

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MATTHEW'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stretford

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106337

Headteacher: Mrs K Spark

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 15th to 18th September 2003

Inspection number:257860

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary School
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	133 full-time, plus 20 part-time in nursery
School address:	Poplar Road Stretford Manchester
Postcode:	M32 9AN
Telephone number:	0161 8651284
Fax number:	0161 912 5210
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. David Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	5 th July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's is a Church of England voluntary controlled primary school. It is a smaller than average size school providing education for 133 boys and girls. An additional 20 children attend either the morning or afternoon nursery sessions. Seventeen per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The school does not identify any pupils in the early stages of learning through English as an additional language. Approximately one quarter of the pupils is on the school's register of special educational needs. One pupil has a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. The major identified concerns in the school are moderate learning and speech difficulties. Great attention is given to individual needs and the school is a nut-free zone to accommodate pupils identified with severe nut allergies. The area served by the school is socially and economically disadvantaged. Several pupils join or leave the school during the school term. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below what is expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Citizenship Special educational needs English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects
15015	Mr M Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Humanities including religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an acceptable quality of education with some good features. Overall achievement is satisfactory and is good in reading and mathematics. Many pupils reach the level expected for their age. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. The budget is managed effectively and the school provides **sound value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good in mathematics in response to good teaching, and an increasing number of pupils reach above average standards in Year 2. Pupils enjoy reading and in Years 3 to 6 many make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology are good in Year 2.
- Standards are below average in writing and pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils reach the level expected for their age in science but higher attaining pupils underachieve.
- The new headteacher provides good leadership which has some very good features. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and in a short space of time they have put in place initiatives which are starting to have a positive effect on standards. This can be seen most in the caring ethos evident in the school.
- Assessment systems are lacking in subjects other than English and mathematics and this makes it difficult for teachers to check closely on pupils' progress. Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve their work.
- The school provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs. However, the support for pupils learning through English as an additional language does not always match their needs. This is more noticeable in English when pupils miss literacy lessons.

Since the school was inspected in November 2001 the rate of improvement has been good. New planning helps teachers to build on previous learning, and standards have improved in all subjects except writing. Teaching is better and all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Most improvement is seen in the pupils' attitudes to learning. They now apply their skills confidently when investigating in science and mathematics.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	C	A
Mathematics	C	C	E	B
Science	E	E	D	B

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory.

In 2002 pupils achieved well when compared with similar schools. This continues to be the case in mathematics and pupils in Year 6 are reaching the level expected for their age. Overall progress is satisfactory in English and standards are average. However, pupils are underachieving in writing throughout the school and standards are below average. Current standards in science are average but fewer pupils are reaching above average standards. Higher attaining pupils are not always making as much progress in science as they could because of a lack of challenge. Standards in Year 2 are above average in mathematics and achievement is good. In reading and science, achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach the level expected for their age. In the Foundation

Stage, the children are on course to reach the learning goals set for them in all aspects except writing and mathematics. Achievement is very good in personal and social development, which aids learning in other areas. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are set work which matches their needs.

Pupils have **very positive attitudes to school**. They are eager to learn and most try hard to complete tasks. **Attendance is below average** but has improved in response to the school's more rigorous promotion of good attendance. A small core of pupils do not arrive punctually. **Behaviour is very good**. Older pupils lead by example, setting good role models for the younger pupils. The **very good quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is very evident in the respect shown to each other and leads to a happy school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best feature in the Foundation Stage is the adults' genuine concern for the children, which is seen in warm relationships. Children settle happily into school. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is satisfactory, with some strong teaching in Years 2, 3 and 6, where imaginative strategies make learning more interesting. Teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology is good. Teachers skilfully share their expertise and consequently learning is good. Some lack of challenge especially in the teaching of science and writing does not encourage effective learning. Teachers mark pupils' work but do not always tell them how to improve by adding informative comments or setting pupils individual targets. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and check closely on their progress. This is not the case for pupils who are learning through English as an additional language. Support is not always focused on their interests and ability and they could learn at a faster rate especially in English.

The school offers a **sound curriculum** enriched by a **good range** of visits, visitors and after-school activities. Partnership with parents is **good**. They are pleased with the education their children now receive. This is a caring school which **effectively** seeks and acts on pupils' views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Effective leadership from the new headteacher has led to more detailed monitoring and evaluation of standards. Information is shared with all so that future priorities are based on self-evaluation and so supported by all.

The management of the school is good. Several important changes have been made, including reviewing teaching and its effect on learning. Insufficient time has passed to see any significant effect on the quality of education. Subject leaders carry out audits to find how to improve learning, but some of these do not focus enough on how to raise standards. **Overall governance is good.** Governors organise their work well and played a major part in implementing the school's racial equality policy. Financial control is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and appreciate that the school is now a happy place for their children to learn. Pupils enjoy school and the older pupils especially feel valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing and ensure the higher attaining pupils are always sufficiently challenged to make good progress especially in science;
- improve assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics and make better use of assessment information so that pupils know how to improve;
- ensure the needs of the pupils learning through English as an additional language are fully met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In the Foundation Stage¹ pupils achieve very well in their personal and social skills and satisfactorily in their language and mathematical development. Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2 and achievement is good. Standards in reading are satisfactory, but writing is below average and pupils are underachieving. In Year 6, achievement is good in mathematics and reading and pupils reach the level expected for their age. Writing remains a weakness and pupils are not making enough progress. Overall, standards in science are average but higher attaining pupils are underachieving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress in their personal and social development in the Foundation Stage and exceed the level expected for their age.
- Achievement is good in mathematics and in Year 2 standards are above average
- Achievement is good in reading in Years 3 to 6 with many pupils in Year 6 being enthusiastic readers.
- Standards are below average in writing and pupils are underachieving.
- Overall achievement in science is satisfactory with many reaching average standards. However, higher attaining pupils do not make enough progress.
- Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 and exceed the level expected for their age.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Although pupils learning through English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, support only partially meets their needs and they could make better progress especially in English.

