

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Royton

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 131848

Headteacher: Mrs J Caine

Lead inspector: Mrs J Tracey

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 November 2003

Inspection number: 257921

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 aided
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 248

School address: Hindle Drive
Royton
Oldham
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Telephone number: 0161 624 9019
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Fr David Booth

Date of previous inspection: 2 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school situated on the outskirts of Oldham. It was formed from the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in 1998. The headteacher and deputy joined the school in 2002/03. The school is an average sized primary school with a steady roll of about 250 pupils from varied backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is average. Most pupils come from the local area apart from those in the two classes for pupils with severe language disorders. These pupils are placed in the school by the local education authority. They travel from all parts of Oldham on transfer from their original schools. The school has a nursery and most children proceed through to the main school. There are significantly more boys than girls in the reception class and Year 2. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin. None is at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The proportion with statements of need is well above average; these pupils are not evenly distributed throughout the year groups. The school is proud of its strong links with the church.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9928	Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector	
29504	Mrs S Herring	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography History
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Music
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Design and technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Paul's provides a sound standard of education for all its pupils. Its strong Christian ethos, centred on pupils' personal development, results in satisfactory achievement by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils in the two classes for those with severe language disorders achieve very well in relation to the targets set for them. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school cares well for its pupils. Pupils of all abilities, background, race and culture are very well integrated in every aspect of school life.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall; it is very good in the language resource classes where teaching is very good.
- Standards could be improved further throughout the school, particularly in writing. In some classes, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough. Standards in art and design are above average.
- Leadership and management are effective in identifying areas for improvement but targets in the school development plan are not prioritised within realistic time scales. School policies are not implemented consistently across all year groups.
- The school does not regularly consult parents and pupils to seek out their views.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1998. Over time, the trend in pupils' results in national tests is broadly similar to the national trend. Action taken in response to the issues of the previous inspection has resulted in good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The overall standard of work in ICT has risen from below average to average. Provision for homework has improved, but is still inconsistent.

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	C	E	E
Mathematics	D	A	D	C
Science	E	C	E	D

*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, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes. They are on course to achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the Foundation Stage, and to exceed them in personal and social development. Overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 vary from year to year depending on the proportion of pupils with severe language disorders in the year group. These pupils rarely join the school at the start of their schooling but are transferred from other schools when their specific needs are diagnosed. Currently, standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Progress varies from one year group to another; it is good in some and satisfactory in others. In the latter, higher-attaining pupils are often not challenged sufficiently; they are underachieving. The disruption to pupils' learning in the Year 2 class caused by a succession of teachers in earlier years is being overcome; pupils are now making satisfactory progress. At present, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils' reading skills are average throughout the school. Writing improves more gradually. Currently, it is below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is reflected in pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and attendance. The school positively encourages pupils to accept responsibility, which is particularly evident in the way older pupils carry out their duties and support other pupils. Good relationships between pupils and adults are fostered through the school's Christian ethos and the sensitive way in which pupils in the language resource classes are integrated into every aspect of school life.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The broad ranging curriculum with its good programme of additional activities is underpinned by the strong commitment of staff. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; it is very good in the language resource classes. **Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory.** It is very good in the language resource classes, good in music and art and design and satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils' learning, based on the acquisition of knowledge and the use of skills, is good in lessons that have an urgent pace and where pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Pupils do not move on fast enough in some lessons because too much time is spent on recalling previous work. This particularly affects the progress of the more able pupils. Good teaching occurs when pupils are motivated to learn through interesting and challenging activities that enable them to assess their own learning against the teacher's aims for the lesson. Teachers' expectations in such lessons are high. The school takes good care of all its pupils by sensitively meeting their individual needs and providing good opportunities for them to work together within the curriculum and beyond. Pupils' welfare and educational well-being are paramount.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership team ensures that the maintenance and further raising of standards feature as overriding priorities in planning for school improvement. The school is managed satisfactorily and runs smoothly. However, in the past year, the school has tried to change too much too quickly. Many of the initiatives have not been embedded in school routines long enough to measure their effect on the progress of individual pupils. Governance is satisfactory but many governors do not have close links with the daily life of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the quality of education provided. They appreciate the way that all pupils are treated equally and feel that the school nurtures their children well so that they mature with genuine respect and consideration for others. Some parents do not feel that the school actively seeks their views. A few have concerns about bullying. Pupils think that St Paul's is a good school where the teachers treat them fairly and expect them to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further, particularly in writing and for the most able pupils.
- Reassess the school development plan and establish clearer and more realistic priorities.
- Agree and implement a consistent whole-school approach to homework, planning and the use of information from assessment procedures.
- Seek parents' and pupils' views and take account of them when making decisions.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Currently, standards in all the core subjects are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. Those in the language resource classes make very good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards could be raised further, particularly in writing.
- Pupils with language disorders in the language resource classes achieve very well. They often reach standards above those that might be expected by the time they leave the school.
- The progress of higher-attaining pupils is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent from one year group to another. These pupils are underachieving in some classes.
- Standards are above average in art and design.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved from below average to average since the previous inspection.

Commentary

1. Standards are average on entry to the Foundation Stage. Overall, children make sound progress in the nursery and reception classes in all the areas of learning. Their personal and social development is good, owing to good teaching and the sensitive way in which they are introduced to school life. By the start of Year 1, most children meet the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They exceed them in personal and social development.
2. Pupils in the language resource classes (up to a maximum of 17) rarely join the school at the start of their schooling. In some cases it is after Year 2. All these pupils have statements of educational need because of severe language disorders. Account has to be taken of this when comparing standards achieved in National Curriculum tests against national averages. Comparison with schools with similar results at Year 2 can also be misleading because of the late entry to the school of some of these pupils. Overall, standards in each year group, and in National Curriculum tests taken in Years 2 and 6, vary from year to year depending on the severity of pupils' special educational needs in the year group and at what age they joined the school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.0 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.0 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.2 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils' results in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 2 in 2003 were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. However, It should be noted that the proportion of pupils who exceeded the level expected for their age in reading and mathematics was higher than in 2002. This reflects the school's recent drive to ensure that all pupils learn at rates appropriate to their ability. There is scope for further improvement in

