

# INSPECTION REPORT

## YEW TREE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 133712

Headteacher: Mrs M Buckley

Lead inspector: Mr T Wheatley

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 258533

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	428
School address:	Alcester Street Chadderton Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	OL9 8LD
Telephone number:	(0161) 284 5464
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bill Gow
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school was formed in September 2002 by the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school on the same site. There are 428 pupils on roll and numbers are falling, though the school is larger than the average primary school. Overall, there are more boys than girls in the school. Fifty-three children are currently in the Reception class, most of whom were five-years-old at the time of the inspection. The school is due to have a Nursery open in September 2004. The socio-economic backgrounds of pupils are mixed, with an above-average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and many pupils who bring packed lunches. Pupils come from predominantly white British backgrounds but there are small numbers of pupils from Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and other Asian backgrounds and the great majority of the pupils from these backgrounds have no difficulties with English language. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning English and 15 others have ethnic minority support. During the inspection none of these pupils showed learning difficulties associated with lack of English language. The percentages of pupils with statements of special educational needs or who are on the school's register of special educational needs are below average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties and there are very small numbers of pupils with speech or communication difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, severe learning difficulties and dyslexia.

Attainment on entry to the school is below average, and evidence from the school shows that for pupils currently in Year 6 attainment on entry was well below average.

At the time of the inspection the assistant headteacher was on extended absence due to illness.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10013	Mr T Wheatley	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
19720	Mrs D Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector	
19026	Mr B Downes	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education
22657	Mr M Madeley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Music Physical education
29281	Mrs P Ward	Team inspector	English Art and design

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective and improving school with very good features. Pupils achieve well overall and teaching and learning are generally good. The headteacher provides outstanding direction for the school to improve. The school has very good links with parents and works very hard to ensure pupils develop good attitudes and become responsible. The school gives good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards of literacy are not high enough, especially in writing, but the school's work on developing speaking and listening skills is having a positive effect.
- A significant amount of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent, although the very good skills seen are not employed consistently throughout the school.
- The headteacher has set very clear priorities for the school's improvement and provides very good leadership.
- The use of assessment information to set targets for improvement in standards is generally good in Years 3 to 6, but is underdeveloped elsewhere.
- The school works very hard on improving pupils' social skills and behaviour and is having considerable success.
- Support for learning outside of the school day is very good.
- Links with other schools are very good.
- The school's relationships with parents are very good and are having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school.

**The school was formed in 2002 and has not been inspected before.** The school has become well established in the community. The process of amalgamating the former infant and junior schools has been successfully managed by the headteacher. Staff work increasingly well together.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	n/a	n/a	D	E
mathematics	n/a	n/a	B	A
science	n/a	n/a	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

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

**Pupils' achievement is good overall.** Attainment on entry to the school is currently below average. Many children start reception with well below average social skills and below-average literacy skills. Most do not reach the expected goals, but their achievement is satisfactory and they achieve well in developing good social skills. By Year 2 standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Listening skills are broadly average, but reading and writing are below average. Mathematical skills are below average. In other subjects standards are below expectations overall, but exceed expectations in art and design and are in line with expectations in science, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. By Year 6 standards are broadly average and pupils achieve well because many of them started school with well below average levels of attainment and poor literacy skills and have made good progress. Standards are below average in reading and writing and broadly average in listening. Standards are above average in mathematics and science. Standards are in line with expectations in design and technology,

history, ICT, physical education and religious education, they exceed expectations in art and design and are below in geography. No music was seen so no judgement can be made.

All pupils, whatever their backgrounds or prior attainment, make good progress overall.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good** and pupils have positive attitudes to school and to other pupils and adults. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Most pupils attend regularly and attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good overall.** Teaching and learning are **good** overall and there is a significant amount of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, teachers use assessment information mostly effectively to set pupils targets to help them improve their work, but this is less consistent elsewhere. The curriculum is **good** and is matched to the needs of pupils and includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities that pupils enjoy. Currently, outdoor provision for children aged under five is limited, but there are plans to improve this. The school provides a good level of care for pupils through creating an atmosphere of trust and respect. Good and often very good relationships between staff and pupils increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has an excellent vision for how the school should improve. She is well supported by other staff in management positions. The school's processes for monitoring and evaluating its work are good and have identified the work that needs to be done to continue to improve. The school has a clear focus on raising standards and it is generally effective. Governors are effective; they have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and take an active part in evaluating school performance and planning improvements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Pupils' and parents' views of the school are good.** The school has very good links with its parents and parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the work and attitude of teachers. Pupils enjoy being at the school and mature and develop well as a result.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school needs to do in order to raise standards are:**

- Provide planned opportunities in all subjects for pupils to improve their independent writing skills.
- Ensure that the very good teaching seen spreads throughout the school.
- Improve the use of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to consistently set targets for pupils so that they know what they have to do to achieve well.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good**. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory elsewhere. Literacy skills are below average overall, though they are improving. Standards in mathematics are above average by Year 6.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics and art and design.
- Pupils' below average writing, reading and spelling skills generally limit how well they perform in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

1. Attainment on entry to Reception is below average, with children having particularly poor literacy and social skills. Attainment on entry to the present Year 1 was below average with many pupils having poor writing and speaking skills. Evidence provided by the school indicates that the current Year 2 classes and the Year 2 classes that took the National Curriculum tests in 2003, came into the school with below average levels of attainment. The current Year 6 pupils and those who took National Curriculum tests in 2003 entered school with well below average levels of attainment.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage, in the Reception class, achieve satisfactorily. While the great majority do not reach the expected goals in their personal and social development, in this area, they achieve well taking into account poor social skills on entry to Reception. Most pupils do not meet the expected goals in their communication and literacy development because they have limited vocabulary and do not speak in complete sentences. In their mathematical development, they have basic numeracy skills, but are not confident in using them. While no judgement can be made in children's creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, teachers' planning indicates that children experience the full curriculum for the early learning goals.
3. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003, results were below average overall. Results in reading were below average and were well below average in writing and mathematics. In teachers' assessments for science results were broadly average. Based on their attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieved satisfactorily. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 results were broadly average and average compared with pupils from schools with similar prior attainment. In English, results were below average and well below average compared with pupils in similar schools. Results in mathematics were above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools; in science results were above the national average and above average compared with similar schools. Pupils achieved well overall, including those with special educational needs.
4. Standards seen in Year 2 are below average overall. In reading and writing standards are below average, but pupils' listening skills are broadly average. In mathematics standards are below average and in science they are broadly average. In art and design standards are above average, in history, ICT and physical education they are broadly as expected and in geography and religious education they are below expectations. Elsewhere, there was not enough evidence to make secure judgements. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, though in mathematics and art and design achievement is good for all pupils.