Commentary

1. Children start in the nursery with standards generally below average, especially in their language and mathematical development. In response to a significant focus on developing their personal and social skills the children exceed the level expected for them in this area of learning. This reflects very good achievement. Most make satisfactory progress in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy, but do not reach the expected level with particular weaknesses in writing. Good progress is made in physical development because good use is made of the imaginative and challenging resources. Many pupils are working at levels higher than those expected for their age. Satisfactory progress is made in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

¹ Foundation Stage- this 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.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores² in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.8 (13.8)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	19.6 (14.4)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school's results at the end of Year 2 have been rising over time and the average points above calculated from the 2002 results were impressive. Compared with similar schools, results were in the top 5 per cent in the country in all three subjects. The school identifies these pupils as an academically very able group and in mathematics two pupils reached exceptionally high standards. The most recent test results (2003) were not as high in writing or mathematics. This group included more pupils with special educational needs. Results in writing were much lower and no pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. Current standards in mathematics show a return to above average standards. Challenging teaching in Year 2 has brought this about. Achievement is good especially for the higher attaining pupils. In reading, most achieve satisfactorily and reach the level expected for their age but few are enthusiastic readers. Writing is below average and higher attaining pupils especially are underachieving. Pupils lack accuracy in basic punctuation and higher attaining pupils have limited skills in structuring a longer piece of writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (26.1)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.7(26.4)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.0 (26.7)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. **These results were in line with the national average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, results were more positive showing many pupils were performing well. The results in 2003 were similar in English and better in science and mathematics with more pupils reaching the level expected for their age. The trend in results fluctuates because of the small number of pupils involved, but overall the school's results have been below the national trend. Current standards are average in mathematics and achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. The challenging teaching in Year 6 means more pupils are working at above average levels. Although standards in science are average the challenge seen in mathematics is lacking and higher attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could and are underachieving. The school's focus on reading has been effective and many pupils make good progress to reach the level expected for their age. Teachers share their enthusiasm for books with pupils and many pupils are now discerning readers. Standards in writing are below average and pupils underachieve. This is linked to a history of too many tasks that were undemanding and did not encourage imaginative writing. Teaching in Year 6 is tackling this with impressive ideas but the pupils have a long way to go to catch up for lost time. The lack of a handwriting policy means pupils do not have a fluent style of writing and presentation could be neater.**

² Average point scores. The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a Level 1, 15 points for Level 2 and 21 points for Level 3. The average score is then calculated by adding up all of the points and dividing by the number of pupils.

4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers refer to their individual education plans and set tasks that match their needs. This is not the case for the pupils learning through English as an additional language. Overall, their progress is satisfactory but they could learn at a faster rate if tasks were more closely matched to their needs and interests, especially in English. The school is in the early stages of focusing on the needs of the academically gifted pupils. Currently, the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils seen in a few lessons does not encourage effective learning. As a result, the pupils in Year 4 who reached exceptionally high standards in their national tests in mathematics in Year 2 are not sustaining these high standards.
5. Information and communication technology has improved with effective management, which has led to better resources and more confident teachers. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards are good. Overall, achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age. However, older pupils have not yet had enough experiences in all aspects of the curriculum.
6. Pupils' standards in basic numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology are sufficient to support pupils' learning in other subjects. This is very evident in reading in Year 6 when pupils are confident locating information from books and the Internet. Although writing is weaker, pupils are able to write at a sufficient level to record their ideas and have a satisfactory understanding of the different ways of presenting their findings.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is below average . Pupils have very good attitudes towards their school and behave very well. Pupils' personal development is very good as is the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school monitors attendance rigorously and impresses on parents the importance of regular attendance. These procedures have been effective in improving attendance, although it remains below average.
- Pupils enjoy school and are interested in all activities. They willingly accept responsibility.
- Behaviour is very good. Pupils show genuine concern for each other and appreciate they have a school free from all forms of harassment. Promotion of these attitudes is very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, particularly their moral and social development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.7	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4 (2002)	National data:	0.5 (2002)

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

7. In response to more rigorous promotion of good attendance it has improved, but remains below the national average. Unauthorised absence has especially improved. The school now highly publicises the best attending class and involves the education welfare officer when extra support is needed. A small core of pupils does not arrive at school punctually.
8. Almost all parents believe that their child enjoys school and that this has improved greatly over the past couple of years. Pupils agree that they like school and can think of little that would improve it. Many take part in the good range of activities outside the classroom and after school. Behaviour is almost always very good, in lessons, assemblies, the dinner hall

and on the playground. Pupils are considerate towards others and teachers rarely have to reprimand them. There were no exclusions last year.

9. The school has made great efforts to promote this positive ethos in the school. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher promptly recognised poor behaviour was a major barrier to learning and put in place new procedures to guide teachers. Now the school's approach to behaviour management is consistent and all staff are involved in the giving of rewards and imposing sanctions. As a result, all pupils know exactly what is acceptable behaviour in the school and respond with equal respect to all staff, whether teachers or lunchtime supervisors. Pupils are encouraged to understand the effects of bullying and racism and respond with very good sensitivity to these issues. Where the odd incident does occur, the school reacts effectively, involving both the pupils and their parents to resolve the problem and prevent recurrence.
10. Moral and social development is very good. As a result, pupils grow in maturity during their time in school. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to be involved in decisions about the school. For example, the school council meets regularly and gathers ideas from across the school so that all pupils can air any concerns. Pupils in Year 6 wear different coloured jumpers with great pride and they set very good role models for others. They show great sensitivity when taking responsibility for other pupils. Pupils clearly understand right from wrong and can talk about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others.
11. Spiritual development is good. The focus on developing pupils' self-esteem promotes a pride in achievement. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils gain an insight into their own culture through music, history and art and gain through visits to local museums. The school has recently taken positive steps to make pupils more familiar with the cultures and religions of other groups they will meet, not only in their own school, but in Britain as a whole. For example, their self-portraits celebrate the diversity in the school and every class had contributed to the school's compact disc of their singing of 'Songs from around the World'.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to an acceptable level of learning in all classes. The school provides a sound curriculum enriched by a good range of visits and visitors which make pupils' experiences more exciting. This is a caring school which pays good attention to pupils' views.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. There is no difference between the teaching in different stages in the school. There are weaknesses in the marking of work and setting targets for pupils. As a result, pupils are unclear about how to improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage pupils to do their best and have high expectations of behaviour so that lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, except writing and some aspects of information and communication technology.
- Assessment is used well in English and mathematics to track pupils' progress, but information is not used to establish targets for pupils. Other subjects lack assessment systems to aid teachers planning lessons.
- Teachers do not always challenge the higher attaining pupils especially in science and writing.
- The marking of work does not always make it clear to pupils how to improve.
- Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs but less effective for the pupils learning through English as an additional language.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	2 (6%)	12 (45%)	20 (49%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

