

INSPECTION REPORT

ST VINCENT de PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Knutsford

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111358

Headteacher: Mrs R M Moores

Lead inspector: Mrs R J Schaffer

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 February 2004

Inspection number: 257991

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary school
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 177

School address: Manor Park South
Knutsford
Cheshire
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Telephone number: 01565 633 637
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr A C Weir

Date of previous inspection: 13 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in a quiet residential area of the small town of Knutsford. It has close links with the Catholic parish church which is some distance away in the town centre. At the time of inspection there were 177 pupils on roll. Most pupils start their education at the play group which shares the site or a nearby nursery school. Children start in the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. Although in the current Reception class, children joined with average attainment, in most years overall, attainment on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average and the number with statements of special need is average. The majority of difficulties these pupils experience relate to language and speech while more severe difficulties are of a medical or physical difficulty. A small number of pupils, in three classes, come from Philippine or Indian heritage and speak Malayalam or Tagalog. They are all at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average and most come from homes with some economic advantage. The school population is generally stable and most pupils stay at the school for the whole of their primary education. In 2002 the school received the Investors in People Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|---|
| 23698 | J Schaffer | Lead inspector | Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language |
| 19343 | M Howel | Lay inspector | |
| 29263 | F Clarke | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage |
| 32640 | M Hilton | Team inspector | English Geography History |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St. Vincent de Paul is an effective school. Pupils' achievements are good overall and they attain a high standard of work by the end of Year 6. Teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to work hard and they respond by taking a keen interest in lessons and the other activities provided. The staff are an effective team, committed to improvement. The headteacher who is well supported by the governors has established an ethos that cares for each pupil and places the Roman Catholic faith at the heart of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching in English, mathematics and science results in pupils achieving high standards.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and courteousness reflects the school's very good moral teaching.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher promotes effective teams within the school community.
- The skilful teaching of the deputy headteacher is a strong influence on others.
- Art is promoted throughout the school by the excellent teaching of the subject leader.
- The curriculum is well planned for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and enriched by a wide range of experiences and activities, including sports outside of school time.
- In the Foundation Stage, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn through play.
- Although the school has good strategic planning overall, a few areas of school life are not planned for well enough.
- The school's cramped accommodation in Years 3 to 6 makes teachers' work more difficult and limits opportunities for pupils to carry out practical work and research.

When the school was inspected in 1998, standards were above average. The improvement of standards beyond this level has been achieved through good subject development by knowledgeable key members of staff and the careful review of each pupil's progress as they move up the school. Some of the weaknesses of the provision within the Foundation Stage have not shown sufficient improvement since the last inspection. Improvement, however, since the previous inspection has been **good** overall.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | Similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | A | A* | A | B |
| mathematics | A | A | A | C |
| science | A | B | A | C |

*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.*

Pupils' achievements overall are good. Children's achievements in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and they are on track to attain the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. In mathematics they should exceed them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' attainment is boosted and their achievements are very good. The standard of work in Year 2 is well above average in English, mathematics and science and the standard of their work in art and design is above expectations for their age. Pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 are good as they continue to build on the high standards attained at the end of Year 2. In 2003, the school's results when compared against similar schools were satisfactory. When compared against the national levels of achievement, the results are well above average. In the current Year 6, pupils are attaining an even higher standard than that of the previous year. Pupils' records show, achievement through Years 3 to 6 is good. Pupils with special educational needs and

those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, generally make good progress towards their individual targets. In art and design and in information and communication technology, pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory but do not continue the accelerated progress of Years 1 and 2 and this is mainly due to the difficulties presented by the cramped accommodation in Years 3 to 6.

The school fosters spiritual and moral development very well and social and cultural development is good but more could be done to develop pupils' social skills in the Foundation Stage and the awareness of other cultures throughout the school. Overall development in this aspect is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of **education is good**. Teaching is good overall. Effective curriculum planning ensures good learning in mixed age classes. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is very good and in Years 3 to 6 this quality of teaching is often present but overall, in these year groups, it is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is often very high in Years 1 to 6, and when this is the case, excellent lessons challenge pupils and stimulate their desire to learn. Clarity of explanations, both during teachers' expositions and when misconceptions occur are a very positive feature. In a few lessons, this clarity is lacking and so pupils' understanding of what they have to learn takes longer to achieve. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and the plans for their individual work are exceptionally good. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are taught very well by the visiting support staff, but in class, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop these pupils' knowledge of English. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory. When staff work with pupils on focused activities to teach particular skills, teaching is often good but there is a lack of challenge and structure to play areas; activities that develop creativity and social skills, and those that tap into pupils' curiosity are not planned for well enough. Throughout the school, good relationships and high expectations of pupils' behaviour underpin the good climate for learning. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in other subjects.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher, supported very well by the deputy headteacher, inspires pupils and staff to do their best and her leadership is **very good**. There is a clear vision for the school and plans to achieve its aims are generally good and backed up by proper self-evaluation. Although management is good, in a few areas of its work the school has not been thorough enough in identifying weaknesses. Governors are very effective in much of their work but need to check that there is rigour in all plans for development. Overall governance is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents hold the school in high regard. A few have one or two concerns, but these do not detract from their good appreciation of the general work of the school. Overall, parents' and pupils' views of the school are **good**. Pupils are happy to come to school; they particularly enjoy the many activities offered after school and they feel valued by their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve opportunities for children to learn through play in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that strategic planning adequately provides for all areas of school life.
- Continue to seek ways to improve the accommodation so as to provide for;
 - opportunities for research and practical activities in Years 3 to 6;
 - accessibility for pupils with disabilities;
 - larger area for outdoor play.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children's achievements are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievements are very good and in Years 3 to 6 they are good. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Overall standards achieved are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The school's results in national tests are consistently high.
- Pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are good and in Years 1 and 2 they are very good.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but could achieve more in communication language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Pupils' achievements in art and design are very good in Years 1 and 2.
- The school has successfully addressed the problem of boys' under achievement in English.

