

INSPECTION REPORT

BOLLINGTON CROSS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bollington Cross, Macclesfield

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111252

Headteacher: Mrs J Downing

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 1st December 2004

Inspection number: 266451

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 113

School address: Bollington Road
Bollington
Macclesfield
Cheshire
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Dr I Smith

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small school is situated in the town of Bollington near Macclesfield. The locality is primarily an area of mixed housing, and most of the pupils live close to the school. Although pupils' backgrounds vary, overall their socio-economic circumstances are average. There are 113 pupils on roll aged between four and 11 years. However, there are four primary schools in the immediate area and, due to local trends, the numbers of pupils at the school are gradually falling. This is also resulting in year groups that range from 12 to 28 so some classes include pupils from more than one year group. Most of the pupils have some experience of education before they join the school. When children start school, their attainment varies significantly from year to year. In some years, attainment is below that expected, as at the last inspection, in others it is above. For children in the present reception class, it is close to that which is typical for their age. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, is below average. The majority of pupils are of White-British origin and the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small with a few who have English as an additional language. The school was awarded the School Achievement Award in 2002, the Artsmark

Silver Award and the Healthy Schools Award in 2003. It is involved in the Primary Leadership scheme for Primary Schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2166 6	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	English
			Geography
			History
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
1136 8	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector	
2550 9	Mrs J Clarke	Team inspector	Science
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Religious education
			The Foundation Stage
3319 2	Mrs A Burton	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Music
			Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bollington Cross CE Primary School is a good school that provides good value for money. From when they start in reception, due to good teaching, pupils achieve well to attain good standards overall in Years 2 and 6.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achieve well in speaking, listening, reading and investigative science skills.
- Teaching is good overall. There is a substantial amount of very good teaching.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes to school, behave very well and are a credit to the school.
- Activities in some subjects are not used consistently to develop pupils' writing and mathematical problem-solving skills.
- The headteacher leads the school very well with a clear vision for its future development.
- Provision for children in reception is very good.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is very good in English, but this is not as effective in other subjects.

Since the last inspection the school has improved well. No significant areas for improvement were identified by the last inspection, but the minor issues have been addressed effectively. Rigorous procedures to analyse the school's performance and to improve teaching and learning have been established leading directly to the much improved results in the 2004 national tests. A new building to replace out-dated mobile classrooms provides very good accommodation and resources for pupils in Years 1 to 6.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	D	C	B
mathematics	D	E	C	C
science	C	D	C	C

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well as they move through the school. Children in reception achieve well. As a result, by the end of reception, a significant proportion exceed the goals they are expected to reach in all the areas of learning. In their personal and social development they achieve very well and virtually all children exceed the expected levels in this area of their learning. In the 2004 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results in reading were well above average and in mathematics were above average. The school's results in writing were very high and placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. When compared to similar schools the results were above average in mathematics and very high in reading and writing, again placing the

school in the top five per cent of schools. However, due to small numbers in year groups, the standards vary considerably from year to year. Inspection evidence shows that relative to their starting point on entry to school, current pupils in Year 2 are achieving well to attain satisfactory standards in reading, writing and mathematics and science. In the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6, results were average when compared to all schools in English, mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools the results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 6 are achieving well to reach good standards in English and science. The good standards are due to pupils' good achievement in their speaking, listening, reading and their investigative science skills. Achievement and standards in writing and mathematics are satisfactory because there is a lack of consistency in other lessons to develop these aspects of their learning. In other subjects pupils are achieving satisfactorily to reach the expected standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. However, in music, due to specialist teaching, pupils achieve well and reach good standards by the end of Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements in any other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Attendance in the last year was below average, but this was due to three pupils who were absent due to long term medical problems. Attendance is currently much improved and few pupils miss school. Punctuality is satisfactory. The very good provision the school makes for developing pupils' social skills is reflected in excellent relationships throughout the school between pupils and with adults.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, with a substantial proportion of teaching that is very good. Throughout the school teachers use questions very effectively to encourage pupils to join in lessons and to check their knowledge and understanding. Teachers also have very consistent expectations of pupils so they behave very well and learn to work together and on their own with little supervision. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a good range of activities that provide—well for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not use the closing class discussions well enough to reinforce the objectives of the lesson. For those pupils who need extra help with their learning, teachers ensure that support staff provide them with effective support which makes a very significant contribution to the progress they make. Assessment procedures in English are very effective and systematically link assessment information, teacher's marking of pupils' work and their targets for learning which has a positive effect on their achievement. However, this is not the case in other subjects where the procedures to gather information on pupils' learning are good, but pupils are not involved in setting and reviewing their own targets.

The curriculum is good, particularly for the creative arts, and is very well enhanced by activities after school, visits and visitors. The curriculum is very good for children in reception due to the extended range of activities provided for them out of lessons and the close links that have been established with the private nursery that uses the school. The accommodation and resources are good, particularly the outdoor area and the new building for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The school has established very good links with the community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and a very clear vision for its future development. Very strong teamwork between all staff is a key feature of the school. Senior staff are very good role models for other staff and pupils through their management and teaching. The headteacher is well supported by all staff with responsibilities for aspects of the school. Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and ensure that the school fulfils its legal responsibilities well. They play an important part in the school's development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive of its work and their children. Pupils also have very positive views of the school and, through the class representatives and the School Council, are very effectively involved in its development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop teacher's planning to make consistent use of all subjects to develop pupils' writing and mathematical problem-solving skills.
- Extend the very good assessment procedures in English to other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

From when they start school in reception, pupils achieve well as they move through the school. As a result, standards in Year 6 are above those expected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening and investigative science are good throughout the school.
- Children achieve well in the reception class so that a significant proportion are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the year.
- Pupils achieve well to develop good skills in reading by Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well.
- Pupils could achieve better standards in writing and mathematical problem solving.

