

INSPECTION REPORT

BARTON CLOUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stretford, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106320

Headteacher: Mr L Trippier

Lead inspector: Mr R Gill

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th September 2004

Inspection number: 266378

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	238
School address:	Audley Avenue Stretford Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M32 9TG
Telephone number:	0161 7487539
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Reilly
Date of previous inspection:	5 th July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barton Clough Primary is an average-sized school situated in Stretford, to the south of Manchester. It serves an area of marked social disadvantage. Most of the pupils live locally. The school has a Language Unit, which provides full-time education for pupils from the surrounding area who have a statement of special educational needs by virtue of their speech or communication difficulties. The school is also a provider of childcare for children aged two to five years. It gained the Investor in People award in 2002 and a Schools Achievement Award in 2003. A small proportion of pupils has a minority ethnic heritage; very few are learning English as an additional language. There are two children in public care. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average when compared to all primary schools. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above that found nationally. The majority of these pupils have learning, speech or communication difficulties, but the school does cater for pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school population is a changeable one. This has an effect on attainment, particularly at the end of Year 2. The children's attainment when they start school is well below that found in most children of a similar age. The school has changed a great deal since its last inspection in 1999. It has experienced a large turnover in staff in the last two years and a new headteacher was appointed in January 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4074	R Gill	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Art and design Design and technology
8922	B McIntosh	Lay inspector	
30590	P Tuttle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Physical education
32392	J Watson	Team inspector	Science Religious education Special educational needs
19041	R Linstead	Team inspector	English English as an additional language History Geography

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school. Standards of achievement are satisfactory. Despite a change in headteacher, and a significant turnover in staff and pupils in some classes since 2003, the school is moving forward quickly again under the good leadership of the new headteacher. Teaching is sound overall, but the achievement of children in the nursery and reception classes (Foundation Stage) and pupils with special educational needs is good as a result of the good teaching they receive. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the school is led in a way that inspires confidence from staff, pupils and parents;
- pupils' very good social and moral development is reflected in the positive relationships and behaviour they display around the school;
- standards are below the national expectations in English and information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6 and in English, mathematics and ICT in Year 2;
- information from teachers' assessment is not used well enough to involve pupils in discussing their own learning;
- co-ordinators' work is weakened by lack of regular opportunities to observe teaching; and
- the new partnership created with parents is beginning to have a strong influence on their children's progress.

The school has improved satisfactorily since its last inspection in 1999. Standards generally improved at a good rate from 1999, culminating in the 2003 results in Year 6. Unpublished figures for 2004 show a dip in Year 2 and Year 6 largely due to the temporary difficulties caused by the staff turnover. Provision in the Foundation Stage has developed well. The care provided for pupils, their personal development and the links with parents have all improved well. Progress in ICT has been dogged by persistent technical difficulties. Some progress has been made in creating a useful system of assessment, but this remains a weakness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 did well in 2003 and achieved well above pupils in similar schools, mainly because their attainment was so low in 1999. In 2004, those in Year 6 achieved satisfactorily when their individual progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is taken into account.

The work seen during the inspection confirms that:

- children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the nationally expected goals despite not reaching them overall;
- standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below expected levels in Year 2, but pupils achieve satisfactorily, and there is room for improvement; and

- standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectation in mathematics and science, but below them in English. Nevertheless, achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and pupils' behaviour around school is very positive. Attendance is satisfactory overall although absence in some classes affects the progress of an important minority of pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are sound. Good teaching ensures that children learn quickly in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, pupils with a special educational need learn well because teachers, expertly supported by the example of teachers in the school's Language Unit, know precisely what to do. Good teaching occurs in the rest of the school, but much is satisfactory because pupils' learning is not guided closely enough by information gained from assessing their progress.

The school provides good support for pupils. It works very well with parents and well with the community to enhance pupils' achievements. The curriculum is generally satisfactory, and the good opportunities for pupils' personal development and talents in sport have a positive influence on their progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by the assistant headteachers and governors, sets an example that embodies the drive to raise standards. Parents rightly speak highly of the current emphasis placed on consultation. Co-ordinators manage satisfactorily, but their effectiveness has been hampered by limited opportunities to observe teaching. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is just beginning to play a more dynamic role in checking on the school's progress and challenging it to do better. Governors ensure that the school successfully includes all pupils and promotes racial equality well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally very pleased with the school. Many appreciate the rapid improvement in their children's progress and attitudes to learning that have occurred since the new headteacher arrived. Equally, pupils have a very good opinion of the school and talk with confidence about their work and personal development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards in English, mathematics and ICT, particularly in Year 2;
- personalise the use of information about pupils' learning; and
- provide more opportunities for co-ordinators to evaluate work in their subjects to help drive up standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' attainment in Year 6 in English is below average, but average in mathematics and science; their achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 standards are below the national expectation in English and mathematics and in line with it in science. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 2. Standards by the end of the reception year fall below expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Nevertheless, this represents good achievement in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of achievement are good in the Foundation Stage despite children not reaching the nationally expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Standards are below what is expected nationally the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve satisfactorily but standards could be higher;
- Standards in ICT are below national expectations and pupils do not achieve well enough;
- Standards of achievement are good in the Language Unit and for pupils with special educational needs throughout the rest of the school.