Commentary

- 1 At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All three subjects have continued to improve and standards are now well above average. There has been consistency in the level of good results for the last three years. In 2003 in the national tests for Year 6, almost all pupils attained the expected level in English and science, which meant that pupils with special educational needs achieved very well. The standard of pupils' work currently in these two year groups is well above average and pupils are on track to do even better in the national tests than in previous years. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets in their individual plans in English and mathematics. This is helped by the regular check that is made on the rate of their progress.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading | 16.8 (17.8) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| Writing | 16.1 (15.1) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| Mathematics | 18.8 (17.3) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievements are very good. They make very good progress in speaking and listening, understanding and using punctuation, correct spellings and in letter formation. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning key words and letter sounds and by the time they are in Year 2, they are keen and confident to write. In mathematics, pupils' use of numbers and their understanding of different methods of solving problems improve at a very good rate. In a science lesson on forces, pupils in Year 2 worked at a level above that expected for their age when they used their investigative skills to identify and record the difficult to spot difference between a push and a pull. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of pupils' paintings, drawings, and their understanding of elements of design are above expectations for their age.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 29.1 (29.5) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| Mathematics | 28.8 (28.6) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| Science | 30.0 (29.7) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 In Years 3 to 6, the very sharp rate of progress that occurs in Years 1 and 2 slackens a little, but nevertheless pupils' achievements are good. In English, pupils become keen independent readers and make good gains in their knowledge of literature and language structure. Pupils attain a high standard in speaking and listening by Year 6. Even though the school's cramped accommodation in Years 3 to 6 prevents pupils from using the library and computers independently, pupils' understanding of non-fiction texts advances well. In a science lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils could scan a complex text about the arctic tundra to look for clues to inform their study of wildlife habitats. In mathematics, pupils' rapid recall of number facts improves well year-on-year and their skills in solving problems and reasoning develop well. A few higher attaining pupils reach the expected level or beyond in Year 5 in mathematics. In order to maintain good progress for these pupils, the school has acquired extra resources to challenge them with problem solving activities at a higher level. Interesting lessons and a range of motivational strategies keep boys as keen to read and write as girls.
- 4 Children in the Reception Class make satisfactory progress towards the goals set for them in all the six areas of learning. However, they do not make as much progress as they could because some activities lack challenge. They have begun to write simple words when working with an adult or on a set task but when they play, they resort to making very poorly formed marks on paper because there is no expectation that they should do better at these times. They are very interested in the world around them but there are not enough opportunities for them to learn through their own curiosity and enjoyment of exploration and investigation.
- 5 The school admitted pupils who speak English as an additional language for the first time in September. Consequently, records of their progress span a short period of time. Generally they make good progress in learning to speak English, especially when they work with visiting staff from the local education authority. In lessons, their progress is satisfactory but, on occasions, opportunities are missed to help them practise vocabulary they have just acquired.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**, and their attendance is good. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with special strengths in spiritual and moral development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are treated with respect and valued by their teachers and in consequence, they are very well behaved and courteous to each other and to other adults.
- Adults' support of the Catholic faith is communicated very well to pupils; it develops spirituality and very good moral teaching.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are happy to come to school.

- Pupils carry out duties responsibly and respond well to opportunities to show initiative, although in the Reception class planning does not focus enough on children’s personal, social and emotional development.
- The local town is used very well to develop pupils’ awareness of their cultural heritage but opportunities to promote awareness of cultures from other communities are limited.

Commentary

- 6 Assembly time and time for prayers or reflection in class are very important times in the life of the school. The example of adults, and strategies such as the use of quiet music help pupils develop their understanding of the spiritual dimension of life during these special times. Other areas of the curriculum are used well to promote wonder and praise for the world around. The school works closely with the parish. The priest is a well-known visitor and parents are involved in special assemblies so that there is a strong feeling of a school community.
- 7 Teachers treat pupils with respect and they respond by treating others in a similar way. During lessons, teachers praise pupils’ efforts and take care to ensure that all are included in discussions. Pupils who have difficulties with learning or with emotional problems are dealt with very sensitively and, as a result, their self-esteem improves. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance and punctuality are good. When working with a partner or collaborating within a group, pupils’ social skills develop well. After-school clubs, musical and sporting activities contribute to pupils’ pride in their school and their social development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.8 | School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

- 8 Pupils’ behaviour is very good as was found at the last inspection. They listen to their teachers attentively and respond well to requests. Children in the Reception class are very well behaved and respond to their teachers’ high expectations of them. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are very courteous to each other and to adults. At playtime there are occasions when older pupils, especially boys, play boisterously. On inspection, this was found to be high spirits and not intended to upset others. The playground area is very small and limits opportunities for such things as ball games. In the past twelve months there have been four exclusions for one pupil who had particular difficulties understanding the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Exclusions

Exclusions in the last school year

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 131 | 4 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 3 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. Note not all parents provide information to the school about their child's ethnicity so the numbers are not the same as the total on roll.

- 9 Pupils are given a good range of responsibilities, and these are not confined to the oldest pupils. For instance, the two playground 'buddies' watching out for others at the 'friendship' stop were in Years 1 and 2. Year 6 pupils understand the importance of taking on an extra responsibility because they have to apply in writing for jobs they wish to take on. The School Council which was started recently has begun to develop pupils' organisational and social skills. In the Reception class, planning does not focus enough on children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children do not respond as well as they should when asked to participate in activities such as tidying away resources.
- 10 The local town's many interesting historical connections, are exploited effectively by teachers to give pupils a good understanding of their cultural heritage. Music, art and design, literature and drama contribute well to pupils' appreciation of culture. However, although there are some opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the cultures of other communities and countries, this is not promoted as well as it could be or linked to pupils' social development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** because there is generally careful planning to provide for all levels of attainment, including in those classes in which there are more than one year group.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory; it is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Overall the quality of teaching is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accurate assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do enable teachers to plan work that is well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment.
- Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour establish a good climate for learning in all classes.
- Lessons are consistently very well planned and organised, especially in Years 2 and 6, drawing upon teachers' high level of subject knowledge.
- Teachers make effective use of different styles and methods that enhance the level of pupils' interest so that their learning increases.