Commentary

1 When children start school in reception, their level of skills, knowledge and understanding varies considerably from year to year. This reflects the small number of children in each group. For example, in the current reception class there are only 14 children, two of whom are boys and in last years group there were 16, four of whom had special educational needs. The present class began school with skills, knowledge and understanding that was broadly typical for their age. However, they represent a broad spread of ability with a few children whose skills are below those expected and a few who are working at levels that are better than expected. Children achieve well in reception so that the vast majority of the children, irrespective of their ability, reach at least the expected levels in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. A good proportion of the present class are well on course to exceed the expected levels in these areas of learning. In their personal, social and emotional development children achieve very well. Even at this early point of the year, a good proportion are already working at the levels expected of them for the end of reception so that virtually all the children are set to reach levels that exceed those expected for their age.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.5 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.2 (14.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 The trend in the school's results in national tests for pupils in Year 2 is above the national pattern. This reflects the fact that results in the 2004 national tests were significantly better than in 2003 when the results in reading were average and in writing

and mathematics were well below average. The school had a whole school focus on improving standards in reading and writing in 2003/04 which contributed to the very high proportion of pupils who attained the higher than expected levels in reading and writing. Most importantly, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level was well above average in all three subjects. Inspection evidence shows that, compared to their starting point when their levels of skills were below those expected, pupils in Year 2 are achieving well, although standards are in line with those expected in speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in listening are good. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in ICT and religious education to reach standards in line with those expected.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (25.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (25.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.5 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3 Due to two years of disappointing results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 and 2003, the trend in the school's performance is below the national pattern. A third of the pupils in the 2003 group had special educational needs, the school focussed its efforts on developing pupils' basic skills last year and these were rewarded in much improved results in the 2004 national tests. Standards were average in English, mathematics and science when compared to all schools and when compared to similar schools except in English in which results were above average. However, analysis of the results showed that the school had added good value when compared to the same pupils' performance in their Year 2 tests. This supports inspection evidence which shows that pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language who achieve well due to the effective way that teachers plan activities for them in lessons. The few pupils with English as an additional language are achieving very well in their development of spoken English due to the specialist support they receive from outside agencies, the very effective use of questions and discussion by teachers and the good support they receive from classroom assistants. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 in speaking and listening, reading and science are good. Standards in pupils' basic literacy skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation are also good. However, due to the fewer systematically planned opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in other subjects except in science, achievement in this aspect of English is satisfactory and, apart from a few higher attaining pupils, their writing lacks vibrancy and emotional depth. Similarly in mathematics, pupils achieve well to develop good basic number skills, but because there are not enough opportunities in mathematics lessons and in other subjects for pupils to use their numeracy skills, their ability to solve problems and use their skills in different ways is less well developed. In ICT and religious education, pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach standards in line with those expected. However, in music, due to the effective teaching by the specialist teacher, standards and achievement are good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Pupils' attendance is good. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils want to come to school, develop a very strong desire to learn and take a very keen interest in all the activities the school provides.
- The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct so they develop a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Teachers' marking and the consistent emphasis on ensuring pupils are praised for their efforts, develops their self-esteem and confidence very effectively.
- Relationships between pupils are excellent.
- Children in reception achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

Attendance

4 Pupils' attendance in the last year was below the national average. However, this was very unusual and directly due to three pupils who missed considerable amounts of school due to illness. The school did its best to support these pupils and in at least one case, the school provided work for the pupils to do at home. In previous years attendance was good. Pupils want to come to school and the vast majority of parents ensure that their children attend school and this is reflected in the first few weeks of this term when few pupils have missed school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.1%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

5 Pupils' response to the inspection questionnaire and their comments in discussions show that they really enjoy coming to school and working hard. Their views are reflected by parents who, with very few exceptions, feel that their children like school. Throughout the school, all adults are good role models for pupils in their very close teamwork and obvious regard for each other's skills. In addition, from when children start at school, teachers and support staff consistently emphasis and reward pupils' achievements by using praise well both in lessons and in their marking of pupils' work. This makes a significant contribution to the pace at which children's personal skills develop in reception. The school also has sophisticated systems that recognise academic achievement, good behaviour and kindness. As a result, pupils learn to value and respect the attributes and abilities of other people and their self-esteem develops very well. By Year 6, they are confident and mature individuals well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their education. The school places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of their role as members of the community. Within school, pupils are expected to help each other and the School Council has a very high profile, which gives younger pupils a target to aspire to. For

example, they help in assemblies to take younger pupils back to classes. Pupils are also taught to appreciate their responsibilities to the wider community. For example, considerable sums of money have been raised for several local and national charities.

6 Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well in lessons, where they have plenty of opportunities to reflect upon their work and how they behave towards others, and in other activities such as assemblies. This reflects the ethos of the school where the basic principles of the Christian faith are reinforced well. However, this is complemented very effectively by the very strong emphasis the school places on ensuring that pupils' develop a very good understanding of other faiths and cultures, in addition to their own traditions. This is an area of the school's work that has improved well since the last inspection. The subject leader for religious education has arranged training for staff and increased the range of visiting speakers from different faiths to school. In addition, pupils learn about different cultures through music, religious education lessons and art and design. Numerous displays around the school celebrate different cultural and religious traditions. As a result, they are very well prepared for living in an integrated, culturally diverse society.

7 At the time of the last inspection, although pupils' behaviour was a key feature of the school, the school had introduced policies to combat bullying and to promote self-discipline among pupils. These have been very effective and few parents and no pupils expressed any concern about bullying or any other form of harassment taking place in school. This is reflected in the lack of any exclusion in the last year. Parents were very confident that if they had any concerns in this area then the school would deal with them very quickly and effectively. As a result, relationships between pupils are excellent and they develop very good social skills. They learn to share and take turns, become very independent and can get on with their work in the many activities that require them to work on their own with the minimum of supervision.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education, founded on effective teaching, is good. The school places a very high priority on involving pupils in the work of the school and has established very good links with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' use of questions is very effective in encouraging pupils to contribute their ideas in lessons.
- The school makes very effective use of assessment information to involve pupils in the setting and reviewing of their learning targets in English, but these procedures are not in place in other subjects.
- Teachers and support staff have consistently very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers' planning is good and they make effective use of support staff in lessons to work with small groups and individual pupils.
- Teaching and learning in reception are very good based on very good planning.
- Teachers provide plenty of collaborative activities for pupils in lessons so they learn to work together, on their own and in small groups very well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	17	2	0	0	0

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

8 Parents feel that teaching is good and without exception, they believe that the school expects their children to work hard. Inspection evidence fully supports their view. As a visitor to the school, the first thing that one notices when entering a classroom is that the pupils are so engrossed in their work that they hardly look up and every room has a very positive working atmosphere. This reflects the fact that pupils are very used to people such as the headteacher popping in to classrooms to see what is going on, but also how well teachers have established a very positive ethos in the school based on very good relationships and very high expectations. Good fun and humour is a feature of many lessons. Without exception, they have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance so lessons are well organised and pupils know exactly how they should behave. As a result, they are able to provide many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and small groups, confident that pupils will get on with their work with the minimum of supervision whilst they concentrate their time on those pupils who need their help.