12. The grid above shows that all of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school with strengths seen in Year 2, 3 and 6. In these years teachers have taken on board the ideas outlined in the school's draft teaching and learning policy. This is especially evident in the variety of methods used and the focus on thinking carefully about responses and learning through practical activities. Consequently, learning is good and pupils in these classes are keen to extend their knowledge and skills.
13. Over the last year concerted efforts have been made to improve behaviour that was preventing pupils learning as well as they should. Teachers now consistently apply the same behaviour techniques and reward pupils with a choice of activity in *golden time*. This has been most effective and teachers now set high standards of behaviour. As a result, learning is now improving because pupils can concentrate and are not disturbed by misbehaviour. Pupils now produce more work and try hard to apply the skills being taught. This is especially beneficial in the Foundation Stage where the staff's caring relationships lead to pupils growing in confidence and learning to settle and follow school routines.
14. Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics. Skills are taught thoroughly and pupils accurately apply the skills in other subjects. Reading is also taught effectively. Letters and sounds are taught well through lively games in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils use this knowledge well in their reading. In Years 3 to 6, teachers share their enthusiasm for books with pupils so that many learn to enjoy reading. Teachers are less confident teaching writing. Some tasks lack challenge and pupils do not learn to organise their writing and express their ideas in an imaginative style. This improves in Year 6 where teaching inspires pupils to be creative and the rate of learning increases. There is no clear guidance to help teachers to teach handwriting and so pupils do not learn how to write neatly in a joined-up style. Teachers confidently teach word processing, but a few teachers are less secure teaching other aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum.
15. In English and mathematics the school has good assessment systems. Information is used to track progress and to offer additional support or adjust the curriculum when a need is spotted. This has been effective in the focus on using number skills in problem-solving in mathematics and has led to standards improving. The lack of assessment systems in other subjects makes it difficult for teachers to have an informed picture of current needs. This is a problem in science and leads to higher attaining pupils not always being set tasks that fully extend their learning. As yet, the school has not moved to inform pupils of their individual literacy and numeracy targets. Discussions with pupils show they are unclear about the next steps in their learning. This problem is not helped by comments in the marking of pupils' work that do not clearly tell pupils what was good or not so good in their work. Some comments are too positive and give pupils the impression they are working at a higher level than they actually are. This is not the case in Year 6 where clear advice is given to pupils and individual discussions encourage them to overcome any barriers and this considerably raises the pupils' confidence in their own learning.
16. Teachers fully meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and support staff give close attention to the targets set for these pupils in their detailed individual education plans. When one target is reached, another is set so that pupils make good

progress. The overall progress of pupils learning through English as an additional language is monitored, although there is no system to assess their initial language needs. The effectiveness of the support these pupils receive is not closely checked to see that it is matching current needs. Some tasks lack challenge. Pupils miss literacy lessons, and then have to mark time when they return to class because they have to wait for the rest of the class to complete their work. In the next literacy lesson they stay in class and so they have to close the gap in their learning. This lack of continuity is a barrier to their learning.

The curriculum

Curricular provision overall is satisfactory. Improvement has been good since the previous inspection in the emphasis now given to skills and investigative learning. Better planning enables teachers to build more accurately on prior learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum planned for the Foundation Stage is good.
- The good focus on skills and opportunities for learning by investigation.
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good enrichment through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- Insufficient opportunities for application of computer skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils learning through English as an additional language miss literacy lessons when withdrawn from lessons.
- The match of work to ability is inconsistent, and provision for higher attaining pupils and those identified as academically gifted is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

17. Effective leadership from the headteacher encourages subject managers to carry out a regular review of their subjects. The quality of these audits varies and some lack a focus on standards. Nevertheless, continuity of learning has improved because of the introduction of new planning guidelines. The curriculum is now satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. Year 6 pupils are in no doubt the school provides a worthwhile range of experiences that allow pupils to learn by investigation and exercise thinking skills. Good arrangements for personal, social and health education enable pupils to develop in maturity, a significant improvement since the last inspection.
18. The systematic planning in place for each subject ensures progression in learning from Year 1 to Year 6. This was a weakness in the previous inspection which has now been resolved. Teachers make effective links between subjects so that learning is more relevant to pupils. Not all aspects of information and communication technology have been taught, although planning now gives due attention to each one. This is to be redressed through the Year 6 daily planning and an increase in the amount of time devoted to the subject. There are satisfactory examples of the computer being used to support learning in English, science, geography and history, but there is room for extension of these. Good planning for the Foundation Stage gives a thoughtful balance to the six areas of learning, and good focus on learning through practical activity. Links between the nursery and reception are satisfactory, but tasks seen in the reception class were not fully building on the children's experiences in the nursery.
19. Teachers' planning does not always take full account of the needs of some higher attaining pupils. For instance, two gifted pupils are identified in Year 4, but no specific provision is in place for them. The pupils learning through English as an additional language who are withdrawn from class often miss more vital and useful work back in class. On return to the end of the lesson they are in the role of an audience because they do not know what has been going on. Individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs are

a good example of how clear targets are guiding teachers with their planning. This enables work to be matched to pupils' ability and so they make good progress.

20. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and after-school activities. For Year 6 this is enhanced by a residential trip which pupils look forward to enormously, because it *enables us to grow*. Visitors make learning more exciting and on several occasions extend pupils' knowledge of traditions from other cultures. Every class takes part in visits and makes learning more purposeful and relevant. A good range of sporting and arts activities out of school hours develops pupils' interests further and feeds valuable skills back into the classroom.
21. Learning resources are good and contribute well to teaching and learning. Resources for English, information and communication technology and the Foundation Stage have especially built up to a good level. The multi-media suite enables the school to launch an interesting curriculum innovation this year, enlarging the cross-curricular use of computers. The accommodation is good, including two well-stocked libraries and ample space. The nursery is spacious and well resourced for this age range. The outdoor environment is attractive and the school is set in a large, sheltered site. The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff trained and experienced to teach this age range.

