress.
- Sometimes pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work when using worksheets.

Commentary

61. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6 standards have not improved from those found at the time of the previous inspection and in the National Tests in 2003; results were well below those expected nationally. However, inspection evidence demonstrates that standards are rising slowly but remain below those expected. The reason for the gradual improvement is that the school has benefited from the support of the Local Education Authority, and as a result put in place strategies that are gradually improving standards. A thorough analysis of pupils' mathematical needs has been made. The school has rightly identified problem solving as a key area for development. Inspection evidence shows that not enough is being done to ensure that pupils are consistently challenged to develop their problem solving skills. This is especially so for higher attainers where a survey of previous work shows little or no real sustained emphasis in their work to use the numeric skills they possess to solve problems.
62. Pupils of all attainment levels are being suitably challenged in developing their basic number skills, and achieve soundly. Pupils enjoy manipulating numbers but take too long to apply

known number facts. For example, a group of pupils in Year 2 could add three single digit numbers together quickly and accurately, but when the same numbers were used in a money calculation problem they became confused. In Year 6, they can calculate the answers to problems but many lack the necessary speed in doing so; for example, when calculating percentage discounts.

63. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and use this to organise interesting lessons that motivate their pupils to learn. For example, during the inspection good use of direct teaching methods in a class for pupils in Years 5 and 6 inspired pupils to quickly work out how to use a protractor. Most teachers have a warm relaxed relationship with the pupils and as a result pupils' confidence is bolstered so that they willingly tackle problems. However, a survey of previous work shows that potential higher attaining pupils are sometimes asked to complete the 'easier' questions in a workbook rather than being challenged by harder questions found later on. There is no significant difference in achievement between groups of pupils.
64. During the inspection good teaching in a Year 1 class ensured that pupils improved their knowledge of basic addition facts with good use being made of the classroom assistant to support a group of special educational needs pupils. A good feature of the lesson was the teacher's patient approach that meant that pupils of all attainment levels were willing to provide answers. Pupils were given time to think. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, or has some unsatisfactory elements, pupils are not managed well, and not enough care is taken to ensure that when the teacher is speaking all pupils listen. As a result the pace of these lessons is not as good as in other classes, and pupils do not make as much progress.
65. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the post. She has good subject knowledge and has undertaken training on how to carry out a work survey. She has yet to monitor and evaluate teaching of the subject. The school has in place a satisfactory assessment system. There is a good range of equipment that is readily available. Classroom assistants support individual pupils with special educational needs well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. A survey of pupils' work shows that they are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. Good use is made of graphs in science; for example, to illustrate the dissolving of salt in water. In ICT pupils produce their own spreadsheets to record statistical information. There are some satisfactory examples of timelines being used in history. Pupils in Year 4 accurately measure the materials they need to use to make pop up models in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good. However, pupils' lack of spelling skills and the unsatisfactory way that some of their work is presented are barriers to learning.
- Strategies put in place to improve standards are beginning to have a positive effect.
- Assessment procedures, especially the marking of pupils' work, are not effective in indicating to pupils what to do next in order to improve.

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key scientific facts are better developed than their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Some lessons are too long.

Commentary

67. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and sometimes good. Since the last inspection the percentage of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected Level 4 has increased from 46 per cent to 88 per cent, but is still below the national average. Inspection findings demonstrate that standards are just below the national average. Pupils' lack of technical vocabulary, unsatisfactory spelling and presentation skills are a barrier to their learning.
68. The school has put in place strategies that are helping to raise standards by placing greater emphasis on developing literacy skills during science lessons in order to improve pupils' understanding and ability to record their work. There are indications that these improvements are having a positive effect. In a class for pupils in Years 1 and 2 they learn how to select healthy foods. The teacher planned effective reading and speaking and listening opportunities to help pupils understand how to eat a balanced diet. Similarly, in a class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 they were successfully encouraged to think and compare animal skeletons with human skeletons. Most Year 6 pupils accurately use scientific terms like condensation and evaporation to describe changes in matter. They have a good understanding of materials and their properties.
69. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key facts and principles are better developed than their skills of scientific enquiry. However, some good examples of investigative science were seen in the older classes. In a class of pupils in Years 4 and 5, they worked well together to investigate how much force it takes to move an object across different surfaces. They successfully carried out the experiment, predicting the outcome and recording and evaluating the results. Pupils in Year 6 successfully conducted an experiment to investigate condensation and evaporation. They filled a bowl with warm water, covered it with cling film and placed ice cubes on its surface and observed the results. They predicted the outcomes and were able to explain what was happening to the ice cubes and to the air trapped below the cling film.
70. Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. Lessons were seen where teachers provided a good range of practical activities that involved and interested the pupils. During the week of the inspection, good teaching was seen in Year 2 and in a Year 4 class. Common features to both lessons were good planning that ensured all pupils were actively involved in their learning and an imaginative use of resources. However, in some classes, lessons are too long and pupils become restless and lose concentration.
71. The curriculum is satisfactory. However, opportunities are missed when teachers mark pupils' work to provide pointers for improvement. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged and they are sometimes given work that is too easy. To help improve the confidence of teachers the co-ordinator has plans to share her scientific expertise by supporting them in planning lessons and by teaching alongside them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and are now in line with nationally expected levels in both Years 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection.
- Learning is good and well supported by resources of a high quality.
- Achievement is good.
- There are still some shortages of software in science.