9 This ethos is established in reception where the adults very quickly make sure that children learn to listen to instructions and to each other. As a result, they quickly develop a respect for each other and learn to work with other children. The teachers' planning is very good and not only matches the national guidance closely, but provides activities for children that reflect the broad range of ability in the class. She also makes very good use of extra adults, classroom assistants and the many parents who help in lessons. As a result, children achieve well in all the areas of learning and acquire the basic skills of language, literacy and mathematics well. The breadth of the activities, provided, including

swimming, ensures that children develop their creative and physical skills and their knowledge of the world well.

10 The vast majority of lessons are brisk and well paced. A major strength of class discussion is the very effective way that teachers use questions to challenge pupils and to check their understanding. In the best lessons, teachers target questions to those pupils who are not volunteering answers so that no one can sit back and allow others to do the work. They also vary the difficulty of questions for specific pupils – asking lower ability pupils or those with special educational needs questions that they are able to answer, but they also follow up higher attaining pupils' initial answers with secondary questions to encourage them to expand upon their initial ideas. As a result, all pupils, irrespective of their ability are fully involved in lessons. This also has the added benefit of developing pupils' self-esteem and their speaking and listening skills. Activities in most lessons are well planned and match the objectives of the lessons well. There are a few occasions when support staff do not have a clear role in the opening parts of lessons, but overall, they are used well to work with groups and to support specific pupils, mainly those with special educational needs which makes a significant contribution to the progress these pupils make. In most lessons, teachers share the aims of lessons with pupils and regularly refer to them throughout the lessons which helps give all parts of lessons a clear direction and focus. However, this is not always the case with the result that the closing discussion at the end of the lesson lacks clear focus and is not used well enough to check what pupils have learnt or to assess whether any aspects may need to be worked on further.

11 The school has established very good procedures to assess and track the progress pupils are making as they move through the school. This information is used well to set targets for pupils with class teachers so they know what each pupil should have achieved by the end of each term. In English, the school has established very sophisticated systems to involve pupils in evaluating their own progress towards these targets. For example, in the front of each pupil's English book is a sheet that outlines what they need to do to improve. Pupils discuss their progress with another pupil each week. Teachers also use these targets well when they are marking pupils' work, as a result, pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve. This has a particularly positive effect on pupils' achievement and progress in developing their basic literacy skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Their ability to write factual accounts develops well because teachers give them plenty of opportunities in subjects such as science to describe in their own words what they have done. However, the same attention is not given to using these targets as the basis for planning activities in other subjects, such as history and geography, to help pupils learn to use these skills. As a result, most pupils' writing, particularly their creative writing does not develop as quickly as it could. In addition, similarly, detailed systems for target setting are not in place in other subjects, including mathematics. Consequently teachers do not have the same structure to guide their marking and, as a result, pupils are not as clear about what they need to learn next. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is only satisfactory.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in reception is very good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The very broad range of activities outside of lessons for pupils of all ages and aptitudes are very well attended by pupils and significantly enhance the curriculum.
- Activities in all subjects are not planned consistently enough for pupils to develop their writing and investigative mathematical skills.
- The new building provides good accommodation for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and is a very significant improvement on the out-dated mobile classrooms in place at the last inspection.

Commentary

12 The school provides a good curriculum that fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the guidance for religious education. It is broad and balanced and provides a good range of relevant and interesting experiences for pupils to develop academically and personally, whatever their personal skills and attributes. One aspect that is not as strong is the inconsistent range of activities in subjects other than in English and mathematics for pupils to practise their imaginative and creative writing and to use their mathematical skills. In some classes, teachers link subjects together well, for example, activities and texts in English lessons link well to topics in history, but this is not consistent across the school.

13 There are a few particularly notable elements of curriculum provision that stand out. Firstly, all pupils, including the children in reception, have the opportunity to go on regular residential visits. This has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and links very well to the very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school uses a commercial scheme to teach this part of the curriculum and all classes have lessons based on this scheme and a chance to talk about specific issues in 'Circle Time' sessions. The Co-ordinator has worked hard to develop this aspect of the school's work since the last inspection and the school was awarded the 'Healthy Schools Award' in 2003 in recognition of the school's efforts to ensure that pupils learn about healthy living, sex and drugs education.

14 The curriculum for children in reception is a particularly strong aspect of the school. Although, teaching is good and children achieve well, the sum of the curriculum is much better than the individual elements and taken overall it provides children with a very rich and stimulating initial experience of school. Children have the opportunity to experience a very broad range of activities in the classroom and outside in their own area. The school is looking to develop this further and has recently had a roof put up so that children can use the area in all weathers. In addition to the residential mentioned above, in other areas of learning there are specific activities that make a significant contribution to children's personal, physical and creative development, which ensures that many children exceed the expected levels by the end of reception. For example, all children go swimming on a weekly basis – an activity that parents view very positively. The class also works closely with the private nursery that uses the school building. Children in both groups share the space for outdoor and practical activities which helps children in reception develop an understanding of the needs of younger children.

15 The school pays very good attention to ensuring that pupils of all abilities and aptitudes benefit from what is on offer. Pupils with special educational needs and those

with English as an additional language have specific lessons and sessions to develop their skills in line with their clear education plans. Where needed external specialists are used well to supplement what the school provides on a daily basis. The school also identifies those who are gifted and talented in specific areas and tries to provide them with specific activities to develop these talents. An important factor in this is the contribution of visits and visitors to school, including specialist teaching of physical education, music, ICT and science, to broadening the curriculum well beyond that which is normally seen. In addition, a very good range of activities out of lessons are provided to appeal to pupils of all ages and interests. For example, there are clubs for art and design, drama and dance. For those whose interests lie in sports there are teams of clubs in football, Kwik cricket and netball. In addition to these, pupils have the opportunity to receive coaching in judo and lacrosse at certain points in the year. A link with the local Cheshire Wildlife Trust helps provide a nature club and there are plenty of musical activities too. As a result, most of the pupils are involved in at least one activity.

16 The accommodation has improved very well since the last inspection when many pupils were taught in out-dated and unsuitable mobile classrooms. A new building was opened in March 2004 for pupils in Years 1 to 6. This has enhanced the learning environment very significantly and pupils now have a good range of resources to use in lessons. Overall, teachers make good use of the resources in lessons, including the Interactive Whiteboards, which have quickly become an integral part of many lessons. However, the opportunities for pupils to use computers in lessons to use the full range of their skills are more limited. However, the school has recognised that this needs developing further, as does the library area. The outside area is well resourced and carefully planned. The 'wildlife' area is used by the nature club and in lessons. There is an activity area with climbing frames and other large play equipment to which reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have daily access. The School Council was very involved in its planning and design so it meets the needs of children of all ages very well.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support and guidance for pupils are good. The school has very good procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The School Council and the class representatives make a very important contribution to the development of the school.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.