- In the Foundation stage, children are not provided with enough planned opportunities to learn through play or to initiate activities themselves.
- Teachers are not always knowledgeable about the best methods and strategies to support pupils learning English as an additional language.

Commentary

- 11 Teachers' lesson plans show that careful thought has gone into how well pupils have done in previous lessons. This enables them to provide work that builds on previous knowledge. The school has effectively developed teachers' skills at providing for different levels of attainment within one class. In their explanations and questions, teachers probe pupils' understanding and modify the level of challenge according to pupils' capabilities. In every lesson, work at different levels of difficulty is provided so that higher attaining pupils and those who learn more slowly than others are given work to match their understanding. When pupils have particular difficulties or the rate of their learning is much slower than expected, skilful assessments of the reasons for this are carried out by a specialist teacher. These provide good guidance for the effective support of learning assistants when pupils work for short periods of time out of class.
- 12 Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond to this very well. In all classes, very good relationships are established and pupils clearly respect their teachers. Good strategies for pupils to work either with a partner or collaboratively in a group, provide interest and variation to the tempo of the lesson. Pupils share ideas with each other and so learn more than if working individually. These strategies are helpful when pupils work with others of different levels of attainment, for instance in science and are helpful to those learning English as an additional language. Throughout the school, pupils are used to this way of working so that they learn from each others' ideas and prompt each other spontaneously.
- 13 Co-ordinators are particularly knowledgeable in their subjects and their lessons provide a good model for others. Well-judged resources and a variety of methods and styles enliven their lessons so that pupils' interest is captured and they are enthusiastic about their work. The geography co-ordinator, for example, invited a Knutsford town planner into school when the pupils were studying the effect of traffic on the life of townspeople. Their work in English, to draw up pertinent questions for this visitor, had much greater point to it than if the exercise had not been linked to a real-life situation. In an art lesson in Year 1, the teacher's very good subject knowledge allowed her to carefully select questions so as to draw from the pupils a level of observation about the work of a well known artist that would have been a credit to pupils twice their age.
- 14 Most teachers have very good subject knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in Years 2 and 6, this is allied to clarity of explanations and high expectations of the rate of pupils' learning so that there is a high level of consistency in the quality of lessons provided. Much of the excellent and very good teaching shown in the table below was seen in these year groups. Less successful, and in one case, unsatisfactory teaching occurred when explanations were not clear and the expectation of what pupils would learn was not as high. Computers are used well by most teachers to develop pupils' learning but in one lesson, teaching was unsuccessful because the teacher's knowledge of ICT was insufficient to explain its use accurately. The quality of teaching is similar to the previous inspection although the amount of excellent and very good lessons has increased.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 3 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

- 15 In the Foundation Stage, staff have developed good relationships and know the children well. They assess children's knowledge and understanding accurately and in the activities that are teacher led, generally provide tasks that are well matched to their learning needs. The teaching of mathematics is good and there is sound teaching of the basic skills in reading and writing. However, there is insufficient planning for children to learn through their own selected activities and through play. By focusing on what is to be taught rather than what the children might learn, tasks are often very directed and do not allow children to investigate or to explore their own ideas and creativity. Some areas within the classroom, for instance, those with construction and those with art and craft materials are not sufficiently designed to raise children's curiosity about the world around them.
- 16 The visiting teacher with special expertise in teaching English as an additional language provides very good support for the few pupils at an early stage of learning English. Using practical activities and a range of good resources, she encourages them effectively to use the words they know and learn new ones quickly. In lessons, these pupils are included in all activities, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop their English because they are unaware of the best strategies and methods to use.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good** and there is a **very good** range of experiences offered out of school time. Although the school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, in Years 3 to 6, the cramped aspect of the accommodation places limitations on teachers' planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers pupils a rich and varied curriculum which is enhanced through extra-curricular activities and through a wide range of visits and visitors.
- There is a very good regular review of the curriculum to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes are challenged appropriately.
- The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are particularly well constructed and provide good guidance for staff to help these pupils achieve their targets quickly.
- Good links between subjects help to make learning relevant to pupils' interests.
- Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good.
- In Years 3 to 6, because of the lack of space, teachers are faced with difficulties when planning practical work and opportunities for pupils to carry out research.

Commentary

- 17 The curriculum is well planned and it is regularly reviewed in order to make sure that in mixed age classes work is not duplicated or omitted. All pupils have access to the National Curriculum and there is good continuity in the development of their learning. There is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education that develops pupils' understanding appropriately of sex and relationships and the misuse of drugs. Planning makes use of good use of links between subjects so that learning is relevant and engenders interest. For example, pupils in a Year 4 and 5 class practised their tables, and spotted number patterns in their calculations in order to carry out some exciting designs using a control program on computers. In English, the co-ordinator has provided good training for

staff in ways to develop skills such as note taking through history topics and evaluative writing in design and technology. Methods recommended in the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been adapted well and teachers are skilful at planning for pupils with different levels of attainment. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' interest in other languages is developed well in short weekly sessions of French. In the Reception class, work is planned using the national guidance for this age range but there is not a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities and there is insufficient planning for personal, social and emotional development.

- 18 The school has a very good range of extra-curricular provision. As well as a variety of sporting activities, the pupils have the opportunity to attend recorder, drama and computer clubs. There is also an environmental club that involves the pupils in studying local issues. Pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning is also stimulated through a range of visits and visiting speakers linked directly to the curriculum.
- 19 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. A part-time teacher with specialist knowledge makes detailed assessments of pupils' individual needs. These assessments provide very good information for pupils' individual plans that guide the effective support given by learning support staff. Although the number of classroom assistants is less than in most schools, their time is carefully targeted. There are good checks to ensure that when progress is made new targets are set. There is a small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. These pupils joined the school at the start of this academic year. Good assessments are made of their understanding and use of English which are linked to the National Curriculum. However, the targets for them to work towards are very wide and so not useful in assessing short term progress. Staff have not had training in best methods of supporting pupils learning a new language and so opportunities to develop pupils' use of spoken English are missed. The school does not have a system for identifying those pupils with special gifts and talents, although teachers' are aware of those with high achievement through the good assessment procedures.
- 20 The school is trying to overcome some of the limitations in its accommodation. A new ICT suite has been built but this has meant that the library and research area was lost. The ICT suite is not adjacent to classes and so pupils cannot use it independently during class work. The restriction of space in the Year 3 to 6 classes causes difficulties when the whole class is undertaking practical work, particularly in art and design and design technology. To overcome these problems the school has used the facilities of other schools in the local area to have whole days dedicated to art and design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for the pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. There is overall good support and guidance for pupils' personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction arrangements for pupils entering the school.
- Pupils trust their teachers and know they can turn to them for help.
- The arrangements for the pupils' welfare are well established.