Commentary

1. The school was charged with raising standards in English and mathematics in its 1999 inspection report. This was tackled well by concentrating, mainly, on pupils' achievements in Year 2 and developing the existing good practice in Year 6. The school's rate of improvement raced ahead of the national rise in standards even if results, particularly in Year 2, did not reach the national average; the school was closing the gap. This general development was not sustained in Year 2 beyond 2002 and in Year 6 after 2003. Nevertheless, the progress made was quite dramatic in some cases. For example, in 2003 the school exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science despite the pupils concerned having been a very low attaining year group at the age of seven.
2. Changes in staff in Year 2 and Year 6 coupled with an unusually high movement of children in and out of school in Year 2 in 2003 and 2004 caused the recent downturn in standards. Pupils, in 2004, achieved satisfactorily in Year 6 despite the lower results. In Year 2 it appears, from the 2003 results, that pupils were well below average, but when the factors of changes in the school population of pupils attending the school, the significantly low attendance of a minority and the group of pupils with statements of special educational needs in the Language Unit are taken into account, achievement in reading and writing was satisfactory. However, pupils did not achieve well enough in mathematics. A similar pattern emerges from the as yet unpublished 2004 results for Year 2 pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.8 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.8 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 26 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	28.6 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.3 (28.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.7 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Current standards, at the beginning of the school year, are below the national expectation in English at Year 2 and Year 6. This is mainly because pupils' speaking and listening skills are not developed enough and this affects their progress in reading. Pupils' writing is generally in line with national expectations in Year 6. Attainment is below the nationally expected level in mathematics in Year 2, but in line with it in Year 6. Pupils meet national requirements in science in Year 2 and Year 6. The pace of pupils' progress is better in Year 6 than in Year 2. Pupils are on course to reach the targets set for the end of Year 6, but standards of achievement could be higher in Year 2.
4. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Their progress is good in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching concentrates well on the basics and children are taught to consolidate their learning in the many well-organised play activities that are provided. When children work as a group with an adult, the use of songs, rhymes, games and quick-fire discussion helps to make learning fun. These activities develop children's powers of speech, which particularly advantages the small group of children who are learning English as an additional language. Those with a special educational need achieve well because the planning for their learning is so precise about what they need to do. Children are on course to reach the nationally expected levels in creative and physical development. This represents good progress owing to the rich variety of activities that are provided in the classrooms and outside in the newly created play facilities. Achievement in personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children achieve a poise and confidence that are destined to bring them in line with national expectations by the end of the reception year.
5. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes and in the Language Unit achieve well despite not reaching the nationally expected levels. Their learning is carefully guided by detailed plans that contain attainable steps towards well-devised goals. Teaching is often augmented successfully by the work of assistants who have become far more skilled, of late, at helping pupils meet their targets. One of the key strengths in the Language Unit, in ensuring that pupils make good progress, is the linking of subjects to reinforce learning on many levels. For example, art and design is used successfully to boost pupils' skills in writing when they are expected to write about the paintings they have created. The pride with which they talk about their work, in this respect, demonstrates how academic progress is closely tied to the growth of self-esteem.
6. The school contains a small group of pupils who have a minority ethnic heritage and an even smaller group of children looked after in public care. These pupils are achieving satisfactorily at the same rate as the majority of pupils in the school. In some lessons all pupils, including those capable of higher attainment, have moments of weak progress and achievement because too little time is devoted to discussion, finding out what pupils think about the learning and how it could be improved. By contrast, there are occasions when progress whizzes along such as in lessons devoted to talking about feelings and other aspects of personal development.
7. The low standards and weak achievement in ICT are not of the school's making. Provision in the subject did improve after the last inspection, but serious faults in the school's computers

and other pieces of hardware in the last year have prevented pupils from sustaining their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes help them to learn effectively;
- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment;
- High expectations of behaviour are set and achieved; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment;
- Pupils' moral and social awareness are developed very well and helps them become mature and responsible;
- Pupils have a good awareness of their own and other cultures and faiths but have too few opportunities to experience visitors representing other faiths.

Commentary

8. Pupils like coming to school, are keen to learn and find lessons interesting. They feel that teachers make learning fun and they enjoy the variety of experiences that the school offers. They respond with confidence to the challenges set for them and concentrate well on their tasks. When contributing to discussions or explaining their methods of calculation they are not afraid to make mistakes as they know their answers are valued. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Unit, have equally positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons. It is only in a very few lessons when pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, resulting from ineffective management of behaviour, and this hinders pupils' progress. The positive attitude to work is encouraged from the moment the children enter the nursery. In the reception year, children make very good progress towards the goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development. After only a short time back in school the children were very well behaved and settled in their routines and learning.
9. The school gives a very high profile to pupils' social and moral development. Relationships are very good throughout the school because the pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community. This helps to create a happy learning environment. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and almost always try to do what they know is right. The 'Golden Time' reward is very good in promoting self-discipline and helping pupils make choices about their own behaviour. Pupils enjoy the individual rewards for good work and behaviour and know that their efforts are valued. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by pupils but they feel that if any form of harassment does occur, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff. There has been one fixed-period exclusion during the last school year. This is a success when consideration is given to the number of pupils, and an indication of the school's strong commitment to inclusion.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	159	1	0
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed-White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed-any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British-Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British-African	1	0	0
Black or Black British-any other Black background	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	5	0	0

10. The school's good ethos gives pupils' confidence and raises their self-esteem. The pupils enthusiastically take on extra responsibilities such as being prefects, corridor monitors or playground leaders. From the reception class upwards pupils are able to participate actively in the school council. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate very well in play and work. They are very friendly, polite and welcoming, greeting visitors with a cheerful smile. The atmosphere around the school at lunchtime is very positive and sociable. Pupils are very well behaved in the dining room and chat amicably to each other and adults.
11. Spiritual development is an integral part of the curriculum and assemblies and is planned around themes that are relevant to pupils. This helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. Achievement assemblies affirm the school values of helping pupils appreciate the individuality in themselves and others. Class discussions give good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views of others.
12. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. They are taught to appreciate and respect others' beliefs, ideas and culture and they show a good level of fairness and tolerance. Racism is not tolerated and pupils of different ethnic heritages mix freely and easily at all times. The school raises awareness of the richness of cultures that make up British society well. The pupils learn about other world faiths and traditions through art, history, geography and religious education but there are too few first hand experiences from outside visitors representing other cultures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

13. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are well motivated by the range of class and individual rewards and their attendance is good. In Years 1 and 2 the overall attendance for 2003-04 was unsatisfactory but this was due mainly to a small number of poor attendees in each class. The poor attendance of these pupils affects their attainment and progress. The school makes first day absence calls which helps to keep the unauthorised absence low. Any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously. Punctuality has improved over the last year but there are still a few persistent latecomers each day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education that includes sound teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall, because systems are too new for results to be used well enough. There is a sound curriculum which is well enhanced by activities beyond the classroom, particularly in sport. Pupils appreciate what the school does for them, particularly in the way that their views are taken into account.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage and in the Language Unit. A range of good methods of assessment has been introduced recently, but these are not yet used enough to help set demanding tasks and pupils are not involved fully in discussions about how they could improve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some lessons, in the Foundation Stage and elsewhere, make learning fun and pupils are involved well in talking about their learning;
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because activities are so well matched to pupils' needs;
- The involvement of pupils in their own learning through marking and discussion is inconsistent;
- The lack of detailed knowledge about pupils' achievements prevents a faster rate of progress.