Commentary

17 This aspect of the school's work has improved significantly since the last inspection and among parents; the very high standard of care and concern for pupils' welfare is seen as a major strength of the school. Inspection evidence supports their view. The school has established very comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils' safety and welfare, including risk assessment and has arrangements for ensuring a high proportion of staff are First Aid trained. In addition, all staff know and understand the procedures for child protection. The procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed.

18 Pupils are well supported in school by teachers and support staff. The school has rigorous procedures in place to monitor pupils' development both academically and personally. As a result, partly because Bollington Cross is a small school, but also because relationships between adults and pupils are very good, most pupils are confident that if they have a problem there will be someone they can talk to.

19 At the core of the very effective procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school is the School Council. This is drawn from pupils in Years 6, but those wishing to be involved have to be elected by the whole school. The council meets the elected representatives from each class on a regular basis to discuss issues that are concerning them, but it also has a wider role in school. They take responsibility for looking after younger pupils, and are consulted about school rules and developments. As a result, the majority of pupils feel that their views are valued. For example, the plans for the outside area were altered significantly following the School Council advice and intervention. Taken all together, the system the school has established, ensures that pupils' views are represented well and, in addition, very effectively develops pupils' understanding of the democratic process and their responsibilities of living in a community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established very good links with parents, the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents about the work of the school and the progress their children are making is very good.
- The procedures to ensure that parents are satisfied with the work of the school are very effective.
- The school's very good links with a local secondary school makes a significant contribution to the provision for ICT.
- The school is well regarded in the local community and actively seeks to involve the community in its work.

Commentary

20 This aspect of the school's work was a major strength at the time of the last inspection and this continues to be the case. The school values the views of parents and makes every effort to involve them in school by providing them with a wealth of information on the work of the school and the progress their children are making. In addition, to the formal parents' meetings, parents have easy access to teaching staff to discuss their children's progress at times other than the formally designated parents' evenings. As a result, with very few exceptions, parents are very satisfied with the information they get, feel part of the school and fully involved in what it provides. This is reflected in the very active parent/teacher association and the good numbers of parents who volunteer to help in school and attend meetings or events.

21 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop its links with the local community. The school makes effective use of the local area in lessons for visits and surveys. It also actively seeks to improve the services it provides for the community. For example, in September the school offered a local private nursery the use of part of its buildings next to the reception classroom. The staff have established very good working relationships and plan activities together, children share facilities and the nursery has the use of the outside area and the school hall for activities. In an area where falling roles in school is a problem, this innovative idea has provided the community with a very much enhanced facility for their small children, has raised the profile of the school and improved the provision for children in reception. The school hopes that this link will help to attract more children into reception to stabilise the number of pupils at the school, which has gradually been falling in recent years due to local trends. In addition, several local organisations use the new building for meetings, the church has begun to use the building on Sundays for its Junior Church and staff from a large local pharmaceuticals company takes science lessons with older pupils.

22 The school has been equally proactive in developing its links with other schools. As part of the primary leadership project links with other schools in the local cluster have developed well. For example, they now collaborate on training events. The links with the local high school are very good. This school provides an ICT technician on a weekly basis, much to the delight of staff, and teachers come into school on a very regular basis to take lessons in, for example, ICT for Year 6 pupils. This has the advantage of preparing pupils well for transferring to secondary school, and enables pupils to benefit from the expertise of specialist teaching. The school has recently become involved in the Sport Co-ordinator programme linking in another secondary school, which aims to improve teachers' skills and to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn to play sports that the school could not normally provide.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and managed. Governance of the school is good. The headteacher's leadership of the school is very good. She is well supported by key staff in the effective management of the school. Consequently, the school deals very well with the potential barriers to learning caused by the very variable number and abilities of different year groups and the financial pressures caused by gradually falling roles.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school with a clear sense of purpose reflecting her very high aspirations for the school and vision for its future development.
- The quality of teamwork and commitment of staff to each other and the school is very good.
- Very effective procedures to identify its immediate priorities have led to a significant improvement in standards in Year 6 in 2004 national tests.
- Senior leaders are very good role models for other staff.
- The school improvement plan clearly outlines priorities for development, but does not set timescales in sufficient detail to enable short term planning and evaluation.
- Governors are highly committed to the school and have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

23 Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop its provision well. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and in an area of falling roles she wants to provide the best possible education for pupils, irrespective of their abilities or aptitude. Since her appointment some five terms ago, the headteacher has taken the initiative in leading the school with a very direct sense of purpose. Very effective self-evaluation procedures have been introduced to examine all aspects of the school, but with a particular emphasis on developing aspects of teaching and learning following the disappointing results in national tests in 2002 and 2003. The effectiveness of these procedures and the training the school has provided for staff can be measured by the good improvement in results in 2004. In this drive to raise standards she has been very well supported by the deputy headteacher who has a very clear overview of the school. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are very good role models for staff and pupils through their own teaching and relationships with pupils.

24 However, none of this would have been possible if all the other members of staff had not fulfilled their own roles well and worked together as a team. In a small school, each member of staff is a 'key' member of staff. The school has established effective procedures to involve all staff in monitoring assessment information and to identify areas in which the school needs to improve its work. Staff performance management systems are intrinsically linked to these priorities for improvement so that staff know exactly what it is they are working towards and how it will be evaluated. As a result, the headteacher's vision for the school is reflected in its priorities and the aims identified in the school improvement plan are shared by all staff who all work together very well. Indeed, the commitment of all adults associated with the school to each other and the quality of education provided for pupils is a key feature of the school.

25 Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school due to their committee structure that allows the full range of school issues to be raised and discussed. They are very well led by the chair of governors who is highly experienced and has been involved with the school for an extended period. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities well, including the monitoring of its race equality policy. They are involved in all aspects of school life and are pro-active in shaping the vision and direction of the school. However, although the school improvement plan identifies the correct areas for development and is supported by subject action plans, there is no overall breakdown of what will be achieved at which point. This makes it difficult for the governors and senior staff to closely monitor progress on a short term basis. As a result, they are not as clear on exactly what progress the school has made towards the current priorities, particularly in raising standards.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	333578	Balance from previous year	84039
Total expenditure	332720	Balance carried forward to the next	84897
Expenditure per pupil	2640		

26 Financial management is good. Governors and administrative staff have effective systems in place to monitor school spending and to make sure that school priorities are supported with sufficient funds to ensure they are developed effectively. The figures in the above table appear to show that the school has a very high carry over figure. However, this is distorted by the funds provided for the new building that at the end of the last financial year were still reflected in the accounts. Most of this has now been spent on resourcing the new building, and the school also has other plans in place to enhance the original school building and further improve facilities for children in reception.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

27 The provision for children in the reception class is **very good**. The school has further improved the strong position reported in the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good. The children start in the reception class in the year they are five. Most of the children have had some preschool experiences but not all. There are at present fourteen children in the reception class. There are good induction procedures for the children so that they make a secure start to their schooling. Good information provided for parents enables a very close partnership right from the earliest stages of the children's life in school. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.