writing. Currently, the overall standard of work in Year 2 is below average. Standards are average in reading, below average in writing, mathematics and science and above average in art and design. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils bearing in mind the spread of ability in the year group and the disruption to learning caused by a succession of teachers in earlier years. This is now being overcome through greater stability in the teaching provision.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.8 (27.6)	26.8(27.0)
Mathematics	26.3 (28.4)	26.8(26.7)
Science	27.2(28.7)	28.6(28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils' results in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 6 were well below average in 2003. There was an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including language disorders, in this year group. Direct comparison with similar schools, based on prior attainment, is misleading because some of these pupils were not at the school in Year 2. Over time, the trend in results is broadly similar to the national trend. The difference between boys' and girls' achievement varies in relation to the balance of genders in the year group and the proportion of each on the register of special educational need.
5. The school has satisfactorily implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The full effect is not yet evident in the overall standard of work because working practices, such as the use of homework and assessment from lessons, are inconsistent. The variable quality of the presentation of written work also affects standards. The school has identified the need to improve the overall quality of writing, which it is doing through specific initiatives and close liaison with advisers from the local education authority. Writing gradually improves as pupils move through the school. Currently, the overall standard of work in Year 6 is average. Standards are similar in English (reading and writing), mathematics and science. They are above average in art and design. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 but this varies between satisfactory and good from one year group to another. Where it is satisfactory rather than good, higher-attaining pupils are often not being challenged enough so they are underachieving. Evidence of this was seen in a scrutiny of pupils' work from last year's Years 3 and 4. Pupils make good progress in art and design, music and ICT taking into account their prior attainment.
6. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In the mainstream they achieve at least satisfactorily, and often better, because of good support from teaching assistants. They achieve very well in the language resource classes, especially in the infant class where language skills on entry are very low. The very good teaching, targeted specifically on each pupil's own needs, gives them confidence. It frequently enables them to reach standards beyond those that might reasonably have been expected.
7. Standards in ICT have improved from below average to average since the previous inspection. This is due to the significant improvement in provision, including teaching, and the inclusion of ICT as an integral part of lesson plans in other subjects of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupil's attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a positive attitude to school life.
- Behaviour is good but low-level name-calling has not been wholly eliminated.
- The school has a happy, caring atmosphere that involves all pupils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities.
- Attendance is good but absences that are due to family holidays are significant.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy school and know they come to learn. They understand the routines of school life well and settle down quickly. In class they are alert, attentive and keen to participate in lessons. Pupils work hard and generally try their best. Most take homework seriously, although provision for it is inconsistent. School clubs are very popular and well attended.
9. The school expects high standards of behaviour and the vast majority of pupils are well behaved all the time. There is a clear behaviour policy (a summary of which has been sent to parents) and rules are well publicised. Pupils think that staff apply the rules fairly and good behaviour is recognised by awards. The pupils take the collection of these awards seriously. A very small number of pupils have difficulty in maintaining a good standard of behaviour all day. However, skilled teaching and effective behaviour management routines usually minimise any impact on lessons. When incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur, other pupils consistently act sensibly and ignore them. Over the last year there have been a few cases of bullying but pupils do not think this is an issue now and express confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problems speedily. Low-level name-calling however, worries a few pupils and not enough has been done to eliminate this problem. During the most recent reporting year there was one permanent exclusion and 11 temporary ones involving two pupils.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	255	11	1
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

10. The school has a friendly and happy atmosphere. Pupils get on well with each other and the many adults in the school. In classrooms, pupils work and collaborate well. They listen to each other's views with respect. During the inspection, skipping was the current vogue on the playground and boys and girls were happily trying to outdo each other in terms of skills. Pupils show a very high level of understanding, respect and consideration when playing with or helping those pupils in the school with disabilities. The school is keen to give pupils additional responsibilities. In Year 6, all pupils take a prominent role in helping to run the school. They take their duties seriously and were very proud to show the inspectors the display of photographs and 'job descriptions' they had written for themselves. By the time pupils leave the school they are developing into confident individuals with sensible opinions.

11. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. Unauthorised absence is negligible. However, absence which is due to parents taking holidays in term time is significant – about a fifth of all absences are due to this.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.6	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

12. The provision for spiritual development is good. Close links with the church successfully promote Christian ethos and values in the everyday work of the school. Assemblies are particularly effective in providing opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection. Pupils satisfactorily consider their heritage in the church and school community and their place in the wider world. Staff listen carefully to pupils and show respect for their ideas so that pupils grow in self-esteem and become confident in expressing their own points of view.
13. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Good provision is made for social development. Pupils have a very good awareness of their responsibilities as members of the school community. They are particularly thoughtful and helpful when welcoming pupils from the language resource classes into their own classes. Pupils are sympathetic and understanding of others less fortunate than themselves. They take a pride in their own achievements and are genuine in their congratulation of others. Discussion times in all classes provide a well-organised forum for considering ethical and social issues. However, there is no school council through which pupils can air their views of the school. Consequently, opportunities to involve pupils in the democratic process are missed.
14. The provision for cultural development is good. Through art and music in particular, pupils are learning to appreciate and enjoy their own heritage as well as a wide range of non-western cultures. Since the previous inspection the school has provided more opportunities for pupils to understand that people in today's society have different beliefs and cultures. Involvement in a local education authority initiative in Year 5 is making pupils think hard about such issues. Through this project, pupils have first-hand opportunities to join with pupils of different cultural backgrounds to discuss ethical dilemmas. This is a good example of how the school is contributing to the promotion of racial harmony amongst local people.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is satisfactory. It is underpinned by the school's mission to provide equally for every pupil to achieve their full potential and become a responsible citizen.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in art and design and in music.
- Pupils with special educational need are well taught. Teaching in the language resource classes is very good.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils, which enables them to take an active part in lessons.

- The school's agreed procedures, for example, homework and the use of information from assessment procedures, are not implemented consistently in all classes.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some classes.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always give a clear indication of how it could be improved.

