

INSPECTION REPORT

**St JOHNS CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105504

Headteacher: Mr F A Wood

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 257725

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 3-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 364

School address: Clarence Road
Longsight
Manchester

Postcode: M13 0YE

Telephone number: 0161 2247752

Fax number: 0161 2485248

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Revd. Ian Gomersall

Date of previous inspection: April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school, which is bigger than most schools is located about a mile south of Manchester city centre and serves a stable community comprising private and social housing. There is high unemployment locally and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The level of mobility is low. The school is involved in both the Excellence in Cities initiative and Children's Fund programme. Currently there are 274 pupils from the age of five to 11 years on roll together with 45 children attending full-time in the nursery and 45 in the reception year. The nursery and reception years are known as the Foundation Stage¹. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the Foundation Stage is typically very poor but covers a wide span of ability. Most pupils are from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds but there are also Black African and Caribbean, Indian, and White British pupils on roll plus a small number from dual heritage. Over two-thirds of the pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language, most speak either Urdu, Bengali or Somali at home. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties and eight pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school is resourced to meet the needs of hearing impaired pupils and additional local authority staff are employed to support these pupils.

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Educational Inclusion Personal social and health education and citizenship
31718	D Shields	Lay inspector	
4099	R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
19994	L Bradley	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Religious education English as an additional language
10611	M James	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs
20466	A Tattersall	Team inspector	Provision made for hearing impaired pupils

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PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St John's Church of England Primary is an **effective** school with a very caring ethos that values all pupils as equally special. The school serves its multicultural community very well and is successful in meeting the needs of a diverse group of pupils who get on very well together in racial harmony. Teaching is good and this enables pupils to achieve well during their time in school. The headteacher gives good leadership and together with senior managers, staff and governors strives to make the school even better. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is held in very high regard by parents, particularly for his strong commitment to inclusion.
- The well co-ordinated system of support is highly effective in enabling the many pupils, who are learning to speak English as an additional language to build communication skills with good confidence.
- Good teaching enables boys and girls of different abilities and ethnic backgrounds to learn successfully and to achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are far too low and pupils rarely have the chance to use their skills to support learning in other subjects.
- Assessment, keeping track of progress and the setting of target systems are not used consistently to plan pupils' next steps in learning or to involve them in reviewing how well they are doing.
- Pupils' attendance is good and their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good, although the school could do much more to take account of their views.
- The curriculum is of good quality and meets the needs and aptitudes of pupils of all ages as well as providing good enrichment and benefiting from strong community links.
- Staff are very responsive to pupils' special needs, including those with hearing impairments and challenging behaviour, and they pay very good attention to pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- Very good relationships with parents are beneficial to their children's learning.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities lack rigour and more could be done to identify and share good practice in teaching and learning.

The school has made **satisfactory** progress overall in tackling identified weaknesses since the time of the previous inspection with the exception of raising standards in ICT which are well below average. Very good progress has been made in improving attendance.

Current pupils' achievement is **good**.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The table above shows that Year 6 pupils reached below average standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in English and science and well below average standards in mathematics. Pupils did very well in all subjects when compared to the standards reached by pupils in similar schools. From their starting point in Year 2 most pupils achieved very well. The school's performance was in line with the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The school is adding considerable value to pupils' education and is enabling them to achieve well. The school's performance is above that of other local schools. From a very low base the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage even though the majority fall well short of the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical

development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them. Pupils from five to 11 progress at a good rate to reach standards that although below average in English, mathematics and science, reflect good achievement. Pupils reach below average standards in geography and history. In these subjects pupils demonstrate good knowledge, but weaker writing skills hamper their recorded work. Standards in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are average by the end of Year 6. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress in music and physical education. Standards in ICT are well below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Pupils enjoy school, try hard with their work and behave very well. The school is a happy and harmonious community and the few exclusions have been warranted. The school has given very good attention to improving attendance and this has been met with remarkable success as attendance is currently above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Classes are happy and purposeful places of learning with excellent relationships. The quality of assessment is not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their work, with marking a weakness in this respect. Support staff play a pivotal role in assisting targeted groups of pupils to build their basic skills well. Learning mentors are providing beneficial support to vulnerable pupils and are helping raise their self-esteem and confidence. Bi-lingual staff do a good job in supporting pupils and their families in their home language which helps celebrate diversity. The curriculum offers worthwhile experiences for the pupils with some good enrichment. The provision for pupils with special needs, including those with hearing impairments and behavioural challenges, is good. Pupils receive very good care and support. They are very well looked after during the school day. The provision for their personal and social development ensures the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged strong links with other schools and its community for the benefit of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The school's mission of *Caring together, growing together, learning together, succeeding together* is well reflected in the very good ethos it promotes. The headteacher is leading the school forward with a strong commitment to inclusion and enabling pupils to develop as rounded individuals, well skilled for later life. The senior management team has many strengths between them and members play critical roles in leading forward subjects. However, more work is needed in developing their strategic role. Most subject leaders have a good grasp of their subjects, but have not had sufficient time or opportunity to develop their management role fully. Governors ensure that all legal requirements are met and are good critical friends of the school. They apply the principles of best value well to their decisions.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents find the school approachable, feel their children make good progress and are very positive about the level of care their children receive. They appreciate the range of extra-curricular and other activities that help broaden their children's experiences. Pupils' friendships are valued, teachers are supportive and helpful and pupils trust them. Overwhelmingly they say this is a very happy school to be at.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and achievement in ICT and extend its use to support pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Extend monitoring and evaluation activities so that senior managers have more extensive information about standards, teaching and learning and use it more rigorously.
- Ensure that assessment and target-setting systems are developed in all subjects and used consistently to plan pupils' next steps in learning, to track their achievement and to involve them in reviewing progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good** and standards in core subjects compare very favourably with those found in similar local schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school adds significant value to pupils' education, as shown by the very good achievement of Year 6 pupils in the 2003 National Curriculum tests.
- From a very low base, boys and girls of different abilities and across all ethnic backgrounds achieve well in English, mathematics, science, religious education, music and physical education.
- Standards in information and communication technology are far too low and pupils rarely have the chance to use their information and communication technology skills to support learning in other subjects.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science compare very favourably with those found in similar local schools.
- The well co-ordinated system of support is highly effective in enabling the many pupils, who are learning to speak English as an additional language, to build communication skills with good confidence.

Commentary

1. Standards overall have improved since the previous inspection with the exception of information and communication technology where there has been very limited advancement and provision here is poor.
2. The strong emphasis given to pupils' English language development in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is helping the younger pupils in school to build strong foundations for more accelerated English language acquisition as they get older. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are spread across the ability groups in classes and the mathematics sets in junior years. Some of these pupils also have assessed special educational needs and benefit from the well co-ordinated provision that the special educational needs co-ordinator takes responsibility for, and works in their best interests. Pupils from across the ability range achieve successfully because class teachers and the specialist staff work in partnership to both plan and deliver well-matched work programmes. By the time they leave school, the great majority of boys and girls who have begun school with very limited English are enabled to achieve well both academically and socially, and make particularly good progress in the core subjects they study.
3. The following table shows that Year 2 pupils reached well below average standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests. Standards were below those reached by pupils in similar schools in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Standards in 2003 fell below those reached in 2002 in mathematics, were very similar in reading and improved significantly in writing. Teachers' assessed science standards as well below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (13.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.2 (10.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.6 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The table that follows shows that Year 6 pupils reached below average standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in English and science and well below average standards in mathematics. The school’s data shows that its performance in National Curriculum tests is above that of other local schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (26.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.0 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.5 (29.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Findings from inspection show that the standards achieved in most subjects are respectable given the very low base from which many pupils start. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage even though the majority fall well short of the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them. Pupils from five to 11 progress at a good rate to reach standards that, although below average in English, mathematics and science, reflect good achievement. Pupils reach below average standards in geography and history. In these subjects pupils demonstrate good knowledge, but weak writing skills hampers their recorded work. Standards in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are average by the end of Year 6. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress in music, religious education and physical education. Standards in information and communication technology are well below average and pupils’ achievement is unsatisfactory.
6. Inspectors could find no significant variation between the standards that boys and girls achieve, or in their good enthusiasm for school. There is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or between those who speak a different language at home. Pupils new to school and the many who have very limited English language are receiving appropriate support to help them settle into routines and feel secure whilst staff assess their particular needs. Good use is made of teaching assistants to deliver tailor-made programmes either one-to-one or in small groups to help these pupils learn English at a good rate. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, achieve well in relation to their capabilities, but overall standards are likely to be restricted by this proportion of pupils.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are far too low. Skills in the use and application of information and communication technology are a significant weakness because of the poor provision made in this subject. External factors beyond the control of the school, for example, delayed training and unreliable resources, have impeded the implementation of the subject action plan but, nevertheless, the leadership and management of improvement

have been poor. Pupils have very limited access to computer technology beyond the weekly timetable slots in the suite. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is poor, and although there are limited applications in English, mathematics, art and design and science, for example, most pupils are given insufficient opportunities to apply their limited skills in most subjects. The school has no effective procedures for assessing the starting point, attainment and the progress made by individual pupils in information and communication technology and no way of knowing whether the work is matched to their individual needs.