28 The teacher in the reception class works very closely with parent helpers who give very good help in the class. She gives them very clear guidance so that they are sure about their role. The teacher plans very closely to the national guidance given for young children. The school is very effective in providing many extra activities for the children, which successfully enriches the curriculum and makes the provision for these young children very good. For example, the children have weekly swimming lessons and have the opportunity to spend some time on a residential experience at a local centre. The school has recently welcomed a private nursery in the classrooms adjacent to the reception class and a strong relationship has developed between the nursery, the reception teacher and teaching assistants.

29 When children start school, the spread of ability is very wide and each year group is very different to each other. For example, in the current reception year there are 2 boys and twelve girls, whilst in the previous two reception groups there have been significantly more boys than girls. This also applies to the skills that children have when they start school. In some years it is below that which is expected. However, the current reception children started school with attainment in all areas of learning broadly at the levels expected of children of their age. They are achieving well and, even at this early part of the year, a few children are working at the levels expected of them by the end of the year, particularly in their personal development. As a result, most of the children are on course to exceed the levels expected in all the areas of learning by at the end of the reception year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A calm, supportive, learning environment where children learn very well.
- Very good relationships in the class enable the children to achieve very well.

Commentary

30 Very good teaching in this area of learning allows the children to learn and achieve very well. Although, they started school with skills and understanding that were broadly typical for their age, even at this early point in the year, many children have developed their skills and attributes to the levels expected of them at the end of reception. By the

end of the year virtually all of the children will exceed the levels expected in this area of learning.

31 The teacher has established very good relationships with the children and has created a calm, busy learning environment in which the children feel confident and secure. As a result, the children are keen to come to school in the morning and are confident and relaxed, whether they are in the classroom, the craft area or in the outdoor activity area and consequently learning is very effective. A very important aspect of the very good teaching in this area of learning is the teacher's very high expectations of the children. She makes them very clear through very clear and specific instructions so the children are very clear about what they have to do and how they should behave towards others. As a result, they learn to work happily together, share equipment well, help each other and co-operate well. Activities in lessons are fun and provide a very good balance between those that children do on their own and those led by adults so lessons are happy, busy occasions where all are purposefully employed and no time is wasted. As a result the children acquire good learning skills. However, the children are also expected to be independent, contribute to the organisation of the classroom and to do their share at the end of sessions, but even these tasks are made to be fun with little games and competitions. As a result, the children approach all their activities in an enthusiastic manner, tidying up at the end of the session when they are asked to do so.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher's very effective planning provides a broad range of challenging activities.
- The children have many opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Commentary

32 Good, carefully structured and challenging teaching enables the children to achieve well in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The teacher employs a wide range of strategies to encourage the children to develop their vocabulary and confidence in speaking. This is given a high priority in all sessions, for example, when the children were busy making porridge they were asked to talk about what the porridge looked like both before and after cooking. As a result, most of the children will exceed the levels expected of this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

33 A key feature of the good teaching is the very broad range of activities that encourage children to develop all the aspects of their literacy and language skills. Simple books are used well in lessons to introduce children to stories and rhymes. As a result, all the children are engaged by stories and most have made a good start to their reading. This reflects the very good emphasis in the class on the teaching of basic skills. An important factor is the effective way that the teacher uses the teaching assistant in lessons. For example, in a lesson observed the teacher and the teaching assistant worked with small groups of children giving them individual help with their tasks and as a result these children made significant strides in their learning. However, children have many opportunities to practise their writing in lessons and in other activities. For example, they write their names in their books as they come into school in the morning and are expected to write their

names on their drawings and paintings before they start on their task. As a result, children show commendable levels of achievement already and more able children are already able to clearly convey their thoughts and ideas in a sentence. In all activities, the children concentrate very well, are very independent and, due to the effective use of praise by the adults, develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem and tackle challenging activities enthusiastically. For example, in one lessons all the children tried hard to write a sentence on their Whiteboards about their weekend activities even if they could only write a few words. As a result, by the end of the reception year most of the children are likely to be able to write their own simple sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities are used very well in lessons to develop children's basic number skills.

Commentary

34 As a result of good teaching and learning the children develop their mathematical awareness well, consequently by the end of the reception year most of the children will exceed the levels expected of this area of learning. The children enjoy their learning because the teacher makes their activities interesting. Tasks are challenging for the children and the pace of learning is brisk. As a result the learning of basic skills is good and achievement is secured. The children enjoy counting; they count enthusiastically to 20 and with support to 50. They are beginning to work with money and recognise 1p coins. They are enthusiastic shopkeepers, writing the prices on the items they are to sell and role-play buying and selling with enthusiasm. More able children work with larger sums of money and try hard to guess how many coins the class teacher has in her purse writing their estimates down on their Whiteboards. Other children find ladybirds in the sand tray, count the spots on their backs and match them to the correct number. The children know the names of three-dimensional shapes and make shape pictures with them. This aspect of their learning is developing well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher's planning provides children with many and varied experiences to develop their knowledge and skills.

Commentary

35 As a result of good teaching and learning the children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world well, consequently by the end of the reception year most of the children will exceed the levels expected of this area of learning. The children are provided with a wide range of activities planned to engage their interests and stimulate their

curiosity. The children were extremely excited when working with the floor robot and the remote controlled cars in the playground. The children estimated how many moves they needed to program into the robot to successfully move along the pathway to 'Goldilock's house'. They worked hard to remember the correct sequence of moves for the robot. Those children who operated the cars made a roadway and an obstacle course to manoeuvre the cars round, whilst other children used the coloured chalks to draw their own roadway. Making and tasting porridge, was an extremely enjoyable activity for the children. They appreciated the need to take great care as the cooker was hot, to wash their hands and to watch carefully. They were happy to taste the finished porridge to see if they liked it better with strawberry jam or on its own. It is clear that the children have many stimulating and fascinating opportunities, which intrigue and interest them and develop their understanding of the world around them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for developing children's physical skills is exciting and extensive.