5. In Year 6 standards are broadly average, though the literacy skills of many pupils are below average. Pupils do not write with enough confidence and accuracy, or spell consistently well. Speaking and reading skills are below average. However, the majority of pupils listen competently. In mathematics and science standards are above average. Standards in art and design are above average. In design and technology, history, ICT, physical education and religious education standards are in line with expectations. In geography, standards are below expectations. Overall, pupils achieve well and satisfactorily in geography, history and physical education.
6. Pupils' poor literacy skills, and in particular writing, are the most significant factor in limiting learning. Work being done to provide planned opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in most subject areas is starting to have a positive effect. This is evident especially in mathematics and science where pupils frequently express their knowledge and understanding well. However, this is not yet common throughout the school. Writing skills are still unsatisfactory, and there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to write as there are to speak and listen.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress in their learning to that of other pupils as a result of the support they receive. They achieve satisfactorily in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 and well in Years 5 and 6. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress as other pupils. While there has been support for some ethnic minority pupils, lack of English language is not a significant problem and these pupils generally achieve well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (n/a)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (n/a)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.1 (n/a)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (n/a)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.2 (n/a)	26.7 (26.8)
science	29.4 (n/a)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 97 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** and pupils have **positive** attitudes to school and to other pupils and adults. Pupils behave **well** in lessons and around school. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's thoughtful approach and hard work on improving pupils' social skills and behaviour, results in happy and confident pupils.
- Most pupils develop a good understanding of the culture and heritage of others.
- Relationships are good, creating a relaxed and productive atmosphere, in which pupils learn well.

- Older pupils take on responsibility very well and make a real contribution to the daily life of school.

### **Commentary**

8. The importance of pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything the school does and staff have successfully created a supportive and caring atmosphere in which pupils grow and flourish. A particular strength is the way in which the school helps pupils learn to live and work together within the school community and this results in pupils' social development being very good. Many pupils come to school with few social skills but they quickly understand what is expected of them. Through the school's committed and effective strategies, pupils learn how to moderate and manage their behaviour and become aware of the effect of their behaviour on others. This leads to behaviour throughout the school being good and often better. There have been a small number of short-term exclusions, used effectively to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
9. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. The level of support and encouragement they receive has a significant impact on their self-esteem and their confidence to ask for assistance when they are not sure what to do.
10. The carefully thought-out personal and social education programme provides many opportunities for teachers and pupils to talk about and reflect on emotions and feelings. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were thinking about their move to secondary school. Most were looking forward to it but they also had time to share any worries and apprehensions they had. For younger pupils, time is used first thing on Monday mornings to help them settle after the weekend and focus their minds on the week ahead.
11. Pupils grow spiritually and culturally because there are many occasions for pupils to think about themselves, others and the world at large. Assemblies play an important part in the school day and are a genuine coming together of pupils and staff to listen, reflect, sing and pray about a particular theme. Assemblies during the inspection were lively, thoughtful, sometimes exciting and sometimes quiet, but enjoyed by everyone. In religious education lessons, pupils show great respect for and interest in world faiths. For example, Year 5 pupils learned about the Hindu form of worship, Puja, and could give examples of special times in other faiths. A Year 2 class listened intently to a Year 6 pupil talking about his Muslim beliefs and his mosque. Through their friendships with other schools, pupils share lessons, sport, music and drama with other children. They learn to appreciate the differences and enjoy the similarities of other people's culture, heritage and faith.
12. The school day is based on the values of tolerance and respect which results in good and often very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils. Pupils understand their classroom rules and why they are important. This has a positive impact on pupils' response and attitudes in lessons and to school in general. Pupils go through the school day happily and enjoy having visitors to talk to. They work hard and with enthusiasm, are friendly, polite and keen to talk about themselves and the school. From an early age, pupils are taught to listen to one another. They show concern and compassion, and a respect for others' needs. In many lessons, pupils helped each other spontaneously when working in pairs and groups and showed a natural and caring understanding of those less able.
13. Pupils take a keen interest in how their school works. They enjoy being part of such things as the school council where they have a genuine voice in what happens in the school. Older pupils, particularly Year 6, accept responsibility readily and maturely and make a valuable contribution to the running of the school. Team captains, the anti-bullying council and 'buddies' all work hard and often organise themselves and others very well. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem improves greatly through being given such responsibilities and they gain a real sense of belonging to and taking pride in their own community. On leaving school, most pupils are confident, well-rounded people ready for the next stage of their education.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.3
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.

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	377	13	0
Mixed – white and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – white and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	22	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The curriculum is **good** and the range of extra-curricular opportunities is **very good**. The quality of guidance and support is **good** and pupils establish very **good** relationships with adults. Links with parents and other schools are **very good** and with the community are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is sometimes **very good** and occasionally **excellent**. Teaching and learning are **good** in Years 3 to 6 and are **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and in the Reception classes. A small amount of teaching is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning, especially in Years 5 and 6 are very good.
- Strategies to improve literacy skills by providing opportunities for pupils to speak and listen are starting to be effective.
- Teachers' efforts to establish a good working atmosphere and to manage pupils' behaviour are generally good and frequently very good.
- Opportunities to write are not consistently planned into lessons and the over-use of worksheets restricts how well pupils' writing skills develop.

- Assessment is used well, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to set targets for pupils and to plan teaching, but it is unsatisfactory overall elsewhere.
- On occasion, work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' learning needs.

### **Commentary**

14. Where teaching is very good, work is challenging and matched carefully to pupils' learning needs. The teachers present work in an enthusiastic way that engages pupils' interests and encourages them to think for themselves, to reason and to explain their thinking to the whole class or to the group of pupils they work with. Consequently, pupils learn well and, in particular, express what they know and understand articulately. This was evident in many Year 5 and Year 6 lessons and to a much lesser extent elsewhere. Work was particularly challenging in English, mathematics, art and design, and design and technology.
15. Where teaching was outstanding, the introduction to the lesson involved all pupils in discussing and explaining parts of a story read in an earlier lesson. The tasks for separate groups of pupils were challenging and required pupils to work partly independently and partly collaboratively to produce character conversations. They did this well, constructing sentences varying from the simple to the complex (though sometimes with inaccurate spelling) and using speech marks correctly. Pupils were extremely well managed, given friendly, specific support as required and encouraged to work hard. The pace of learning was fast and pupils developed considerable self-confidence and enjoyed what they did. At the end of the lesson, the teacher drew the pupils together, asked several of them to read out their conversations and then used pupils to 'model' parts of the sentences, including speech marks, to reinforce the work done.
16. The majority of lessons are well planned and follow the three-part lesson strategy throughout the school. Teachers handle individual learning needs sensitively, providing suitable tasks that challenge pupils, but also give them a sense of achievement. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, frequently using strategies to calm pupils down and to help them settle to work. The majority of lessons provide a calm, organised working atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and develop their self-esteem. Teachers frequently use ICT to support learning in other subjects and pupils' learning is enhanced by this experience.
17. Where teaching is unsatisfactory a number of factors are evident. On occasion, teachers' management of pupils' disruptive behaviour is not effective and this slows the learning of all pupils. On other occasions, groups of pupils, notably the lowest attainers are not suitably supported with work they have difficulty with and they learn very little, or the teacher's subject knowledge is insecure and pupils do not acquire a good enough understanding of the subject.
18. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, teachers manage children well, provide a calm atmosphere for learning and encourage children to work together. In these lessons teachers also provide opportunities for consolidation of basic skills and extension into more challenging work.
19. Teachers frequently include opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, thus developing pupils' literacy skills and giving them confidence to write. This is more obvious with the oldest pupils than with younger ones, but the practice is spreading and is helping pupils to learn more effectively. Similarly, planned opportunities to write are more frequently seen in Years 5 and 6 and to a lesser extent elsewhere. Worksheets are used too frequently, particularly in Years 1 and 2, but also in other years, and this is inhibiting the development of pupils' capability to write at length and to express their knowledge and understanding articulately.
20. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and good in English, mathematics and to a lesser extent in science, especially in Years 3 to 6, where teachers are setting targets for pupils and to tell them how they can improve their work. These procedures are in the early stages of implementation in Years 1 and 2 and have not yet enough time to make a significant impact, and they are varied across the school in other subjects.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Individual education plans are well prepared and teachers plan and implement work specifically designed for them. They ensure that pupils are included fully in lessons. At times, pupils are withdrawn to upgrade their skills and receive the additional support recommended in their statements of special educational needs. Classroom support assistants provide good support in class for pupils with statements, working closely to the requirements of pupils' individual education plans. Teachers also plan work to match the needs of a large number of lower-attaining pupils who have poor communication and writing skills but who are not specifically funded for additional provision. Classroom assistants also support these pupils well.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	9 (17%)	24 (44%)	18 (33%)	3 (5%)	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 **good** and includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities which pupils enjoy. The school is engaged in reviewing and improving the curriculum. Currently, outdoor provision for children aged under five is limited, but there are plans to improve this.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities.
- Support for learning outside the school day is very good.
- There is a good range of sporting and musical activities.
- Preparation for pupils' transfer to secondary education is very good.
- The outdoor provision for pupils in the Reception classes is poor.