8. The school agrees targets for pupils' achievements in English and mathematics with the local education authority two years in advance of the pupils taking the National Curriculum tests. The targets being set are therefore not based on the most reliable and up-to-date assessment data. The school is torn between wanting to aim as high as it can, whilst seeking to add value that is reflected in more realistic targets that can be reviewed at more frequent intervals. The schools' own data on the performance of different pupils in the National Curriculum tests is being used to help plan the additional support that will be required. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are not sharp enough to pinpoint learning spurts and this is where improvement can be made to help managers keep a closer track on overall achievement and make the target setting process far more useful and influential when seeking to raise standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance is **good** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils, whatever their ability or ethnic background, show a real desire to learn.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent.
- Attendance has improved very significantly since the previous inspection and the arrangements to promote regular attendance are excellent.
- The school is a very harmonious and friendly community in which total respect is shown for one another's cultural traditions.

Commentary

9. Pupils strongly agree that St John's is a good school to be at and give it a unanimous "thumbs up!" for everything that it provides. Pupils get on very well with their classmates. They have extremely secure relationships with teachers and other adults who work with them. One pupil commented on the questionnaire that "teachers are friendly and people come and help you". In discussions they confidently express the view that bullying is rare. If it does happen they tell an adult who then helps both the bullied pupils and the bullies. Pupils from the many ethnic backgrounds equally state that instances of name calling related to racism are rare. One older pupil told inspectors that, "the headteacher takes this sort of thing very seriously". Pupils with special educational needs and those from the hearing impaired unit equally enjoy and are involved in all aspects of school life.
10. Lessons are always happy, busy and productive. This is because pupils enjoy learning, they try hard and are attentive and this has a positive impact on how well they achieve in lessons. Pupils' attitudes are at their very best when lessons zip along at a brisk pace and activities are challenging. However, occasionally some pupils can be easily distracted if teaching does not engage them fully. Pupils work well together in small groups and pairs, especially during science lessons. The scope for pupils to become independent learners is improving but opportunities, for example, to carry out their own research, are missed in some lessons. Pupils nearly always behave very well. One reason for this is because all adults have a consistent approach to behaviour management. Occasionally some pupils have great difficulty in controlling their behaviour but they receive very good support from adults who work in the

school and as a result they are often able to continue with their lessons. In the year prior to the inspection there were three fixed-term exclusions. The school only uses this sanction when every other strategy of support has failed.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi

No of pupils on roll
3
88

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
1	0

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

- There is a wonderful sense of racial harmony. Pupils are encouraged to behave well, to respect, respond to and value the views of others and to understand about life in a wide multi-ethnic society. Through the schools good curriculum, for instance, in subjects such as religious education and literacy as well as through assemblies, pupils are developing very good spiritual awareness. Another significant factor that contributes to this is the school's celebration of the many religious faiths of the pupils. All are helped to think about their own and other's feelings, along with rights and responsibilities. Pupils are highly valued and treated with respect and as a result they are polite, courteous and friendly towards visitors. As they move through the school, pupils become confident about themselves and life outside the school. The school's excellent emphasis on celebrating the similarities and differences in the wide range of pupils' cultural backgrounds has very effectively raised their awareness of cultural diversity. Discussions, even with the younger pupils, indicate that they have a very good understanding of issues concerning racism and sexism.
- Attendance has improved very significantly since the previous inspection and is above average. Punctuality at the start of the school day has also improved. The school has worked extremely hard to achieve this by raising parents' awareness of the need for their children to attend on a regular basis and on time. The work undertaken by the highly effective learning mentors is a significant factor in the school's success. They have established very good relationships with parents who almost always follow the schools attendance policy, especially in relation to taking extended holidays to the sub continent. Both attendance and punctuality have an extremely high profile in the school and this is helping to sustain the school's success.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.9
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0
National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. The curriculum offers worthwhile experiences for the pupils with some good enrichment. Pupils receive very good care and support. The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged strong links with other schools and its community for the benefit of pupils.

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables boys and girls of different abilities and ethnic backgrounds to learn successfully.
- The very best and most consistent teaching to help pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills at a rapid pace was seen in English, mathematics and science.
- Most teachers are using literacy and numeracy lessons to help pupils build up key skills at a good pace.
- Teaching and learning are not good enough in information and communication technology as there is too little opportunity for pupils to build skills and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The quality of teachers' assessment, though satisfactory in core subjects, is not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their work, with marking a weakness in this respect.

Commentary

13. Since the time of the previous inspection quite a few staff have left and new staff have joined. Nevertheless, the many strengths in teaching and learning reported at the time of the previous inspection have been sustained. Teaching is good with some very good features in English, mathematics and science in particular that help pupils' learn successfully, and achieve well, during their time in school. However, assessment, including marking, remains a key area for improvement, as does the need to analyse and use data to assist the progress individual pupils make, year-on-year. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved and some good teaching and learning took place in the lessons observed by inspectors. Nevertheless, it is the weakest subject in school, as far as achievement is concerned, due to the poor provision being made particularly for older pupils who have limited access to computers and rarely have the chance to use developing skills to support learning in other subjects.
14. Younger teachers have joined the team in the last two years and have brought with them a freshness of approach that more experienced staff value. Between them the teaching staff have many talents and all are willing to share ideas and are reflective about their practice. Morale is high and there is good determination to provide an even better education for all pupils. The school's mission of *Caring together, growing together, learning together, succeeding together* is reflected well in the very good ethos promoted.
15. Teaching and learning are good in all years with some very good features, and these help pupils build their skills from strong foundations. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Classes are happy and purposeful places of learning in which excellent relationships underpin pupils' good achievement. The very best and most consistent teaching to help pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills at a rapid pace was seen in English, mathematics and science. Very good lessons were observed in history, music and information and communication technology too. Some common features were present in all of these imaginative and stimulating lessons:
 - Very clear explanations given to support the amount and quality of work produced.
 - Shared expectations that engaged pupils learning from the outset.
 - High levels of challenge in the work set that resulted in all pupils making very good gains in learning.
 - Highly effective use of support staff and resources.
 - Effective use of time targets to ensure that everyone worked to full capacity.
16. An excellent lesson in English in a Year 5/6 class enabled the pupils to extend their writing skills exceedingly well as they developed a storyline from different viewpoints. The teacher's strategy of *hot seating* enabled the pupils to firstly role-play a scenario, putting themselves in another's shoes and then exploring and discussing feelings in groups before writing empathic pieces independently that demonstrated a flair for story telling and very good

achievement. The sample of pupils' work confirms the inspection judgements about the quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 71 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	16 (23%)	35 (49%)	19 (27%)	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.