Commentary

36 As a result of good teaching and learning the children develop their physical skills well, consequently by the end of the reception year most of the children will exceed the levels expected in this area of learning. The children have many planned opportunities to develop their physical skills. They have regular swimming lessons, use the wheeled vehicles outdoors and have an opportunity to go on a residential experience with the pupils in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection the children really enjoyed working with the parachute in the hall. They showed good levels of confidence as they moved under the parachute and climbed to the top when it was inflated. They also use small equipment with increasing control, for example, they use pencils, pens and brushes in their work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher plans a good range of interesting and fun practical activities in lessons.

Commentary

37 As a result of good teaching and learning the children develop their creative skills well, consequently by the end of the reception year most of the children will exceed the levels expected of this area of learning. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned creative experiences to stimulate their imaginations. They enjoyed dressing up as characters from 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and acting out the story in The Three Bears cottage. The children have many opportunities to paint and to make collages of the characters from their story. They extend and develop their vocabulary, ideas and feelings through the many opportunities they have to explore and use their imaginations as they collaborate in their play

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established very good procedures to assess and track the progress pupils are making and to involve pupils' in their own learning.
- The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and what needs to be done to develop it further.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion and the effective use of questions.
- The opportunities to use the full range of pupils' writing skills in other subjects are not consistently planned for across the school.

Commentary

38 Standards vary significantly from year to year depending upon the make up of and the variable number in each year group. For example, in 2003 when the results for pupils in Year 6 were well below average, a third of pupils had special educational needs. The school realised that a major emphasis needed to be placed on ensuring that pupils' had a secure basis of basic literacy skills, punctuation and grammar to build on. This hard work was rewarded in 2004 when results were much improved and above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that currently standards are satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 6. Overall, pupils are achieving well. However, there are distinct differences between the strands of the subject. Standards and achievement in speaking and listening are good throughout the school and in Year 6, standards in reading are good. In writing, standards are broadly in line with those expected in both year groups, and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop good basic writing skills and are good at writing factual and narrative accounts of their work and experiences, but apart from a few higher attaining pupils they do not use a broad and exciting range of vocabulary in their imaginative writing to describe characters, their emotions and feelings. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are achieving well. However, pupils with English as an additional language are achieving very well in developing their spoken English skills due to specialist support and teachers very effective use of questions in lessons to encourage them to contribute.

39 Teaching in English lessons is good. There are very consistent strengths in all classes that contribute well to the pace of pupils' learning. The very positive ethos in all classes throughout the school is founded on teachers' very effective management and organisation of lessons. They are very clear about how they expect pupils to behave and what they expect them to do in lessons. As a result, pupils get on very well with their tasks with the minimum of supervision, share ideas and resources very well which releases teachers and support staff to work with their groups uninterrupted by other pupils demanding attention or needing admonishment. Lessons are also brisk and pacy, particularly the opening class discussions. A key feature of these discussions is the very effective way that teachers use questions to involve pupils of all abilities. For example, for lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs, they target questions at

their level of understanding to check their knowledge, but also to give them a chance to succeed. For higher attaining pupils, teachers do not accept their first answer, but use follow up questions well to extend their ideas and thinking. This is particularly the case in the upper years of the school and really develops pupil's speaking skills and their ability to use their reading skills to understand more about the characters or plot of the text they are working on. In addition, in the best lessons, teachers use links with other subjects, such as history, very well to provide the materials that pupils use. Lessons are well planned to develop a specific aspect of pupils' basic skills and teachers generally make it clear to pupils what they will be learning about. In most lessons, teachers use these aims throughout the lesson to help keep pupils focussed and to check their learning. However, this is not consistently the case. On a few occasions when the teacher does not make it clear to pupils what they are learning about, the final part of lessons where pupils are recapping on what they have been learning about, lack sharp focus and direction. Overall, teacher's approach to the teaching of English has a very positive effect on pupils' self-confidence and their understanding of the basic literacy skills.

40 The subject leader has spent a lot of time looking in detail at pupils' work, teachers' planning and analysing test papers. As a result, she has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas that need to be worked on further. She is helped very effectively by the school's very good assessment and tracking systems which enables annual targets to be set for each pupil with class teachers. These are reviewed termly so that pupils' progress can be monitored and any additional support given when needed to maintain the pace of pupils' learning. However, the major strength of the assessment procedures is the way that pupils are involved in monitoring their own progress. Each pupil knows what it is they need to learn and they review their progress with another pupil each week. They are able to tick off their own targets as they meet them under the supervision of their teacher. Teacher's also use these targets well in their marking to engage pupils in a dialogue on how they can improve their work. Although these procedures have not been in place for long they are already beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement, particularly in writing. For example, pupils in Year 4 made very good progress last year, despite starting in Year 3 with skills that were well below average at the end of Year 2. They are now well on course to reach at least average levels by the end of Year 6 which would represent good achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41 The school makes good use of subjects such as science to develop pupils' factual writing and research skills. Speaking and listening are encouraged very well across the school through the lively question and answer sessions at the beginning of most lessons. However, as pupils move through the school, there are missed opportunities to give pupils enough activities to practise their writing in different styles in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. For example, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their imagination to describe events from a different view point.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of number is good so pupils' develop good basic skills.

- Monitoring procedures are good and accurately identify areas for improvement.
- There is insufficient emphasis placed on developing pupils' problem solving and investigative mathematics skills.
- Assessment is not used well enough to set pupils targets for improvement.

Commentary

42 The subject leader has good subject knowledge and leads the subject well. As a result, the school has addressed the areas for improvement made in the last inspection report well. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and supplements this scheme of work with other commercially produced materials that provide satisfactorily for pupils of differing abilities. Teachers now plan better to develop pupil's mental mathematical skills. Due to the subject leaders effective monitoring, as a first step to raising standards following the very disappointing results in 2003, the school decided to place a very strong emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills in Years 3 to 6. The accuracy of this evaluation was reflected, and teachers' work rewarded, in 2004 when the results for pupils in Year 6 were much improved on the previous year to be in line with the national average and that of similar schools. However, the very variable number of pupils in each year group has a significant impact on overall standards achieved and means that comparing results year on year has to be done with great care. Inspection evidence shows that in the current Years 2 and 6 standards are average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall. However, due to the effective support by teaching assistants and good planning of activities in lessons, pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

43 Good teaching with effective questioning and an emphasis on developing pupils' number and computation skills is a key feature of lessons throughout the school. In this aspect of the subject they achieve well. Teachers use praise effectively to celebrate the effort and achievement of pupils and very positive relationships with pupils help them to learn in all classes. As a result, pupils respond well to a range of mental warm-up exercises at the start of their lessons. Pupils engage particularly well in whole class activities using the Interactive Whiteboard. A good range of tasks is given to pupils in Years 1 and 2, combining counting skills with problem solving. Pupils of all abilities present their work well. Support from teaching assistants using practical resources such as coins and number lines as well as play activities, enables pupils with less ability to achieve well and make good progress. By the time pupils reach Year 2 they are able to effectively use a hundred square to count in tens, fives and twos and to use this skill in counting to tally vehicles passing the school. They made pictograms and bar charts and were able to extract information from their graphs. They applied their mathematical skills to an imaginative investigation set by their teacher.