Commentary

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is sound in all aspects of the curriculum, and good in its promotion of children's personal and social development. The sensitive way in which children are introduced to class routines develops their self-confidence and is fundamental to the establishment of respectful relationships that form the basis of life in the school community. Children in the nursery had only been in school for a short time prior to the inspection but good organisation and firm discipline have enabled them to make a good start to their learning.
16. During the last year, teachers' training has specifically focused on the effect of teaching on pupils' learning. This has led to better planning and sharper aims for the learning in each lesson. As a result, in most lessons, pupils know what they are expected to learn and can assess the extent to which they have been successful. In the good and better lessons, teachers' planning builds on pupils' prior learning but avoids excessive repetition. Some lessons, although satisfactory, do not provide sufficient challenge for the highest-attaining pupils because the pace is not fast enough. More often than not this is because all pupils are set the same tasks so there is a lack of urgency about their completion. Skilful questioning by the teacher in the best lessons draws all pupils into discussion. It enables teachers to identify what pupils know and understand and provides a springboard for developing the next stage in the learning. Pupils' learning is good when they are encouraged to experiment for themselves and try out new skills, such as in art and design and music. The school recognises the need to develop pupils' independent investigative skills further in mathematics and science. Weaknesses in the teaching are mainly due to inconsistencies in the implementation of agreed school procedures, for example, in the provision of homework and the use of information from assessment of pupils' attainment. Also, the presentation of pupils' work is variable and marking does not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve.
17. Teachers recognise the benefits of cross-curricular work. They regularly weave together aspects of different subjects in 'topics'. Art is well used to bring a practical dimension to work in subjects such as history, geography and design and technology, as demonstrated by the impressive array of Greek style pottery made by pupils in Year 6. Similarly, ICT is well used for the consolidation of learning, research and presentation of written work for visual effect.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work well together, planning the work carefully around that of the main focus of the lesson for the whole class. Teaching in the language resource classes for pupils with severe language disorders is very good. It is sensitive to pupils' needs, but, at the same time, challenging. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and gain satisfaction from meeting them, particularly when they result in pupils' integration into mainstream classes for some lessons.
19. The collection and analysis of data relating to pupils' attainment and progress are thorough and detailed. They enable the leadership team and teachers to see whether pupils are making sufficient progress from year to year. However, until recently, the use of this information to set targets and initiate action in response to any underachievement was unsatisfactory. This situation is gradually changing but the effect will only be evident over time. Teachers are now accountable for the progress of pupils in their class over time, both as individuals and as a group. Good use is made of information gained from assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs.
20. To summarise, some very effective strategies are in use. They result in interesting, imaginative lessons that stimulate pupils to achieve well. However, these practices are not shared enough. Until recently, teachers tended to work independently with too little reference to what

was happening in other classes and sections of the school. There is evidence that the situation is changing in response to teachers' greater involvement in the school's self-evaluation procedures. It is too soon to measure the effect on pupils' progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (15%)	17 (43%)	16 (40%)	1 (2%)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is broad, with many opportunities for enrichment, but the combined teaching of some subjects through 'topics' results in some long periods in which no science is taught to particular classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access to all the school's activities is very good. There are very good arrangements for including pupils from the language resource classes in school life. They, and other pupils, benefit enormously.
- Links between the various subjects of the curriculum are good. They could be extended further in writing.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school, and very good in the language resource classes.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available for all pupils.
- The arrangement for teaching the 'topics' is unbalanced. It affects the steady acquisition of scientific skills.
- There is insufficient, specific planning to develop problem solving and investigative skills in mathematics and science, or to challenge the higher-attaining pupils.
- There is no designated outdoor play area to extend the learning environment of children in the reception class.

Commentary

21. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and is suitably based on the recommended Early Learning Goals. Work is planned to take account of all areas of learning, though some activities lack a clear focus. This reduces their effect on children's learning.
22. National strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are fully in place. However, the work planned for some lessons does not take account of the needs of different groups of pupils and what they already know. Consequently, more able pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge to enable them to achieve the higher levels. There is insufficient emphasis on planning opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills in mathematics and science. This has been identified as an area for improvement. Work in different subjects is linked well into topics, providing a cohesive range of work and reinforcing learning across the subjects. The teaching of science exclusively within the topics does not give sufficient priority to the subject. There are long periods in which science is not taught to some classes. This is a factor in fewer pupils than would be expected achieving the higher levels. The improvement in ICT resources since the previous inspection has helped to raise standards, though there is still a need to supplement resources with equipment such as sensors. The bank of laptops is used well to develop specific computer skills and to support learning in other subjects.
23. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs in the language resource classes is very good. Highly focused support is well directed. A rich range of practical activities for infant

pupils is effectively balanced with well-planned opportunities for older pupils to work in mainstream classes wherever possible. Individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs are clear and detailed, with an appropriate number of relevant targets.

24. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development (PSHE) and citizenship through the science curriculum and other specific lessons. All staff give freely of their time to provide a wide range of enrichment activities in sport, music, art and French; and to enhance the teaching of ICT and literacy. A good feature is the provision of a skipping club and a friendship club for younger pupils in response to an identified need to develop interpersonal skills. The curriculum is enhanced well through visits to places of interest such as the science museum and by specialist staff, including peripatetic music teachers.
25. There is a suitable number of qualified teachers who are well supported by experienced teaching assistants. Together, they encourage lower-attaining pupils and raise their self-esteem. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is bright and well cared for and enhanced by good quality displays, which celebrate pupils' work. The lack of a designated outside area for the reception class reduces the range of learning opportunities, particularly in physical development.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is good, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are happy with the level of care, support and security provided for their children. Procedures for seeking pupils' views are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good level of care and welfare.
- Provision for pupils in the language resource classes is very good.
- The school does not have systems for regularly seeking out or acting on pupils' views.

Commentary

26. The school is a friendly community based firmly on Christian principles where care and respect for the individual are considered important. The parish priest, who is also the chair of governors, has a high profile in the school and an easy relationship with the pupils. Staff know the pupils well. Relationships are trusting and pupils feel confident that if they have a concern, there are many adults in the school that they can turn to. Supervision is good at all times. Procedures for child protection are effective. Health and safety issues are taken seriously. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and a healthy eating policy is promoted. The construction of a new security fence around the perimeter has added greatly to the sense of security as well as reduced the amount of vandalism. Parents are right to feel confident that, while at school, their children are well cared for, safe and secure.
27. Starting arrangements for children entering the nursery or reception class are good. They foster good home-school relationships. Arrangements for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs are good. They are rigorous and involve parents and carers at all stages.
28. The school has no formal mechanism for collecting pupils' views or involving them in the way the school develops. The school lacks a forum where pupils' opinions can be sought and considered. This is a missed opportunity as in discussions during the inspection, pupils had some interesting ideas on the way the school could be improved, for instance on the way name-calling is handled.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and with other schools. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a good opinion of the school.
- Insufficient information is given to parents to allow them to be fully involved in their children's learning.
- Parents are not sufficiently involved in the life of the school or the way it develops.
- Pupils benefit from the good community links.