17. The staff in the Foundation Stage have good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. They have high expectations of both work and behaviour, and this contributes to the good progress the children make. The teachers have a pleasant, helpful and encouraging manner with the children, and give them much praise for their work. A suitable range of strategies is used in teaching the children, and most effective use is made of the classroom space available. Procedures for recording how well children are doing are thorough, and the teachers and the teaching assistants complement each other very well in ensuring that the children are provided with tasks that are suitable to their needs.
18. Pupils with special educational needs receive some very good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to these pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans.
19. Work undertaken in support of pupils who are at a very early stage of learning English is of good quality and enables these pupils to learn successfully. Bi-lingual staff do a good job in supporting pupils in their home language which helps celebrate diversity and gives them self worth and the motivation to learn a new language with confidence.
20. As part of its self-review the school brought to inspectors' attention the good performance of Bengali-speaking boys and the under-achievement of Urdu and Punjabi-speaking girls in National Curriculum tests, the latter of particular concern. Inspectors tracked the achievement of different ethnic groups in school very closely. They examined both boys' and girls' responses in lessons carefully. It is clear that in some classes boys are more forthcoming in responding to questions or offering information themselves. In the most successful lessons, the teacher targeted questions at particular pupils and in this way could match the question to elicit the level of knowledge and understanding but also to ensure the full involvement of all. In some lessons there are missed opportunities for support staff to support equality of opportunity to the full in this respect. Inspectors found no significant variation in the quality or standards of written work being produced by boys and girls or in their achievement. There was no evidence identified by inspectors to support the school's analysis of the test results and more work will be required by senior managers to explore this further.
21. The teaching of basic skills is good and pupils build their basic skills successfully. They are attentive listeners and pay good attention to all instructions. They sustain good concentration in lessons and show a keenness to respond to questions. Pupils' writing skills are improving due to the school's effective improvement strategies but handwriting and presentation require more work. The school uses visual resources very successfully to help explain key concepts in different subjects and this stimulates good discussions. The approach enables the pupils to talk about what they observe before they begin to write about it and this gives confidence to writing and also assists in the development of improving vocabulary. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' communication and language skills from an early age pays dividends as they grow older and also enables them to have full access to all the subjects that they study. The school's setting arrangements which place pupils in Years 3 to 6 into ability groupings for

mathematics are working satisfactorily, but better use of assessment data could enable those who are potentially high attaining to benefit consistently from more challenging work.

22. Good attention is paid to sharing the lesson objectives with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what they are expected to learn. However, there is variable use of time targets to aid the pace of an individual's learning during group activities when the teacher's attention is focused elsewhere and in some higher-attaining groups the pace of work slackens off at these times. Most plenary sessions are used well to reinforce the lesson objectives, but few take stock of what has been learnt by individual pupils or look forward to enable them to identify what they need to do next to improve their work. Marking too is a weakness in this respect. These key features are impeding potentially consistently high quality teaching and learning.

The curriculum

The **good** curriculum provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements. Extra curricular provision is good and the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity is very good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well.
- The school has yet to monitor sufficiently rigorously whether the system of withdrawing pupils for additional basic skills support has a negative impact on their learning in other subjects.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- The accommodation is of good quality. It is bright, stimulating and well maintained, and resources are well chosen and of good quality.

Commentary

23. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that meets the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all, from children in the nursery to pupils in Year 6. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception is good. The children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. A rich, stimulating and varied curriculum is the result. There has been suitable attention given to enhancing the curriculum for physical education since the time of the previous inspection and swimming and outdoor pursuits are now available. Pupils can choose from a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
24. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are provided for well. The school has identified particular individuals who have specific learning needs and they may be withdrawn from their class in order to be supported singly or in small groups. The timetable of withdrawal is planned each half-term so as to cause minimal disruption to pupils' learning in any one subject. However, nobody monitors the class work individuals miss as a result and this requires close tracking to identify whether the system is giving with one hand, but taking away with the other.
25. The school is involved in a range of initiatives to enhance its provision, for example, Excellence in Cities provides funding for learning mentors to help support pupils overcome barriers to learning. Learning mentors successfully meet the diverse needs of individual pupils who are experiencing particular difficulty or are in vulnerable situations. They provide very good support and make a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal welfare. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex and drugs education.

26. The school has been successful in its implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and this is reflected in improvements in pupils' sustained good achievement. The setting of pupils in mathematics is working satisfactorily on the whole but the arrangements do not serve the needs of high-flying mathematicians as consistently as they do the lower-attaining ones. The school quite rightly has to give significant emphasis to enabling pupils to build their English skills to enable full access to all subjects and this does take time. The school is usefully looking at how the curriculum might be reshaped to focus more on skills across subjects in the light of the good practice outlined in the government's strategy entitled "Excellence and Enjoyment".
27. The after-school provision of extra-curricular activities provides good enrichment with over 200 pupils involved in at least one session weekly. Activities include football, computer, art and craft, with pupils attending one session a week of either football, Spanish, mathematics challenges, basket ball, indoor games, recorder, homework or reading. There are performance groups in steel pan and violin, and the choir sung publicly six times last year including taking part in the Commonwealth sponsored "Singfest" at Bridgwater Hall. Through the Excellence in Cities initiative, holiday activities for primary pupils take place at the High School and a Bengali language class runs at weekends. A few pupils are nominated annually to attend a local education authority run "Excellence Centre" on each Saturday, last year the focus was mathematics and this year it is dance drama.
28. Parents highly rate the range of visits that pupils have undertaken to enhance the curriculum such as the Lowry Centre, Stockley farm, Styal village, Knowsley Safari park, Gulliver's Kingdom and the theatre. All mentioned these to inspectors as adding value to pupils' education but cost is an issue for some parents and the governors provide substantial subsidy so that visits go ahead. Parents' contribution has been capped at six pounds per child and this is proving successful. The governors' support for the curriculum in this way shows how strong the school's commitment to inclusion really is.
29. The school is a welcoming environment. First impressions are very pleasant with metal art and sculpture woven into the security fencing and a good quality outdoor play space being developed. Internally the school is very well maintained and provides bright, stimulating accommodation in which resources are well chosen and of good quality. Displays are attractive and celebrate pupils' achievement and they are increasingly being developed as a teaching resource. Pupils told inspectors that they very much enjoyed learning about the life and work of local business men, the dentist, a magistrate, reporter, nurse, fire officers, police, history student, teachers from Bangladesh and Spanish exchange students who have all been into school to share their experiences.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. Arrangements to seek pupils' views are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are very well cared for.
- The learning mentors provide extremely effective support for the pupils in their care.
- Pupils' views are valued but not enough is done to involve them in the work and development of the school.
- Academic guidance is not sufficiently targeted so that pupils clearly know what they must do to improve.
- All pupils have excellent and trusting relationships with at least one adult in the school.

Commentary

30. The school provides an extremely caring and happy atmosphere in which pupils say they feel safe and secure. Pupils know there is an adult they could go to if they are worried at school. They hold very positive views about school life. Several pupils told inspectors that, "it's a marvellous, fantastic school". The excellent relationship between adults and pupils gives them the confidence to ask for help if they need it. A pupil in Year 5 stated, "you can talk to teachers and they listen". The learning mentors in particular show an extraordinary commitment and concern for the particular needs of pupils in their care, many of whom have learning difficulties or are trying to cope with personal challenges. When pupils feel vulnerable they can visit them in the "Bat Cave", the place where all pupils know where to find the learning mentors. Some spend lunchtime with the learning mentors in the community room playing co-operative games, and this also develops their social skills. Pupils confirm they feel very well supported by the learning mentors and say that they help them when they are experiencing difficulties. This high level of support enables these pupils to cope with their difficulties but also to take part in their lessons and make good progress with their learning. Whilst pastoral guidance is extremely effective, academic guidance is satisfactory. Staff know the pupils well, but rely too heavily on informal systems to track achievement, especially in the non-core subjects. Pupils state confidently that they can ask their teachers for help during lessons. However, the school's assessment information is not consistently used to enable pupils to know how they can improve their work. Teachers do not share academic targets with pupils to help them understand how they can improve the standard of their work.
31. The care given to pupils who are learning to speak English is very good. There are around 90 per cent of pupils on roll for whom English is an additional language and many of them are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Urdu and Bengali are the main spoken languages, though the number speaking Somali is increasing. The school has substantially increased the number of bi- and multi-lingual staff so that the English language needs of pupils can be supported by the use of mother tongue when appropriate. This was seen to work very effectively at the start of each day to share expectations with pupils and to pass on information to parents. The very good links with parents of children starting in the nursery or reception class, and the sensitive arrangements for supporting them, help children to quickly feel at home and adjust to the routines of school life. This early relationship with families is quickly built upon and strengthened as pupils move through the school. Pupils who join the school part way through the school year are equally very well supported. In discussion several pupils confirm this. Adults follow the agreed policies and very clear practices relating to health, safety and child protection very well. These procedures permeate all aspects of school life and are very clearly understood by all concerned that work or help in school. The governors, however, do not fulfill their duties comprehensively in relation to health and safety as they are too reliant on the headteacher to provide them with information about risk assessments.
32. Parents believe that the all adults in school encourage pupils to become mature and independent. Pupils say that teachers listen to and value what they have to say in lessons. However, there is no systematic way to seek pupils' views, such as a school council, and no regular consultation by other means such as questionnaires or suggestion boxes. Because of this the school is not able to take their views into account, where appropriate, when agreeing priorities for improvement. This is very much a missed opportunity.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with the community are **good**. Liaison with other schools is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships with parents are very good.
- Links with the community improve the quality of pupils' education as well as their personal development.

