

INSPECTION REPORT

DIGGLE SCHOOL

Diggle, Saddleworth

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105665

Headteacher: Miss Elizabeth Lawson

Lead inspector: Peter Sandall

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th May 2005

Inspection number: 266736

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 182

School address: Sam Road
Diggle
Saddleworth
Postcode: OL3 5PU

Telephone number: 01457 872114
Fax number: 01457 872114

Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of Mr Brian Cliffe
governors:

Date of previous 23rd November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Diggle is a primary school of average size serving the village of the same name on the edge of Saddleworth Moors. Most of the pupils come either from the village or the surrounding area, and parents and governors regard the school as being important to the local community. The school's current roll of 182 has a balance of boys and girls, virtually all of whom are of white, British descent. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class, while covering a range of abilities, is above average overall. The percentage of pupils identified as having a special educational need is below average, and has been so for several years; the same is true of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Numbers on roll have remained similar over the past five years, and most pupils remain in the school for the whole of their primary education. The school provides out-of-school care both before and after school for about a quarter of its pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, physical education, religious education
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
23319	Vincent Leary	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology, music, the Foundation Stage curriculum
22046	Jo Jolliffe	Team inspector	English, personal, social and health education, geography, history, special educational needs, English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	19
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	22
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Diggle is an effective school which gives good value for money. The pupils achieve well and reach above average standards overall, due to good teaching in a very good climate for learning. Leadership and management are good and have successfully maintained standards over time.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, well supported by the governing body, although the leadership and management roles of other staff are not well developed throughout the school.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, with some very good and excellent practice.
- Pupils of all abilities generally achieve well, but some older, more able pupils would benefit from greater challenge.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and contribute well to their achievement.
- Good assessment procedures do not yet set challenging targets for individual pupils.
- The school places a high priority on pupils' care and welfare.
- There are very good links with parents, the community and other schools.

The school has made good improvement overall. Standards have been maintained or improved since the previous inspection. The key issues that arose then, concerning standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and accurate assessment by teachers, have both been dealt with effectively. There is now a much higher proportion of good and very good teaching.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start the reception year with a range of abilities, but have above average attainment overall. They make good progress and the majority of children are in line to exceed the expected goals in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year. In Year 2, standards are currently well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. In Year 6 standards remain well above average in English, and are above average in mathematics and science. However, the school's own records show that these pupils are achieving well in terms of their prior attainment, as their results in tests at Year 2 were not so high. Standards have improved considerably in ICT, where they were unsatisfactory. Standards in art are high. Achievement is good overall and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all year groups. However, more able pupils in Year 6 do not do as well as they could in

mathematics and science because their tasks are not sufficiently challenging. This is borne out by test results in 2004, when fewer pupils attained the higher level 5. Attainment overall at Year 6 was well above the national average for the previous three years, indicating that achievement over time has been good.

Pupils display very good personal qualities, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They have very good attitudes to school, to each other and to adults. Together with very good behaviour, these social strengths contribute to a very good ethos which supports learning. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a good education and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Almost three quarters of the teaching seen was judged to be good, with a third of this being very good or excellent. Good use of skilled teaching assistants contributes to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' positive attitudes to school ensure that most lessons have a very good working atmosphere and time is used well. Effective assessment procedures give teachers a good level of information about pupils' progress, and analysis highlights weaker areas. Sharing this to a greater extent with individual pupils would provide clear targets for improvement.

A good curriculum is enriched by a very good programme of visits and visitors and plenty of opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and activities outside the school day, contributing to very good links with the community. There is a very good partnership with parents and carers. Pupils are cared for very well but older pupils have little involvement in decisions which affect them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has been influential in maintaining high standards. Staff are involved in the school's development planning, but there are no senior members of staff to give a lead, or to act as a sounding board and a source of ideas. Governors have a good understanding of the school's needs and are fully involved in strategic planning. Statutory requirements are met apart from a written policy to support race equality; this is being attended to. Good financial management is linked to the school's priorities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The pupils and their parents are generally very happy with their school. Both the parents' questionnaire and meeting produced very positive responses. Parents are made welcome, kept well informed and encouraged to be partners in their children's education. They believe, and inspectors agree, that their children are receiving a good academic and social education. Pupils enjoy their lessons, although some older pupils echoed the concerns of a few parents about sometimes being bored, and there is evidence to support this. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further develop leadership and management roles across the school.