Commentary

72. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with nationally expected levels. This has been achieved because the headteacher has implemented effective strategies and made the raising of standards in ICT a priority. The school has improved the hardware, as well as providing all staff with appropriate training in order to raise the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers and support staff show a good level of competence in using the technology and this has helped to improve pupils' standards.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with examples of very good teaching. Teachers show good levels of competence and confidently use ICT in the presentation of lessons. They plan their lessons effectively and pupils respond with enthusiasm, treating equipment with care. An example of very good teaching was seen in Year 6, where the teacher used a projector linked to a computer expertly to teach the pupils how to create their own database, based on a survey of people's preferences for different types of biscuits. They worked enthusiastically and successfully with laptops to define and choose appropriate fields in which to place data. The lesson was well planned and encouraged pupils to discuss and develop ideas by bringing together text and images.
74. A good supply of laptop and desktop computers ensures that all pupils can be fully included in lessons. The use of projectors linked to computers provides the school with excellent teaching and learning opportunities. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and to experiment themselves. Teaching assistants are well deployed to offer effective support where necessary. This support is particularly successful in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make progress that is as good as that of other pupils. Pupils confidently use hardware and access the Internet to find information. Members of the school council used a digital camera to photograph and display images of themselves on the notice board.
75. Most pupils make good progress in developing ICT skills and this is an improvement since the last inspection. By Year 2, pupils are making good progress in developing their keyboard skills and their ability to use the mouse accurately. Pupils in Year 3 extend their skills in word processing by high-lighting and cutting and pasting text. Pupils in Year 6 use ICT to organise and classify information. They have constructed a Mather Street School timetable and understand how to use spreadsheets to organise and present information. The school has produced a booklet that identifies ICT skills that each child has to develop and is an effective assessment tool used to monitor progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. ICT is used well in most subjects. However in science a lack of suitable programs hinders the development of pupils' investigative skills. In art and design, pupils in Year 6 successfully found details of the works of the artist, Matisse, and created a colourful display. In a literacy lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a computer effectively, linked to a projector, to encourage the pupils to think and discuss ways in which information can be found. The pupils' response was good and the session developed their speaking and listening skills well.

HUMANITIES

The provision for religious education is of a good quality. Insufficient evidence was available to make firm judgments on teaching, learning, achievement and standards in geography. The provision for history is satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers ensure that skills are being developed alongside knowledge.
- The subject is used well to develop pupils' writing skills.
- There is no whole-school approach to assessment and the subject does not have a co-ordinator.

Commentary

77. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in history is similar to that found in most schools and their achievement is good. However, the school has not maintained the above average standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning is sound and the work pupils are expected to do ensures that knowledge, skills and understanding are being developed in line with requirements of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards and achievements in Years 1 and 2. The lessons observed and a scrutiny of work, indicate that pupils experience a satisfactory range of learning opportunities.
78. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills. For example, by allowing them access to primary and secondary sources to find out how the Aztecs lived. Pupils wrote their own notes that were of a good quality and reported back their findings to the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. As a result much information was gathered in a short period of time. Pupils were not afraid to ask questions. For example, one asked, 'if you dug something interesting up, how would you know what it was?' Pupils achieved well in this lesson because it was made interesting through the very good use of artefacts, which stimulated learning. Pupils with special educational needs also achieved well due to the effective support of a teaching assistant whose questioning maintained pupils' interest and developed their understanding.
79. The subject does not have a co-ordinator and there are no assessment procedures in place to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis but comments to help pupils improve are rarely supplied.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good curriculum, which fully reflects the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Children demonstrate a developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths.
- An innovative inter-school link with a multicultural school in the community has been successful in raising pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religious beliefs.
- Provision in assemblies for the whole school enables pupils to form thoughtful views on religious issues.
- The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has been involved in local education authority and community developments.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their writing skills.