- Although school to home communication works very well, the school does not always indicate to parents how written information can be translated into their community language if required.

Commentary

33. Parents hold the school in very high regard and are pleased with the progress their children make. The early relationships established when children start in the nursery are built upon so that almost all parents are happy to approach the school if they have any concerns. The school has built up this very close relationship over a number of years and much of the success is due to the very strong lead given by the headteacher and, more recently, through the work of the learning mentors. Teachers make themselves available to talk to parents at the start and close of sessions and this too is a really positive feature. This means that any issues are quickly addressed. Events are regularly organised to which parents are invited, such as class and celebration assemblies, as well as adult education courses. These are reported to be very well attended and the one in progress during the inspection on positive behaviour management was very much enjoyed and found to be useful by the parents. The vast majority of parents support the school in many ways, most notably by ensuring their children attend school regularly. Parents are very generous. They provide food for celebrations such as Eid and when visitors come to the school. They also help raise money that is used to subsidise educational visits and the school values this support. Although parents are occasionally consulted on specific school issues, for example, the policy on homework, no wider more regular consultation takes place and this is a missed opportunity.
34. Day-to-day communication with parents is very good. The early morning “drop in” to the community room gives parents ready access to the learning mentors, two of whom speak several of the community languages. Parents also have ready access to a bi-lingual office receptionist, and this too helps to establish good communication and relationships when parents visit the school. Written information is of good quality, including regular newsletters as well as an informative governors’ annual report. The end-of-year pupil progress report is a useful publication that reports on all subjects. However, other than the governors’ annual report nothing is translated into community languages or indications given as to how this can be achieved if required. Parents do not consistently receive written information about what their children will learn each term.
35. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the visits they have made into the wider community, such as to Southport, Ordsall Hall and to the theatre. Some year groups also have the opportunity to take part in concerts linked to the arts, for instance, with the Royal Northern College of Music. Pupils’ experiences are broadened by all these opportunities. Members of the nearby community visit the school to attend school productions and recently supported the winter fair. There are also good links and liaison with colleges and the local secondary schools. Arrangements to support pupils both before and after their transfer to the next stage of education are well planned.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **good** overall. The headteacher and key staff provide **good** leadership. Management is **satisfactory** with some aspects that require improvement. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A real strength is the headteacher’s vision and commitment to inclusion.
- There is a very positive ethos in the school, shared by the whole school community.
- Monitoring of standards, teaching and learning is not rigorous enough.
- The governing body make a good contribution to the leadership of the school.
- Financial management is very good and the school gives good value for money.

Commentary

36. The headteacher leads his staff with a strong vision for the provision of a well-rounded and inclusive education for all the pupils in the school. His outstanding devotion and dedication to the needs of the pupils of the school's community has permeated the very good ethos of the school for the 20 years of his headship. He is deservedly regarded and respected very highly by pupils, parents, staff and governors alike for his establishment of St John's school as a beacon for pupil and community development in the area. The headteacher's determined leadership has ensured that all the pupils of the school are taught well, make good progress and are very well cared for. Even more importantly, all members of the school community live and learn in a calm and racially harmonious atmosphere because of the emphasis he has placed on this and the support he has given to building mutually respectful relationships. As a headteacher with high visibility and availability in the school, all roads invariably lead to him.
37. The present management structure in the school, whilst satisfactory overall, leaves too much decision-making to the headteacher. He is effective at this, but at present the delegation of some responsibilities is too blurred, causing an overload of work for some and a limited involvement in strategic matters for others. Whilst senior members of staff lead their areas well, especially in English, and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and in the provision for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language, management of these and other aspects of provision is not so effective. An example of this is that although the senior management team, comprising five very competent leaders, has identified information and communication technology as an area for improvement well over a year ago, the pace of change has been far too slow and little improvement has taken place. Equally, the need to improve the monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning, especially in non-core subjects of the curriculum, has been slow to take off. The school realises that these aspects of management need swift improvement and a start has been made to move matters forward. The appointment of a new member of the senior management team to lead on shaping the non-core curriculum is galvanising the management team to take quicker and more effective decisions than in the past. All leaders know that this will enable the headteacher to concentrate on the major issues in the school, rather than all of the issues. The deputy headteacher has led improvement effectively in the Foundation Stage, and makes a good contribution to adult education and home liaison. However, her present sphere of influence in the early years of the school gives her little visibility as a leader throughout the rest of the school.
38. The governing body, well led by a caring and knowledgeable chair, is effective in promoting school inclusion policies very well and for leading the strategies that have seen a very much-improved level of attendance. The present governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They support staff and managers well although their challenge to improvement and individual leaders, whilst satisfactory, is not as effective as other aspects of their work. They know where weaknesses lie but have tended to rely on the headteacher to deal with them, rather than being visibly proactive in support of the management of change.
39. The school has effective systems in place for self-evaluation and for producing and analysing data relating to standards especially in English and mathematics. However, it is less successful in using this information to promote improvement in identified priorities. Target setting, for example, is sometimes unrealistic and also not made clear enough to pupils. Assessment of progress is also inconsistent, particularly in the non-core subjects of the curriculum. The standard of education is still good because teachers and the very competent teaching assistants throughout the school do their jobs in the classroom well. An effective performance management system has supported this well. The school would like standards to be even better and realises that more consistent monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders, and better evaluation of progress through assessment will assist better effectiveness.

40. The school makes very good use of its financial and other resources to provide pupils with a good education. The headteacher and school administrator manage the budget and the many grants the school receives effectively. Although little money is retained as a contingency, this is good practice as the school's strategic planning over time is consistent and numbers on role are assured for some time to come. The school is very much sought after by parents and has an extensive waiting list. Although there is a weakness in the use of resources in information and communication technology, overall the governors apply the principles of best value effectively. The governing body is particularly good at comparing its performance with that of similar schools. Although frequently well above other schools in this respect, the school managers are not complacent and are constantly striving to do better. The school spends more than most schools on educating each pupil but provides pupils with an education that adds considerable value to their life skills and prepares them well for citizenship and this represents good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,211,259	Balance from previous year	32,884
Total expenditure	1,200,159	Balance carried forward to the next	43,985
Expenditure per pupil	3,288		

The effectiveness of the resourced provision for hearing impaired pupils.

The effectiveness of the resourced provision for hearing impaired pupils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Hearing impaired pupils achieve as well as others in school.
- Staff work together well to support hearing impaired pupils.
- Pupils' needs are assessed well to ensure that they receive the help they require.
- There is a recognised need to improve pupils' writing skills.
- Leadership and management of the resourced provision are effective.

Commentary

41. There are good arrangements provided for hearing impaired pupils in the resourced provision. Pupils attend main school classes with their hearing peers as much as possible and this enables them to develop good social skills, make friends and to develop strong and supportive relationships with others. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' needs and pupils receive a good standard of support to enable them to achieve. Teaching is good and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
42. Specialist and school staff collaborate well to plan how pupils should receive help. This is often through a specialist teacher or teaching assistant of the hearing impaired joining lessons in the main school. This was very effective for pupils in Year 5 to learn to play in a steel band. By concentrating on the visiting music teacher, watching peers, listening through radio hearing aids, feeling vibrations, and guidance from the specialist teaching assistant, pupils are fully part of the steel band and their contributions are valued. If hearing impaired pupils require more help in lessons they may receive this in a smaller group. For instance, pupils in Year 3 received good guidance from the class teacher when they worked in a small group to learn more about odd and even numbers. Through plenty of repetition and good resources, pupils with hearing impairment are making good progress to select cards to show odd and even numbers up to 100.