**Commentary**

22. The school ensures that all pupils have a good range and quality of learning experiences and this is especially so for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Time allocations for the curriculum and for subjects are satisfactory and the school is rightly reviewing its timetable arrangements so that the time pupils spend on a subject at any one time provides opportunities for pupils to become fully engrossed in the subject and for learning to be effective. Statutory requirements for the curriculum and for collective worship are fully met and all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Teachers and classroom assistants plan work effectively to ensure all pupils experience all aspects of the curriculum. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There are very good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to their secondary schools. Following the amalgamation of the two schools the curriculum is integrating well, with continuing review to bring about improvements. Curriculum development is focused on improving pupils' learning. For example, discussions are taking place about how to improve pupils' literacy skills within literacy lessons and also in other subjects. This also involves discussions about developing cross-curricular themes to enhance provision for pupils.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils follow the same curriculum as other pupils, through tasks which are well adapted to their individual needs. Individual education plans are clear and well focused with small steps in learning leading to relevant targets.

24. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including sport and music. There is a breakfast club each morning and a homework club in the evening. A good range of visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and extend pupils' learning.
25. Resources are of good quality and are well organised for use in year groups. The match of teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum is good. There are adequate numbers of support staff. Although most of the accommodation is very good, the provision of outdoor facilities and the quality of the outdoor resources in the Reception area are unsatisfactory and inhibit how well children develop physical skills. A new nursery is about to be built and the facilities planned will overcome this problem.

### Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good** support for its pupils and involves them very effectively in school life. The school is a **safe** place in which to work and live.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- An atmosphere of trust and respect pervades the school.
- Good and often very good relationships between staff and pupils increase pupils' self-confidence.
- Well-informed teachers know pupils and families well and support individual needs well.
- Pupils are involved in the daily life of school very well and they know their views are important.
- Procedures for looking after pupils on a daily basis are good.

### Commentary

26. The school is a very caring place where pupils feel safe and confident. The good relationships are the basis upon which much of the personal support is built and this contributes to pupils' ability to get the most out of every day. The school is a happy place and pupils, staff and visitors enjoy being there. Development of pupils' social and personal skills is intrinsic in school life and pervades the whole day and this is having a positive impact on how well children develop social skills. All staff in the school – teaching and non-teaching – work well as a team which ensures that pupils always encounter the same approach, standards and philosophy. For example, classroom support assistants are used in the playground at lunchtimes to monitor and supervise pupils at play. This has improved behaviour and reduced conflict as pupils learn that the standards expected in play are the same as those in lessons.
27. Staff know the pupils well and have a genuine concern and interest for their welfare and progress. They know much about individual families and are quick to spot and respond to pupils' needs. Targets for improvement are set in English, mathematics and science and older pupils – particularly those in Years 5 and 6 – know how well they are doing. These pupils are very well supported and motivated by teachers' confidence in their ability to achieve well. A learning mentor is used well to work with those pupils whose behaviour, social or emotional problems are hindering their learning. Throughout the school, praise and rewards are used successfully to encourage pupils to try their best and to work hard. There are many opportunities for pupils' to show what they can do and pupils enjoy performing for others. During the inspection, a group of Year 5 pupils worked with a visiting drama specialist and within one day, produced and performed a 15-minute play on Victorian life. Their performance was slick, funny, informative and entertaining and thoroughly enjoyed by the enthusiastic audience.
28. The school values pupils' opinions highly, seeing them as an integral part of school life. Older pupils, again particularly those in Year 6, express their views openly and responsibly because they know their ideas will be taken seriously. Their work as team captains and on the anti-bullying council is very effective and they take their responsibilities seriously, suggesting improvements and developments. The school council involves pupils from Year 2 upwards

- and Year 3 pupils act as buddies for younger children at lunchtime. Such opportunities help pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem whilst providing a real source of help for teachers.
29. The school has good procedures in place for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Where intervention from specialist support is required the appropriate arrangements are made to ensure that the requirements outlined in the pupils' statement of needs are fully met. Arrangements for additional classroom support are made as necessary. Where necessary, additional resources are provided to enable pupils to have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and are responsive to their particular needs.
30. The school pays good attention to the daily care of its pupils. Sickness and accidents are dealt with in a sensitive way to minimise the upset for young children and the school liaises closely with parents at all times. Health and safety checks across the school site are carried out regularly and child protection issues are dealt with conscientiously.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **very good** links with its parents and other schools and **good** links with the local community. These all support pupils' learning **well**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good communication keeps parents well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the work and attitude of staff.
- Links with other schools are very good and pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Good use is made of the local community to supplement the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

31. Parents feel that the school values them as partners and friends and that it works hard to involve them in as many ways as possible. Parents have been consulted well over the amalgamation of the two schools and have since been asked for their views of the work of the school. Relationships between staff and parents are very good and form a very good basis for genuine dialogue. There are many formal and informal opportunities to meet and talk to teachers and as a result parents are very well informed about how well their children are doing. At the autumn parents' meeting, detailed targets relating to National Curriculum levels are clearly explained and discussed with parents. These are monitored throughout the year and teachers are very quick to contact parents if they see any problems. The targets are reviewed in the summer parents' meeting so parents know exactly how well their children are doing. The written reports are used to summarise what pupils have learned over the year and what their strengths are – they do this very well.
32. There are many very effective links with other schools in the area which directly benefit pupils in many ways. Through very good partnerships with two local secondary schools, pupils have had specialist teaching in French, science and humanities. Regular events involve pupils from other primary schools all working together in the secondary schools. This gives pupils the chance to meet before they move on and also to experience exciting and new approaches to learning. Sporting, drama and musical events again involve pupils from a number of primary schools working together. Through the behaviour improvement project, the school has been actively involved in helping groups of vulnerable Year 6 pupils from across the local education authority understand and manage their behaviour in readiness for the transfer on to secondary school. The transition from primary to secondary school is managed very well and Year 6 pupils are looking forward to September. For a number of years, the school has had a friendship with a school whose pupils are mostly of Pakistani heritage. Year 2 pupils visit each other's schools for lessons and activities to learn and play together and enjoy the differences and similarities that exist between them.