Commentary

80. Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection, when they were unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are broadly in line with those found nationally. Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school, and in the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, teaching was very good. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2.
81. An innovative community link with a local multicultural school has been very successful in developing pupils' wider understanding of other religions. Classes are organised in both schools in such a way that half of the pupils attend a religious education lesson in their own school, whilst the other half attend at the linked school. The religious significance of such aspects of the Islamic faith as fasting at Ramadan is better understood, as are aspects of Christianity by pupils who practise the Islamic faith. Discussions with pupils and analyses of their work show that they know religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian, but that other religions are represented. Pupils make good progress in developing a knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and compare the Bible with the Qur'an and the Torah.
82. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that Baptism is a naming ceremony that welcomes Christians into the Church. Their understanding of its symbolism is enhanced as a result of a visit from a local vicar who demonstrates how Baptism is administered. Pupils visit a local church and learn about the symbolism of the altar and sacred vessels, such as a chalice. They compare festivals such as Christmas and Eid, and make accurate reference to a 'prayer mat', and to 'wudu', which is the Islamic term for washing or cleansing before entering the mosque. Older pupils understand the message of bible stories, including the Good Samaritan and the story of Moses. In an assembly led by the headteacher, children listened attentively to a modern version of the parable of The Prodigal Son. Questions were probing and helped the children to explore the complexities of tolerance, humility and forgiveness.
83. In the 2 lessons seen teaching was good overall. In a class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, they listened to the story of Papa Papov. Guided by the teacher's sensitive prompts and questions, they discussed with considerable insight, the story that explored the moral dilemma between material and spiritual poverty. A hall poster, to which children were invited to add their own comments, asked them about their hopes for the world, the neighbourhood, the school and themselves. Children's thoughtful responses were displayed for all to read and some reflect a high level of maturity and sensitivity to moral issues. Teachers ensure that older pupils have a good overall grasp of religious issues and ideas. However, they provide too few opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding through writing.
84. Many of the positive developments in religious education have been brought about by the very good management and leadership of the co-ordinator who has been involved in trying out new policies and schemes of work proposed by the Local Education Authority. The school has benefited from her guidance and enthusiasm.

Geography

85. Discussion held with the headteacher and a scrutiny of teachers' planning demonstrates that provision meets statutory requirements. The school has implemented a scheme of work that takes account of the latest national guidance. However, there is currently no co-ordinator for the subject. Resources are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Insufficient work was seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education to make overall judgements about provision. In the small number of lessons seen in music and dance pupils displayed average standards.

87. In **art and design** discussions held with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the styles used by different artists. One child commented, 'it's amazing the work of different artists like David Hockney.' Pupils have produced some masks of a very good quality based on the work of the Bangladesh artist, Abdus Shakoor. There is a very good display of pupils' own attempts at creating Chinese New Year decorations. Pupils have used ICT well to produce pictures in the style of Matisse. They have also looked into his background on the Internet. Pupils took a great pride in talking about how they had produced their own Roman mosaics. In Year 2, building designs have been used well as a stimulus for pupils to design their own buildings and produce collage pictures.
88. The range of art and design work clearly shows that pupils' cultural knowledge is improved greatly by what they have done in art and design.
89. In **design and technology** a survey of work done demonstrates that pupils are developing their skills soundly. By the end of Year 6 pupils can evaluate the different characteristics of biscuits to find the 'best buy'. They have planned how to evaluate the different products, sampled them and produced data to demonstrate their findings. One pupil wrote, 'this biscuit is good value because you get 200 grams for the price of 150 grams.' Pupils in Year 4 and 5 produced their own design for a lever and then used the design to make a pop up addition to a leaflet as part of a study of how mechanisms work. Pupils are self-critical of what they produce.
90. In **physical education** achievement in dance lessons seen was satisfactory and pupils demonstrated control in their movements. In a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils, for example, they responded well to the teacher's instructions to look at the pictures on a comic strip, and then work to in pairs to produce a repeated sequence of movements. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to evaluate their own performance, and that of others, and this helps to develop speaking skills. School records show that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave.
91. The school organises a wide range of sporting activities. These include competitive games with other schools. The hall is spacious and equipment is of a good quality.
92. In **music** pupils' achievements and progress in the lessons seen were satisfactory. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. Pupils sing tunefully with a good sense of beat and dynamics. A visiting music specialist teaches the choir very well and this has raised the standard of singing across the school. Younger children use a good range of untuned percussion instruments to accompany songs and stories. In one lesson, Years 1 and 2 pupils were able to detect and respond to changes in the pitch of a simple tune. In a lesson in Year 3, some pupils understood the terms 'accompaniment' and 'melody'. They used chime bars and hand bells to order sounds according to pitch. In small groups, pupils were able to accompany a song using instruments and simple musical notation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils undertake a very good range of responsibilities enthusiastically.
- They discuss feelings and share their views with others sensibly.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of life in multicultural Britain.
- Teaching and learning are of a good quality.

Commentary

93. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop their own self-worth and confidence. Teaching is of a good quality and as a result the quality of learning is good with pupils keen to offer their opinions. Pupils achieve well and standards of attainment are in line with those found in most schools. For example, older pupils discuss very sensibly the issues raised by the Steven Lawrence case. Planned discussion sessions highlight the need to be aware of people's feelings. When asked about their hopes for the world one child responded, 'for there to be no crime, people to be good citizens and for there to be safe places to play.' Issues to do with sex and relationships, drugs and health education are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility. For example, before the inspection two pupils showed the inspector round the school, not the headteacher as is normally the case. The subject is well led and managed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).