43. The effective systems that are used by specialist teachers of the hearing impaired to assess pupils' needs complement the school's systems. Although the information confirms that pupils' attainment is well below average as a consequence of their special educational needs, the results are used well by staff to plan to meet pupils' needs effectively. There are good arrangements to maximise pupils' hearing through regular checks of hearing and the provision of hearing aids, with particularly good arrangements for pupils to benefit from radio aids. These are used consistently well to improve pupils' opportunities to hear in class and assemblies, where teachers in the main school and visitors will wear a transmitter when there is a hearing impaired pupil present.
44. Assessments confirm that pupils have the greatest challenge in learning in literacy lessons. Consequently, the school has established effective arrangements for pupils to receive individual and small group support, including withdrawal into the resource base when required. This provides a quiet atmosphere and enables pupils to concentrate on tasks to make good progress through skilled teaching. Pupils have the greatest difficulty in making progress in writing skills. An important target for improvement in the resourced provision is the introduction of a new system to enable pupils to develop skills, for instance, in writing answers to questions. This is already proving highly successful and pupils are making good progress as they become more familiar with a range of support materials such as referring to charts to select words to create sentences.
45. The resource provision for hearing impaired pupils is led and managed effectively through a partnership between the headteacher and the local education authority. The headteacher works effectively with the teachers and teaching assistants allocated to the school to manage the provision on a day-to-day basis. Senior managers also visit to share leadership with the headteacher, to monitor teaching, learning, pupils' achievements and to guide developments. The partnership ensures an efficient use of funds. As pupil numbers fluctuate, then an alteration is made to the number of staff allocated to support the hearing impaired children. This, when taking into account the progress that pupils make, ensures that the resourced provision provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

46. There are currently 45 children attending full-time in the nursery and 45 children in the reception year. The nursery and reception years are known as the Foundation Stage. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the Foundation Stage is very poor. English speaking, listening, reading and numeracy skills are especially weak. Most pupils are from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds where families speak Urdu and Bengali at home. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the language needs of all are fully supported. Teaching assistants are of high calibre and make a strong positive contribution to children's learning. Provision for the majority of children who are learning English as an additional language is good, because adults take every opportunity to develop skills on a one-to-one basis. This is true for the small but significant proportion of children who have assessed special educational needs too. Through good teaching in all areas of learning, children make confident progress in learning to speak English and in developing other skills. Despite the school's best efforts, a higher than average number of children do not achieve the goals expected for their age. Strong teamwork, thorough planning and high expectations are the key to the Foundation Stage success. Effective leadership and management have resulted in improved liaison between the two year groups, with better planning and good assessment procedures. Accommodation is of sound quality with good quality play areas out of doors. Reception classes are rather tight on space but the staff overcome this well by careful organisation of activities. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the development of the Foundation Stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to achieve the expected level by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Children are polite and very well behaved.
- Children readily take turns and share the resources provided.
- Children show growing independence in their work.
- Teaching is very good, and this allows children to achieve very well.

Commentary

47. Children start with low personal and social development skills. Children learn how to behave in school, and be part of a social grouping during their time in the Foundation Stage because of the very good attention paid to this aspect of their education. In nursery, children soon learn to share items, take turns and play together. Those in reception learn to eat their snack and drink their milk in a most pleasant manner. Children are eager to explore new learning, and most in the reception are able to concentrate on the work being undertaken. They are able to move confidently around the classrooms, and the school when necessary. Teachers, and other staff, provide children with an appropriate mix of directed activities and self-chosen ones, to which the children respond well. The staff team know the children well, and they respond appropriately to their individual needs. The work of bi-lingual staff adds extra value to supporting both the children and their parents and builds a very strong home partnership to the benefit of the children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well but most are likely to fall well short of the goal expected for their age in communication, language and literacy by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Children have very limited speaking skills in English when they join the nursery.
- Children enjoy handling books, and developing their early reading skills.
- Children use pencils to produce simple writing, although most can only write a small number of words.
- Teaching is good, with opportunities being provided to develop all appropriate skills.

Commentary

48. Children enjoy listening to stories. The careful teaching of basic skills results in children handling books correctly. They are interested in the illustrations and turn pages carefully. Many recognise the difference between text and pictures and a small number recognise some initial sounds. Children's speaking skills are less well developed. A small number speak clearly, whilst most speak in single words, not possessing the English vocabulary or the confidence to make longer contributions. However, teachers and teaching assistants make skilful use of questioning to encourage the children to talk. For two mornings each week, the learning mentors work in support of children's English language development conversing in Urdu and Bengali alongside English and this is a very positive feature in helping the children to learn successfully. Children enjoy looking at books, and in reception they are beginning to recognise a number of words that they read to others. Teachers provide children with suitable opportunities to write, but with most in nursery developing their emergent writing skills at a very slow pace. Most can write their name and experiment with mark making but writing skills are weak. The higher attainers in reception hold their pencil correctly and have good pencil control, modelling writing from left to right and giving meaning to the writing using various letters and symbols. Children make steady progress in the reception classes with high attaining children using an increasing number of letters in their writing and attempting to write their name independently. They are beginning to recognise initial sounds. A number of children reverse letters and are unsure of some letter shapes, for example, when making shopping lists. Good opportunities are provided for writing through role-play and this is supporting positively their good achievement.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in building their mathematical skills but most are likely to fall well short of the goals expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Children know a range of songs and rhymes that help to develop their understanding of number.
- Whilst most children can count up to ten, when working together, many are uncertain in relating a number of items to the appropriate numeral.
- Some children know a suitable range of simple mathematical vocabulary, although others find using the correct terminology difficult.
- Teaching is good, with, for example, a range of counting and shape activities provided for the children.

Commentary

49. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to count and use counting rhymes. In nursery, for example, children count items of fruit. Children also attempt to identify the correct

number of items to match a numeral, but many find this difficult. A number of children in reception successfully add 'one more', when asked, but few are yet able to demonstrate this in writing. Many children have an appropriate vocabulary that allows them to name basic two-dimensional shapes, but most have difficulties in describing these shapes because of their limited knowledge of English vocabulary. Teachers provide children with a variety of mathematical tasks and games that help them to develop their knowledge of number, shape and measures, and that extend their English language, for example, when pairs of children lay on the floor so that others could decide who was tallest. The good emphasis given to visual learning helps the children understand the concepts much more readily and is a positive feature of the good teaching and learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is good.
- Children are beginning to develop their understanding of plants and animals, as well as different cultures, although many have difficulties explaining their understanding because of limited English language.
- Children successfully carry out practical activities confidently, such as making food items.
- Teaching is good, with a rich and stimulating variety of activities provided for the children.

Commentary

50. When children start school the school's data shows that their knowledge and understanding of the wider world is extremely limited. Teachers provide children with a good range of activities and experiences that enable them to learn about the world. Children in the nursery learn, for example, about the body and the senses, whilst those in reception learn about plants. Through stories and assemblies the children learn about celebrations in different cultures, which are sometimes shared in home languages as well as English. Visits, for example, to the farm, and visitors such as people who help us, extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively. A number of children are able to explain their knowledge with some confidence, whilst many, with more limited English language skills, often find understanding and explaining more difficult. Practical activities, such as preparing food, are a regular feature in both the nursery and reception, and children in reception particularly enjoyed making and tasting pizzas, whilst those in the nursery enjoyed their sandwiches. Most children in the nursery are at an early stage of familiarisation with the computers, making random movements with little control of the mouse. Higher attaining children in the reception classes control the mouse reasonably well. They can locate letters of their name and type these in. In spite of steady gains in learning, for most children attainment remains well below the expected level by the time they start in Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well but most are unlikely to reach the goals expected by the time they leave reception.
- The children use a range of large equipment with increasing dexterity and confidence but some children are less competent in controlling smaller items.
- Most children have sound control of, for example, simple catching in physical education lessons.
- Teaching is good, with many opportunities provided for children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

51. Children benefit from the range of activities provided daily. Pencils, crayons, scissors, play dough and a variety of construction toys and large apparatus are readily available, and children use them with enthusiasm. In nursery and reception, most children cut and stick items, and thread beads onto a string. However, some need help to carry out these procedures, lacking both accuracy and control. Younger children use outdoor equipment well, for instance, using wheeled-vehicles confidently and skilfully. Older children further develop their physical skills during lessons in the yard on throwing and catching. Teachers, and teaching assistants, support them well, providing clear demonstrations and much encouragement. In the hall, the nursery children worked with much enjoyment as they strode like giants and scurried like mice to the well-chosen music that they listened to very carefully. Staff are most careful to ensure the children's safety at all times.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to reach standards below the level expected by the end of reception despite good progress.
- Some children have limited imagination with which to develop their work and limited experiences on which to draw.
- Children are presented with a variety of activities in music, painting and model making, to which they respond well.
- Children are particularly keen to experience role-play activities.
- The good teaching, with a wide variety of activities being provided, enables the children to achieve well.