Commentary

14. The overall quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection, although the personnel has changed significantly. There is less unsatisfactory teaching, but the amount of very good work has remained about the same. The good teaching continues to be concentrated in the Foundation Stage and in the Language Unit but is spread across the Years 1 to 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (13%)	17 (55%)	9 (29%)	1 (3%)	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.

15. Strong teaching has several common themes running through it, but the central strand is that learning engages pupils' interest in learning to the point of effervescent enthusiasm. This occurred for example, in a Foundation Stage lesson in which children were learning about the human body. They were engrossed in the singing and repetitious rhymes. At one stage the level of fun and excitement became infectious. Older pupils in Year 5 became fiercely

competitive in a game designed to improve their knowledge of 'times tables'. This atmosphere of friendly rivalry gave meaning and verve to this seemingly ordinary activity.

16. Good learning is often characterised by pupils being successfully involved in talking about their work. This happened, for example, in a lesson in the Language Unit in which pupils were developing, orally, a story line that had to contain a dilemma for the central character. Moreover, teaching is occasionally powerful in the way that it helps pupils to build on their previous knowledge through high quality discussion. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils' knowledge of plant growth was successfully extended by virtue of skilful teaching that drew out of pupils what they knew already, but had forgotten, and then dovetailed new learning onto it.
17. Teaching that provides good activities, based on useful assessment, designed to facilitate step-by-step learning is a theme that is found predominantly in the Language Unit, but it spreads into work related to pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. In these areas, learning is well assessed on a regular basis and the careful analysis is translated into apt targets for pupils to work towards. Parents are very proud of the school's successes in this respect. They are involved from an early stage and review regularly pupils' progress with the special needs co-ordinator and teachers so that they can support their child's learning. Teachers and speech therapists plan very well together to ensure that individual speech and language needs are tackled. Teaching assistants play an increasingly useful role in making sure that pupils meet their targets. Moreover, pupils are encouraged to assess their own progress towards their targets thus involving them in their own assessment.
18. The weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons relate largely to the lack of active pupils' involvement. In many cases this is replicated in the way that their work is marked. Teaching identifies too few areas for development leaving pupils unaware of how to improve. There is a discontinuity throughout the school in this respect; some good examples of helpful marking are matched by weaker practice. In a few lessons teachers talk too much and pupils become restless. Generally, there is more interaction but pupils are often not required to say how they thought the lesson went for them and how they might have improved. This missing element of self-assessment causes pupils to rely too heavily on what teaching says are the aspects to develop, which are often too general to assist individual pupils. Very occasionally, pupils resort to disruption when not engaged sufficiently, and the lessons become unsatisfactory.
19. The assessment of pupils' work through testing and the teachers' own judgements about achievement has been underdeveloped in Years 1 to 6. The volume of assessment was improved from 1999, but the way these and other insights into learning were used to inform teachers and motivate pupils remained a weakness until very recently. Essentially, too much statistical information was collected and not enough was done with it. There is now a very streamlined system in place and some headway has been made in identifying small groups of pupils who could be doing better. However, the effect of assessment is unsatisfactory because there has not been time for the new system to bear fruit.

The curriculum

The school gives pupils satisfactory opportunities for learning. Careful planning makes lessons interesting and caters for the needs of pupils of all capabilities. The school is well staffed and has good accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of the curriculum in the nursery and reception class gives children a good start to their education;
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs;

- The good match of the staff to pupils' needs and good standards of accommodation and resources improve the quality of pupils' education;
- Provision for sport and games after school is good.

Commentary

20. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school has successfully put in place and developed the national strategies for English and mathematics. Learning in other subjects benefits from new programmes of study and good quality guidance for teachers. Pupils of all capabilities therefore find the topics interesting and relevant. Careful planning often strengthens learning by skilful linking of subjects such as geography and history, and science and design and technology.
21. The quality of the curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes has improved well since the school's last inspection. Facilities for outdoor play have been established and make a significant contribution to physical development and other areas of learning. The programme of work, based on productive educational play, helps children to make good progress towards the nationally expected levels by the end of their year in reception. The strength of the curriculum is the effective balance between activities planned for children and those that they initiate for themselves, for example in imaginative play. This kind of learning is ideally suited for the small group of children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. They are making good progress.
22. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs springs from the good practice that exists in the school's Language Unit. This is guided skilfully by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Work is adapted well to suit the pupils' abilities and they are integrated successfully into mainstream classes for lessons such as religious education. All pupils with a special educational need, throughout the school, learn well because the special plans drawn up for them contain the appropriate small steps that are shared well with parents and checked carefully by teaching assistants.
23. The good quality of the accommodation gives all pupils a high quality learning environment. This contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school and their good attitudes and behaviour. The good quality and number of resources improve pupils' concentration on new learning. The staff are well trained and qualified to teach to the revised curriculum and to meet the particular needs of pupils, including those in Language Unit.
24. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. There are clubs and groups for art and design, French, drama and singing. Good provision for after-school sport includes football for girls and boys, basketball, badminton, hockey, golf and mixed games for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Good links with a local Premier League football team, the local golf driving range and the physical education department of the local comprehensive school widen the range of activities and coaching and stimulate pupils' interest and involvement in sport and games.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The caring atmosphere in school helps pupils to enjoy their learning. The school provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance. Pupils are at the forefront of the school's work, and the way the school seeks and acts upon their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very welcoming place where pupils are cared for well and helped to mature and gain in confidence;

- Teachers and other staff provide very good personal support for pupils;
- Good arrangements are made to help children settle in smoothly to the nursery and reception classes;
- Pupils are not involved closely enough in setting their own targets for academic improvement;
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon. They contribute very well to the development of the school.