Commentary

29. Parents report that they are pleased with the school. They particularly like the approachability of the staff, the way their children are expected to work hard and how their children mature and become more responsible during their time at the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully consulted in drawing up and reviewing pupils' individual education plans. In the language resource classes, they make good use of the home/school books that promote regular dialogue between staff and parents on an informal basis.
30. The quality of information for parents, although satisfactory, is variable. The provision of formal opportunities for parents to meet teachers is good. There are meetings each term and at times that are convenient to working parents. Some documentation for parents is very clear and useful, for instance the Foundation Stage newsletter. Other documents do not always give parents enough information to help them to be involved in their children's learning. Letters about future work lack a common approach and the quality varies too much between classes. Pupils' reports meet statutory requirements but the targets for development are frequently too general or vague to be of use to parents who want to help their children. A key issue in the previous inspection was to develop and put into action a homework policy. Partial success has been achieved. Many parents are unclear about expectations and feel that practices across the school are still inconsistent. Inspectors agree.
31. The school is not doing enough to involve parents in the life of the school. There are very limited opportunities for parents to visit the school in support of activities during the school day, for instance to come to assemblies or to help in class. Parents do not feel that their views are sought about general school matters and do not always fully understand why decisions have been taken.
32. The school is an integral part of the church community. The priest is a very familiar face in the school and pupils are closely involved in 'School Sunday' and Christian festivals. Close links with a local 'Before and after' school club are appreciated by parents. Sporting skills are developed well through the use of local coaching services in basketball, football and cricket. A good number of visitors come to the school, including recently an author, a potter, a mural artist and a drummer. The school is involved and positively supportive of Oldham's 'Cohesion in the Community' project to promote empathy between people of different cultural backgrounds.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Leadership by the headteacher and key staff, management and governance are all sound and underpin the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Raising achievement is a clearly identified priority in the school's work.

- The school's commitment to providing equally for pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and cultures is implicit and explicit in all its work.
- Teachers are highly committed and their work is backed up well by teaching assistants.
- The management of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school functions well on a day-to-day basis but priorities in the school development plan are not sharp enough to generate consistent practices across all year groups.
- Parents are appreciative of the caring, family ethos.
- The monitoring roles of staff with responsibility are not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

Commentary

33. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff have been successful in bringing about satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. A strong feature of the school's work is the way it thoughtfully encourages integration of all pupils in the many opportunities provided. Teaching and other staff are hardworking and committed to providing well for pupils of all abilities. The trend in pupils' results over time is broadly similar to that found nationally and there is a commitment to raising standards further. In addition, there has been good improvement in provision for ICT, which has raised standards from below average to average.
34. The school has continued to experience change since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in 1998, not least in personnel and operational procedures. A new leadership team took up appointment in 2002/03, which is promoting greater emphasis on staff's corporate commitment to implementing agreed school procedures. This is beginning to have an effect through a higher focus on teachers' accountability for their pupils' progress over the course of each year, particularly in English and mathematics. As yet, there is still a degree of inconsistency in the use of information from assessment procedures and in teachers' expectations of pupils' learning. However, there is evidence of greater liaison between teachers in the different sections of the school, which is raising their awareness of the effect of the work of one year group on another.
35. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages all the provision very well. The deployment of teaching assistants makes best use of individual talents to meet the pupils' needs successfully. Liaison with outside agencies, such as speech therapy, is carried out efficiently and is very supportive to the school.
36. Management systems are effective in ensuring the smooth running of the school on a daily basis and providing for individual pupils' needs. The set-up for supporting pupils with special educational needs and language disorders is particularly good. Self-evaluation procedures have been a prominent feature of the school's 'in-house' work in the past year. They took up a considerable amount of time but were worthwhile in highlighting areas of weakness. The school development plan that emerged is all embracing and ambitious. It is a thorough and lengthy document but its targets are somewhat overwhelming and do not lead to a clear focus on the most immediate aspects for attention. Consequently, the school is attempting to move forward on too many fronts simultaneously, which results in frustration and inconsistency. This is recognised, as is the desire for a period of stability during which new practices can be firmly embedded and tested for their effectiveness.
37. Governors' support for the school and overview of its work are satisfactory. However, very few governors actively involve themselves in the daily life of the school to gain insight into the effect of their decisions. The governing body satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is aware of the school's major strengths and weaknesses. Governors ask questions about the school's operation and do not hold back from challenging its thinking when they have concerns. The governing body is instrumental in ensuring that the budget is closely linked to strategic planning and that the school gets best value for its spending. Financial control is

good. There is very little evidence of consultation with parents and pupils in matters directly related to general school issues.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	655,619	Balance from previous year	40,543
Total expenditure	674,351	Balance carried forward to the next	21,811
Expenditure per pupil	2,644		

38. Parents have confidence in the leadership and management of the school. They feel that staff create a welcoming environment that caters well for pupils' educational needs and their personal well-being. Taking into account the funding, the very good provision for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the satisfactory provision overall, the school provides sound value for money.

LANGUAGE RESOURCE CLASSES

What is the effectiveness of the language resource classes?

The school has two language resource classes for children with statements of special educational need in language development. There are eight places in the infant class and nine in the junior class. This resource serves the whole of the local education authority and pupils are admitted from schools in all areas of Oldham.

The provision in the language resource classes is **very good** and is a considerable strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and pupils achieve very well in relation to their individual targets.
- Standards are below average because of the barriers to learning caused by severe language difficulties.
- Assessment systems are used efficiently to track progress. Information gained is used to plan work, which is closely matched to individual needs.
- The school benefits enormously from the teaching expertise gathered in these classes.
- Relationships in the classes and between the classes and mainstream school are very good.
- Older pupils are successfully integrated into mainstream classes.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

39. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers establish a calm, supportive environment where pupils concentrate and achieve very well. High expectations of behaviour are made clear in a very positive way and praise is used effectively to encourage the pupils' best efforts. Teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding to plan small steps of learning very efficiently to meet the clear, relevant targets in the pupils' individual education plans. Pupils receive positive reinforcement so they know that they are making good progress. Teachers target questions very well to challenge individuals at appropriate levels. Instructions are clear and backed up by demonstrations when necessary.

40. In the infant class the curriculum is broad with lively practical experiences, which support learning successfully in the basic skills of English and mathematics as well as multi-subject topic work. In the junior class, pupils' progress has been so good that pupils from Year 4 onwards are integrated into mainstream classes, with support from a teaching assistant, for topic work. Some older pupils also work in their own age group classes for English and mathematics. Good strategic planning enables some mainstream pupils to take advantage of the resource class facilities. This inclusion is a particular strength and provides good opportunities for pupils to socialise, celebrate achievement and understand each other's problems. The considerable expertise in working with children with special educational needs is shared very successfully throughout the school.

41. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator in managing the special provision, as well as the school's mainstream provision for pupils with special educational needs, is highly effective. The work of teaching assistants is carefully organised to make best use of available resources. As a result, they are well briefed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Good, productive links are forged with agencies such as speech therapy and educational psychology departments. Regular reviews of pupils and statements involve all staff concerned, together with parents and agencies. Adaptations to the school building since the previous inspection to provide attractive classrooms for the resource classes have significantly improved the provision. Resources are good and are used very effectively to support learning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. As at the time of the previous inspection, children make satisfactory progress overall.

Children's attainment when they enter nursery is average for their age. They achieve satisfactorily and reach the goals expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the time they start in Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in these areas of learning. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about standards and provision in physical development. Achievement in the development of personal and social skills is good; children exceed the expected goals because of good teaching. Those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily alongside their peers. Leadership and management are sound. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has only recently taken on this responsibility; very little monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place so far. Children in the reception class have limited use of the nursery outdoor area but do not have a secure outdoor area of their own. This restricts the curriculum in outdoor learning for these children. Procedures for assessing children's progress are satisfactory but the information gathered is not always used effectively enough to plan work to fully meet the range of abilities in each class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children achieve well.
- Staff create a welcoming and secure learning environment.
- Initial home-school links are good.
- There are not enough opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

42. The nursery and reception classes are carefully organised so that they provide a warm and friendly environment for children and parents. Gradual induction sessions to the nursery and helpful curricular discussions in the reception class give parents confidence in the school, which helps children to feel secure. Staff build up caring relationships. They listen carefully and show respect for children's ideas, providing encouragement for individuals through praise. As a result, children settle quickly into school routines and are increasingly confident in joining in class and group activities. Circle time, in the reception class, when all children are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour as they pass a *gentle touch* around the circle, is used to particularly good effect in promoting positive attitudes to learning and to each other. Challenging behaviour is dealt with sensitively as adults take individuals aside and calmly explain and reinforce the school's expectations. Consequently, children learn to negotiate turns and share happily. In the reception class, children follow instructions well but do not have enough opportunities to select activities for themselves. Opportunities to promote independent learning are missed.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.
- Children are developing positive attitudes to books and enjoy listening to stories.
- Group tasks do not reinforce class teaching efficiently. Teachers' plans are not sufficiently focused on what children are expected to learn from tasks.

Commentary

43. Children throughout the Foundation Stage enjoy stories. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time. Teachers demonstrate positive attitudes to books and successfully raise children's expectations of enjoyment. Children in the reception class are skilled at 'finding clues' in pictures, which enable them to describe the main events of the story. They confidently recognise the characters and a few familiar words in the first reading books; most are beginning to recognise some letters by shape and sound and use some letter shapes in their own writing. Whole-class sessions are well organised and promote learning successfully. Group activities do not always challenge children of different levels of attainment and are not planned with sufficient focus on specific objectives. This slows the pace of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of lively number rhymes to promote counting skills.
- Attractive practical resources interest children and successfully promote sorting and matching skills.
- Group activities lack focus and learning objectives are not clear enough to promote learning well.
- Information from assessment is not used efficiently to plan work that builds progressively on what children already know.

Commentary

44. Children in the nursery and reception classes count with growing accuracy and match objects carefully in play situations using criteria such as colour or shape. They are increasingly able to talk about what they are doing. Children in the reception class are confident in using terms of *more* or *less* correctly. They count accurately forwards and backwards to five and show the correct number of fingers to match the numbers in their action songs. Good use is made of acting out the *Five Monkeys* rhyme to increase children's understanding of zero as an empty set. As in communication, language and literacy, group activities are not planned with sufficient focus to reinforce teaching or to move learning forward. Whilst staff observe children carefully to assess their progress, they do not always use the information gathered to plan work to meet the specific needs of individuals or groups.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide an interesting range of practical activities.
- Computers are used effectively to support learning.
- Teaching assistants provide good support in group work.

Commentary

45. Children achieve satisfactorily in response to sound teaching. Throughout the Foundation Stage they explore a range of materials and are developing sound observational skills. They use simple tools competently to construct, for example, a monster, a plane or a car from junk materials. Children in the reception class are skilled and independent in using the computer, for instance, to draw a picture. They control the mouse adeptly to move objects on screen. Group activities such as baking are efficiently organised. Teaching assistants are well briefed and ask questions which successfully extend the children's thinking.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards as no lessons were observed. However, evidence from teachers' planning indicates that opportunities for children in the reception class to engage in outdoor learning are limited by the facilities available.

Commentary

46. Children in the nursery benefit from daily access to a secure play area with a good range of large equipment. They control large wheeled vehicles with some awareness of space and other people. In the reception class, children successfully learn to control small equipment competently, such as when they use scissors to cut round simple shapes. They handle percussion instruments with care and control to shake or pat when creating a suggested effect.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative play areas are attractively developed in the nursery.
- The provision is enhanced by the contributions of a specialist music teacher.
- Some over-direction by adults limits opportunities for children to make their own choices.

Commentary

47. In the nursery, particularly good use is made of imaginative play to support learning. Good links are established between the highly popular *space ship* and work children have been doing about light and darkness. The quality of play in the home corner was effectively developed by the addition of pyjamas to link into the ideas of day and night. Children in the reception class enthusiastically sing and explore sound with percussion instruments. The specialist music teacher uses her secure knowledge and understanding to plan challenging sessions where, with help, children choose suitable instruments to illustrate the sounds of different fireworks. Occasionally, when adults intervene too frequently in art activities, children tend to follow instructions rather than develop their own ideas. This limits the development of their creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils co-operate and work together well.
- Pupils' standards in writing are below average in Year 2; they are average in Year 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The teaching assistants give good support by helping lower-attaining pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- The tracking and assessment systems are not used consistently in all classes to raise standards. Consequently, progress varies from one class to another.