Commentary

52. In both the nursery and reception, a good range of activities is provided, which the children undertake with enthusiasm. Children play instruments, sing songs and produce paintings and models. They show developing skills in all activities. Children are especially happy to take part in activities in both the 'Three Bears' House' and the 'Deep Blue Sea'. Whilst many children show good levels of imagination in their work, others find it more difficult to develop this skill. Children's art work is also affected by their lack of control of items such as pencils and brushes. Teachers and teaching assistants complement each other very well in supporting, encouraging and attempting to stimulate the children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very effective in increasing the confidence and skills of the many pupils who join the school with very limited knowledge of English.
- Standards in writing are rising, although handwriting is still not good enough.
- Teachers place strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of nuances in the texts they study.
- The school's sophisticated use of data enables it to pinpoint any groups who are underachieving.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not often given work that really stretches them.
- Marking is rarely used to agree the next steps in learning for individual pupils.

- Both subject leaders put their knowledge and experience to good use in supporting staff.

Commentary

53. In the last six years, the profile of the pupils attending the school has barely changed. If anything, there has been a slight increase in the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, the vast majority of whom are still at an early stage of learning the language when they move into Year 3. Many of the strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. This is particularly so with regards to the good support that pupils with special educational needs receive and the very effective way in which all staff work to make the curriculum accessible for all those pupils who are learning English as an additional language, whether at an early stage or when they are ready to develop higher-order skills of deduction and inference.
54. At Key Stage 1, the leap in standards in 2000 has been largely maintained in reading, whilst standards in writing have been less consistent, although showing good improvement in 2003. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are still well below average in both subjects, with very few pupils reaching the higher Level 3 and a significant minority of pupils not reaching the expected level. This is not surprising given their stage of language development and still represents good achievement from the very low base when they start school.
55. At Key Stage 2, standards have improved ahead of the national trend since 1999, but still remain below average. Although the school has been successful in ensuring that almost all its pupils reach Level 3, fewer pupils reach the expected level or the higher Level 5 than schools across the country. Inspection evidence shows the same picture. However, when compared with schools whose pupils reached similar standards in the national tests when they were seven, pupils at St John's do very much better, indicating the very good progress that pupils make between the ages of seven and 11 in mastering the English language.
56. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is good and they make steady progress in developing literacy skills. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average. Pupils develop good listening habits because of teachers' good behaviour management and clear, well-structured delivery accompanied by visual clues and mime. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence to speak up in class, although most need encouragement to utter more than a few words. Reading is well structured and most pupils read books that are at just the right level to enable them to apply their developing range of strategies. Most pupils are keen to learn to read, although a significant number of pupils are still reading simple texts by the end of Year 2. Higher-attaining pupils are tackling books that make them think and most are enabled to reach above expected standards. Good emphasis has been placed in providing pupils with prompts and vocabulary to promote independent writing, but insufficient thought has been given to providing the right sort of support for pupils to develop their handwriting skills. This limits the attainment of higher-attaining pupils in National Curriculum tests, as does teachers' reluctance to make them more self-reliant when writing independently.
57. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well and their progress accelerates as many acquire the building blocks needed to read and write in an additional language. By the age of 11, pupils' speaking and listening skills are average. They are particularly good listeners as was demonstrated in a Year 6 debate where pupils referred back in detail to previous contributions when putting their case. Standards in reading are below average. Although an increasing number of pupils are becoming fluent readers, only a small minority is tackling really demanding texts with confidence. In spite of teachers' good efforts to develop their understanding of idiomatic language, this is still a stumbling block for a number of bilingual pupils. Those pupils for whom English is their first language, and boys, benefit from the thoroughness with which teachers enable them to get under the skin of a text and achieve well, whether they have special educational needs or are high-attaining pupils. Pupils write with increasing fluency and accuracy, showing a satisfactory grasp of different forms of writing. In the very best lessons, pupils are enabled to reach average standards. However, standards

remain below average, partly because pupils have not been taught how to write fluently with a pen. Boys do not achieve as well as girls in the national tests, but showed themselves capable of good achievement when excellent teaching gave them a real sense of purpose.

58. Teaching and learning are good with a high level of consistency across the school. Very good teaching and learning was seen in every band. This represents a real improvement from the previous inspection when teaching ranged from poor to excellent. Most planning is of a high order and skillfully weaves together speaking, listening, reading and writing. Its one weakness is the failure to identify the potential for information and communication technology for practising skills and for drafting and redrafting work. Great store is placed on modeling speaking, reading and writing, but not on handwriting. Lessons move at a brisk pace while at the same time paying good attention to checking and reinforcing pupils' understanding. There is a good level of pupil participation in whole-class sessions and pupils know what is expected of them when they undertake independent work. Support teachers and teaching assistants provide high quality support, mostly when working with small groups and on occasion when team-teaching with the class teacher. The support teacher in one Year 6 class has developed an excellent strategy of spending a quarter of an hour each week to focus on what pupils are reading independently in class. This gives a real sense of purpose to daily reading and enables pupils to demonstrate their understanding, as well as giving other pupils an insight into books they may like to read. Teachers make good use of extensive data to identify where additional support is needed and to group pupils for intensive bursts of tightly focused activities. Good quality records are kept of pupils' progress in reading and writing. However, although teachers' marking is positive and often refers back to key learning objectives, it does not identify the next steps for pupils or lead to establishing individual targets and this is a shortcoming.
59. Leadership is good. Both subject leaders are experienced practitioners who are successfully tackling those areas identified for improvement. The good training and support they provide for staff is borne out by good levels of consistency in using the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of all the school's pupils. Management is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to address the weaknesses identified by the previous report and has met with success. The monitoring of standards, teaching and learning is no longer a weakness and the quality, quantity and range of reading material is good. More could be done to promote the staff's understanding of assessment systems that are used to gauge the stages of development of those pupils who are learning English as an additional language and to ensure that they dovetail with other forms of assessment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The school rightly sees literacy as the key that unlocks the curriculum for its pupils. Teachers promote pupils' language and literacy skills in all subjects. Religious education makes a particularly strong contribution by developing pupils' ability to express complex ideas both verbally and in writing. Discussion increasingly figures in many lessons as pupils move up the school. Although teachers work hard to promote pupils' speaking skills in many lessons, opportunities are missed in physical education lessons when teachers do not always build in time for pupils to evaluate their work. Classrooms and shared areas use displays creatively to support pupils' written work and to stimulate their ideas.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average, they are doing better than pupils in similar schools.
- Teaching and learning of mathematics is good throughout the school and the achievement of almost all pupils is good.

- Pupils enjoy mathematics and behave well in lessons.
- The use of assessment and target setting to plan pupils' next steps in learning needs improvement.
- The new subject leader has made a good start but now needs time for the monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning.
- Ensure that assessment and target setting systems are developed in all subjects and used consistently to plan pupils' next steps in learning.