Commentary

25. Parents feel that the school provides a high standard of care and individual pupils receive excellent support in times of real need. Pupils are safe and secure at school and the good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. All staff work hard to make the school a very welcoming place for pupils. Daily routines are well planned and pupils are carefully supervised when at work or at play. At lunchtimes clear systems are well established and this ensures a continuity of pupils' welfare and safety. The headteacher has introduced thorough systems for carrying out risk assessments of the premises and grounds and appropriate records are maintained. On a practical day-to-day level the staff and caretaker are vigilant in checking the building to ensure a safe working environment for the children and promptly deal with any hazards found.
26. The school is always ready to listen to pupils and offers very good personal support as their needs arise. Relationships throughout the school are very good so pupils feel secure and know there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. Child protection procedures are good and staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about the children in their care. The school gives a high priority to identifying and helping vulnerable children with anxieties or personal and social problems that may be hindering their education. Close liaison with parents, carers and outside agencies helps to ensure that the children get the support they need. This has a positive effect on their learning and contributes well to their overall personal development. The school is welcoming, and the friendly atmosphere as children arrive with their parents to start the school day in the nursery and reception classes gives them confidence to quickly settle into the routines of the day.
27. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made good gains in their academic and personal progress. Teachers collect a lot of information about pupils' academic performance but they do not use it as well as they might to involve pupils in seeking ways to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Unit, are supported well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons and achieve well. There is a strong commitment to involve parents in their children's education in the Foundation Stage and well-written booklets have been provided to support parents in this work.
28. Pupils know that their views matter and the school will try to act upon what they say. They feel well involved and part of the decision-making processes in school. One boy was quick to say that the school council is very important because it helps children to voice their opinions and raise awareness of issues that affect them. For example, the work of the council has focused on themes such as bullying and discouraging adults from smoking in the school grounds.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and other schools are good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and their personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed very good relationships with parents which contribute to pupils' achievement and their good attitudes to learning;

- The use of surveys to seek parents' views is very effective and much good has come from the results;
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's progress;
- Family learning courses help parents to develop their own skills and gain an understanding of how to help their children at home;
- Good links with the community and other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

29. Parents feel that there is "a new zest for life in the school". They speak enthusiastically about the welcoming, friendly atmosphere in school and how they are encouraged to take part in their children's learning. The headteacher and staff are accessible and approachable if parents have any concerns about their children. At the start of the day the headteacher spends time chatting to parents at the school gate. This simple gesture exemplifies to them a new mood of openness about the school. The school works very well with parents to involve them in their children's learning and they respond well to this. The parents' association is very successful in organising social and fund-raising events and raises substantial amounts of money for school funds. A number of parents and volunteers are involved in the successful 'Reading Partner' initiative that provides extra adult support for pupils and is helping them to develop their reading skills.
30. The school feels that parents' views make an effective contribution to school improvement. Their ideas and suggestions are sought in various ways, either through formal surveys or the informal but successful 'cup and chat' meetings held each term. Good feedback is given through newsletters on any action that is taken as a result of issues they raise. The involvement of parents in this way has helped establish a strong working relationship between home and school.
31. The school organises a good range of courses for parents that help them to develop their own skills and this boosts their confidence. The family learning courses are successful in giving parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what their children are learning and as a result they are able to help them at home. During the inspection parents and children received certificates for their involvement in family learning. This portrayed a very positive picture of the pride and enjoyment parents and their children gain from learning together.
32. Communication with parents is very good and keeps them very well informed about school life, how well their children are doing and what they are learning in class. Parents have good opportunities to find out about how their children are progressing through formal and informal discussions with staff. The end of year reports give a very good summary of pupils' achievements and progress and include targets for future learning. Parents of pupils with special educational attend review meetings and are fully involved in their child's learning.
33. The school makes full use of local resources in terms of working with people and visiting places to bring learning alive for the pupils. There is a good programme of visitors to the school and children visit many interesting local places to enrich their curriculum. The school provides a base for extended childcare provision which is a good facility for the community. Links with Business in the community and Community Service have enabled the school to improve resource storage and grounds. The school works closely with a range of other schools. There are regular opportunities for the sharing of curricular issues and staff expertise which contribute to pupils' learning. Although transition arrangements to secondary schools are satisfactory the curriculum links between Years 6 and 7 are underdeveloped.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership provided by the headteacher is good, but management, overall, is satisfactory, because senior staff and co-ordinators lack experience.

The governance of the school is satisfactory with the governors ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership, inspired by the headteacher, provides direction and drive;
- The well-qualified and energetic team of senior staff and co-ordinators lacks experience in evaluating teaching and learning;
- The school is good at creating partnerships.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides a pace and sense of urgency to the school's development that are very well appreciated by governors, staff, parents and pupils. Initiatives begun after the school's last inspection in 1999 are being refined, augmented and, in some cases, rejuvenated. A touch of zeal has been added to the very positive atmosphere which exists. The example, set by the headteacher, of forward thinking and good communications combined with an open friendly approach is infectious. It has resulted in many pupils emulating the same poise and openness in their relationships around school.
35. The school's rapid advances in National Curriculum test results, in Year 2 and Year 6, from 1999 could not be fully sustained when key staff left or changed classes. This is because pupils' learning was not well enough assessed, in all classes, leaving the next teacher, and the pupils themselves, initially unclear about what to do next. The school has now put in place a good system of assessment designed to assure a continuous build-up of achievement. Already small groups of children who need to make more rapid progress have been identified. This process of tightening systems has been well managed, but it is too soon to see its full effect, and there is more work to be done to make sure that pupils are fully involved in the appraisal of their own learning. The closer analysis of learning, and any resultant targets for improvement, grows naturally from the existing good practice in the school's Language Unit. This well led and managed department of the school has an influence that is beginning to flourish, for all pupils with special educational needs, as teachers and their assistants work more closely with its staff.
36. Energetic leadership has created strong partnerships on many fronts. The firm and fruitful links between home and school that exist in the well-managed Foundation Stage, and pre-school groups, make children's entry into school smooth and productive. The revitalised effect of the school's Investor in People status has, for example, vastly improved the self-esteem of teaching assistants who are beginning to work far more closely with teachers in teaching pupils with special educational needs. Parents value the drive to include them in the school's development, particularly through the family learning scheme that adds a spiritual dimension to their relationship with the school; the pride on the faces of those involved is a dramatic indication of the successful leadership that exists in this respect.
37. A strong team of senior staff and co-ordinators is working hard to evaluate, regularly, the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have gained a firm grasp of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, and of the satisfactory improvement from the last inspection, and know what needs to be done next. A system of regular checking and evaluation has been drawn up, but it is too soon for their common understanding to have been deepened and extended because so few of the school's leaders have actually observed teaching and formed a view about areas for development. Nevertheless, test results have been fully analysed and already the system of performance management has been sharpened to place a greater emphasis on pupils' progress in mathematics. This is a good example of purposeful management at work.

38. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school and in the process of development, despite some of its members being very new and enjoying a period of induction. Statutory duties are implemented in full, including the provision of a race equality policy that is monitored regularly. Governors consult well and have an outward-looking approach that compares the school's performance with others in a similar position. The effect of their work is satisfactory overall because, currently, it is only a core of more experienced governors that has an in-depth view of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	642,349.07
Total expenditure	630594.04
Expenditure per pupil	2672

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	2738.75
Balance carried forward to the next	14,493.78

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage of learning is **good**. This is due the effective leadership of the co-ordinator and the good level of teaching, care, guidance and support, given to all children.

A consistency in lesson planning, teaching methods and the assessment of children's learning has been achieved through good leadership and management. Children's progress is monitored closely; staff, including teaching assistants, know the children well. Their work is assessed satisfactorily and annotated with useful comments to help parents see what progress has been made. An effective partnership with parents has been created. Parents speak highly of the provision.

On entry to the school, children are well below levels of attainment typical for their age. By the end of the reception year, most have made good progress but are still below expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, but on course to reach them in other areas of learning. This represents good achievement, apart from personal, social and emotional development in which it is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good;
- Children show care and respect for each other;
- All adults are very good, caring role models for all children.

Commentary

39. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and are consistent in their approach in organising and managing children's learning opportunities. Children respond very well and this enables them to develop personal and social skills in line with expectations for their ages. The strong focus on the development of children's social skills, throughout the Foundation Stage, results in children making very good progress. Many are on course to achieve the nationally expected levels by the end of reception. Children quickly learn the routines to be followed and show a real keenness to take an active part in learning – working well together and in groups. In reception, for example, a small group negotiated very well in planning to make a flag for their model boat made from wooden blocks. Many opportunities are provided for children to initiate their own activities within the classrooms and in the well-used outdoor area. Teaching is very good and as a result children work in a purposeful learning environment. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are well integrated. The judicious use of teaching assistants enables these children to make very good achievement in this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations but children achieve well, despite their limited skills on entry to nursery;
- There is a good emphasis on tackling children's difficulties in speaking and listening;
- Children with special educational needs receive specialist help and make good progress;
- Assessments, on a day-to-day basis, are not linked closely enough to national expectations.

Commentary

40. When they start school, children find it hard to communicate their thoughts clearly and listen to others. Teaching responds to these difficulties right from the start. Lessons are planned well to include many opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening. For example, children in the nursery are actively encouraged to talk about what they feel are the best things in their nursery. In one lesson, the teacher circulated a toy dog for children to hold as they thought about what to say. This was a very effective teaching strategy and the children grew in confidence and shared their thoughts well; other children listened with interest. In reception class, the good teaching develops children's speaking further by questioning them and encouraging them to expand their replies.
41. The Foundation Stage gives strong support to children with special educational needs. The local Language Inclusion Strategy is very effective in meeting these children's needs. The skills of teachers' assistants are mobilised well in this respect, for example when an assistant taught successfully a group of children how to sound out and make the shape of a letter 'c'. The feeling of success at the end of his short session was almost tangible.
42. Children show a keen interest in stories and are able to recall the sequence of events in a story read by their teacher. By contrast, many children find it hard to learn to write because they lack experience in scribbling on paper to make shapes and patterns. Consequently, this affects the speed at which they learn to form letters. Nevertheless, children make good progress in reading and writing, including the few who are learning English as an additional language. Children are not on course to reach nationally expected levels by the end of reception, but are achieving well as a result of the good teaching they receive.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of reception are below expectations but achievement is good;
- Teaching of number is good, and in shape, space and measure it is very good;
- Many children find it hard to form numbers correctly.

Commentary

43. Teaching is good in developing children's counting skills and the use of number. Learning about shape, space and measure in the nursery is very good and all children make good progress with one or two achieving extremely well. For example, when studying four two-dimensional shapes one child was able to deduce that a square has four long sides, whereas a rectangle has two long sides and two short ones. Others benefited well from the discussion encouraged by the teacher and learning overall was very good. Children are encouraged well to develop and use their number skills in group activities and are keen to do so. The effective use of rhymes and songs also helps children to consolidate their learning of number sequencing. By contrast, the writing of numbers presents problems for many children because of their weak manipulative skills. This is because a significant number of children start school

in the nursery with limited skills in holding pencils and making patterns on paper. Consequently, they find it hard, later on, to write numbers correctly. Good teaching is tackling this weakness, but progress is slow owing to children's initial difficulties.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations but all children achieve well;
- Planning for use of the outdoor facility for this area of learning is good. Children are actively encouraged to initiate their own learning activities;
- Insufficient time is being devoted to developing children's ICT skills.

Commentary

44. Planning for the development of children's knowledge is good and this results in productive learning. Children use the new outdoor play areas well, even when not directly supervised by an adult. For example, they build large constructions out of plastic blocks and experiment with the physical properties of sand and water. This kind of freely chosen activity enhances social skills and develops children's capabilities in verbalising their thoughts and listening to those of others.
45. The challenge provided by teaching and the conversations that ensue are most effective and as a result children learn well. For example, a child in the nursery planted plastic flowers carefully in soil in her tray and then turned them to face the sun. She was keen to explain that the sun makes flowers grow and then stated, "They need water too!" Children in the reception learn well about the human body as a result of some very good teaching. By the end of a typical lesson, children can draw themselves and discuss their pictures to show they have included all the necessary body features. Learning is initially hampered by children's lack of physical dexterity, in cutting with scissors and managing glue for example. However, they make good progress in these skills. By contrast, the development of ICT skills is haphazard. Computers are used but not systematically enough to ensure consistently good achievement.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- On entry to the nursery many children show underdeveloped physical skills;
- Teaching is good and children make good progress, achieving well throughout the Foundation Stage;
- The provision of climbing apparatus has improved since the previous inspection.