33. The school uses its local community well to broaden its curriculum, enhance lessons and offer pupils new experiences. Visits to a variety of places are planned for all ages. For example, recent visitors have included the Harlequin Theatre Company, South Chadderton school band and the 'Bug Man'. Pupils have been to the Grange Arts Centre and Cannon Hall Farm and had the chance to join in local music and sporting events with other schools. A pre-school group is held at the school and before-and after-school activities are run by RASCAT. A recent parenting skills course was run at the school and enjoyed by all those involved. The school has not yet developed links further afield in this country to broaden pupils' awareness of environments different from their own.
34. The school has good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept well informed, are actively involved in annual reviews and also in target setting.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is **very well** led and well managed with very clear priorities for improvement. Responsibilities are effectively delegated and the work done by the headteacher to ensure the smooth amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools has been managed extremely well. Governors are effective in their roles.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has an excellent view of how the school should improve.
- The monitoring of the school's work and standards achieved by pupils is effective and is leading to improvements in teaching and standards.
- Subject co-ordinators are not yet as fully involved in the process of monitoring and evaluation as they ought to be, but their involvement is increasing.
- Governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

35. The school is approaching the end of its second year as a primary school having been successfully formed by the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools on the same site. With a minimum of staff changes and disruption, the headteacher has effectively brought the two schools together. Management responsibilities have been shared where possible, and with a focus on employing and valuing the contributions of staff from both schools. Consequently, while there are still some roles that are divided, in the main, staff work increasingly very well together, conscious and respectful of each other's efforts. As a result, planning is improving and is leading to rising standards. For example, the science co-ordinators have worked closely together to ensure that there is continuity in the curriculum between the infant and junior parts of the school.
36. Overall, the school is well led and managed and the leadership of the headteacher is very good. She involves all staff very effectively in school improvement planning. She has an extremely clear vision of how the school should improve and has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School self-evaluation is very good. The headteacher and senior staff observe and evaluate teaching and use the results to plan training and improvements that are starting to lead to rising standards. Subject co-ordinators are increasingly involved in lesson observation and evaluation, looking at teachers' planning, scrutinising pupils' work and providing advice and guidance. The headteacher provides the priorities for improvement in outline and ensures that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff have opportunities to modify them and to contribute to the plans for achieving the priorities. This is effective, ensuring a whole-school view for improvement and whole-school commitment to school development. Overall, staff work well at improvement planning, though there are some variations, particularly where leadership and management are not fully integrated between the infants and juniors, leading to occasional lack of continuity in the



curriculum. In general, efforts to change practice and raise standards are more effective in the juniors than in the infants.

37. Generally, most subjects areas are well lead and managed, the exception being geography in Years 3 to 6 where use of assessment to aid teaching and to guide pupils' learning is unsatisfactory, an issue management is aware of.
38. Governors play an active part in school evaluation. The headteacher, staff and business manager keep them very well informed and several governors observe teaching. Governors play an active part in school improvement planning and meet all of their statutory responsibilities.
39. Performance management procedures are in place and staff are fully supported in their professional development. Deployment of staff is managed very well, including providing good cover for long-term absence of staff. Planning for future staffing is good, taking into account the anticipated fall in pupil numbers. Planning to prepare the school for having a nursery from September 2004 is very good. The school has responded very well to the new workforce regulations.
40. The management of school finances is very good with very effective procedures in place to control the budget, allocate funds and to involve governors. The school has made considerable savings on expenditure in order to support the financing of the planned new nursery and to provide contingency funds to support the school as the expected numbers of pupils decrease. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,096,374
Total expenditure	1,007,802
Expenditure per pupil	2,377

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54,531
Balance carried forward to the next year	143,103

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

41. Children join the school in the September of the school year in which they are five. They enter school with weak social skills and their spoken language is below expectations. A good programme of visits helps children settle quickly into school.
42. Assessment is satisfactory. The observations of staff are discussed and noted. The children's national records are regularly kept up to date. The co-ordinator recognises that teachers do not yet make enough use of specific activities to assess children's ability and this is an area for improvement the school is focusing on in order to raise standards.
43. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The curriculum is based firmly around the national guidance for this age group though teachers' planning centres more around what children will do rather than what they will learn. Monitoring of learning has not been as thorough as the co-ordinator would like because much of her time has been spent visiting other schools and planning the new nursery provision. Accommodation, apart from the outdoor learning environment, is adequate for the curriculum but resources are recognised as having some weakness. These minor weaknesses will be addressed when the new nursery provision is in place.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are settled and have positive attitudes.
- Teachers set firm and consistent standards for behaviour.

#### **Commentary**

44. Standards are below national expectations. Children come to school with low levels of social skills but because of good teaching, which quickly established routines, they achieve well. Children leave parents willingly in the morning and know that they must engage in reading activities because the routine is well established. They do so quietly and sensibly, allowing the teacher to work with individuals. Children's behaviour is generally good because teachers set high standards and stick to them. They pay attention when the teacher wants to speak but many still call out answers, even though the teacher regularly reminds them not to. At break times children behave well, sharing games but they are sometimes boisterous in the role-play area when no adults are directly supervising them. Children move between the free-choice activities showing interest and concentration at the activity they have chosen.
45. Children choose their food at break time and eat sensibly. They self select their drink showing good independence. They also learn about living things. This leads them to handle plants carefully knowing that they will grow into flowers.

## COMMUNICATIONS, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for the development of pupils' communications, language and literacy skills is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's writing skills are weak.
- Reading is systematically encouraged.

### Commentary

46. Standards are below national expectations. Children enter school with low skills, for instance many do not have a breadth of vocabulary, and a sound programme helps them achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use 'big books' well to stimulate children's interest in reading and words. Questions too often only require short answers. This doesn't encourage children to speak in full sentences. Children with special educational needs receive good support. Their needs are carefully monitored throughout their time in Reception classes and careful records are maintained. Where necessary tasks are set at the right level of these children.
47. Most children do not use a wide vocabulary when answering questions or talking to each other. Higher-attaining children talk fluently about their books. They usually respond in sentences to the teacher's questions, for instance a child said, 'Stop eating all the spaghetti and the beans!' in response to a picture. Too many children talk in single words and short phrases.
48. Reading standards are below national expectations. Teachers and parents work hard at supporting children's reading. Children read regularly in school and during free choice activities many choose to look at books. Higher-attaining children read simple books fluently making no errors. One read 'anniversary' and 'burglars' without any help! The majority of the children do not though. They handle the book correctly turning the pages and referring to the pictures for clues about the simple text. They retell the story with considerable prompting. Lower-attaining children and those with special educational needs do not yet relate their knowledge of letter sounds to the reading of words. In a good word game about half the children could identify simple words from the 'word wall'.
49. Writing skills are not well developed because the school's method of teaching writing is an area for improvement. Children write their name easily with satisfactory letter formation. This skill does not transfer into their other writing assignments. Few children can write words and only the higher-attaining pupils can consistently write a brief sentence. Pencil grip for some children is weak and this does not help their letter formation.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for pupils' mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good knowledge of number.
- Children do not have enough experience of the language of mathematics.

### Commentary

50. Standards are below national expectations. Children work confidently with number, for instance girls counted the pigs in the farm by touching each one with a finger. Two boys use an arithmetic program very well, easily adding numbers within 10 confidently and accurately. Children's work shows that higher-attaining children are working confidently within the National Curriculum, adding and subtracting numbers and recording their work. Teachers miss the

opportunity to further children's understanding of number during registration when children are not asked to find the date from the numbers available.