- Provide a consistent level of challenge for more able pupils.
- Use assessment information to set clear targets for individual improvement.
- Provide further opportunities to seek and value pupils' views.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure there is a written policy and action plan to support race equality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall, although older, more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at both Year 2 and Year 6, and are well above average in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school, although it slows for some more able, older pupils.
- Achievement over time compares favourably with similar schools at both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards have improved considerably in ICT and pupils are achieving very well.
- Achievement is very good in art and design.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with a range of ability, but have above average attainment overall when they start. Almost all have had some pre-school education. The school builds effectively on their initial abilities through consistently good teaching and teamwork between the teacher and the learning support assistant. Improvements to the accommodation are used well to promote interesting activities which engage the children and ensure they make progress in all six areas of learning. They achieve well, with nearly all on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the reception class and a majority who will attain beyond this level.
2. Results in the most recent national tests at Year 2 were well above average in reading and mathematics and average for writing. When compared to schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to a free school meal, results remain well above average in reading, above average in mathematics but below average in writing. Although most pupils attained the expected level 2 in writing, fewer than expected managed the higher level 3. As there is a relatively small number of pupils in each year group there is likely to be some fluctuation in results from year to year, but the school has maintained a better than average standard over the last four years. Girls have performed better than boys, relatively speaking, but there is no inspection evidence to account for this; by Year 6, in fact, the situation is reversed in mathematics. The school is aware of these differences but analysis does not show a recurring pattern.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.1 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (14.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.5 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Inspection judgements are that by Year 2 pupils are attaining standards in English overall which are well above average. The school is aware of the issues surrounding writing and this is a focus in development planning; evidence from pupils' work indicates that this is proving successful. Standards in mathematics and science are above average, as they are in ICT. In art they are well above average. In religious education standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus; other subjects were not a focus for the inspection. Pupils achieve well and make good progress overall.
4. The picture by Year 6 is generally similar, although there are some differences. The most recent national test results in 2004 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. However, when compared to those of pupils in other schools who did as well in the Year 2 tests four years ago, results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. There were further anomalies in the numbers of pupils attaining different levels. Pupils last year achieved an average percentage of the expected level 4 in English, but were well above average in the percentage of level 5s. This was reversed in mathematics and science tests, where pupils did very well at level 4 but less well at the higher level 5, particularly in mathematics. Standards in English went up overall from the previous year, but went down in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.9 (28.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.7 (30.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The inspection did not provide any definitive evidence as to why this happened, and the school was equally puzzled, having expected better results in mathematics in particular. The school's own records showed that the majority of these pupils were achieving well. Results over the last four years have been consistently above or well above the national average in all three subjects. While the school's trend of improvement is below the national trend, this is mainly because last year's results were not as good as in previous years.
6. Again, the small number of pupils taking the test means that a few pupils failing to meet the expected level has a big effect on the school's percentage. However, there is evidence that at times, for example in mathematics, more able pupils in Year 6 become bored with the work they are expected to do because it focuses on reinforcing skills and knowledge which they already possess. Inspection evidence is that current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards in English which are well above average, and above average standards in mathematics and science. Their expected targets in national tests are similar to those of the 2004 year group, even though their results at Year 2 were considerably lower. While a slightly lower percentage are likely to attain the higher level 5, more should attain the expected level 4. This indicates that when their test results are compared to similar schools they will perform better than pupils last year. Pupils are achieving well overall and making good progress.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored and are achieving well in relation to their individual targets. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and teachers

are aware of their individual strengths. Whilst they achieve well by Year 2, their attainment by Year 6, while appropriate in relation to their capacity, leaves scope for further improvement. Monitoring of their progress is not yet sufficiently robust, and there are missed opportunities to present them with interesting and challenging tasks. Where challenging work is set their response is good and they achieve well, but currently their overall achievement is only satisfactory. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