Commentary

48. The overall standard of work in the current Year 2 is below average but the more able pupils are satisfactorily achieving at a higher level. The well below average results in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 6 in 2003 were due to a combination of the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that pupils did not perform well in the writing aspects of the tests. Overall, standards in the current Year 6 are average. Scrutiny of pupils' work provides clear evidence that standards are higher than in the previous year. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support from the teaching assistants, and participate in all curricular activities.
49. The overall achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. The school has developed good systems to track pupils' progress and to set targets. The assessment procedures indicate that pupils' progress is inconsistent from one year group to another. At best, they are used well but the school has yet to make full use of the information gained to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Some of the targets set for whole classes are not worded in a way that helps the pupils to understand what they must do to improve.
50. Throughout the school, pupils' listening skills are good. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other. Speaking skills are less secure. Most pupils answer quietly in brief sentences, and many show limited confidence when speaking in class. The subject leader recognises this as an area for development to help pupils express themselves more clearly in writing. In some lessons, teachers direct their questioning well in order to give everyone, including those with special educational needs, opportunities to participate and contribute. Teachers help pupils to extend their vocabulary by asking them to explain how they reach answers in mathematics lessons, and to suggest words describing forces and movement in science. Overall, standards of speaking and listening are average throughout the school.
51. When pupils enter the school, they show an enjoyment of stories and willingly talk about their books. All pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read and standards are average in Years 2 and 6. The school introduced a scheme to increase pupils' understanding of letter sounds and blends, and improved reading skills. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have made better progress in reading than in writing. Standards in reading are above average for the more able pupils in Year 6. Older pupils read accurately and fluently; this helps their studies in other subjects. The two small library areas have sufficient non-fiction books but are housed in corridors; this is unsuitable for teaching library skills to whole classes. Older pupils use the Internet for research and many make good use of local libraries. Most pupils are supported well at home by families who hear them read and record their progress.

52. The school has correctly identified the need to improve writing skills. Standards are not consistent throughout the school. They are below average in the current Year 2 and 3, but show a gradual improvement to Year 6, by which time standards are average. The quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work vary, and are often careless and inconsistent in style. Many pupils do not organise the content of their work well. The school's action plan to improve writing is well focused and intensive. The good practice observed in some classes is not shared widely enough to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are challenged to produce work of higher quality. Pupils' writing is now assessed regularly every half term but its introduction is too recent to discern any effect on standards.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In lessons, some good and very good teaching was observed. However, the work in pupils' books showed variations in quality. When the teaching was good, pupils achieved well. For example, in Year 2, imaginative teaching made learning meaningful and exciting when pupils wrote instructions for making fruit drinks, and enjoyed sampling the results. Good relationships make learning a shared experience; and pupils co-operate well in all lessons. Bright displays of words, good resources and quality books stimulate pupils' interest. The teaching assistants support particular groups well, for example helping older pupils with special educational needs to use laptop computers to write their auto-biographies. In the lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good, although they lost interest if the pace became too slow. Occasionally, teachers do not provide work suitable for pupils of different abilities; the highest-attaining pupils are then not challenged enough. The marking of pupils' work does not always indicate how it can be improved to help pupils reach higher standards.
54. The leadership and management of English are good. The subject leader has a good action plan that demonstrates clear vision for improvement, and knowledge of what needs to be done to raise standards, particularly in writing. The school also recognises that there is some good practice in teaching that could be shared throughout the school. Various initiatives enrich pupils' experience, including a visiting author and the Literacy week involving parents and governors. Since the previous inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills in all subjects. They redraft and edit work competently on the computer. In mathematics, pupils often explain and give good reasons for their answers. Pupils write what they have enjoyed and what they could do better in the new 'Thinking Books'. However, opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes are limited. Much work is copied, for example in history and geography, and there are only limited opportunities for pupils to write their own reports in science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough in some classes.
- Planning for lessons is consistent with the National Numeracy Strategy and ensures proper progression in number work, shape and measure and the handling of data.
- There is not enough emphasis on problem solving and investigative work.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' written work is underdeveloped.
- Pupils are not clear about what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

55. Overall standards of work vary from one year group to another in relation to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Currently, standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The range of abilities in Year 2 is skewed towards average/lower attainers; all are now making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment in the reception class and Year 1. During a considerable part of this time, pupils were taught by a succession of teachers and their learning was disrupted. The range of abilities in Year 6 is more balanced; overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily by this stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school; they receive a good level of additional support from teaching assistants. Some pupils in the language resource classes make sufficient progress to enable them to integrate with mainstream classes for mathematics. The progress of higher-attaining pupils is, however, inconsistent. In some year groups they are challenged well; they make good progress through work that encourages them to use their initiative when applying mathematics in unfamiliar situations. In other year groups, the work is less demanding and too repetitive. Progress is then too slow. Boys and girls make similar progress.
56. In 2003, pupils' results in National Curriculum tests were not as good as in 2002. However, the school came very close to meeting its targets in Year 6, including those for higher-attaining pupils. The results accurately reflect the spread of ability in the year group.
57. Pupils enjoy working with numbers. They respond well in classes where teachers make known their high expectations and aims. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is providing a good framework for pupils to build up and practise number skills progressively. These skills, and pupils' mental agility, are average throughout the school. Pupils are satisfactorily learning that there is often more than one way of reaching an answer. The most able pupils explain their reasoning well using the correct technical language. By the time pupils reach Year 6, most have the confidence to work with numbers and to manipulate them in routine work, such as to find ratios and percentages. They understand that explaining the steps taken to reach an answer in written work provides evidence of their understanding. Pupils are less confident when solving word problems or tackling investigative work. This is because they have not had enough practice with questions that require translation of words to their mathematical equivalent. Evidence from assessment records over recent years indicates that pupils' learning has not progressed as quickly in Years 3 and 4 as in other year groups. The school has recognised this and taken action. Work seen during the inspection shows good progress this term.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some of the teaching observed was good. However, evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work last year and one unsatisfactory lesson observed during the inspection indicate that teaching is inconsistent from one year group to another. For instance, pupils are not always clear about what it is they are to learn, or the extent to which they have been successful. Pupils make good progress in lessons where the work for each group provides just enough practice questions, at an appropriate level, to give them confidence before moving on. In other lessons, although satisfactory, all pupils tackle the same work so there is sometimes not enough challenge for those who grasp the work quickly and work faster. Some of the teaching observed was exemplary with respect to planning, pace and recognition of pupils' capabilities. Pupils were then faced with work that gave them confidence to try out things for themselves before seeking support from adults. Teachers constantly emphasise the correct use of mathematical vocabulary, and well-prepared displays in classrooms focus attention on current topics. The quality of presentation of pupils' written work is variable. In this, and other aspects such as homework and the use of information from assessment, the lack of consistency lessens pupils' progress in some year groups. At best, teachers make clear what is expected, mark the work thoroughly and use the information gained to ensure that pupils know how they can improve further.