Commentary

- 21 The school has good induction arrangements to help children enjoy their first experience of school. Children and parents visit the school on a number of occasions, and the school provides a helpful booklet to enable parents to play their part in this important stage of their children's life. There are equally as effective procedures for pupils who join the school at a later stage. New pupils are helped to settle and find their way around the school with the help

of a 'special' friend. This was described as having given one pupil 'the best welcome' he could have wanted. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

- 22 All pupils are valued as individuals, and their teachers have good knowledge of both them and their families. Procedures to inform aspects of child protection are informed by proper training and a sound policy is in place for child protection.
- 23 Pupils' personal development is monitored informally, and the small size of the school means this works well. Any problems the pupils may be experiencing at home are dealt with sensitively by their teachers. Parents say their children are happy at school and that the teachers help them to become mature. A few parents expressed concerns with regard to bullying. This was checked by asking pupils their opinions and no incidents were recalled. When pupils are up-set staff listen sensitively to them. There were no incidents where action was needed on inspection, but it is evident that staff take bullying seriously. Pupils from the top two classes are able to participate in two residential visits, one as a retreat and the other at an activity centre. Such opportunities make a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils.
- 24 The school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils. All the necessary procedures to ensure the safety of pupils are in place, and are known to all the staff. Good provision is made for the particular medical needs of certain pupils, both whilst in school and on visits and trips. The local education authority has very recently completed a health and safety check of the school. It has made a number of recommendations for improvement, but the school has not yet had time to act upon them.
- 25 Pupils' views are sought through the School Council, assemblies and circle time. When fully operational, the Council will provide good opportunities for all pupils to take an active part in decision making within the school. The pupils are confident and articulate, and would appreciate and benefit from more opportunities to voice their opinions in a structured manner.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and its links with the community and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are happy with the education their children receive.
- Many parents come into school to help with work in class.
- The school has very good links with the church.
- The school has a very good relationship with local townspeople and businesses and uses these well to benefit pupils' learning and personal development.
- There are good links with other local schools.
- Opportunities are missed to involve parents in their child's learning in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

- 26 There was strong support for the school from the parents who responded to the questionnaire, and from the majority of those who attended the pre-inspection meeting. They say their children are expected to work hard, and are helped to mature. They also appreciate the good teaching in the school, and considered the behaviour of the pupils to be good. There were a few parents who expressed concerns in letters and at the meeting in relation to the accommodation, the teaching and learning in mixed age classes. Inspectors agreed that the accommodation is too cramped but found there was no need for concern with regard to planning or teaching in mixed age classes.

- 27 The number of parents that come into school to help in class is considerable and their help is much appreciated by the school. A good relationship with parents is started when children begin in the Reception class. However, this is not developed as fully as it could be with opportunities missed, for instance, by inviting parents to accompany their child into class and thereby stimulate interest for both parent and child in the planned learning for that day. Parents are given good information about how well their child is progressing and other information is helpful. Staff and the headteacher are always available for parents at the end of the school day. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in their assessment and support. There is a strong and very active Parent Teacher Association that organises a variety of valuable fund raising events. The school and pupils benefit from the monies provided by the association and from the involvement of the parents.
- 28 The school's relationship with the church and parish is embedded into the life of the school. There are regular masses held in school and a good number of parents and grandparents join their children on these occasions. There are joint activities within the parish, and the school is very much part of the local community. The school has developed good business links, and the pupils benefit from the very good use made of local places of interest and museums. Over a substantial period of time, staff have built up the school's relationship with a range of local organizations, such as the environmental 'Watch' group and Macclesfield Football Club.
- 29 The school works closely with the pre-school nursery setting that shares the school site. There are also good links with other nursery providers, and when possible, pupils are visited in these settings. The school is part of an active cluster group of primary schools and benefits from many of the joint initiatives. There are strong links with the main secondary school to which the majority of the pupils transfer. These links include the opportunity for pupils to experience lessons in their new school, and to work on a linked project. Parents who have children who have made the transfer said the good links had made the transition much easier for their children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led. Management of the school is **good**. Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides the school with very good leadership.
- The deputy headteacher is a very effective role model to other staff.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and work very effectively to develop and improve their subject.
- The expertise and contribution of the governors are good.
- Although the school's strategic planning is generally good, there has been a lack of rigour in planning for the Foundation Stage and the development of pupils' awareness of the diversity of world cultures.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is not informed by good knowledge of this stage of education.

Commentary

- 30 The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and provides very good leadership. She motivates the staff and delegates well while retaining a personal interest and detailed grasp of school issues. The headteacher ensures that all those who work in the school feel valued and are able to make a contribution to school development. She is very well supported by a hardworking and enthusiastic staff, who share her commitment to high achievement, including the deputy headteacher whose effective range of management and classroom skills

is an asset to the school. At the previous inspection, the quality of leadership and management was found to be very high in many aspects but there were areas in need of development. These have been dealt with and have resulted in improved provision for the pupils. The high standard has been maintained.