51. Children are less confident when using the language of mathematics to describe position. They frequently say 'there' even when challenged by the teacher to describe where they mean. Most children know the four basic flat shapes and can pick them out during a walk around the locality. Achievement is satisfactory. Children have moved forward from a low starting point, particularly, in their number skills. Teaching is satisfactory. Number skills are extended well, especially for higher-attaining children, but insufficient emphasis is put on developing children's use of mathematical language.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

52. There is no judgement on provision for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world because few lessons were observed. Teachers' planning indicates that this aspect is taught to the correct standards. Children's awareness of animals is promoted through the current topic of 'farm animals' and this will be developed further by a visit to a local farm. Children have a growing awareness of why animals are kept on farms. They enjoyed making butter from milk and cream but few could predict what might happen when they mixed the two in the jar. A good planting activity, led well by a learning support assistant, helped children learn about what plants need to grow and decorated the pleasant garden area. Children have free use of the large blocks and creatively use them to make a 'Noah's Ark', marching animals inside 'two by two'. They also work with the computer and tape recorder with confidence. The mouse is shared fairly by pupils.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

53. No judgement is made about provision for pupils' physical development because too few lessons were seen. The full curriculum is being taught because this is made clear in teachers' planning. Children learn to handle small tools like rolling pins, cutters and pencils. Skills in painting and shaping malleable materials are satisfactory but pencil control for many remains weak. Children move with satisfactory control when playing outside. They ride tricycles and use large apparatus well and are aware of others around them so that no accidents occur. The school knows that the outdoor environment is currently inadequate for the children and is inhibiting the development of children's movement skills. Plans are well in hand to make significant improvements when the new nursery is added.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

54. No judgement is made about provision for pupils' creative development as few lessons were observed. Teachers' planning shows that the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are met in full. Children enjoy these activities and concentrate quite well, for instance, when making pictures with collage materials. They play happily and sensibly in the role-play areas which are currently a 'vets' practice' and the 'camping area'. Vocabulary and counting are reinforced during singing sessions.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is good.
- Standards in reading and writing are below average and spelling is weak.

- Initiatives to improve pupils' speaking skills are having a positive effect.
- The headteacher is taking action to improve standards of teaching and learning.

## Commentary

55. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, the results for pupils in Year 2 were well below the national average in writing and below average in reading. The National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 6 were below average overall and well below the average of pupils of similar prior attainment in other schools. There was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.
56. Inspection findings indicate an improving picture with pupils in the current Year 6 making good progress and achieving well from a well below average level of attainment in literacy on entry to the school. Year 2 pupils have achieved satisfactorily. Attainment in listening, at the ages of seven and 11, is in line with the national average. Standards in reading and writing at the age of seven are below the national average. There is no significant difference between the standards for boys and girls.
57. Standards in listening in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Discussion with teachers shows that there has been a particularly high emphasis placed on improving standards in this area of learning. Pupils are taught to listen carefully. Where teachers break the lessons into small teaching steps, pupils concentrate well. This means that by the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils demonstrate the ability to listen attentively. There are a small number of pupils in each class, whose attention drifts after a relatively short time and teachers have to remind them to listen to what they are being told.
58. There has also been a high emphasis on increasing pupils' speaking skills. In almost all lessons there are carefully planned times when pupils are encouraged to communicate their ideas and discuss their work. Teachers intervene to extend pupils' speaking skills with questions such as: 'What have you found out?' and, 'How do you know?' Opportunities are also provided for pupils to participate in drama and gain the confidence to speak in front of an audience. This was seen in the confident Year 3 presentation of an Aesop fable. The dramatisation of a script they had learnt during the day was a very good achievement for Year 5 pupils. Good initiatives like these are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' communication skills. However, standards overall are still below those usually expected. By the end of Years 2 and 6 the higher-attaining pupils are confident in expressing their views. Throughout the school pupils are eager to chat, but many have poor articulation and frequently speak in very short sentences. In all year groups, there is a significant minority of pupils who have only a limited range of vocabulary. When talking about their work, these pupils have difficulty in finding the words to express their thoughts and often need support and prompting from teachers and classroom assistants.
59. There are some good procedures to extend pupils' reading skills. Apart from the literacy hour which the school uses to good effect, each morning in Years 1 and 2 there is designated reading time when parents are encouraged to accompany children into the classroom to read with them. Throughout the school there is time allocated first thing in the morning whilst pupils are still fresh, for them to have additional time for spelling, reading to their teacher and for writing. These approaches are beginning to have a positive impact, but standards overall in reading are still below average. In Year 2 a small number of higher attaining pupils read expressively and with good pace. When asked about the content of the book, they show good understanding of what they have read, are able to talk about the story and suggest what might happen next. They are confident in tackling unfamiliar words but are still not sure how to locate vocabulary in a dictionary. Average-attaining pupils read generally accurately, but because they have to spend so long working out individual words, their reading does not always flow and therefore loses meaning. Lower-attaining pupils are able to recognise familiar words, but are still dependent on picture cues to clarify meaning.

60. A significant minority of Year 6 pupils who read fluently show a real enjoyment for reading. They state what their reading preferences are and why. The majority of pupils read with sufficient accuracy to access the curriculum. They respond to teachers' challenge to read for information during class lessons, in the library and also when using the web. They use a thesaurus and dictionary effectively to find ways of improving the first drafts of their work, but their reading of unfamiliar texts is hesitant and lacking in expression. Often, teachers have to explain vocabulary that pupils have not previously experienced and have difficulty in understanding. A small number of pupils who have particular difficulties in interpreting text, use their knowledge of sounds well to pronounce unfamiliar words and decipher meaning. When asked about their preferences, pupils said they enjoyed reading and listening to texts such as 'A thief in the village' by James Berry and really enjoyed the work of the author Michael Morpurgo.
61. Analysis of pupils' work in Year 6 shows clearly, that during this year, pupils, including those with special educational needs have made good progress in their writing skills. When consideration is given to their prior attainment achievement is good. Pupils' work from the autumn and spring terms presented for inspection in Years 1 and 2 indicates satisfactory achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.
62. Standards by Year 2 are below average. The majority of pupils write in sentences and a small number of higher-attaining pupils use interesting vocabulary as well as accurately punctuating their work. Average pupils, when writing their 'wanted' posters for 'Mr Wolf', lack confidence and spend a lot of time rubbing out their work. Their handwriting is legible but inconsistent in orientation and size. The quantity of their work is low and they are not yet using as wide a range of words or punctuation as they should do for their age. Spelling in pupils' work is weak. The sample of work provided for inspection purposes included too little creative and imaginative work.
63. As pupils get older, they write for a wider range of purposes. In Year 4, there are some interesting recounts of their visit to Castleshaw. Their fantasy poems and also the Year 6 poems based on 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes, which were completed in a book week, are good quality. In one Year 6 lesson, higher-attaining pupils made personal responses to the text they were reading. Some wrote in a journalistic style, some used bullet points, others chose to write in sentences. They wrote about the main characters in the story competently. Average and below-average pupils also discussed and recorded the characters feelings. In another class, following their successful research on theme parks, pupils wrote persuasive posters and letters to promote the activities. In all three Year 6 classes pupils work with maximum effort, rising to the very good challenge their teachers set. Higher-attaining pupils write in a logical manner and information is clearly presented. Their choice of vocabulary adds interest. Average-and lower-attaining pupils' writing shows satisfactory organisation in their work, but sequences of sentences are not sufficiently extended. There is a significant number of below-average pupils who are not yet writing at length and still need support in structuring their work. Throughout the school spelling is weak. By the end of Year 6, most pupils write in a neat, joined style.
64. Teaching overall is satisfactory and is good in Years 5 and 6 and in these classes pupils achieve well. In almost all lessons observed throughout the school, effective questioning skills make pupils think hard and respond to the challenges to communicate their views. At times in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, the pace slips a little and as a result pupils become disinterested. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 6 and in one lesson in Year 2 there was excellent teaching. In these lessons work was carefully planned to give pupils plenty of challenging experiences and because the work was inspiring pupils achieved very well. Most teachers have high expectation of pupils to present their work carefully. The choice of good quality literature such as 'The Iron man' and 'Romeo and Juliet' increases pupils' knowledge and aids their cultural development. Classroom assistants support teaching and learning well. They encourage all pupils who find learning difficult and provide good support for those pupils who have particular special educational needs. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as their