59. The subject leader has been instrumental in co-ordinating the provision for mathematics, implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and analysing pupils' achievement. The most effective teaching strategies have been recognised through the effect they have had on progress as measured for individual pupils in each year group. However, as yet, these strategies have not been shared and not enough time has been given over to monitoring and evaluating the consistency of teaching and pupils' written work. This is acknowledged by the school and features in school development plans. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils confidently use mathematics in their work in other subjects although there is no overall plan to ensure consistency in the use of units or forms of presentation. Pupils appreciate the usefulness of mathematical skills in practical work, especially in measuring and estimating and when analysing data. They competently use tables and graphs to record data; older pupils make use of the results to confirm predictions or make generalised statements. The school has picked up on links with work in ICT. For example, pupils make good use of information on data bases to provide evidence for research work in history and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective in imparting facts and knowledge.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is insufficient, specific planning to develop pupils' skills of enquiry and to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils.
- There is a lack of balance in the timetabling of science with long periods in which science is not taught to some classes, though the time allocation overall is satisfactory.
- There are no common, agreed assessment procedures.

Commentary

60. Standards of work are below average in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 have not had any science lessons so far this year, but work they completed in Year 5 indicates that standards are broadly average. Given the wide variations in the ability spread of different classes, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
61. Achievement is satisfactory overall. However, the work planned does not always take account of what pupils already know and this leads to a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Pupils from the language resource classes sometimes join science lessons in other classes. They integrate very well. The good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
62. In Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of how their 'Amazing body' works and how diet and hygiene can affect their health. They are beginning to think scientifically, as demonstrated in the diagrams they drew up to classify sounds from various sources. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of scientific facts related to physical processes, such as gravity. They can conduct experiments within a given framework. However, the outline of experiments is very largely set by the teachers. This restricts the development of pupils' independent skills of scientific enquiry.
63. The curriculum is covered through work in 'topics'. This results in some overlong periods during which there are no specific science lessons. Consequently, pupils do not build up

scientific skills systematically and progressively, particularly those related to scientific enquiry. Pupils have a lot of ground to make up at times when they do study science. A scrutiny of pupils' books from last year indicates that teaching concentrated on imparting facts and knowledge, with insufficient time for scientific investigation. This reduced opportunities for pupils to achieve the higher levels in the National Curriculum.

64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good lessons were observed in which teachers responded well to the recent focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The work in pupils' books however, shows that in the past many lessons were based on imparting factual knowledge. All pupils tended to complete the same work, through comprehension tasks, with little opportunity for individual response. A common feature of the good lessons is the way in which teachers manage the behaviour of pupils with specific difficulties, enabling them to achieve well. Teachers assess pupils' work in their own way but there is no common format for these assessments or for recording and tracking pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers are often unaware of the levels that pupils have achieved at the start of each year and so cannot take account of them in planning new work.
65. Management of the subject is not sufficiently effective. There is no consistent approach to recording pupils' progress so the school does not have a clear picture of standards year-on-year. There has been no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning to identify and share good practice or provide support.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have risen from below average to average. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise have increased.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Pupils achieve well. They are satisfactorily learning to transfer their skills in ICT to other subjects in the curriculum.
- Pupils do not have sufficient experience in some aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study, for example, in the use of sensing and monitoring equipment and in simulating events.

Commentary

66. Pupils achieve well in ICT. By Year 6, standards are average overall and good in some aspects of the curriculum. Evidence from the inspection came mostly from pupils' work in Years 3 to 6. However, the confidence and competence with which pupils in Year 3 use computers suggest that they have had a good grounding in the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory and standards were below average, is good. Better resources have been provided and teachers have been trained. The most significant factors contributing to the improvement are the efficient manner in which the subject is organised, its innovative leadership and the back-up support to maintain the equipment in working order.
67. Teachers make good use of the computers based in each classroom for teaching the operational skills and providing for every pupil to practise them. In addition, good use is made of a bank of laptop computers that are accessible to pupils in Years 3 to 6 on a weekly basis. This arrangement works well. Pupils treat the equipment with respect. They assist each other when problems arise and pass on information they have gained from the computer club. By Year 6, pupils are working independently with a good level of success. They are proud of their work, which shows good presentational skills and an instinct to personalise it through good use of drafting and editing. Pupils' confidence in using new technology was evident in the way they

searched programmes of different providers to find the desired information without calling on adult support. They talked through information on the school's website, identifying its origin and relating it to their own work in earlier years. In all, pupils are at ease with the use of ICT and view it as a resource to aid their learning. More extensive use is made of word-processing and research skills than other programmes of study, such as the use of sensing and monitoring devices and the controlling of events. Pupils are aware of this but they quickly pick up the skills once they are taught. In younger year groups, for example, pupils' keyboard skills develop well. They enjoy using programs to produce pictures and have the necessary skills to manipulate changes and add colour.

68. Very little direct teaching was seen during the inspection. However, evidence from other sources indicates that teachers' subject knowledge is being used well and that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. The school is forward looking in its provision. Pupils' work is kept on permanent record in individual folders in the computer system. Pupils access these at times to remind themselves of what they have done in previous years. Assessment files have recently been added, which are designed so that pupils can complete them themselves. Pupils know about these and realise that they will help them to see what is still to be achieved. The system is well-designed with a view to providing teachers with a record of progress matched to levels in the National Curriculum.
69. Provision for ICT has moved on since the previous inspection because of good strategic planning and pertinent use of all the available resources. The subject leader regularly evaluates progress of targets in the development plan and has a clear view of what is to be tackled next. This is focusing other teachers' attention on the most important issues and freeing them from replicating preparatory work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Teachers' planning frequently incorporates ICT, especially on occasions when classes have their regular weekly access to the laptop computers. There are clear signs that pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills is underpinning work in other subjects. For example, pupils' discussion with their teacher in Year 4 revealed awareness of the link between knowing how to copy, paste and cut text and concurrent work in English on the production of material for a newspaper. Good use is also made of the computers based in classrooms to back up work in literacy and numeracy, especially when pupils' understanding of fundamental number concepts and language skills needs to be consolidated. Older pupils recognise the versatility of ICT as a tool for communication. They appreciate the extent to which it can add a new dimension to their work, both in providing information and in making presentations for visual impact.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient work was seen in history and geography to form overall judgements about the current quality of provision and standards because the inspection took place early in the school year. Some classes have not yet covered history or geography topics. Only one lesson was observed in history and no lessons were observed in geography. In the good lesson seen, in Year 6, pupils learned to appreciate some of the foods enjoyed by Greeks, now and in the past. There were good links with other subject areas, such as when pupils used laptop computers to create menus for a Greek taverna using the Greek alphabet. A scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year shows that standards were average in both subjects in Years 2 and 6. Teachers arrange a good range of visits to local places of interest, such as Bramall Hall and Tandle Hills, to enhance learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough evidence was available at the time of the inspection to make overall judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology. Teaching and learning were good in the one lesson observed during the inspection. At the time of the previous inspection, standards and pupils' progress were unsatisfactory. The school took action by:

- adopting a well-thought out scheme of work
- ensuring that pupils followed through the full design process and evaluated their products
- introducing an assessment at the end of each unit of work
- developing skills, for example, how to improve a product
- improving resources
- displaying pupils' work to raise the profile of design and technology.