- 31 Subject leaders manage their subjects very well. They monitor the school's performance data, analysing strengths and weaknesses very efficiently, taking effective action to maintain the very good standards achieved by the school. The special needs co-ordinator works well with the visiting specialist teacher and support staff and parents to oversee the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Innovative methods are being trialled to support the several pupils who have difficulties because of dyslexia. However, the school has not yet taken up the good opportunity of extra training for all staff which would benefit these pupils.
- 32 The headteacher and senior staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. These observations are carefully recorded and form the basis of professional development meetings which are part of the school's performance management strategy. The quality of the provision for staff development makes a positive contribution to school improvement and staff morale.
- 33 The governors' active interest and involvement in the school is very good. They provide strong and knowledgeable support. They have a full committee structure and meet regularly. They receive very good quality information about what is going on in the school through detailed reports from the headteacher and their own visits to the school. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
- 34 The day-to-day management of the school is effective. The administrative officer is hardworking and efficient. Everyday financial control is good, and information and communication technology are used well for administrative purposes. Financial information given to governors is very detailed, enabling them to fulfill their monitoring role and have an oversight of the school's financial position. The governors are very aware of making best use of the school's resources and of comparing its provision with that of other schools to check that it is providing value for money.
- 35 The strategic management plan drawn up in consultation with staff and governors is a very useful document which lists priorities and identifies areas for future development. However, a few areas of the plan, such as those relating to the Foundation Stage and to multicultural provision, lack the clear definition and focus needed to ensure that staff are fully aware of what exactly requires to be done to bring about improvements.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 366,073 |
| Total expenditure | 391,795 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,304 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 31,797 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 12,092 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

When children start in the Reception Class, their attainment is generally above average. In the current year, however, attainment is closer to average than is usual for this school. The quality of provision is satisfactory. There is a wide range of activities to promote the six areas of learning and experiences planned in literacy and numeracy accurately reflect the children's stage of development. There is, however, a predominance of adult-directed activities over child-selected ones, which limits independence and there is insufficient emphasis on children learning through structured play and through first hand experiences. This was identified at the previous inspection and in this respect there has been insufficient improvement. Provision for physical development has improved as there was no designated outdoor area. There is now a very pleasant, easily accessible area, which is used well to enhance provision in all the learning areas. In other aspects, provision has remained the same and overall improvement is satisfactory. Arrangements for admission are good and successfully promote a positive relationship with parents. However, this initial relationship is not developed as fully as it could be as parents do not have the opportunity to accompany their child into the Reception class in the mornings and so the opportunity to involve them closely in the day's learning is missed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective relationships mean that children settle well and enjoy coming to school.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they respond very well.
- Personal and emotional development are planned for well in subjects such as religious education but there is insufficient planning through daily routines and independent activities.
- Opportunities for children to develop independence and perseverance are sometimes missed.

Commentary

36 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and children are on course to attain the goals in this area by the time they reach Year 1. Children have very good relationships with the staff. They enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards learning demonstrated by their good behaviour and their keen participation in most of the activities provided. However, there is not always sufficient focus placed on children initiating their own activities to extend their learning. Classroom routines are well-known to children but turn-taking and children's sense of responsibility could be developed more fully, for instance, by providing a sign-up sheet to write their names when they have played a computer game. Occasionally, activities are not well organised or lack challenge which results in children not wanting to persevere with the task and being unsure of what to do next. At the end of sessions, children are not always fully involved in tidying up and replacing items correctly. Children's knowledge about other aspects of school life is developed well when they attend assemblies, have lunch and share playtimes with older pupils.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy listening to stories and these sessions are used well to promote reading skills.
- Staff have high expectations of children's learning and use a wide range of vocabulary in discussions.
- There are not enough spontaneous reading and writing opportunities.

Commentary

- 37 Teaching is satisfactory and most children will attain the goals in this area by the end of the reception year. Staff encourage the children to talk and to extend their ideas through conversation and questions. Many of the children are quite articulate with a good range of vocabulary. Children enjoy stories and when sharing a "Big Book" with the teacher they listened attentively, joining in with the repetitive text, making relevant comments and confidently predicting what might happen next. There are plenty of attractive story and information books to engage children's interest and books are taken home regularly to share with parents, all of which has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read. However, opportunities are missed to emphasise the significance of reading in everyday situations. For instance, there are some examples of writing displayed around the classroom but these are not always phrased in such a way as to promote relevant reading opportunities.
- 38 The children make good progress in formal writing sessions such as recording their stories in religious education, but they are not generally encouraged to practise writing independently and for different purposes at other times. An area for writing is designated in the classroom but lacks sufficient resources to support children's successful use of letter sounds and simple words that they know. The attractive home play area, set up as a station café provides some good opportunities for children to develop language. This was seen when a child at an early stage of English acquisition chatted on the 'phone' making good progress in using her newly acquired words of English. However, when children were observed playing in this area, they took a long time to decide what to do because there was too little structure to help them find a role they understood.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children engage in a wide variety of enjoyable activities to promote mathematical skills.
- Work is well matched to attainment levels.

Commentary

- 39 Teaching is good and most children are on course to attain the goals by the end of the Reception Year with a few reaching this standard earlier. Various strategies are used to engage children's attention and to make number activities fun. For example, children enjoyed searching for numbered pebbles in the outdoor area, tapping out the numbers and finally setting out the pebbles in the correct order. Spotting the counting mistakes made by Mickey Monkey enables them to make good progress in their own counting skills. Activities are well geared to individual children's attainment levels. Deciding how to use the big bricks to build a 'field' for the roamer provided a good challenge for the children and involved estimating shape and size. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to relate mathematics to children's

everyday experiences such as counting the number of children present or absent or referring to the numbers in groups. The display of abstract shapes is useful but is not complemented by reference to actual shapes found in the classroom and in the wider environment.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing confidence in using computers.
- Activities are planned to reflect topics that interest children.
- There are too few planned opportunities for children to select tools and appropriate resources independently because of the way in which the classroom is organised, and this limits their curiosity.