Commentary

61. In mathematics standards are below average at the end of Year 2, and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were well below average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. However, in recent years, other than in 2003 when results were well below average, by the time pupils left the school at the end of Year 6 standards were well above the levels attained by similar schools. When pupils' prior attainment is taken into account, the value added to their learning since entering the school was also well above average. Pupils start the school with a very low level of mathematical knowledge and skills, and a considerable lack of English language skills and comprehension, which are vitally important in mathematical development. The achievement of almost all pupils of different abilities and ethnic background is good. Pupils with special educational needs learn successfully because of the good support they are given, including specific mathematics targets to work on in well written individual education plans. Pupils who learn to speak English as a second language, do well in mathematics and are represented in all the ability sets in the junior years.
62. In Year 2 a high proportion of pupils attain the expected national standard in mathematics although fewer than seen nationally, reach higher levels. There is a similar picture in Year 6 although the school is making considerable effort to enable more pupils to obtain above average levels. In order to do this the school introduced mathematical "sets" two years ago for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This has not been wholly successful because there is some confusion as to whether the sets are organised by ability or by age group. As a result the sets are a mixture of these two criteria, so often still have a wide range of ability within them. The school and new subject leader are looking closely at the inconsistencies, which have arisen as a result in order that their aim of enabling more pupils to reach a higher level can be successful.
63. Teaching and learning reflects achievement. Teaching is good throughout the school because teachers are using good development of language strategies to help pupils' learning. During the inspection many examples were seen of pupils being encouraged to explain their thinking and methods, which encourages reinforcement of learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and class management skills, and successfully harness pupils' obvious enthusiasm for mathematics to their learning. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils is characterised by clear mutual respect. Teachers are always polite and caring towards the pupils, who respond with very good behaviour, good listening and good concentration when attempting their tasks. Learning could be even better though if targets were set consistently for pupils and they had knowledge of them. Teachers' marking acknowledges effort and is positive, but does not focus sharply enough on points for improvement or in encouraging pupils to be more careful in the presentation of their work.
64. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The school did not have a subject leader for some time and the present leader has only been in the post since September. At present she is in the process of undertaking a full review of the subject and is already aware of strengths and weaknesses in mathematics in the school. This includes the need to use the more than adequate assessment data available to make more realistic targets to support pupils next steps in learning in the future. As a full time class teacher and member of the primary strategy team, she has yet to have full opportunity to support her monitoring and evaluation responsibilities and this will require review.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The basic skills of numeracy are established satisfactorily across the curriculum. Mathematics is an area of the curriculum that has been promoted regularly in information and communication technology, where pupils have used computers to produce a variety of graphs to reflect data. Science and design and technology are other areas of the curriculum where mathematics has been used well to support learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Based on their prior attainment pupils' achievement is good and no differences were noted in the performance of boys and girls.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with teachers now making better use of practical activities.
- Teachers are sometimes making limited use of assessment to provide pupils with work that is suited to their varying needs.
- Pupils show good attitudes towards the subject.
- The subject leader has contributed well to the improvements in science.

Commentary

66. Good provision is made in science. Whilst pupils' achievement is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection, improvements have been made in both organisation and planning and these are supporting the improving standards. Pupils start the school with a very low level of scientific knowledge and skills, and a considerable lack of English language skills and comprehension, which are vitally important to supporting scientific studies. The achievement of almost all pupils of different abilities and ethnic background is good because of the good focus on promoting subject specific vocabulary and because of the focus given to practical activity. Pupils with special educational needs learn successfully because of the good support they are given. Pupils who learn to speak English as a second language, do well in science and are represented in all ability groups.
67. By the end of Year 2, pupils overall show a secure knowledge and developing understanding of the subject but the standards are below that expected for age. For example, they successfully name the main features of the human body and a flowering plant, and most are able to identify the items needed to sustain life but recorded work is hampered by weak writing skills. By the end of Year 6, where standards this year are below average, pupils carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. Many readily explain various life-processes of humans, as well as discussing, for example, the importance and function of the heart, and most show reasonable understanding of aspects of materials. They understand the idea of forces, but some cannot always identify the direction of different forces. Most produce suitable diagrams to explain the formation of shadows. However, whilst many pupils successfully explain their work, using the correct scientific terminology, a significant number find this difficult to describe in recorded work, and this is having a lowering overall effect on standards.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are suitably planned and most pupils show great interest in the subject, displaying good attitudes and enjoying the practical work in particular. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. They organise group tasks that enable pupils to work well with other pupils in carrying out activities. Pupils are aware of safety procedures and most produce their work reasonably carefully. Teachers and teaching assistants support all pupils in turn, and this helps them all, including those with special needs

and those with English as an additional language, to make good progress. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but few add comments of support and advice that moves learning forward, and as a result the pupils are often unsure how to develop their work further.

69. The subject leader is keen and her leadership is good. She is a very good role model for others. She has successfully started to address the issue of lower standards being achieved at Year 2. She has had some limited opportunity to observe work in other classes, and she is fully aware of the standards being achieved in the school. She is also aware that, to improve standards further, teachers need to ensure that they normally provide pupils with work that suits their differing needs, and she is also aware of the need for teachers to make more use of information and communication technology to support work in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not have a robust strategy for developing either information and communication technology or its use as a learning tool in other subjects.
- Teachers are unclear how well pupils are doing and have no way of recording their progress.
- There is purposeful teaching in the computer suite, but teachers and pupils rarely use computers in classrooms to consolidate skills.
- Year 6 pupils have little understanding of the work that they have covered in the last two years.
- Too much emphasis is placed on word processing.

Commentary

70. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. The school has made far too little progress in tackling these weaknesses as a result of taking poor advice, a measure of bad luck, unreliable hardware over a protracted period, muddled planning and failure to make the subject a high enough priority until recently.
71. At a time when the pace of change is rapid and expectations of what pupils can do has increased, the school has slipped further behind in its provision. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory at both key stages with pupils reaching below average standards at the age of seven and well below average standards at the age of 11 years. This is partly because the school has suffered significant unreliability in its computer network because of poor installation and partly because the school has not given enough time to the subject. Most teachers are only now developing confidence to use information and communication technology on a regular basis with specialist guidance.
72. Teaching and learning remain unsatisfactory overall in spite of recent improvements. Pupils are not able to access their past work easily and there are only a few examples of pupils' work on display or in their books. Discussions with the oldest pupils confirm that they have only a superficial understanding of much of what they have been taught. However, as a result of external support, the school has made some beneficial changes to the way in which teachers work alongside the specialist teacher in the computer suite to the benefit of both pupils and staff. Lessons observed in the suite were never less than satisfactory and sometimes better. In one very good lesson in Year 1, both teachers ensured that pupils with special educational needs and those who were at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language understood the concepts and vocabulary associated with giving directions to a programmable toy. This was a lesson that moved at a fast pace and generated much enthusiasm and very good progress in learning. However, the organisation of the suite is unsatisfactory because the location of the computers inhibits pupils' ability to work collaboratively and makes it difficult for teaching staff to give support.

73. Leadership and management of the subject are poor. The subject leader has made a useful contribution in providing technical support to teachers, but has not taken the lead in developing curriculum development or planning. The school has not established assessment procedures to determine what pupils know and how they progress, nor has it established a portfolio of work to provide guidance to staff on the range of work that pupils should undertake or the standards they should achieve.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Pupils' use of information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects is poor and has moved forward very little in the last six years, in spite of the school's significant investment in resources. Although a very limited amount of work has been done, mainly in word-processing and in using the Internet for research, teachers' and pupils' use of information and communication technology in other subjects is at best patchy and is not part of a coherently planned curriculum. Pupils' use of information and communication technology is often dependent on the confidence of their class teacher in using the technology. Too much time is spent word-processing work that has already been written rather than enabling pupils to compose and review their work on screen. Unreliable hardware has often caused frustration when pupils have attempted to use the Internet for research.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is central to pupils' personal development.
- Teaching places a strong emphasis on developing religious tolerance and respect.
- Year 6 pupils are knowledgeable about their own religion and those practiced by their classmates.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not challenged sufficiently.
- Assemblies include a strong focus on religious education and make a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Work in religious education does not make enough connections with other subjects.

Commentary

75. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, even though they do not reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven. Many pupils are still at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and this restricts their ability to express their ideas verbally and on paper. This said, more could be expected of higher-attaining pupils who tackle the same work as the rest of the class, rarely going on to answer more demanding questions.
76. In Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities achieve well and reach the expected standards by the age of 11 years. In Years 3 and 4, as pupils develop confidence in their use of English, they show good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. In Years 5 and 6, the pace of learning accelerates further with higher-attaining pupils reaching above average standards by the time they leave the school. In discussion, Year 6 pupils showed maturity beyond their years in reflecting on how their studies of other religions had led them to develop tolerance and respect for those with different beliefs. They showed a depth of understanding about the similarities and differences of the different religions that they practiced and a genuine belief that their experiences could help shape their communities and the wider world.