Care, guidance and support

The school has sound procedures for ensuring care, welfare, health and safety. The school gives satisfactory support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual pupils are well cared for and can always turn to someone they trust for advice and support.
- Pupils are set clear targets for improving behaviour and attendance.
- Pupils are not consistently set short-term targets for improvement, nor do they sufficiently evaluate their own work.
- Arrangements to introduce pupils to school are good.

Commentary

22. Staff know the pupils very well and support them individually. For example, all staff know that some pupils have a severe nut allergy and know what to do if they have a reaction. The school does all it can to keep allergens out of the school. The school is developing healthy eating and pupils and staff can be seen improving their physical fitness in the lunchtime 'fitbods' sessions. Child protection procedures are in place and the headteacher is updating training. Assessments of risks are carried out but do not involve governors and are not carried out at regular enough intervals.
23. Pupils know and accept the school's rules because they were involved in forming them. They understand their importance and value the order that they bring to school life. They are rewarded for consistently good behaviour and good attendance. However, pupils have insufficient opportunity to set academic targets for themselves. Teachers do not make full use of assessment information to set individual or group targets so that pupils have an informed view of how to achieve higher standards.
24. The school gives parents and children a good introduction to the school when they start, so that children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school life. Some children have few social skills when they start nursery, but already, after only a couple of weeks, were seen to be gaining the ability to work and play co-operatively with others.

25. Pupils are consulted closely about how their school should improve. For example, their views were canvassed when setting up the new vision statements for the school last year. These statements are now on display and it is clear they are reflected in the daily life of the school. This is especially evident in the steps taken *to encourage and nurture each child, within a happy, caring and safe environment, to develop a healthy self-belief so that they are comfortable with who they are.* The views of school councillors are valued and, when possible, action taken of things they suggest.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents. Links with the community contribute satisfactorily to school life and are being further developed. The school has sound links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information to parents.
- The school has sought to make parents more confident about bringing in concerns.
- Pupils who are transferring to secondary school are given good advice about choosing a school and this is also shared with parents.
- Parents have very positive views about the school.

Commentary

26. The school has worked hard to involve parents in the life of the school and its work is starting to bear fruit, as the high regard of parents attests. Parents are given good information, both when their child begins school and throughout their time there. They are told about what is to be taught so parents can offer extra help at home. The annual pupil reports are thorough and describe what each child can do, and how it needs to improve. The reports also provide a good description of pupils' personal development.
27. Most parents hear their child read at home and give support with homework. A few parents give much valued support in school and many more can be relied on to volunteer for school activities. Their help is appreciated during *golden time* because it means pupils have a wider choice of activities in the time allotted as a reward for all aspects of school life.
28. The school has well established links with the local church and is planning to develop these further to enhance pupils' standards in religious education. Visitors from the community, such as the police, add to the pupils' personal and social education and the school provides a focus for the immediate locality by providing social events. However, the school is little used otherwise by outside bodies and there are limited links with local businesses.
29. Pupils transfer to a wide range of secondary schools, and St Matthew's gives good individual advice to parents about how to apply for these. There are sound and growing links with a few local secondary schools. For example, pupils from one secondary school come and coach sports and another provides facilities and expertise for multi-media work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Governance is good. Leadership is good especially from the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Management is good and the school runs smoothly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Purposeful leadership from the newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher is already starting to have a positive effect on the quality of education.
- Governors are fully involved in the life of the school.
- Management of the needs of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Subject co-ordinators have time to evaluate their subjects, but a lack of assessment systems makes it difficult for them to gain an informed picture of areas needing attention.
- Financial management is good and money is spent prudently.
- Good use is made of assessment information to check on the school's performance and set new targets for the future.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides effective leadership and her collaborative management style has motivated staff, parents and pupils. A focus on valuing staff and extending their own personal development has raised morale and led to a team committed to improvements. Changes have been brought about by consultation. For example, a new vision statement for the school has been agreed and because governors, staff, parents and pupils were involved in the consultation process all now are committed to the future of the school. Parents are pleased the school's reputation in the community is improving. The school is now more popular with parents in the nursery, who are opting for their children to move into the reception class.
31. On appointment a year ago the headteacher and deputy headteacher quickly spotted that until behaviour was acceptable pupils would not make the progress of which they were capable. A new system is in place based on positive management and reward for effort and good behaviour. This has been most effective in improving the school's ethos and establishing an environment which is conducive to effective learning. The school is now in a position to put other changes into play. No time is being wasted and the deputy headteacher is working on a teaching and learning policy. As yet, it is not possible to see the overall effectiveness of this policy. It is firmly based on identified need following observations of teaching that recognised that some mundane approaches were not sufficiently challenging pupils and failed to fully extend learning. Improvements are now filtering through in action and in the best lessons imaginative teaching strategies are leading to enthusiastic learners. The deputy headteacher leads by example and is a very good teacher of Year 6 pupils. Consequently, staff can see for themselves the success of the suggested teaching approaches. Pupils say the school is much happier and identify a change in teaching style in some classes where *teachers encourage you to think and we are not allowed to give up*.
32. Governance is good and governors are determined to raise the status of the school in the community. They carry out their role effectively and are very supportive to staff. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school, well known by pupils, and has become a celebrity through a large collage in the school hall. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met. They share their experiences well and this has been most beneficial with the implementation of a racial equality policy. Expert support and advice helped the school as it worked towards achieving an award recognising its commitment to race equality. Through their visits to school and detailed reports from the headteacher, governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Over recent years the school's priorities have been led by weaknesses identified in previous inspections. The school is now in a position to identify current priorities based on self-evaluation and the monitoring of pupils' performance. As yet, the governors are not fully involved in this process and need to extend this aspect of their leadership. However, they played a full part in deciding the school's vision for the future and through wise appointments have helped to establish a strong management team.
33. Overall, management is good. Co-ordinators for mathematics, science and information and communication technology provide good action plans for their subjects based on evaluation of standards in their subjects. Other co-ordinators provide sound management, but action plans

are not as well focused on raising standards in all aspects of the subjects. Where subjects lack assessment systems it is difficult for leaders to gain a clear overview of standards. Action plans are fed into the school's improvement plan, which ensures it is firmly based on self-evaluation. As a result, the areas for development identified by the inspection are no surprise to the school and especially writing is an identified priority in the school's improvement plan. This document is easy to follow and provides a good vehicle to guide the school's developments. Performance management is firmly established and identified training is linked to school needs as well as personal development.

34. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good and close communication with parents and staff checks that these pupils play a full part in school life. The headteacher tracks pupils' progress effectively and analyses data by gender and ethnicity. However, the overall management of pupils learning through English as an additional language needs further developing to check more closely that best use is being made of available resources.
35. Financial management is good and a watchful eye is kept on major spending decisions. The school has resolved the concerns raised in the most recent financial audit and spending is now led by the priorities in the school's improvement plan. Governors are very aware that the budget is tight and have a three-year plan in place based on projected figures. This gives more security to the financial decisions being made and enables the school to give good attention to the principles of best value.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	368,000
Total expenditure	359,370
Expenditure per pupil	2,333.57

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-6,444
Balance carried forward to the next	8,629

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision is satisfactory.

Attainment when children start the nursery is below average, with weaknesses in the areas of communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional and mathematical development. Children achieve at least satisfactorily in all areas of learning. Leadership and management are sound. The consistent approach to continuous learning through play is well established throughout the Foundation Stage and supports children's development well. Attention given to the progression of skills as children move from the nursery to the reception class is not always focused enough to ensure that all children build soundly on what they already know.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Children achieve very well due to the school's particular emphasis on this area. Almost all are in line to reach the early learning goals³ and many will exceed them by the time they start in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching is very good.
- Children are increasingly confident and independent. They are developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Relationships are very good and children show respect for each other, an awareness of different cultures and care for living things.

Commentary

36. Children respond very well to adults' high expectations of behaviour. They select from a wide range of activities both indoors and out, and work independently for an increasing amount of time. Rewards like *Person of the Day*, *Hard workers* or *Kind Carers'* Certificates together with consideration of how each individual is special effectively raise self-esteem. All adults treat children with respect and value their efforts so that children in turn respect one another. Music, stories and dressing up clothes, for example, from China and India, help raise children's appreciation of non-western cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Children achieve satisfactorily from below average starting points. However, they do not fully reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1, and have particular weakness in aspects of writing.

³ Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and begin to write simple sentences.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Sound teaching leads to satisfactory achievement.
- There is significant emphasis on speaking and listening skills.
- Attractive resources are used effectively to interest and motivate children to learn through play and practical activities.
- Tasks in the reception class do not always build on what children already know.

Commentary

37. Most children listen carefully to nursery rhymes and recognise rhyming sounds at the end of each line. They respond sensibly to simple instructions, although a few do not contribute voluntarily to discussion. Most make satisfactory attempts to write letter shapes, but many use unrecognisable marks to communicate meaning and it is difficult to decipher their writing of their names. Frequent effective opportunities for children to talk and listen in small and large groups. Adults use questions effectively to help children develop their ideas. Resources are chosen carefully to stimulate interest. For instance, a pass the parcel game sustains children's concentration when recognising nursery rhyme characters. Continuity of learning between nursery and reception is not well established and work in the reception class does not always take account of what children have learnt, for instance, when identifying rhymes. Assessments are very detailed and carefully carried out but are not as helpful as they could be in identifying the next steps in learning. Samples of work indicate some overuse of worksheets which are not well matched to needs. These were not in evidence in class during the inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Almost all children achieve satisfactorily from below average beginnings, but weaknesses in number calculations mean that early learning goals are not fully met by the time they start in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Sound teaching leads to satisfactory achievement.
- A good range of practical activities support children's understanding.
- Children achieve well in learning about shape and pattern.

Commentary

38. Children recognise and name several two-dimensional shapes. They accurately continue a repeated pattern of shapes and colours using two criteria. Teachers encourage children to learn successfully by handling practical apparatus to sort, match and count. Games and jigsaws help pupils recognise shape and pattern. Sometimes tasks are not well matched to the activity as when the resources used to teach about two-dimensional shapes were too small and too many. Adults in the nursery do not always intervene in sufficient depth in activities to promote learning well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

The evidence from inspection is that children achieve satisfactorily and are working at the level expected for their age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are learning to appreciate the natural world.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning.

Commentary

39. Children have enjoyed been involved in a gardening project as St Matthews Ground Force Team, digging, weeding and planting in the school garden. Through this, they have gained sound knowledge of the basics for plant survival. Almost all children use the computer competently, for example, they confidently control the mouse to draw pictures, count and dress a teddy on screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is good.

Children achieve well and are in line to meet the early learning goals and exceed them in independent play activities by the time they start in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The curriculum is imaginative and resources are good.
- Nursery nurses provide valuable support.
- Outdoor space is attractive and resources are good.

Commentary

40. Children confidently explore ways of moving on the climbing frame. They control large wheeled toys with awareness of space and of others. Most children use tools like paintbrushes and scissors successfully to fulfil their own purpose. Nursery nurses are well briefed and effectively deployed to work with small groups. All adults insist on good behaviour and establish safe routines for using apparatus. They use praise effectively to provide effective individual support. The curriculum is particularly well developed through daily access to an exciting range of large and small outdoor apparatus and through more formal dance and physical education lessons in the hall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is satisfactory.

Children achieve satisfactorily and are in line to meet the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy exploring sound and making music.
- Children experience a wide range of media.

Commentary

41. Children are confident in experimenting with colour and with materials in their own pictures, collages and models. Nursery children enjoy selecting percussion instruments to make their own music by shaking and tapping. They are largely unaware of others in the group but enjoy exploring sounds.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The overall provision for English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in reading is good.
- Achievement in writing is unsatisfactory and standards are below average. Many pupils lack a secure command of basic punctuation and grammar. Insufficient attention has been given to the teaching of handwriting.
- Teaching in Years 3 and 6 is good and pupils learn well in these years. It is less effective in other classes and a lack of variety of approaches and challenge makes learning less effective.
- Assessment information is used effectively to track pupils' progress and to spot areas in the curriculum which need attention, but it is not used to set individual targets for pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is not the case for those pupils learning through English as an additional language and their needs are only partially met.
- Pupils do not know how to improve their work.