Commentary

40 The theme of trains and transport is being used effectively to provide related experiences that interest the children and develop their knowledge and understanding of journeys and how things move. Teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory. Children were learning to move a programmable toy forward and make a right-angled turn. This activity was well planned, explanations were clear and children were interested in what they were doing. However, an activity in which children were required to identify objects which move and objects which do not move was less successful. To record their findings, children were required to cut out and paste pictures in two categories. They became confused because their attention was drawn to the process of cutting and sticking and because the pictures were not well chosen. The task did little to increase children's learning because there was not enough challenge in the variety of toys to investigate. Construction materials and materials for model and picture making are available, but planning does not provide sufficiently for children to access resources independently or to investigate and adapt materials through their own explorative activities. Children are developing basic computer skills well, using programs to support their learning in mathematics.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

41 No lessons were observed so no judgement can be made about overall provision in this area. Provision has improved since the last inspection with the addition of a designated outside area. Children have regular access to the school hall for movement lessons. Daily activities ensure that children make good progress in developing fine motor skills. The children demonstrate confident use of a range of equipment including scissors, pencils and paste spreaders. Manipulative skills are satisfactory. Children roll, squeeze, push and knead malleable materials to make shapes and objects.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic techniques are well taught.
- Some of the work produced requires little imagination.

Commentary

- 42 Standards are broadly as expected in this area of learning and teaching observed was satisfactory. Although no music activities were observed during the inspection, planning shows that children have opportunities to listen to music and use percussion instruments. The role-play area is successfully promoted to develop children's imaginative use of language. Adults encourage the use of the role-play area well by taking part in some of the children's play. Children were observed taking the parts of customers and servers in the railway café which gave rise to some imaginative conversations. Children enjoyed learning how to make collage pictures using tissue paper, newspaper and fabric. However, the work was very much directed by adults. The curriculum is more geared to the children producing particular items and to learning different techniques than to fostering the children's creativity and self-expression. There is no designated area with openly accessible resources to encourage the children to explore and experiment or to repeat previous activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils' achievements are good.
- There is a very good variety and quality of work produced. Pupils take pride in their handwriting and presentation.
- Boys are keen writers and their achievements are similar to that of girls.
- Inspirational and highly effective teaching in the Year 6 class.
- Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well in lessons.
- Teachers are exploring ways to establish good links between English and other subjects.
- Marking is not used well enough to support target setting.
- Because of the limitations of the accommodation, pupils are not given enough opportunities to utilise their literacy skills independently in research work.

Commentary

- 43 Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievements are good. In 2003, the school's results were well above the national average and good in comparison to similar schools. Boys' writing is a particular strength. Teachers are fully aware of gender issues and the culture of the school encourages boys to be good writers. Pupils with special educational needs are generally supported very well by the visiting teacher, the special needs co-ordinator and the learning support staff. Nearly all make good progress towards their targets, when this is not the case, the school asks for help from outside agencies to try to identify very particular needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress when they are given individual support by visiting specialist staff. In lessons, they listen well and make satisfactory progress but some opportunities are missed to help them practice the new words they have learnt. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- 44 In all year groups, pupils demonstrate very good speaking and listening skills. In a Year 5 class, for example, pupils select appropriate questions to put to a visitor from the council planning department. The drama club and opportunities to speak publicly help pupils improve their confidence and the complexity of their spoken language. In a Year 6 lesson on poetry, pupils provided very detailed responses to questions of inference and deduction. Pupils in Year 2 make very good progress in using their knowledge about letter strings to spell difficult words. They use a fluent joined up handwriting style.

- 45 Across the school teaching is good, with very good and excellent teaching in Years 2 and 6. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher used a variety of teaching methods to ensure that effective learning took place. Very detailed questioning, with a brisk pace using varied activities, helped the children make very good progress. In a Year 2 class the children were given the opportunity to fully elaborate on detailed answers to a text. The teacher constantly challenged the children throughout the lesson and as a result effective learning took place. High expectations across the school result in pupils presenting their work very well. The marking of work was up-to-date, positive and indicated the next stage of learning. However, there was little evidence of follow up to the marking to ensure that the pupil had acted upon it, with little attention paid to the target that the pupil had been given to achieve.
- 46 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is reflective and is fully aware of the strengths and areas to develop in the subject. A detailed programme of monitoring is followed and good measures taken to support and develop staff. These are then evaluated to ensure that progress has been made.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 47 Cross curricular links between literacy and other subjects are good. In year 1, work on puppets in design technology was used to develop writing skills with good evaluations using joined up handwriting and very good grammar, with the use of full stops, capital letters and connectives. In Year 4 and 5 class there were very good explanations of changing pitch in music. All year groups had applied writing skills, in particular, recounts, note taking, reports and fictional writing, to topics in history and geography. However, there is a limited amount of research work undertaken. Most of this is teacher directed. The school does not have room to provide a library area or open access to computers for individual research and, as a result, this places limitations on pupils' interest and enjoyment in research and reading in school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high throughout the school.
- Teaching is very effective and reflects high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- The quality and usefulness of marking is variable.

Commentary

- 48 The curriculum is broad and covers all the aspects of the subject in sufficient depth to enable pupils to achieve well in relation to their capability across all areas of mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment are on course to be well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 which is similar to the standards attained in the most recent statutory tests in 2003. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained. Pupils' achievements are very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Those pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good opportunities to use mathematics in practical ways.
- 49 Pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils' mental calculation strategies and mathematical vocabulary are being well developed throughout the school. Year 1 pupils confidently refer to 'digits', 'ordering' and 'value'. Year 6 pupils mentally multiply and divide decimal numbers by 10 and multiples of 10 and competently describe the

strategies involved. Lessons begin with challenging, quick-fire sessions and pupils are regularly encouraged to use their numeracy skills in different situations and apply their knowledge to solve problems. Teachers ensure that pupils are actively engaged in the activities through effective use of resources such as individual whiteboards, through pertinent questioning and through requiring pupils to explain their strategies.

- 50 The last report indicated that the teaching of younger pupils was satisfactory. The quality of teaching throughout the school is now predominantly good with an example of excellent teaching in the Year 4 and 5 class. Teaching is generally characterised by good subject knowledge, effective planning, demonstration and questioning. In most lessons teachers have high expectations and the lesson moves on at a good pace. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well because teachers have assessed where they need extra help in mathematics and sometimes this is provided for by extra support out of lessons or on computers. Where teaching was judged to be excellent it was exemplified by high challenge, very effective organisation and relevant subject matter which extended the pupils' awareness and particularly engaged their interest. These qualities ensured that pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class made many practical and useful contributions and participated fully in the learning process.
- 51 The overall assessments of pupils' progress are good and used well to inform the next stages of pupils' learning. However, the marking of work varies in quality and usefulness. At its best it clearly informs pupils about how well they have done but fails to indicate specific targets for improvement.
- 52 Management of mathematics is good. The subject leader has a clear overview of standards. She regularly monitors identified aspects of the subject such as the delivery of the mental and oral start to lessons and works alongside colleagues. Test results are carefully analysed to identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning and subsequent planning takes account of this. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to maintain good links with mathematics and ICT and is at present involved with the Nottingham University project trialling the use of ICT in mathematics lessons.