Commentary

46. Children's underdeveloped physical skills affect, adversely, the speed at which they acquire the fine manipulative skills associated with, for example, using scissors, holding pencils and threading beads. By contrast, most children are making good progress in developing their general fitness. This is because the gymnastic equipment, in the school hall, and the Foundation Stage play equipment is so useful in this respect. Most effective support is given for children with special educational needs; those with a disability make good progress because teaching is sensitive to their needs. For example, in one particular lesson, the teacher demonstrated possible movements on the floor and the small apparatus so well that

children, of all abilities, could not fail to respond with joy and physical dexterity. Children are on course to meet national expectations by the end of reception as a result of the good teaching they receive.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to express themselves creatively both indoors and in the outside area;
- Children's attainment is in line with expectations, which represents good achievement;
- Teaching is good in the way that it provides a good range of opportunities for children to develop their creative skills both within the classroom and outside. Children enjoy working with paint.

Commentary

47. Children in the nursery use pre-mixed paint in making self-portraits. The results show clearly that a significant number of children on entry to school have not yet developed the manipulative skills to accomplish the activity well. However, children make rapid progress in developing these skills and achieve average standards by the end of the reception class. Teachers and their assistants actively encourage role-play and the good facilities mean children can and do avail themselves of opportunities both inside and outdoors, learning well. All children enjoy singing rhymes and readily learn them. Teaching makes good use of singing to support other areas of learning, in particular communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress;
- Assessment does not make enough impact on pupils' progress and learning;
- Good resources enable pupils to make steady progress in reading;
- The range of writing opportunities is good but teachers do not always expect enough of pupils;
- Lessons are not developing pupils' speaking and listening skills enough.

Commentary

48. Achievement is satisfactory, given pupils' below average language and literacy development at the beginning of Year 1. Standards in Year 6 are below average, as at the time of the last inspection. Reading and writing standards in Year 2 are also below average. National test results in 2004 give the same picture. Girls and boys reach similar levels of attainment. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with statements of special educational needs in the Language Unit make good progress. This is because enthusiastic staff expect a lot of them; they provide interesting and challenging work and ensure high standards of participation and presentation. Pupils with special educational needs do well in the other classes because teachers match tasks and resources closely to their needs and give good individual support.
49. Speaking and listening standards are not high enough. This is because teachers do not usually give enough opportunities to develop them. Teachers' recent training on new national guidance has not yet improved standards. Although a few lessons give pupils good opportunities for learning through discussion, there is commonly not enough challenge for pupils to contribute and develop their ideas. English lessons usually give opportunities for pupils to talk over ideas in pairs and to discuss extracts from stories. However, slower learners often lose the thread when teachers and other pupils talk at length. Pupils do not therefore learn enough by listening to each other. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 speak confidently, but tend to answer questions briefly and do not explain their views in detailed sentences.
50. The school promotes reading development well. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading has significantly increased since the last inspection. Books are up to date, attractive and interesting. Pupils say that weekly reading with their teachers in groups improves their understanding. Classes use a well-organised library each week and have silent reading sessions at the beginning of each afternoon. They therefore gain satisfactory skills in finding books and information. As a result and because of some good parental support, nearly all read regularly at home. However, as there is not enough regular reading aloud in lessons, standards of phrasing, expression and sense of audience are underdeveloped.
51. Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well through a wide range of stimulating writing experiences. The school gives pupils good opportunities to use their imaginations and express feelings in writing. For example, Year 4 pupils' poems showed their concern over pollution in lines such as: "It's time to stop. It's time to care. Cans and bottles in the street. Broken glass under your feet." Skills in persuasion, note-making, correspondence, planning and spelling are satisfactory. However, overall standards remain below average, because teachers do not expect enough of the quality, amount and improvement in pupils' writing.

52. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The school has plenty of data on pupils' standards in reading and writing, but teachers do not use it sufficiently to improve pupils' learning. While marking recognises achievements and encourages pupils, it does not show them clearly enough how to improve. This is mainly because assessment is not providing detailed termly targets which pupils discuss, understand and strive to achieve. Nor is the school adequately assessing and tracking the development of pupils' speech.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the development of writing skills in other subjects. Pupils use imaginative writing well in history and religious education to understand people and values. In geography pupils' poems intensify learning about the environment. Science and design and technology show good development of analytical and descriptive writing. There is satisfactory use of reading in other subjects. However, teachers do not develop pupils' speech enough in other subjects, mainly because it is not sufficiently planned. In many lessons pupils lack opportunities to assess, discuss and explain their learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards improved well between 1999 and 2003;
- Pupils currently achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but standards could be higher still;
- Not enough use is made of information about pupils' progress to raise standards, but perceptive leadership has a good grasp of what needs to be done;
- There is some lively teaching that captures pupils' interest in the subject.

Commentary

54. Standards of achievement improved well from the time of the last inspection. For example, in the years between 1999 and 2002, the rate of improvement in the school's National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 2 was four times that found nationally. This was because much effort was put into improving the performance of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Less emphasis was placed on ensuring that pupils in every other year group progressed at a good rate and that helpful records of their progress were kept and passed on to the next teacher to guide their work.
55. The pace of improvement in test results, in Year 2, slackened in 2003 and 2004; while pupils achieved satisfactorily, standards could have been higher. Many children left or arrived at the school part way through the year and several pupils had a poor record of attendance that prevented them making adequate progress. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 made significant advances from 1999, to the point that in 2003 their results were above the national average. In 2004, Year 6 standards dipped to be in line with the average. The academic year 2003/4 was a year of turmoil throughout the school, but particularly in Year 2 and Year 6. There was a large turnover of staff and the new teachers, who taught these key year groups, found it hard to raise the attainment of many pupils without detailed records of their previous learning.
56. Currently, standards are below the national expectations in Year 2 and in line with them in Year 6, but the headteacher and the co-ordinator have breathed new life into the management of the subject. The school has a very clear idea of how to ensure better progress throughout the school. All teachers recognise that standards in Year 2 could be higher and what needs to be done to make sure that pupils in Year 6 reach, or exceed, the ambitious goals set for them.