8. Standards in ICT are average by Year 6. While this apparently indicates a slowing of progress from Year 2, where standards are above average, the inspection in 1998 found standards to be below average throughout the school. Since then there has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and resources, brought about by good leadership and management, to the extent that the school has been placed on the 'good practice register' of the local authority. However, these improvements have taken time, and the older pupils did not receive such good grounding in the necessary skills. The subject has also become ever more demanding as new technology has developed. Given these circumstances pupils throughout the school are achieving well in ICT.
9. Standards in art and design are well above average by Year 6, and pupils' achievement is very good. Art is very well planned for and makes good use of opportunities offered by other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils are given a wide range of experiences in both subject matter and different media. Their observational powers are developed very well and they are given plenty of encouragement. Their work is very well displayed and confirms the importance placed by the school on all aspects of the primary experience.
10. While music was not a focus, standards by Year 6 are well above average, an improvement since the previous inspection and indicating that pupils achieve very well. This is mainly the result of very good specialist teaching in lessons, and the wide range of opportunities offered to extend pupils' skills. This includes a very proficient orchestra, in which around a third of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 play, and a very good choir. As with art and design, the subject has a high profile which encourages pupils because they know their hard work is appreciated.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and there have been no recent exclusions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is well above the national average and pupils are very punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are very good.
- The school stimulates pupils effectively and encourages in them the desire to learn.
- Pupils articulate their knowledge and views confidently.
- The spiritual awareness, social skills and moral framework which support community life are reinforced consistently, but pupils are not fully prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.
- Pupils behave very well, are polite and show respect for the feelings of others.
- Attendance is well above average and is extremely well supported by parents and carers.

Commentary

11. Relationships are very good. Reception children are developing good attitudes and independence, and most will exceed the goal for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the year. Pupils are developing well as confident individuals and they show respect for one another, both around the school and during lessons. Pupils often work in pairs where sometimes a higher attaining pupil supports a lower attaining pupil. This is carried out sensitively and constructively, supporting both learning and social skills. Year 2 pupils, for instance, demonstrated confidence and very good social skills in their 'talking pairs', as did Year 6 pupils in their discussion about parliamentary elections. Links with other partners such as Kingfisher School play an important part in developing pupils' social skills and sense of responsibility. Pupils confidently describe what they are doing and are able to articulate their viewpoints, both in lessons and in conversations with adults. They use the Internet to learn independently and work co-operatively in small groups.
12. Because all staff collaborate well to uphold the consistent, positive approach to school routines and behaviour management, pupils' behaviour throughout the school day is very good. There were no exclusions last year. Clear, consistent day-to-day classroom routines, high expectations of sensible movement from place to place, good use of praise to highlight self-disciplined attitudes and good behaviour; all these contribute well to developing the high levels of responsible social skills and attitudes displayed by pupils. Pupils are very polite and courteous. They gain a clear understanding of their own and other people's lives and feelings, particularly through their assemblies and by the staff using every opportunity to reinforce core principles. Spiritual awareness is successfully encouraged in assemblies and religious education. A lesson on Christian symbols in baptism and their meaning, for example, very successfully linked factual knowledge with an appreciation of the importance these symbols have for some people and the importance of respecting this. Another lesson linking the concept of the family to the church also helped older pupils to consider spiritual values. The high quality of music in the school, and the large number of pupils who play in the orchestra or sing in the choir, also plays a significant part in developing spiritual awareness.
13. There are many opportunities for visits and visitors to broaden pupils' horizons. Such opportunities interest pupils and encourage in them a desire to learn. Art and music provision contributes positively to the pupils' cultural development. The school is harmonious because relationships are very good. There are very few instances of bullying and any that do arise are dealt with effectively by the school. However, there is not, as required, a race equality policy or action plan and little evidence of planning to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural, multi-racial society. There is no planned programme of visits or visitors to encourage a wider understanding, and pupils have only limited knowledge of other faiths and festivals. In spite of this, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
14. Pupils are able to talk to staff with ease but there is no school council through which their views and opinions can be expressed more formally. A high proportion of older pupils, for example, have strong reservations about their responsibilities in the dining hall. The headteacher uses a questionnaire which allows pupils to show their feelings about the school, but pupils do not know whether the concerns expressed are responded to. There is a planned programme of opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship, a good example being a lively discussion about voting on the national Election Day, but this is not yet monitored and evaluated.