peers and are fully included in all aspects of the English curriculum. There are some examples of diligent marking of pupils' work, where written guidance as well as positive comments assist pupils in improving their work and in achieving the targets set. However, this standard is not yet consistent enough throughout the school. Where teachers use too many worksheets, pupils are denied the opportunity to extend their imaginative and creative writing skills. Too often pupils have only to fill in missing words and write short sentences and this affects the development of writing handwriting and spelling skills.

65. The two subject co-ordinators provide satisfactory leadership. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, they have effectively worked together to introduce new initiatives for listening, speaking and reading. These are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Monitoring of teaching and learning has also taken place, but many areas identified for improvement are still in the early stages of development. There is not yet a sufficiently effective whole-school approach to teaching and learning throughout the school, for the areas of writing, handwriting and spelling.
66. The headteacher has rigorously identified why pupils are not achieving as well as they could or should. She is determined to raise standards higher and has started to implement a detailed development plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the standards pupils attain.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

67. Language and literacy skills are being used satisfactorily, overall, in other subjects throughout the school, although the opportunities for extended and independent writing are limited. Following instructions in physical education, during discussions in personal and social development and in their writing in other areas of the curriculum, for example when researching and reading about the work of famous artists and designers. Some good use is made of ICT as an alternative form of recording and also for research purposes. Displays in the school contain too few examples of pupils' written work, a result of pupils not having enough opportunities to write independently. There is not yet sufficient time given to writing within English lessons and opportunities are missed to use writing in other curriculum areas. Opportunities to speak and listen are used well in some classes, and are part of the school's drive to improve literacy. However, practice is not consistently good throughout the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 boosts pupils' confidence in their own ability.
- Challenging tasks are given to higher-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Inconsistencies in teaching restrict pupils' progress.

### **Commentary**

68. In the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in Year 2 in 2003, results were well below average, with very few pupils obtaining the higher levels. In the national tests taken by pupils in Year 6 in 2003, results were well above average.
69. Standards in Year 2 currently are below the national average because too few pupils are working at the higher level (Level 3). Standards are better than last year's well below average test results. Pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. The national guidelines are used to deliver a sound programme of mathematics. In a small number of lessons higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

70. Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations and are similar to last year's results in the national tests. Pupils are motivated to work hard and teachers' good subject knowledge helps them tackle challenging tasks. Pupils' achievement is good. It is much better in Years 5 and 6 than elsewhere because in those classes teaching is very effective. The school reached its targets for Year 6 in mathematics last year but this year's targets are not challenging enough.
71. The quality of teaching is good overall and in Years 5 and 6 it is particularly effective. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' learning has been affected by changes in teachers. Whilst the school has worked hard to keep disruption to a minimum, higher-attaining pupils in particular are not being challenged enough in some lessons. On occasion worksheets are used well to provide tasks that suit the different abilities in the class. However, an overuse of worksheets, mostly in Years 1 and 2, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, makes it difficult for pupils, teachers and parents to review progress and rarely gives pupils opportunities to record in the standard way or in their own style. In Years 3 and 4 satisfactory teaching helps pupils understand their mathematics but some teachers find it hard to motivate and inspire their class whilst others do not do enough to help lower-attaining pupils understand the task. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is high quality. Pupils respond positively because teachers support, praise and encourage them whilst making lessons lively and stimulating. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and provides hints on how to improve. Explanations are clear and easy to follow, such as in a Year 5 lesson on division which made very good use of a calculator to show pupils how to use decimals to express remainders. Challenging tasks are tackled willingly because teachers build every pupil's self-esteem. The well-organised and comprehensive revision programme, including additional support in the lunchtime mathematics club, gives pupils confidence in their ability.
72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinators are good and enthusiastic teachers who provide a positive role model for colleagues. They recognise that setting pupils in Year 6 has had a positive effect on standards, particularly for higher-attaining pupils who regularly get challenging work. They have monitored standards by looking at samples of pupils' work and have put in place steps to improve the quality of marking. The overuse of worksheets has been noted but no evaluation has yet taken place. Analysis of data and target setting across the whole school are developing. The Year 6 targets are not challenging enough because they do not take sufficient account of the high quality work going on in Years 5 and 6 where pupils improve rapidly.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

73. The pupils' use of their mathematical skills in other subjects is satisfactory. Much of it is incidental and as yet unplanned. Pupils measure materials using standard units in design and technology to make their frames for models. They sort and record their sorting using Venn diagrams and in science use both block and line graphs to record the data from their experiments.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching is good overall and leads to pupils learning effectively.
- Opportunities for independent writing are limited and not helped by the over-use of worksheets.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**



74. In the end of Year 2 teachers' assessments in 2003, results were broadly average, though very few pupils obtained the higher levels. In the 2003 end of Year 6 national tests, results were above average overall and above average compared with schools where pupils had similar prior attainment. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was above average. Pupils made good progress considering their below average attainment on entry to the school.
75. Standards seen are broadly average in Year 2. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of different materials, but are unsure of their properties and what they could be used for. The majority of pupils use the words 'opaque', 'translucent' and 'transparent' accurately and associate them with the correct materials. All pupils have the basic practical skills to carry out simple experiments, and do so with respect for materials and each other. Written work indicates the over-use of worksheets and under-use of independent writing; pupils do not write at length and have difficulty explaining their understanding without much prompting. In some lessons, lack of opportunity for pupils to be involved sufficiently in practical work means that learning is satisfactory rather than good. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
76. By Year 6 standards are above average. Though no lessons were seen in Year 6, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work indicate that most pupils have a good understanding of the topics studied. For example, their knowledge of electrical circuits is good; they know the differences between series and parallel circuits and explain the differences in terms of the brightness of bulbs in circuits. The highest attainers begin to explain the difference in terms of current flow differences. They understand the relationship between different animals and plants in food chains and some have a good grasp of the ultimate dependence of food chains on sunlight and the process of photosynthesis. Higher attainers explain, simply, what photosynthesis means. Pupils' use of specialist vocabulary is good. For example, they used the words volt, amp, current, resistance, cell, battery, predator and prey accurately and confidently in discussion. They speak well, answer questions in sentences and rarely become confused over the terminology they use. Nevertheless, written work shows too few opportunities to write at length about their scientific understanding, but more frequently to write up experimental reports. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what 'fair-testing' is and how they would apply it in an investigation. Generally, all pupils, whatever their prior attainment or background, achieve well.
77. Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well. Teachers set challenging work and plan activities that occupy and interest pupils. Generally, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, although occasionally poor management behaviour leads to unsatisfactory learning. ICT is used well and makes a significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers focus on developing pupils' literacy skills, especially their speaking and listening, and especially so in Years 5 and 6. More very good teaching is evident from pupils' work higher up the school, and this is because work is demanding and there is a recognition of the importance of pupils being able to express their knowledge and understanding. Work is generally assessed and marked effectively and in Years 3 to 6 targets are set that help pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.
78. The subject is well led and managed. The two co-ordinators work well together and are planning improvements. They have ensured the curriculum is continuous with as little repetition as possible. They have monitored pupils' work, are starting to look at teachers' planning but have not yet established a programme of lesson observation - this is planned for the next school year. The potential for improvement is good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achieve well throughout the school.
- There are many planned opportunities for pupils to use computers.
- Pupils develop good independent learning skills through using computers.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