Example of outstanding teaching

In one of the lessons observed teaching was excellent because pupils in Year 4 and 5 were led to appreciate the awe and wonder of numbers and a real understanding of how numbers work. For homework they had been asked to add together the two digits of the products of multiplication tables to nine. They had noticed the pattern sequence and come to school, excited by their observations. They used their findings to write 'procedures' for a computer programme using a Logo software. They used previously learnt knowledge about angles to produce a variety of shapes as a result of the number sequences. As different patterns emerged on the screens in the computer suite the pupils excitedly compared their different results and discussed the reasons for these differences. An added focus to their interest was the way in which the teacher explained how the process was an effective tool in the information and communication technology industry.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 53 Pupils use their mathematical skills well to support learning in other subjects, for instance to construct graphs and tables, to illustrate findings in science investigations and to apply measuring skills in design and technology. Teachers use mathematical vocabulary well and support pupils in using mathematical vocabulary correctly in their speech and writing.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and attain high standards.
- Pupils' enjoy science and have a good approach to their learning.
- Pupils' use and knowledge of technical vocabulary is exceptionally good.
- Teaching in Years 2 and 6 is very good and this boosts pupils' achievement.
- There is very good leadership of the subject.
- There is too little variety in the investigative work carried out in Years 3 to 5.
- The cramped accommodation in Years 3 to 6 impinges on teachers' ability to plan for:
 - hands-on investigative work;
 - independent research;
 - provision of displays that pupils can touch and handle.

Commentary

- 54 Standards in science at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are well above average. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make very good progress and their achievements are very good. In the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2003, the school's results were well above the national average, but average when compared to schools that had similar results at the end of Year 2. This indicates that pupils' achievements were satisfactory but no better. However, there has been continued improvement in the teaching of science and the achievements of pupils currently in Year 6 are good. Standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection and improvement has been very good.
- 55 By the time pupils are in Year 6, they have a very extensive scientific vocabulary to draw upon to explain their ideas. For example, when starting a topic on habitats, pupils' previous learning on life processes involving animals' feeding relationships enabled them to discuss the eco-system in the arctic circle using expressions such as 'top consumer', 'producer' and 'food-chain' with accuracy. All pupils in Year 6, including those with special educational needs are working at the expected level or beyond. Their attainment is well above average. In Year 2, pupils worked very well on a task that required them to identify the different forces they were applying to a malleable material. Pupils of lower attainment were as well-prepared for the activity as other pupils. Great was their enjoyment at correctly identifying that they used both a 'push' and a 'pull' when they rolled the material into a sausage shape. Pupils' learning during this lesson was very good. It laid a firm foundation for them understanding the forces involved in different mechanisms and having the vocabulary to explain them.
- 56 Only three science lessons were seen, two very good and one satisfactory, but evidence points to good teaching overall. Because teachers relate pupils' learning to their own experiences and to the uses of science in the wider world, pupils' interest is high and they listen very attentively to their teachers. They enjoy science and in the lessons observed, all pupils, including those with special educational needs tackle their work with confidence. In Years 2 and 6, investigative tasks are very well planned. Pupils have very good opportunities to see for themselves how changes or other phenomena occur in their investigations, and to record this accurately. In Years 3 to 5 pupils' books show that some good investigations are provided but there is not a very extensive range of work and sometimes tasks have relied too heavily on pupils recounting what was done as a class.
- 57 The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is an excellent role model and provides very good guidance to other staff. The subject is monitored carefully and areas for development identified. There are limited opportunities for pupils to carry out research independently and there is little space to display science in the communal areas of the

school. The school is aware that more resources are needed to help staff plan easily assembled investigative work, so as to minimize the disruption caused by lack of space.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All aspects of the ICT curriculum are taught and standards are improving.
- Resource provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Teaching quality is variable.

Commentary

- 58 Although standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection and are in line with expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6 there has been some improvement in the quality of work produced by the pupils. There have been many developments in ICT which are reflected in a more demanding curriculum. Inspection evidence shows that all skills are being taught and pupils have good learning experiences in a variety of techniques. Overall pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Effective use is made of ICT to develop skills for pupils with special educational needs and in lessons they are generally supported well and make similar progress to others.
- 59 Since the last inspection the school has used specific grants, subsidised by the school's budget to install a computer suite and purchase an improved range of hardware and software. Although resources have improved over the last two years and the school is now linked to the internet they still remain only just satisfactory as accommodation in the computer suite is cramped and the school lacks resources such as laptops and interactive whiteboards which would improve provision and help to improve standards further.
- 60 Teachers are developing their competence and confidence and use the suite regularly to enable pupils to develop an adequate range of ICT skills. The quality of teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Teachers manage pupils well and encourage them to be confident in using the equipment. They emphasise the correct use of vocabulary and terminology. In most lessons explanations and demonstrations are clear and pupils are helped gradually to develop their skills. Year 6 pupils made very good progress in designing and creating attractive multi-media pages taking into account suitable graphics, fonts and wrap around text in response to the teachers' imaginative and careful guidance. In the lesson that was unsatisfactory, pupils became confused because the task they were given proved to be too difficult for many of them. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are included in all lessons and helped to make the same progress as others.
- 61 The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has placed the school in a strong position to improve standards further. She regularly observes lessons and supports colleagues. She arranges appropriate staff development, for instance, in the control and modelling aspect of the subject and encourages the use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum.
- Information and communication technology across the curriculum**
- 62 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development in the opportunities it provides for the development of collaborative skills and responsible attitudes towards handling equipment. Its use is planned for in all curriculum areas. It is used particularly well in mathematics, for example, in Year 5 pupils produced computer generated shapes dependant on mathematical knowledge of angles and number patterns. Other examples noted were its use to

enhance a science display and cards made for a religious education project using "The Jolly Postman" computer programme.