77. The headteacher teaches the subject to all classes. Teaching is good overall and pupils appreciate the good range of learning styles that are employed to bring the subject to life, particularly the use of video, religious artefacts and visitors to the school. In both lessons and assemblies, there are real strengths in the way that pupils are challenged to reflect on what they have learned and to draw on their knowledge and understanding to discuss and write about emotive issues concerning religion in depth. The school has sensibly chosen to teach the subject on a fortnightly basis to enable topics to be explored in sufficient depth. However, the fact that all lessons are taught by the headteacher means that links with other subjects are not always exploited to the full. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills in Years 3 to 6, especially those of speaking and writing, but pupils would like more links to be made with practical subjects, such as art and design, and design and technology and the chance to visit the places where their fellow pupils worship.
78. Good leadership of the subject means that the subject makes a highly significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Management is satisfactory. Although assessment is used on a half-termly basis to check on pupils' understanding and to inform report writing, the tasks have not been developed to include the assessment of skills.

Geography and history

79. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. One lesson was seen in each of **history and geography**. In addition pupils' work was scrutinised, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 discussed their studies in history and geography and a number of attractive and colourful displays of their work were observed throughout the school. This evidence showed that overall, although their standards are below average in both subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils make good progress. A small proportion clearly attain the standards expected for their age but limited writing skills hampers the recording of knowledge.
80. A great majority of pupils enter the school with little knowledge of the world and limited English language and comprehension skills. By the end of Year 2 they are talking excitedly about the Great Fire of London, old and new toys and the local area around the school, including the cemetery! Pupils in Year 6 have good recall of their visit to the nearby Ordsall Hall, where they dressed in Tudor costume, which increased their knowledge of Henry VIII and his six wives. They also enjoy their visit to Compstall to compare life in the country with life in Manchester. Pupils in conversation show appreciation and developing learning through the "hands-on" practical approach of both subjects and told inspectors they would like even more visits. Although some older pupils have had a little experience at using computers to search and retrieve information in these subjects, this area is underdeveloped and their enquiry skills are consequently not sufficiently well developed. Assessment in both subjects is an area for improvement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology

81. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. One lesson was seen in each of design and technology and art and design.
82. In **art and design**, one lesson was observed, teachers' planning was sampled and pupils' work was examined on display around the school, in their books and in the subject leader's portfolio. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision, although the range of available work indicates that standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6 and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory in every year group. The school teaches art and design on a half-termly basis to ensure that pupils have sufficient time in lessons to develop their skills and to experiment with different tools and materials. In adopting national guidance, the school has ensured that pupils have the chance to work in a

range of media and to learn about the ways in which known artists approach their compositions. Although standards are not as high at the end of Year 6 as they were at the time of the previous inspection because of the increased emphasis on the core subjects, teachers continue to ensure that pupils' creativity is nurtured and that they are encouraged to experiment with colour, texture and form and to produce work of which they are proud.

83. The scrutiny of planning and pupils' work in **design and technology** indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Standards in Year 2 are average and pupils understand the relationship between design and product. In the lesson observed in Years 1/2, pupils successfully designed, and started to make, a card with moving parts. The teaching was good, and pupils showed good attitudes to the subject. They were provided with appropriate materials and tools, and they carried out their work carefully and safely. A study of other plans and samples of work, show that most suitable allowance is made for the subject throughout the school, and the items produced are broadly in line with the standard expected. For example, younger pupils make model houses and puppets, and older pupils make moving monsters, money containers, sandwiches, musical instruments, biscuits and moving toys with a cam mechanism. Planning has improved since the time of the previous inspection and pupils are given worthwhile experiences in the subject.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Pupils are achieving well. Overall standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and enables good learning.
- Pupils enjoy their music making, and their attitudes are often very good.
- The role played by the subject leader is highly effective in moving improvements forward at a good pace.
- Good use is made of extra-curricular activities to enhance the overall provision for music.

Commentary

84. Standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Pupils are achieving well. Pupils show at least satisfactory skills in all aspects of music. They listen carefully to a range of music, and they attempt to use suitable musical terminology to describe what they hear. They play instruments with appropriate skill, and they readily work with others to develop short compositions, which they practice and then play for other pupils. Pupils in Year 2 sing a range of songs, and they show good control over rhythm and pitch. When they sing, pupils in Year 6 sing their words clearly and tunefully, and, on occasions, they confidently sing solo or in two parts. When they sing in parts, pupils show a clear awareness of how the parts fit together, and they successfully finish together. Pupils readily attempt to identify how their work could be improved.
85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well-planned and brisk in pace, with a most suitable range of resources being provided for pupils to use. Pupils are kept busy, and this clearly benefits the learning they make. Pupils join in the activities with enthusiasm and commitment, showing creative effort where required and their attitudes are very good. They enjoy their music, sing well, play instruments confidently and work happily with other pupils. They are keen to listen to music, and many are able to offer opinions about what they hear. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, with clear instruction and demonstration being provided. This effective involvement of teachers enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to make good gains in their musical knowledge, understanding and skills. As well as joining in themselves, teachers also make effective use of pupils to demonstrate different aspects of work to other members of the class, and this encourages all pupils to maintain their interest. Pupils are

particularly appreciative of the work of other pupils, and they readily applaud their performances.

86. The subject leader is a very enthusiastic and skilful musician, and her leadership role is well developed. She supports both colleagues and pupils with her example, and she has contributed very significantly to the enjoyment that is clearly apparent. She supports her colleagues in lessons on occasions, and she provides much of the good extra-curricular provision that includes choir, recorders and steel pans. This provision has much improved since the time of the previous inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been improvements in gymnastics, swimming and resources since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education.
- Health and safety in physical education is well promoted by teachers.
- Football coaching after school is very well attended but pupils would like wider opportunities for participating in sport.

Commentary

87. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieve average standards in physical education, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, there have been two significant improvements since that time in the provision for the subject. Standards in gymnastics have improved from below average to at least average for the large majority of pupils and there is now provision for swimming. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 all go swimming for two terms and by the time they leave Year 4, nearly three-quarters of them can swim the required 25 metres. Resources, described as unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, are now sufficient, although the school still does not have a grassed area for games. The playground, though, is large and of good quality and well marked for many physical activities. All pupils throughout the school are included in all aspects of physical education and their achievement is good.
88. Teaching and learning is good overall. A feature of teaching throughout the school is the good management of pupils. In all lessons observed, pupils changed quietly and took part in their activities with hardly any sound. Teachers emphasise safety, especially in the movement of apparatus and the lack of noise enables pupils to concentrate very hard on what they are doing. This ensures that learning is good because activity is the central pillar of the lessons and pupils move quietly from one area to another. Even when throwing and catching tennis balls in a lesson in Year 6 in the playground, pupils were careful not to distract each other by silly lack of control. Teachers sometimes overlook ways to encourage pupils to evaluate verbally their work and that of others and this is also a missed opportunity to help to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.
89. Pupils have opportunities to take part in out of school sports activities such as soccer and cricket. However in discussion they think that this is intermittent, and are very keen to have more opportunities, especially for games against other schools. The girls, particularly, are disappointed that they do not play netball. Pupils in the school show an immense enthusiasm for physical education, especially sport, which is a resource of vitality, which the school can build upon.
90. The improvement in provision indicates good leadership in the subject, and the management of physical education is satisfactory. The new subject leader has a very solid base to build upon in order to raise standards further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. The personal, social, health education and citizenship aspect of pupils' education was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision.
92. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage where personal, social and emotional development receives much attention. The skills gained by younger children are maintained throughout the school. The school is very responsive to pupils' personal needs and supports their growth as responsible future citizens through the excellent relationships that instil in pupils a desire to do their best on all fronts. However, there is no actual forum that pupils can access to air personal views if they so choose, for example, through a school council. The school does not maintain a record of pupils' achievement, personal goals, interests or successes and this is a missed opportunity.
93. The school organises a number of talks and demonstrations that inform and extend pupils' learning in this area. For example, the "Crucial Crew" visited to talk to pupils in Years 5 and 6 about personal safety in a range of *at risk* situations. Specialist input provided by the local community police officer and school nurse supports the school's work on sex and drugs education effectively.

PART D SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).

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