79. Judgements are based on a small number of lessons, examination of work on display, examination of planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinators.
80. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. By Year 2 pupils have acquired significant confidence in using computers and while they are not particularly fast at locating keys, they are not deterred by this and sustain their efforts. The majority of pupils create text passages competently. They use keys and menus well to punctuate and save their own work. Teachers' planning, pupils' work on display and discussion indicates that pupils have a good grasp of the use of computers for recording information, simple control and for artwork. Overall pupils' achievement is good.
81. By Year 6 the great majority of pupils create and edit text passages well. They move text around the screen competently, change the font, font colour and size and spacing with ease. The majority use the internet effectively to research for information and most find the specific information they require and highlight, copy and paste sections into their own documents. A small proportion of pupils find this more difficult, partly due to inability to read and identify the particular piece of information they require and partly because they do not have the dexterity to copy and paste. However, with help, most eventually achieve this. The majority of pupils move text and pictures around the screen well, creating documents they are pleased with. They save and print competently. Planning and pupils' work indicate that pupils record information in tabular form, sort information and have sound control skills. Overall, all pupils achieve well.
82. Teaching and learning are good. The use of ICT is planned and organised well. Teachers' subject expertise is good, and there are plans to improve this further. Usually, teachers use the ICT suite as part of teaching other subjects and this is effective in ensuring all pupils experience ICT, gain a sense of achievement and are monitored and supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Usually, this is effective, although occasionally some pupils are missed and struggle for some time before help is provided. Explanations are clearly given, but the structure of lessons generally ensures that pupils have opportunities to work independently or in pairs, to research for themselves and to develop their ICT skills. Teachers keep close track of pupils' skills and provide support where it is needed.
83. Leadership and management are good and there is a clear direction for continued improvement. The curriculum is well planned and resources to support it are good. The co-ordinator provides a good level of support for teachers and classroom assistants and while monitoring and evaluation are informal, they are effective. Good use is made of the local authority support services. Plans for further improvement are good.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

84. Provision is good and is effective in developing and consolidating pupils ICT skills. There are planned opportunities in all subjects to develop ICT skills and to use ICT skills to enhance pupils' subject learning. This is particularly effective in developing literacy skills. Teachers use ICT effectively to develop pupils' research skills, especially through the use of the internet and

by directing pupils to specific websites or encouraging them to use search engines to find information.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are adversely affected by the low level of pupils' writing skills, although achievement is satisfactory overall.
- Pupils show good attitudes to work and behave well.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.
- There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching, although teaching is satisfactory overall.
- Assessment procedures are not consistent and the use of assessment to help pupils improve is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

85. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Pupils enter the school with a low level of literacy skills, particularly in writing. Although this improves over time, standards are affected throughout pupils' time in school. There are a limited number of well-written pieces of extended writing in Year 6, for example.
86. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. This is consistent between boys and girls, across different levels of attainment, among pupils with special educational needs and over the minority ethnic groups in the school.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher's subject knowledge is weak, instructions about what pupils are to do are rambling and unclear and the teacher tells the pupils too much, thus restricting their scope for individual investigation and observation. It is a feature of teaching that is otherwise satisfactory that pupils are often not given sufficient opportunities to think, analyse and investigate for themselves. Nevertheless, pupils' factual knowledge of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers control their classes well. As a result pupils behave well in lessons and no time is lost correcting misbehaviour. Pupils generally show interest in geography and have good attitudes to work. Assessment is left mainly to individual teachers, so there is no consistent data about what pupils know or do not know. The use of marking and assessment data to help pupils improve their work is unsatisfactory.
88. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 to 6 curriculum planning, assessment and development of teaching are not as far advanced as they should be following the amalgamation of the two schools.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and are affected by pupils' below-average writing skills.
- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils achieve well in these years.
- Pupils do not develop the skills of interpretation and investigation well enough.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and show good attitudes to work.

### Commentary

89. Standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, mainly because pupils enter the school with a low level of writing skills. Although this improves as pupils move through the school, standards are adversely affected throughout.
90. Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily. There is a higher proportion of good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and pupils achieve better in these two years as a result. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Achievement is consistent across all levels of attainment and across the minority ethnic groups in the school.
91. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons seen and analysis of pupils' work indicate that there are strengths in teaching in Years 5 and 6 and that teaching is not so strong in Years 3 and 4. All of the teachers control their classes well and no time is wasted in lessons because of poor behaviour. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to work. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well. In general teachers do not allow sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop research and interpretation skills, although in Years 5 and 6 this is good. Pupils do not regularly study the reasons why people acted as they did or look at the different ways in which the past is represented and interpreted. The curriculum link between history and literacy is not yet well enough developed to significantly improve pupils' writing and allow them to develop extended pieces of individual research. Consistent assessment procedures are now being developed. The use of assessment to enable pupils to improve their work is unsatisfactory.
92. History makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The two co-ordinators work well in establishing clear priorities for development of the subject. Following the amalgamation of the two schools, the curriculum is being well developed to provide a progressive and consistent programme for all pupils.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards are affected by the low level of pupils' writing skills.
- Teaching is good or very good in half the lessons.
- The use of assessment to show pupils how they can improve their work is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

93. Standards are below the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus in Year 2 and in line with those expectations in Year 6. Standards rise steadily over the time that pupils are in school but

are adversely affected by low level of pupils' writing skills and although they improve, this is still evident in Year 6.

94. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Whatever pupils' ethnic backgrounds or prior attainment, they achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in relation to their lower prior attainment.
95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. There are strengths in teaching in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is challenging and the variety of activities are planned effectively to involve and interest pupils. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that teaching is not as good in Years 3 and 4; mainly, there is less challenge. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are especially good at teaching pupils what particular symbols mean to people of different faiths and how their religious beliefs affect all aspects of their daily lives. Lessons are carefully planned and make full use of the good resources available to 'bring to life' aspects of different religions. Most teachers control their classes well and no time is lost in lessons. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to work. Assessment procedures are being developed in line with the locally-agreed syllabus but the use of marking and other forms of assessment to show pupils how they can improve their work is currently unsatisfactory. The link between religious education and literacy lessons for improving standards of writing is not sufficiently well developed.
96. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are particularly strong spiritual and moral elements in many lessons. The leadership and management of the subject are good with a sound awareness of areas for improvement. A new scheme of work has been developed in line with the revised locally-agreed syllabus and there are clear priorities for further development. There has been a good level of professional development to enable teachers to successfully teach the religions and faiths in the syllabus.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

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

Only two lessons were seen, one in Year 1 and one in Year 2. Discussion with teachers and pupils about their work as well as the samples of work in displays and sketch books have also been taken into account in the judgments made.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in art in Years 2 and 6 are above National expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to sample a good range of activities and develop their creative skills.