Commentary

42. Sound leadership of the subject has led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but improvement has been more effective in reading than in writing. Standards have risen in reading because the school has extended resources and encouraged reading from a wider range of texts. Pupils reach the level expected for their age and many in Year 6 exceed this level in their enthusiasm for reading. This is especially evident in Year 6 because the teacher shares his enthusiasm for reading with the pupils and uses individual discussions to guide them successfully not only to improve their reading skills but also to be discerning readers. Most are confident readers able to locate information quickly and find the required information. Writing is currently a focus in the school's improvement plan. However, while the school is waiting for action to be implemented teachers are not making the most effective use of time allocated to English. For example, classes have handwriting lessons but the school lacks a clear and agreed scheme to teach handwriting. Consequently, teachers approach the skill in different ways and so pupils in Year 6 do not have a fluent joined-up style. The teaching of writing is not always effective. A few teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils to write independently and time is wasted copying work or carrying out exercises which do not fully extend learning. Many pupils find it difficult to write imaginatively. This improves in Year 6 as the teacher inspires pupils to think of imaginative language and many respond with some imaginative ideas. For example, when describing a building one pupil writes, *as if the stones had been there for age and towers like spears.*
43. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and different activities lead to pupils being eager to learn. The opening of most lessons is good. In Years 1 and 2 the practical approach to teaching letters and sounds means pupils acquire this knowledge quickly and use it in their early reading and writing. Group tasks are not always as challenging and the pace of learning slows at this part of the lesson. In Years 3 and 6 teachers tell pupils how much time they have to complete a task and this effectively keeps the lesson moving. Much new learning takes place in these lessons. The new ideas to encourage thinking skills are starting to filter through and have a positive effect on pupils' speaking and listening skills. These are satisfactory in Year 2, but pupils have not fully learnt not to call out and to take it in turns in discussions. In Year 6 pupils are starting to think before they speak and to respect the opinions of others. Computers are used well to present attractive stories in Year 6 but are not always used to support learning as a regular feature in all classes.

44. Teachers and classroom assistants follow the individual education plans set for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, tasks are set that match individual needs and progress is good. The attention given to pupils who are learning through English as an additional language is less effective. Although overall progress is satisfactory, the support available is not always focusing on their current needs to increase their rate of learning in lessons. When withdrawn from lessons tasks are not always matching these pupils' interest. The continuity of their learning is disturbed when they miss literacy lessons and find it difficult to catch up with the rest of the class.
45. The school is making effective use of assessment information to analyse pupils' progress and provide extra support where it is most needed. Pupils are not always aware of how to improve their work because they do not have individual targets and marking of work does not always show pupils how to make their work of a higher standard.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Pupils make good use of their reading skills in other subjects. Teachers promote this well especially in research in history and in using the Internet to search for information. Writing is used well in other subjects and pupils have sufficient skills to record their ideas. For example, in science pupils use labels and numbered bullet points to describe how plants absorb water.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

The school has acted effectively on the recommendations of the previous inspection and overall achievement is now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils reach above average standards.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards are as expected for their age, but pupils lack confidence in working independently and in selecting the correct strategies to solve problems and apply their skills in other subjects.
- Teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 is good. However, the quality of teaching in other years is not as high. Marking of work does not tell pupils how they can make their work better.
- Management of the subject is good and has led to a clear action plan to develop the subject.
- Assessment information is used well to track pupils' progress but it is not yet being used effectively to set pupils' individual targets to help them know how to improve.
- Teachers do not use information and communication technology enough in mathematics teaching.

Commentary

47. Pupils in Year 2 respond well to challenging teaching. They strive to achieve understanding. They say, *It is no use pretending to know what we are doing, the teacher will always spot it.* Practical activities aid their understanding and the use of practical activities engages their attention and much is achieved. Many are confident handling numbers up to 100, and higher attaining pupils are already exceeding the level expected for their age.
48. Teaching and learning are good overall. It is best in Years 2 and 6. Here the teachers work at a particularly fast pace. Pupils know they have to concentrate and work hard and respond rapidly. They thrive on it and work with determination. In Years 2 and 6 the teachers are taking on board the initiatives in the proposed teaching and learning policy. For example, they focus on helping the pupils to develop and use their own thinking strategies for problem solving. As a result, pupils are gaining in confidence to think through problems and decide the best methods to use. This is reaping more success in Year 2 than Year 6 because the older

pupils are new to this approach to learning and have more lost ground to make up. However, the strong teaching in Year 6 is helping to close the gap and most are achieving well in this year. Higher attaining pupils work accurately with decimals and fractions. They are estimating and thinking through their strategies. This is the weakness for other pupils who are not estimating and are slower at working out the best method to solve a problem.

49. Teachers build more on previous learning because they are following the guidelines in the National Numeracy Strategy closely. They inform pupils what they are to learn in the lesson to help pupils understand the context of their learning. Teachers plan different activities to suit the needs of the groups, but the activities are not all fully effective. Some teachers plan all the activities for the week beforehand. This means that lessons later in the week do not always reflect the pupils' rate of progress. However, teachers are flexible, recognise this, and adjust their planning during lessons. The school has identified two gifted pupils in Year 4. They receive extension work, but not of a sufficiently challenging nature and this does not encourage the fast rate of learning that they originally made. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils of lower ability and those who have special educational needs effectively. This enables them to understand their learning and achieve as well as their peers.
50. Good subject management has focused attention on the importance of creating good learning conditions. In a Year 5 lesson for instance, the pupils' learning improved when they noticed the multiplication tables chart on the wall. This gave them the tool they needed to reach the solutions. The resource of the school's computers is not used sufficiently to introduce or complement mathematics topics or learning activities. For instance, Year 6 pupils do not yet know much about spreadsheets. Teachers introduce technical vocabulary well. They encourage pupils to use their reading skills purposefully by regularly setting problems couched in words.
51. Effective management of the subject has led to careful monitoring of performance and the drawing up of a clear action plan to raise standards. As yet, assessment is not being used to set pupils individual targets so that they understand the next steps they need to take to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Teachers use a satisfactory range of opportunities to enable pupils to practice their mathematical skills. For instance, Year 5 pupils use line graphs well to display the results of their science experiments. Year 2 pupils use numbers accurately in a time line in history, to help them follow a sequence of events. These opportunities are not planned in a systematic way. Pupils do not themselves suggest where they would like to use mathematics to explore or extend activities in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The achievement of higher attainers, however, is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved gradually since 1998 and are now average.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for practical investigations but there are few opportunities for independent personal research.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with good lessons seen in Years 2, 3 and 6.
- Relationships are very good and pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- Assessment systems are not well developed and not used effectively.

- Higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently and do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

53. Standards of work are average. When investigating the water uptake of leafy twigs in different conditions, Year 6 pupils explain why the test is fair, make reasonable predictions and carry out the task carefully. Their knowledge of basic life processes is sound. All teachers promote positive attitudes to learning through valuing pupils' efforts and giving positive feedback. Consequently, pupils are confident and thoughtful learners. In the good lessons the teachers' own subject knowledge and enthusiasm provides clear focus to the work. Good organisation of lessons and use of resources contribute to lively practical experiences which help children learn effectively. Since the last inspection, the curriculum co-ordinator has successfully led the school in developing the curriculum. As a result, the provision for investigative work has been much improved and is now satisfactory. Investigations are carefully planned to support learning and build skills in all areas of the subject. The school is aware of the need to promote more independent research where pupils set up their own hypotheses and select appropriate resources, and is beginning to work towards this. Marking of pupils' work in books is carried out conscientiously and gives valuable positive feedback. It does not, however, tell pupils how to improve. Assessment systems are not used effectively across the school and targets are not clearly set for individuals. As a result, assessment data is not used rigorously to inform teachers' plans. This particularly affects the progress of higher attainers. They are not always given sufficient challenge to enable them to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

The school has acted on the recommendations of earlier inspections with determination and improvement since then is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are above average and pupils make good progress.
- Resources are good.
- Effective management has led to a detailed action plan to further develop the subject.
- The multi-media suite has enabled staff to make more use of information technology to support learning in other subjects.
- The range of applications in some areas of the curriculum is limited, and assessment is not in place.
- Progress is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and pupils reach the level expected for their age. Year 6 pupils use computers well for word processing but are less skilful in other aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

54. Good subject leadership has encouraged staff to use the school's new and enhanced computer resources more effectively than in the past. A good programme of national and school-based training has increased confidence and expertise. As a result, teachers use the computer suite confidently to build up pupils' basic skills in core areas. The strongest area is linked to word-processing. Year 6 pupils confidently find files, move text about and illustrate it with pictures. They open up the Internet rapidly and are proud of their research work in various subjects. The pupils who have already worked in the multi-media suite see the potential in this project. The co-ordinator has set up good links with a local secondary school to extend this project. As a result, pupils' standards are up to the expected level in this area. This represents good achievement. In other areas of the curriculum pupils do not achieve as

well. Year 6 pupils do not use spreadsheets much, are unfamiliar with control devices and do not know how to use equipment for sensing and collecting data. However, the school is working through a phased programme for introducing these topics. The planning for Year 6 includes all three aspects, and the timetable devotes sufficient time for the basics to be realised. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but has been patchy, because some teachers' expertise has not been sufficient in these areas. As a result, pupils lack confidence when they work independently and are unsure when selecting some of their own applications. The school's long-term training programme takes account of this.

55. The standards of Year 2 pupils are above the level expected for their age. Their experience has been wider than the older pupils. They use computers to handle simple data in Year 1. In Year 2, pupils know how to control a floor robot. Many already possess good skills for manipulating text, changing its fonts, colours and sizes. They have made good progress and are achieving well to reach above the expected level for their age. It is not possible to make a judgement on teaching overall, because only part of one lesson was observed. This was well-structured and enabled pupils to make sound progress for most of the time. The pupils' work remains on disk as a permanent and cumulative record of their activities. However, this is not an effective form of assessment since it does not evaluate attainment precisely, nor monitor progress. The staff, therefore, do not have guidance to identify more able pupils, to enable them to accelerate their learning. Pupils report that the teachers are good at helping the slower groups in a class. The adoption of workable assessment procedures is an early priority in the subject manager's action plan.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Teachers use a satisfactory range of opportunities to enable pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects. For instance, Year 5 pupils use the Internet at the end of a science lesson to get more information about electricity and circuits. Year 2 pupils correctly put information into their database to give them a visual picture of foods in a healthy diet. There are good examples from several year groups of pupils using the computer to study maps for geography. A model of good practice occurred in the Year 6 history lesson. The teacher had controlled the amount of information available on the Internet about World War 2 air raids. This enabled the pupils to make just the right number of notes to write up an authentic account, as if they were eye-witnesses. These are all valuable experiences, but they are not planned systematically into a coherent whole. On occasion a teacher's expertise is the limiting factor. Consequently, vital opportunities are missed.

HUMANITIES

The overall provision for this curriculum area is satisfactory. No geography lessons were seen but inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. Only one lesson was seen in religious education and two in history.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear planning guidelines include learning about Christianity as well as other major world religions.
- Experiences are enriched by a focus on learning through activity and visits including close links with the church.
- In line with its Church of England status, the school focuses on teaching Christian principles and how they affect the way people live.
- The school lacks assessment systems to aid tracking of attainment and progress.

57. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach the levels outlined in the locally agreed school syllabus. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils know about the major Christian festivals, which are celebrated by the school. The vicar leads them through the events of Easter and its significance to Christians. Harvest is celebrated and then the pupils learn about their role in helping the less fortunate as the gifts are distributed to the homeless in Manchester. Through visits to the church pupils know about the major symbols and features in a church. The new altar cloth which pupils made and was dedicated by the vicar further extended this knowledge. The visit by the Bishop of Hulme was a special occasion in the life of the school and helped to increase pupils' understanding of different roles in the church.
58. In the lesson seen in Year 3 pupils were learning about Sikhism. Teaching was satisfactory and included discussion with Sikh pupils in the class so that learning was more relevant to pupils. Pupils show respect for other values and beliefs and understand the importance of different symbols to followers of Sikhism. Pupils cannot yet draw comparisons between the major world religions. The ethos of the school shows the school has maintained the strengths identified in the last inspection with pupils developing mutual respect for each other as well as various beliefs and preferences.
59. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on teaching and learning. Visitors make learning more relevant to pupils. For example, a pupil's aunty visited to demonstrate Mendhi patterns and explained that in Islam these are for special occasions such as celebrating a wedding.
60. Sound management has led to a review of the curriculum and a closer link to the locally agreed syllabus. Lack of assessment procedures makes it difficult to identify areas of weakness in the subject.