A good assessment system has been created, but the school acknowledges correctly that its effect is currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not observed enough teaching to ensure that lessons are being improved in the prescribed ways, but the school knows about this weakness and is beginning to implement a programme of observations.

57. Throughout the school, pupils capable of higher attainment generally succeed well enough because in most lessons they receive more demanding work to do. Those with special educational needs make good progress because the special needs co-ordinator works closely with all teachers and their assistants to facilitate it. Lower attaining pupils, often a large proportion of the class, make slower progress because the assessment of their work has not been detailed enough and teachers' assistants have hitherto not been trained sufficiently well to help them. Things are changing fast. Assistants are becoming far more skilled in supporting pupils' learning and groups of underperforming pupils have been identified, through careful assessment. Parents and pupils both appreciate the way that mathematics has been prioritised for development. The look of joy on the faces of pupils and their parents in the awards assembly for family learning bears witness to the excitement that mathematics now generates in some parts of the school.
58. The broadly satisfactory teaching, throughout the school, is often characterised by lively mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of the lesson, after which the pace slows as pupils find it hard to settle to tasks that either demand too much from them or not enough. Teachers usually rectify problems on the spot and bring the lesson to a sound conclusion. In the best lessons, teachers maintain the good impetus given at the beginning, making sure that a quick recall of tables is used to solve the well-pitched problems. Pupils enjoy these lessons, particularly boys who relish the competitive element related to learning their tables. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, boys competed with a real sense of urgency to become the tables' champion of the day. This successful practice is not common throughout the school where too many lessons lack this fun element or the full involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Mathematics is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. In design and technology, for example, pupils measure accurately to make their own books or weigh ingredients accurately when making food. Lessons in which computers are used, to help pupils consolidate and extend their skill in calculation or to present information in graphical form, are often successful, but the technical difficulties experienced by the school has meant that progress in this work has often been interrupted.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The implementation of a detailed scheme of work in science has resulted in an improvement in pupils' scientific knowledge;
- Teaching reinforces previous learning well through useful question and answer sessions;
- Pupils' attitudes to science are good;
- Planning in lessons generally does not take account of the needs of all groups within the class;
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out, plan and devise investigations.

Commentary

60. Standards at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 in 2003, as represented by the results in national tests in Year 6 or in the teachers' assessments in Year 2, were well above those achieved nationally. Unpublished results for 2004 were satisfactory for both year groups. Changes in staff, higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs and the lack of detailed and useable assessment information caused the differences. Boys and girls perform at the same level, but all pupils do the same tasks and this often limits the success of higher attaining pupils.
61. Teaching is satisfactory. In lessons teachers consistently share the purpose of the lesson so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. Work is well planned and based firmly on the recommendations in the school's clear and helpful new scheme of work. Consequently, pupils' knowledge is built up steadily across throughout the school. Moreover, scientific vocabulary is consistently developed in most lessons. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their science learning as they concentrate hard to complete their tasks.
62. In the best lessons, pupils find the methods of exploration fun. For example, in Year 6 pupils were excited by the use of ICT to discover more about conditions for growth. In the Language Unit pupils were absorbed in their work as they investigated materials that conduct electricity. Pupils in Year 1 tested their five senses as they discovered new tastes and smells. In all classes, teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, either with individuals or leading small groups, especially those with special educational needs.
63. In otherwise satisfactory lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills across the school. Learning does not incorporate the skills of hypothesising well enough. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to be involved in experiments through raising questions, and planning and devising their own investigations, especially in Years 5 and 6. In some classes there is an over-reliance on work sheets. There is a limited use of mathematics or ICT in science lessons. Where this is being developed, it manifests itself in the composition of simple bar or line graphs.
64. Assessment is at an early stage of development. Pupils' work is checked regularly and results are recorded; they receive praise and general feedback. Teachers make comments about the work but these are not always linked to what pupils need to do next.
65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator is quickly gaining an overview of the subject and the role to be played. A regular pattern of checking the standard of achievement has begun that analyses teachers' planning and pupils' work, but this has not yet extended to observation of teaching and learning. The lack of this checking on teaching prevents a dissemination of the best practice and a revelation of the weak aspects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6;
- The achievement of all pupils is unsatisfactory due to the unreliability of the equipment;
- Teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards for teaching and learning;
- The use of ICT to support other areas of the curriculum is developing well;
- There are limited assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and achievement in learning.

Commentary

66. In the academic year 2003/4, the school's ICT resources became unreliable and in many instances computers failed. The school worked hard to rectify the problems but it was not until the end of the school year that the difficulties were rectified. As a result pupils were unable to build up their knowledge, understanding and skills in using ICT over this 12-month period. They were therefore unable to achieve their potential and standards fell below the national expectation.
67. Teachers are now in the process of teaching the necessary skills in order for the pupils to catch up on the work they have missed. In this endeavour teachers make good use of the electronic whiteboard. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher made good use of the whiteboard's facility to demonstrate how the visual features of a commercial CD-ROM worked so that pupils could model some of their ideas on successful practice.
68. Currently, the learning from a series of lessons does not guide, well enough, what happens in the next half-term because teachers have not had time to use the new system that will allow them to record, in a helpful format, pupils' progress and achievement. This is now a developing area and in one lesson the teacher assessed pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding through questioning them, using a record sheet to determine their attainment.
69. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to overcome the technical difficulties that have dogged the school's resources. However, leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall because issues like assessment and formulating a programme for evaluating teaching have been underdeveloped while the problems with the hardware existed. The school has a designated computer suite and now has a good level of reliable computers and laptops for pupils to use. Training for all teachers has been successful and as a result teaching, as judged in the lessons during the inspection, has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are now confident in teaching all areas of the ICT curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. ICT is used reasonably well in other subjects given the difficulties that the school has faced. Often pupils have been able to use single computers in the classroom when the computer room has been out of action. Word processing is used appropriately for writing stories and poems in Year 5 and Year 6. In numeracy, number skills practice programs are used effectively. Now that pupils can access the Internet, pupils use it well. For example, in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils researched successfully for information about the ancient Greeks. Moreover, teaching makes good use of videos in religious education lessons, and of the digital camera to capture images to assist learning in art and design.