44 However, the focus on improving the teaching of pupils' basic skills has been at the expense of other strands of the subject and there is less evidence of work on shape, space and measures and investigative mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils work very diligently and try hard to complete the task they are set. When they are given the opportunity, they work together well in groups, share their ideas, help each other and use their skills to resolve problems. Although, in Years 5 and 6 pupils were seen to enjoy practical investigative tasks, their use of such activities to help pupils to learn how to use and apply their good number skills are not an integral part of lessons. As a first step, the school has had a whole school 'Maths Day' to promote problem solving during which pupils engaged in fun activities including making mathematics board games. However, in the subject action

plan, the subject leader has correctly identified the need to develop this aspect of the subject throughout the school, in addition to the development of higher level activities for more able pupils. Assessment is not being used effectively enough to set targets and meet pupil's individual needs, whatever their ability. Teachers mark pupil's work regularly, but do not always inform pupils of how their work could be improved. Because pupils are not always required to show how they have worked out problems, teachers are unable to show pupils where they have gone wrong and how they can correct their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45 The lack of emphasis on investigative mathematics is reflected in activities in other subjects. In science, pupils present their work in the form of graphs and charts, but teachers do not clearly identify opportunities for developing mathematical skills in their planning for other subjects. This has a negative effect on pupils' proficiency and understanding of how to use their good number skills in practical ways.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a clear emphasis in lessons on the teaching of scientific experimentation and observation and using results to make pertinent evaluations of experiments.
- Very good links with a local company make a very good contribution to pupils interest in science.

Commentary

46 In 2004 national science tasks and tests for pupils, standards, when matched against those of similar schools, were far above the levels expected for pupils in Years 2 and average at Year 6. However, this is set against the background of the school, which has small numbers of pupils in each year group, which makes comparisons difficult. Throughout the school pupils' achievements in science are good. Currently, standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected and in Year 6, pupils are well on course to reach above average standards by the end of the year. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and reflects the clear direction that has been given to the development of the subject.

47 This is the result of consistently good quality teaching, based on very high expectations of pupil's and the effective management of lessons that places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills. Teachers plan their lessons well and are clear about what they want pupils' to learn. As a result, they learn to work together very well in their groups, share ideas and plan their investigations with care. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the pupils were skilled in the setting up of their investigation making sure that their test was fair and that they made accurate records of their results. The teacher placed the emphasis of the lesson on the accurate and systematic evaluation of the results of the test with an expectation that the pupils came to conclusions that were borne out by their test results. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils learnt about the everyday applications of the use of electricity. Whilst in Year 6 the pupils used and applied their mathematical skills as they set up an investigation to find the optimum temperature that washing powder cubes,

dissolved. Teachers' effective use of technical scientific language is a common feature throughout the school and this helps pupils to describe their experiments and their findings. However, the very good links the school has with a local pharmaceuticals company, who allow specialist scientists come to school to take lessons makes a good contribution to the learning of older pupils and generates pupils' interest in the subject further. The very positive attitudes pupils show to their learning is also reflected in the good quality of written work in their books, the way they talk enthusiastically about the subject and the good number of pupils who take part in the nature club.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the last inspection, resources have improved well.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the full range of their skills in other subjects are inconsistent.
- The subject leader has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed further.
- Links with the local secondary school are good.

Commentary

48 Standards of work seen in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations which are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils were making satisfactory progress in this subject. It was felt that resources were inadequate, however, and this limited pupils' attainment. Although the school has recognised that there is still some way to go in developing aspects of the provision further, due to the effective leadership and management of the subject this aspect of the school's provision has improved well. For example, the subject leader's effective monitoring enabled the school to carefully invest considerable funds to improve resources in ICT as part of the new building that opened in March of this year. Every classroom is equipped with computers, which are available for pupils to use in all lessons. These computers are networked to allow pupils to access the Internet and most classrooms have an Interactive Whiteboard for teachers to use in lessons. However, these developments are very recent and have had insufficient time to have a significant effect on pupils' achievement which continues to be satisfactory.

49 As part of these developments, all teachers have recently attended training to develop their own skills and understanding on how to use the new resources in lessons. As a result, they use the Interactive Whiteboards well in lessons to illustrate points in lessons and to capture the interest of pupils. When they are given the opportunity, pupils enjoy using computers throughout the school and, frequently, more able pupils help less able pupils so that all achieve and make satisfactory progress. They work together and collaborate well when sharing computers in the classroom. Teaching assistants also make a good contribution to pupils' learning by effective support and questioning when pupils are engaged in their tasks. As a result pupils learn a secure range of skills in most of the strands of the subject, particularly those based on research and word-processing. The ICT subject leader has comprehensive and exciting plans to extend the range of resources for teaching the control and modelling aspect of the subject which are currently insufficient and the weakest aspect of the provision.

50 Through her monitoring, the subject leader has also quite rightly identified that whole class teaching of ICT skills is impeded by the lack of an ICT suite and the school has rightly planned to develop this further resource. This was illustrated well during the inspection, in a lesson led by a teacher from Tytherington High School who supports pupils in Year 6 in their learning by taking one lesson each week. The lesson developed pupils' knowledge well and reflects the very good liaison between the schools which helps to prepare pupils' well transition to secondary school. However, the pace of learning and number of opportunities pupils had to use computers to practise their skills was hampered by three pupils having to share a computer. The school has also recently begun to develop procedures to track pupil's progress and to interpret what pupils can do against national expectations.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

51 Teachers use the ICT resources in school well in lessons to present ideas and to involve pupils. However, the range of opportunities for pupils to present their work in different ways and formats is inconsistent. There are a number of very good examples such as the use of PowerPoint presentations in Years 5 and 6 to, for example, structure play scripts in English, but in other subjects and classes such as science, history and geography there are few examples of work other than word processing. In Year 6 pupils were able to make a spreadsheet, input data and to use a formula. They made graphs to analyse and interpret the data. However, in other classes these opportunities are fewer. As a result, although, pupils learn the basic principles of handling data and creating graphs, their ability to do this on their own is not secure.