Geography and history

Provision in geography is satisfactory. Provision in history is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in history in Year 2.
- There is a much better balance within the curriculum for the humanities.
- Teaching styles in history focus effectively on teaching the skills of historical enquiry.
- There are no assessment systems in place for these subjects.

Commentary

61. Sound subject leadership has furthered the school's intention to widen the curriculum, and encourage active learning by pupils. The subject co-ordinators conduct a valuable and realistic annual review of their subjects. This enables them to ensure that improvements are made to keep pace with the school improvement plan. They have not yet monitored the effect of their initiatives. In geography and history in Years 3 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are in line with the expected levels for their age. Achievement in history is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils reach standards higher than the expected standards.
62. No overall judgement about teaching is possible for these subjects, because of the limited number of lessons observed. However, the teaching seen in history in Years 2 and 6 was good and led to effective learning. The key feature was the amount of responsibility the teachers placed on the pupils to take note of the information available from books, video and computer. As a result, pupils had to think hard to organise the material into logical order. In the process they developed the important historical skills of sequencing, interpreting, comparing and drawing on factual knowledge. Pupils love the detective work involved, and many stated that history was their favourite subject. The weakest of the skills is chronology,

knowing the order of historical periods and placing their dates with accuracy. Year 6 pupils did not have a clear idea of when important events happened.

63. Examples of geography in Year 6 show effective use of information and communication technology to collate information about the water cycle. The final display of evidence shows the pupils can express their findings using correct geographical vocabulary.
64. The lack of an effective form of assessment means that staff are unsure about weaknesses and cannot adjust their planning to overcome it. They are not able to monitor progress as pupils move through the school to ensure that pupils' achievement is maintained to a consistently high level up to the end of Year 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The overall provision for this curriculum area is satisfactory.

Two lessons and a junior singing session were seen in music, one lesson in art and design, one in physical education and none in design and technology. Insufficient evidence is available to judge the quality of teaching and learning in art and design, physical education and design and technology. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work and planning indicate that statutory requirements are met in each subject.

Art and design

Commentary

65. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils worked at the level expected for their age. Pupils in Year 1 enthusiastically use a range of resources to explore effects and reflect feelings. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils enthusiastically describe their batik workshop with a professional artist and pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk excitedly about their experience of making Mendhi patterns.

Physical education

Commentary

66. In the one lesson seen, dance was taught well. Good lively teaching led to good learning and good achievement with pupils working at an average level for their age. Well-focused group work in Year 3 culminated in the whole class coming together to perform a dance based on the movements of a biscuit-making machine. Pupils evaluate their work purposefully. Extra-curricular competitive sport and 'Fitbod' sessions enhance learning for some pupils.

Design and technology

Commentary

67. Discussions with pupils in Years 2 and 6 indicate that their knowledge and skills are sound. When designing and making a vehicle for a specific purpose, pupils in Year 2 produced labelled plans showing parts like wheels and axles, but were unable to suggest improvements to their work. Pupils in Year 6 used the Internet as well as their sense of taste to research different types of bread. They express preferences and make and evaluate their own bread.

Music

Provision in music is satisfactory.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards are similar to those found in most schools. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested and enjoy making and listening to music.
- The pace of lessons is slow.
- Assessment systems are not consistent across the school.
- The curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities and successfully promotes cultural development.

Commentary

68. Pupils in Year 6 listen carefully to identify cyclic patterns in music from Java. They satisfactorily follow the pattern when singing and playing percussion. In Year 1, pupils enjoy exploring different sound sources. They confidently clap, click or tap to rhythms but find it difficult to copy repeated patterns. The curriculum co-ordinator teaches all classes and so ensures continuity in skill building. Good subject knowledge is used to plan appropriate work and promote subject specific vocabulary. The pace of lessons slows when too much time is taken in allocation of resources or in unnecessary repetition where pupils lose their focus on learning. Extra-curricular activities are good. The choir is well attended and pupils enjoy performing in the Altrincham Festival, in assemblies and in school festivals. Peripatetic keyboard lessons enhance the curriculum for some pupils. Learning is also enriched by visits and visitors like a group of Asian musicians. Years 5 and 6 enjoy composing in groups in the Hallé project. The whole school were involved in producing their own CD of songs from around the world. Leadership and management are sound. The curriculum co-ordinator has reviewed the school's position and produced a detailed action plan. Current priorities include the development of an efficient system of assessing pupils' progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

Most evidence is based on observations of two lessons in the juniors and discussions with older pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection in this area of pupils' development has been very good.
- Classes have lessons which especially focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills.
- The school gives good attention to race equality and valuing each other as individuals.
- The school council gives pupils a flavour of accepting responsibility and representing the views of others.
- Good attention is given to healthy living.

Commentary

69. Very determined leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher has considerably raised pupils' awareness of how their actions affect others. The focus is on pupils thinking through their actions and accepting responsibility for their own actions. The success of this is very evident in Year 6 where pupils are mature and courteous. They eagerly take part in all the school offers. The school is very much a community and pupils in Year 6 lead by example and understand that to be part of a community involves *give and take*.

70. Insufficient evidence is available to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning, but it is obvious the messages from these lessons permeate the school and influences behaviour and relationships throughout the day. Teaching and learning were good in the lesson seen in

Year 6 because of the variety of approaches used to encourage pupils to air their feelings about bullying. Group discussion, use of art and information technology grasps the interest of all and they gain a real insight into the harmful effects of bullying.

71. The school encourages healthy lifestyles and is working towards the Healthy School Award. Pupils are aware of the need to look after themselves because they are taught about the dangers of harmful drugs and at lunchtime they can take part in organised physical exercise. The school has achieved the Trafford's Bronze Award for Race Equality. Parents and pupils are adamant that there is no racial harassment in their school and all members of the school community are equally respected for their individual strengths.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
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	3

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