HUMANITIES

71. There was not enough evidence to judge the quality of provision in geography and history. This was because there were no history lessons during the inspection and in geography only parts of two lessons were observed. However, pupils' work and conversations with pupils showed standards typical for their age in both subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
72. In **geography**, pupils have satisfactory map-reading skills and understanding of differences between localities. They develop strong and well-informed views on environmental issues, for example, through well-taught lessons in Years 5 and 6 on the building of the second runway at Manchester Airport.
73. In **history**, work shows a satisfactory understanding of chronology and appreciation of heritage, particularly from ancient Greece. Visits to historical sites such as Wigan Pier, and

good use of drama, give pupils detailed appreciation of how children's lives were different in Victorian times.

Religious education

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy lessons and some teaching helps them to make good links between religious ideas and their own lives, but this skill is not developed enough throughout the school;
- The new co-ordinator is developing an overview of the subject across the school and has made good links with the local church;
- Lessons have not yet been observed and this prevents the co-ordinator from knowing, more fully, what needs to be improved.

Commentary

74. Standards in attainment seen during this inspection remain in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is sound throughout the school.
75. The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory. Suitable activities are planned which allow the pupils to think carefully about various religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Pupils have good attitudes, which are evident as they concentrate and work hard in class. They are confident to talk about religion and present their work well. However, in some lessons not enough is expected of pupils in the respect of discussion about how religious ideas relate to and affect their own lives. This limited the overall progress they can make in oral communication. In Year 5, for example, pupils learned successfully about Islam and Christianity, building upon knowledge gained in previous years, but were not expected to make connections between fasting in these two religions. There are some notable exceptions to this shortcoming. For example, in Year 1 pupils learned about Ramadan and related fasting to their own eating habits, and how it would feel to fast. Furthermore, learning is also restricted because the marking of pupils' work does not guide them in how to make improvements.
76. The use of writing is sometimes developed well, for example in the Language Unit where pupils used their well-considered notes about how a Biblical story developed when writing about their own version of the Prodigal Son. The teacher had matched the activity well to the ability of the class.
77. Leadership and management of religious education are sound. The new co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum gives pupils broad and balanced experiences. Good links have been made with the local church and the new vicar is keen to build upon this work. Links with visitors from other religions are beginning to enliven pupils' learning, but are not well developed. The action plan for the subject identifies appropriate targets for improvement in the subject such as to purchase more artefacts to build topic boxes for themes. New resources such as videos and software for the electronic whiteboards have been purchased, but it is too soon for them to have been of much benefit.
78. Monitoring of the subject has begun through analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Some informal feedback to teachers has begun to help them improve teaching and learning, but the lack of a more formalised programme limits the knowledge about pupils' learning and how they can improve. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. It is not possible to judge provision in these subjects because no full lessons were seen in art and design or music. One lesson was observed in physical education and two in design and technology. However, pupils' previous work was examined, discussions with pupils and teachers were held and several short observations were made.
80. Standards of achievement in **art and design** are satisfactory throughout the school. There is some work of high quality produced in some classes, particularly by children with special educational needs in the Language Unit. For example, some paintings of barren trees in a bleak windswept landscape captured dramatically the spirit of the pupils' own poems. The expression of emotion represented a strong facet of the school's provision for personal development. Elsewhere, pupils learn soundly to draw, paint, weave and work in three-dimensions, but ICT is too little used except for some digital photography and downloading of artists' work from the Internet. Multi-cultural projects are undertaken successfully and work produced, in junior classes, relating to Caribbean art created good links between art and design and geography in the study of St Lucia.
81. Standards of achievement in **design and technology** are generally satisfactory, but higher standards are sometimes reached when pupils make food or create with textiles because the co-ordinator has specialist skills in these aspects. Generally, pupils learn to create objects using the full process, of designing to evaluation. For example, in Year 4, pupils made some monsters that moved through the action of air pressure. They were well aware of how the design brief had been fulfilled and what could have been improved. In lessons, higher attaining pupils sometimes mark time while teaching is directed towards pupils who require more help. Too little use is made of ICT in learning, typically in controlling pupils' models, and pupils are not involved enough in discussions about their learning and how it could be improved.
82. Pupils claim that they enjoy **music** lessons. They achieve satisfactorily. A good scheme of work results in pupils knowing enough about rhythm, dynamics and how music is composed, to ensure that they meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Singing, however, is good as exemplified by the spirited and tuneful performances in assemblies. The weaknesses in the short observations relate to the lack of opportunities for pupils to talk expansively, give their own opinions or comment on how well they have learnt. This omission contributes to the low standards in speaking and listening reported in English. The new co-ordinator has a sound overview, but has not evaluated teaching and learning at first hand to find ways to improve the provision.
83. Standards of achievement in **physical education**, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are in line with national expectations. The majority of pupils are able to swim the minimum distance required by the time they leave school. The co-ordinator has developed good links with neighbourhood schools and has developed a good action plan for the future development of physical education. The provision for sport is good and many pupils take part in a wide range of activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. Only two lessons were sampled in personal, social and health education so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision.
85. The school places great importance upon developing pupils' personal and social development and encouraging them to keep safe and well. Issues such as sex education and relationships are included appropriately within lessons in science and religious education. Other aspects, such as awareness of the dangers of drugs and how to deal with emergencies, are suitably dealt with through educational opportunities, such as 'Crucial Crew'. The school makes good

use of guidance provided by the local education authority for teaching the subject to ensure it is embedded in the curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware that the next stage of development is to plan for continuity and consistency of approach across the school. There are specific personal, social and health education lessons in some classes, in which pupils discuss a range of topics, such as the need to look after the environment. The school is working towards a healthy school award and rightly sees this as crucial for children's welfare and learning. Pupils learn about the responsibility of citizenship through voting for class representatives to the school council. The council meets regularly and has worked successfully on issues that affect their welfare directly, such as road safety, healthy living and bullying. Provision is well supported through visiting outside agencies and themed events in school such as 'Black History' week when pupils learn about other cultures and include a focus on racism.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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