### **Commentary**

97. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above those usually expected and because teaching is good, pupils achieve well. In Year 1, observational drawings are of a good standard. Pupils have used viewfinders and observed closely the detail in petals of flowers. When making sunflowers out of clay, they respond well to the challenge to investigate how to join the clay to their tile and what happens if they roll their clay too thinly. Year 2 pupils ask and answer questions about the work of LS Lowry. They are confident, although many have a restricted vocabulary and this limits how well they talk about their work. Pupils draw buildings in Lowry's style showing developing skills in shading and using charcoal effectively to create shadows. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to enable them to achieve as well as

their peers. Pupils with special educational needs have previously created some effective collage in the style of Picasso. During lessons, all pupils including those with English as an additional language, show pride in their work and their good achievements. They work hard, listen carefully to their teachers, follow instructions well and demonstrate enjoyment.

98. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to sample a good range of art and design activities and experiment with a varied selection of media. Samples of work include drawing, painting, collage, two-and three-dimensional work and appreciation of the work of other artists. Year 6 pupils are inspired by the designs of Clarice Cliff. They have researched information about her life, designed their own plates and created some very impressive collage. They have also used ICT well to generate ideas and find out more about hats. Their individual designs show developing skills in drawing and individuality in design. There is also some good work, which results from and supports their studies in other areas of the curriculum. Examples include, pupils' drawings when studying the Egyptians, detailed symmetrical patterns connected to work in mathematics and interpretation of the paintings of Monet through dance.
99. Teaching and learning are generally good. Lessons are carefully planned and are conducted at a good pace, with a brisk review of earlier work to consolidate knowledge. In Year 1, the teacher discusses and demonstrates the skills to be acquired. A notable feature is the opportunity for pupils to investigate real sunflowers; this increases their knowledge of colour, shape and shade. Effective questioning encourages pupils to review and to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support to enable them to achieve well. There is some good collaborative work in Year 1 which supports pupils' social development well.
100. The co-ordinator is providing good leadership. All staff have been involved in the development of a scheme of work which is being used well. It is assisting teachers in their planning and enabling pupils to have access to quality experiences and develop their skills as they move through the school. However, there is not yet a formal system for assessing the progress pupils make so that they can be set targets to help them achieve even better.

### **Design and technology**

101. One design and technology lesson was seen, some pupils' work was scrutinised, teachers' planning was reviewed and discussions were held with the co-ordinators. An overall judgement on provision is not therefore secure. However, National Curriculum requirements are met and the quality of planning indicates that pupils experience problem raising, designing, material and tool selection, prototype making, final product, testing and evaluation. The one lesson seen, and supporting teacher and pupil materials, indicate that the subject is taught in a challenging way and that pupils enjoy the experience. They are made to think about what they plan, justify their reasons and evaluate their work. This is effective and helps not only develop thinking skills but also literacy skills.
102. The subject is well led and managed by two co-ordinators. There has been some work done to ensure continuity across the whole school, but this is acknowledged as an area for further development. Improvement planning is good, with some consideration being given at co-ordinator and senior management level as to how pupils' experience could be enhanced by rearranging the timetable. The potential for further improvement is good.

### **Music**

103. No music lessons were observed during the inspection so no secure judgement can be made about provision. A review of teachers' planning and a discussion with the subject co-ordinators indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Pupils enjoy musical activities, particularly when they are associated with the very good range of plays the school puts on for parents each year. During a singing practice pupils in Years 3 to 6 sing tunefully and joyfully. They hold their parts whilst singing a 'round' well.

104. The co-ordinators are keen and enthusiastic and set a good example for their colleagues. They support them with advice and contribute their skills to the music in the plays performed by each year group. There are good links with the Halle Orchestra, which provide pupils with experiences of quality musicianship. The school encourages pupils to learn instruments and there is a good uptake for woodwind and keyboard. A choir and instrumentalists take part in the Oldham Music Festival every year. This gives pupils the opportunity to perform in front of a large audience.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils work well because teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils' skills are not assessed systematically.
- Most pupils learn to swim.
- A good range of clubs gives higher-attaining pupils opportunities to compete against other accomplished athletes.

### **Commentary**

105. Standards in dance in Year 2 are in line with national expectations. No other aspects of physical education were observed. Pupils learn the steps of a Greek dance quite well and move around rhythmically. Standards in Year 6 in dance and games are in line with national expectations. Pupils have satisfactory soccer skills. Both boys and girls dribble with sound control though some pupils are timid when heading a ball. In dance, pupils work creatively, exploring the theme of 'fairground'. Their sequences, which showed good use of levels, are steadily perfected. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They experience a sound curriculum and have the opportunity to join in a good range of clubs. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 go swimming and experience a full year of lessons. Standards in swimming in Year 4 are broadly average. Most pupils can swim 25 metres and enjoy water-based activities. This represents good achievement because very few pupils swim when they join the school and few are taken swimming in their own time.
106. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers ensure that the working environment is safe for the pupils by checking equipment, teaching them to handle it safely and insisting that they work quietly. Pupils respond positively by working hard at the tasks given. Pupils of all abilities try hard to perfect their skills or sequences because teachers use praise well to motivate them. In Years 3 to 6 teachers made good use of pupil demonstrations to make coaching points to the class. End-of-unit assessment systems are not yet fully developed. This restricts teachers' ability to plan lessons which build on the skills pupils have previously learned. However, teachers assessed pupils' performance well in lessons and made some good coaching points, which enabled pupils to improve their performance.
107. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinators for infant and junior pupils have worked well together to produce useful guidelines for the whole school in gymnastic and dance. They offered talented pupils chances to work at a high level by providing dance and netball clubs. It is recognised that end-of-unit assessment is weak. The subject is well resourced because the equipment from two schools has been combined. The school offers clubs in team sports, street dance and judo as well as opportunities to work with professional coaches from the local soccer and county cricket clubs.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Personal, social and health education**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress in developing responsibility and in being prepared to support and help others.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop their social skills and to take on responsibilities.

#### **Commentary**

108. Personal, social and health education is fostered well through carefully planned times. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and to warning pupils about the dangers of drugs misuse. During work in geography, pupils consider environmental issues for example the use of wind farms as an alternative form of energy. The close links with the community police officer ensures pupils are well prepared for life in the outside world. The school council provides a good forum for pupils to debate issues of the day as seen through their eyes, this adds significantly to pupils' personal development. Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility and carry out tasks around the school. They do this well and treat the tasks they take on with seriousness and responsibility. There are carefully planned times for pupils to visit their next schools to prepare them for the next stage of education.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to voice their worries about moving to their secondary school. Teaching is very effective in allaying their fears. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils consider what it feels like to be lonely. This lesson provides good opportunities for pupils to express their own feelings and emotions and to listen with respect to others. Relationships in the three lessons seen were very good and this was reflected in the confidence of the pupils to share their feelings.
110. Leadership of the area is effective. The policy and teaching programme enables teachers to plan to ensure that children have the skills to live and learn together.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/A
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*