Discussions with the subject leader and photographic evidence show that all pupils complete at least three design and technology projects each year. An example of good personal and social development is when older pupils work with younger ones, for example, when helping to design a pizza.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. The school has gained an Artsmark award.
- Teaching is good, so pupils achieve well.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- The enthusiasm of the subject leader has motivated colleagues well through initiatives such as Arts Week.
- The study of the work of a wide range of artists makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

70. Standards of work are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Participation in Arts Week and the school's success in achieving the Artsmark have led to good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum has improved so that pupils now experience the full range of materials and techniques, including three-dimensional work. A good feature is the effective use of sketch books to enable pupils to practise and develop their skills systematically. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their own pictures to improve their work.
71. Teaching and pupils' learning are good overall. Teachers make good use of the work of famous artists to help pupils to appreciate and understand a wide range of techniques. This was observed in a Year 4 lesson on creating an impressionist painting. A close look at the work of Pucci helped pupils to appreciate the colours and shapes of autumn leaves, which they then successfully incorporated into their own pictures. A strong feature of the school's work is the way pupils are encouraged to demonstrate and develop their art skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 designed and made plates with Greek designs in history; in Year 1, pupils produced good wall hangings in black and white to illustrate light and also contrast. Good management skills help to modify some challenging behaviour, so enabling all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to participate fully in lessons. Skilled teaching assistants are well deployed to encourage pupils and keep them focused on the task.
72. Pupils have a good attitude to their work. They learn to express their feelings through art. For example, pupils listen to music, discuss how it makes them feel and translate this into the colours they use in their pictures.
73. The subject is well led and managed. The enthusiastic and committed approach of the subject leader inspires and motivates colleagues. Good teamwork and high expectations have helped to make the annual Arts Week a success and contribute significantly to the above average

standards. A good start has been made on assessing pupils' progress through comparing skills of figure drawing from year to year.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well. Standards of singing are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good. The school makes effective use of the talents of a visiting specialist.
- Boys and girls of all ages and abilities are successfully encouraged to take an active part in lessons. Pupils enjoy music.
- The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
- Learning is further enhanced for some pupils by well-organised, extracurricular activities.
- There are no formal procedures to assess the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

74. In whole-school sessions, pupils sing a wide range of songs enthusiastically and tunefully with sensitive expression and with particularly good control of dynamics and rhythm. Older pupils keep to their own part successfully when singing rounds in up to four parts. No lessons were observed in Year 6 to confirm an overall judgement on standards. However, limited evidence from recorded work and discussion with pupils indicate that they are at least average. Pupils perform their own group compositions based, for instance, on *the relay race*. They successfully evaluate and refine their work to improve it. In Year 2, standards are average. Pupils move in time to a calypso rhythm and sing accurately following the shape of the melody. Their listening skills, however, are not well developed.
75. Pupils' achievement and learning across the school are good because of good teaching. Teachers plan well to the recently adopted scheme of work, which promotes the development of skills and knowledge, step-by-step from year to year. The visiting music specialist enhances the quality of teaching considerably through her direct teaching of pupils and through her support for class teachers in raising their own expertise in the subject. Teachers foster good relationships and use praise effectively to raise self-esteem. As a result, pupils are confident and enjoy performing for others. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes and from the resource classes are fully included in class lessons and several show particular enjoyment in making and listening to music.
76. A wide range of music from different times and places, from Brazilian Samba to North American canoe songs and traditional orchestral pieces, broadens pupils' awareness and appreciation of a variety of cultures. Visits, during the annual Arts Week from a high school orchestra, from a primary school steel band and from a drummer/percussionist, provide very good first-hand experiences to promote learning and appreciation. Extra-curricular activities such as recorder clubs, choir and peripatetic lessons in violin help junior pupils develop their talents successfully. Three talented Year 6 pupils have been chosen to sing with the local education authority's music service choir.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has overseen the implementation of the new scheme of work efficiently but the curriculum is not adapted in lessons to meet the range of ability in each class. Information is not yet gathered to refine future work more closely to meet the pupils' needs.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to express imaginative ideas through dance and gymnastics lessons.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their lessons and work well together.
- Extra-curricular sports activities broaden the range of the pupils' physical education.
- Healthy activities at playtimes help pupils to improve their fitness.
- There is good inclusion of all pupils in all activities. In some lessons, however, pupils become noisy and excited.
- There is not always enough emphasis on the development of skills.

Commentary

78. Standards are average throughout the school. Pupils work hard and attitudes are good because they enjoy their activities. In gymnastics and dance lessons, pupils express their ideas imaginatively through a range of movements. They show satisfactory skills and move with good co-ordination and balance. When given suitable opportunities, pupils refine and improve their sequence of movements. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. Pupils work together willingly, and evaluate each other's work thoughtfully. This contributes well to their personal and social development. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and consistent with that of others of the same age. In a few lessons, there is not enough emphasis on the development of skills to help pupils to reach higher standards and progress more rapidly.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned well, and provide suitably challenging activities that keep all pupils involved and actively learning. Pupils understand the importance of preparing their bodies for exercise through warm-up activities. However, in some lessons, pupils become noisy because teachers do not set high enough expectations for behaviour, or place enough emphasis on working to improve skills. The range of extra-curricular sports activities makes a good contribution to pupils' physical education, and they are keen to participate. Younger pupils enjoy their weekly skipping club. Pupils improve their levels of fitness at playtimes by using a variety of small equipment, including skipping ropes, balls and the basketball hoops.
80. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. The action plans identify scope for wider development of sport and physical activities. This includes working towards the sport 'Active Mark', Top Sport activities and links with local high schools. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in all aspects of physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

81. Governors and staff place great importance on producing well-rounded individuals as a foundation for their future lives. The good links with the parish and community support this development well. Boys and girls, and pupils with disabilities, all work very comfortably with each other because the school provides many good opportunities for interaction.
82. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the development of PSHE and citizenship as specific subjects of the curriculum is at an early stage of planning. Some of the work is taught through science with other sections being covered in Circle Time – a form of class discussion

where pupils take it in turns to discuss feelings and views. This contributes effectively to the development of pupils' speaking skills and self-esteem. By the time pupils leave the school they are becoming confident individuals with sensible opinions and a developing sense of responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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