HUMANITIES

- 63 No lessons were seen on inspection in history and only one lesson in geography. Evidence was sought from analysis of pupils' work and teachers' plans, and discussions with pupils and with the subject leader.

HISTORY

- 64 Pupils' work is of a good standard. They acquire a good range of historical skills. For example, they are given good opportunities to understand different periods of time and how they relate to one another through the use of 'time lines'. They interpret historical evidence well and develop knowledge and understanding of people and events in the past. Pupils in Year 5, spoke with enthusiasm about the research they carried out in their work on Anglo Saxons. In all Year groups, teachers use history well to promote interest in other subjects. Literacy skills were particularly well applied with note taking, report writing and recounts being undertaken in Years 5 and 6. The subject leader has plans to develop links further and this is a current priority. The marking of work is not fully developed as it does not focus upon the historical skill that is being taught.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn at a good rate because lessons are interesting.
- The subject is promoted very well by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

- 65 Teaching is good and pupils' achievements are good. In a Year 5 lesson, that was based on recent fieldwork in the local high street, a visitor from the local planning office was invited to discuss with the pupils the pedestrianisation of an area in the town. During discussions, the pupils asked perceptive questions and provided a range of explanations for differing viewpoints. They used good geographical terms and highlighted important issues to consider.
- 66 In Years 1 and 2, displays of pupils' work shows that they make good progress in learning about maps and how to describe where places are. Pupils in Year 3 could discuss in detail life in an Indian village. They showed good understanding of how it differed from their own. Most used a range of skills and geographical vocabulary beyond those expected for their age.
- 67 All year groups undertake fieldwork and other practical work that the subject leader has planned with the local ranger service, this includes orienteering for all age groups from Year 1 up. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and promotes the subject well; she is involved, with some of the pupils, in a local environmental group that meets out of school time. As with history, work is not always marked so that pupils are aware of what geographical skills they need to improve.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in art and design. Two lessons were seen in design and technology. No lessons were seen in physical education and music. Other evidence came from looking at work, hearing music and singing in assembly, and talking to co-ordinators and pupils about the school's provision for physical education.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good and pupils attain a high standard.
- The co-ordinator is inspirational in her work.
- In Years 3 to 6 pupils' work is often good but lacks consistency.

Commentary

- 68 In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a range of materials and processes with a high level of creativity. They receive focused teaching on how to investigate materials, try out tools and learn from the work of artists and craftspeople. In an exceptionally good lesson in Year 1, pupils made well-attuned observations about the patterns and colours they could see in large posters of paintings by a well-known artist. They reproduced some of these in their own pictures confidently making decisions and evaluating their own work without an adult prompting them. While the teacher made sure that the start of the lesson provided opportunities to improve their skills, the main part of the lesson allowed them hands on time. In Year 2, pupils use their sketch books to try out drawings and processes that they later use in their pictures or other kinds of art work.
- 69 No teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 to 5, displays show that pupils' work is often of a good standard. Vibrant pictures in Years 3 and 4 reflected the colours and patterns associated with the work of Gustav Klimt, and in the Year 4 and 5 class pupils reproduced the figures of a medieval tapestry, and thoughtfully explored the wallpaper designs of William Morris. However, their work in their sketch books was patchy and it is clear that there are long periods of time when they are not in use. In Years 3 to 6, the lack of space makes art work difficult and time for the subject is limited.
- 70 The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and gives very good guidance to colleagues. She has taken demonstration lessons and monitors teachers' planning. In order to compensate for the difficulties imposed by the lack of space, in the summer pupils worked with a local artist at a nearby secondary school on sculptures of gigantic insects. This impressive three-dimensional work was immensely enjoyed by the pupils and demonstrates the school's commitment to providing pupils with a full range of experiences. The school has adequate assessment procedures but has not yet identified pupils with special gifts or talents and so these are not recognized in art and design.

Design and technology

- 71 The co-ordinator has recently been on training for this subject and has cascaded her knowledge to other members of staff. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Because teachers were starting on new units of work, it was not possible to evaluate the standard of work, except in Year 1 where the colourful puppets pupils had made out of felt displayed very good levels of creativity and control of tools and materials. Written evaluations indicated pupils' good understanding of this activity. Finished work from Years 3 to 6 was generally of an average standard.

Music

- 72 The school employs a part-time teacher with specialist knowledge in music. Although her teaching could not be seen during the inspection, musical skills displayed by pupils in assembly were good, indicating good teaching. The singing by the whole school was very good. Pupils sang with enthusiasm, tunefully and with good attention to the mood and structure of the piece. They have mastered singing in parts and are aware of each other as they sing. The performance by a few pupils on recorders was good. The school does not have a record of those with special gifts and talents.

Physical Education

- 73 Pupils participate well in the many after-school clubs for different sporting activities. The co-ordinator has great enthusiasm for the subject and teachers' plans indicate that pupils are provided with a good programme of work. Pupils talk about the clubs they belong to eagerly and it is clear that sport plays an important part in the life of the school. Macclesfield Football Club provides elements of coaching and the school has some success in local leagues for various sporting activities. The school is in the process of devising new more systematic methods to recognise and record pupils' achievements which currently happens on an ad hoc basis; it fails to pinpoint those with special talents although individual pupils shine in the clubs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 74 No lessons were seen in this subject. The school makes good provision for teaching many of the areas identified in the national guidelines in other subjects. Geography is used well to provide pupils with a good understanding of different kinds of responsibilities, rights and duties, for instance, towards the natural environment and to the community in which they live. Pupils' awareness of a healthy safer lifestyle is developed through science and physical education. The recent introduction of special times for discussion in each class and the organisation and work of the School Council have added to pupils' good opportunities to make real choices and decisions and develop confidence and responsibility. Planning from the guidance for the Foundation Stage is not as thorough as it could be and opportunities are missed to develop children's sense of responsibility and perseverance with tasks.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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