HUMANITIES

52 Due to the timetable arrangements, there was very limited evidence available in **history** and **geography** to enable judgements to be made on standards or the quality of provision. Teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that pupils study a range of topics that reflect the national guidance and the school scheme of work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum makes a very significant contribution to pupils cultural development through the good range of visitors to school.
- Pupils' are encouraged to think about their responsibilities and to consider others.
- The co-ordinator is committed to the subject and works hard to bring about improvements.

Commentary

53 Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in religious education to reach standards in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and traditions was identified as a weakness. Since then the subject leader has given clear leadership to the subject by

developing a curriculum which gives many opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others thoughts and beliefs. In addition she has organised a significant number of training opportunities for staff, several in conjunction with other local schools. These have effectively raised the profile of the subject in the school and developed teachers' knowledge, particularly of world faiths. However, her main achievement has been to extend the links with the community and to increase the number and range of visitors from other faiths who contribute to assemblies and lessons. These are now good and make a very constructive contribution as part of the school's provision to prepare pupils for living in a culturally diverse society. The co-ordinator is keen to keep the curriculum under constant review so that she can tailor it precisely to the needs of the school.

54 In lessons, teachers place a great deal of emphasis on developing pupils' understanding through discussion. As a result, they learn to be tolerant and consider other people's ideas and thoughts. In the lessons seen and in discussions with pupils, they are interested in what they do and talk enthusiastically about their contributions to discussions in class. The older pupils in Year 6 talked about their responsibilities of being part of a community. They were given good opportunities to share their thoughts on being part of the school community. They are very good listeners and are able to articulate their ideas about trust, the consequences of actions, respect for other people and providing good role models for younger pupils. In this way the pupils develop their social responsibilities as well as beginning to understand how different communities live together. In Years 1 and 2 the children are also encouraged to think of others. In particular these pupils thought about those who were less fortunate than themselves and said a prayer for all the children in the world. Pupils are respectful in prayer and sit quietly to reflect.

55 The adjacent Anglican Church of St Oswald's also provides a valuable teaching aid, so that Year 2 children have learned a basic understanding about the major festivals of Christianity. Discussion with pupils shows that, by Year 6 this has been expanded and broadened to include the major world faiths including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. These, and other faiths, are celebrated through the many displays in the school that further reflect the commitment the school places on preparing the pupils to live in a multi-cultural society.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

56 In art and design and design and technology, work was sampled by talking to pupils, looking at their work in books and the high quality displays around the school. However, due to the timetabling arrangements, insufficient evidence was gathered to make overall judgements about standards or provision in these subjects.

57 In **art and design**, displays around the school show that teachers develop pupils' artistic ideas and skills through exciting and challenging activities. This was recognised last year when the school was awarded the prestigious 'Artsmark Silver' and is working towards 'Artsmark Gold'. Observations of work completed by pupils in Year 6 shows an exceptional level of individuality and quality of work. As they move through the school, pupils build securely on a wide range of skills and produce some very effective pieces. For example, they study a range of artists both contemporary and from the past. For example, the works of Jackson Pollock, Clarice Cliff and Mondrian have been studied. The pupils have then created their own work reflecting their very different styles. Pupils' work is well presented, with some pictures completed by the pupils to show children all around the world, decorating the hall in the new school building.

58 Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about their work in **design and technology** including lessons in food technology. They talked with enthusiasm of the design and making projects they have experienced and noted in particular the skilful way the teachers linked subjects together. For example, the pupils in Year 5 were busy making elastic band driven paddle boats which were to be converted into landing craft in support of their learning in history as they were studying Britain since the 1930's. Pupils reported clearly the design and making process and how they evaluated their work and thought about what they could do to make their products even better.

59 In **physical education** no lessons were seen so that it was not possible to make judgements on standards or the quality of provision. Teacher's planning shows that pupils experience a good range of activities to develop their skills in all the areas of the National Curriculum. However, there are particular strengths. For example, all pupils in the school including the children in reception go swimming most weeks of the year. Parents were particularly pleased with this. In addition, through links with the community, the school is able to provide pupils with specialist coaching in sports such as lacrosse. The school's recent involvement in the Sports Co-ordinator programme aims to extend and broaden this further in the near future.

Music

Provision in music is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' creative skills and makes a good contribution to their cultural development.
- Due to the wide range of activities in lessons, pupils of all abilities achieve well and enjoy music.
- Pupils have good opportunities to engage in extra curricular activities in music.

Commentary

59 At the time of the last inspection pupils made sound progress in music and standards were satisfactory. A music specialist teaches music throughout the school. As a result, teaching is good with many very good features observed and music is an important element of the school's creative curriculum for pupils. Lessons are well planned to fully cover all aspects of music including performing skills, composing, responding and listening to music. Teaching also makes good cross-curricular links and pupils have a broad range of opportunities to listen to music from other cultures and to hear a variety of instruments. As a result, pupils achieve well as they move through the school so that by Year 6 standards are better than those expected. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed singing a carol that they had composed and they listened enthralled by the teacher playing the harp. In all classes, pupils practised and made good progress in the lessons observed. Pupils respond well by listening and taking part with obvious enjoyment. Pupils with weaker skills are encouraged to take part and lessons have a positive climate in which to succeed.

60 Leadership of music is good in the school. The music teacher co-ordinates the subject and class teachers benefit from observing lessons from a music specialist. However, pupils' experience in making music is also enhanced well by additional activities. For example, pupils perform at the schools Harvest Festival and Christmas production, pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in the Macclesfield Music Festival and throughout the year all classes enjoy visits from musicians to the school. For those who wish to develop their skills further extra tuition is provided in, for example, guitar and recorders. All of these activities extend pupils enjoyment and experience of music and contributed to the school gaining an 'Artsmark Silver' Award in 2003.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

61 A few short sessions of 'Circle Time' and Personal, social and health education lessons were sampled during the inspection. Unfortunately, not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or learning. However, evidence from talking to the member of staff responsible for this aspect of the school's work indicates that the school is very committed to developing pupils' understanding and awareness of issues surrounding drugs, sex and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Discussions with pupils and their very good personal skills indicate that the school is successful in developing pupils' sense of responsibility to themselves and each other. The school ensures that pupils are involved whenever possible in its work and the School

Council is a very strong voice for pupils, initiates them in the democratic process and teaches them how they can contribute in a very positive way to their community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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