15. Pupils enjoy being at school and their parents fully support them and the school by ensuring that attendance is very good. The school's careful monitoring ensures continued very good levels of attendance. Pupils are punctual and so the day gets off to a prompt start.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.5
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for all its pupils. Teaching is good, as is learning, supported by a very good ethos and good leadership and management. An involving curriculum is supported by very good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils receive a good level of support and guidance and very good attention is paid to their safety and welfare. There are very good links with parents, other schools and the wider community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good, but could be used more effectively to support the progress of individual pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching, and two examples of excellent teaching were seen.
- Good teaching takes place in all classes.
- Pupils' relationships with teachers and the encouragement they receive provide a very good climate for learning.
- Learning slows for some more able, older pupils as not all tasks are sufficiently challenging.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures give a good picture of pupils' progress, but are not used effectively to set targets for group or individual progress.
- Marking is uneven and does not always follow the school's policy.

Commentary

16. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and because of this, learning is also good overall and pupils make good progress. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching, as there was then, and the proportion of very good and excellent teaching is much higher: a third of the teaching seen came into this category. This is a strong picture on which to base future development, and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. The school's leadership has high expectations of teaching quality and monitors it effectively informally, being well aware of strengths

overall. However, the relative weakness in the achievement of older, more able pupils has not been addressed effectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (7%)	8 (27%)	12 (40%)	8 (27%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

17. Children in the Foundation Stage are well taught and make good gains in their learning as a result. They benefit further because the current teaching group of 19 children is smaller than usual, resulting in plenty of individual attention. The class teacher and the learning support assistant work and plan together very effectively, with a good understanding of the learning needs of very young children. There is a good range of activities for the children; they are interesting and involving and support different aspects of learning, with a good mix of both structured and independent tasks. There is a strong emphasis on practical experiences to ensure that learning is realistic rather than theoretical. The high priority placed on extending the children’s speaking and listening skills, already above average when they come into the reception class, underpins all aspects of their learning.
18. The climate for learning is very good. The school is a well-ordered community with high expectations of pupils’ behaviour which are very well met by the great majority of pupils. As a result most lessons run very smoothly and focus effectively on the relevant learning intentions planned by the teacher. Relationships are very good between teachers, support assistants and pupils, and pupils are confident to ask when they need help. The very good relationships between pupils also enable teachers to make good use of discussion, whether with the whole class, groups of pupils or when pupils are asked to talk about specific problems in pairs. Because these strengths apply in all classes, pupils are familiar with teachers’ methods and expectations and respond accordingly.
19. There is a very good emphasis on pupils working independently, whether on their own or in collaboration with other pupils. A good example was a mathematics lesson in Year 5, where pupils looked for patterns when solving problems. Pupils were expected to think for themselves and were encouraged to stretch themselves with more challenging work, whatever their ability. Coupled with sensitive support where pupils needed it, this resulted in excellent achievement for all. Because the curriculum is usually presented in an interesting way, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well and show what they know.
20. The exception to this is the response of more able pupils in Year 6. While they are appropriately challenged most of the time, there are occasions when they are not, which affects their attitude to learning. This is confirmed by the comments of some pupils and parents. There is an understandable focus in Year 6 on ensuring that all the pupils understand the main concepts which underpin their knowledge, particularly in English, mathematics and science. When more able pupils are fully engaged, for example by demanding writing tasks, their response indicates that they are very capable and they achieve well. However, evidence from both pupils’ books and some lessons suggests that this is not always the case in mathematics, particularly, and at times in science.

21. The school complies with the special educational needs code of practice. The progress of pupils with special educational needs towards meeting their personal targets is regularly reviewed by the special needs co-ordinator and class teacher, together with parents. Teachers and support staff know their pupils and their targets very well and support their needs effectively. As a result pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils are identified by the school and are usually extended by the tasks they are set. Teachers are well aware of their capabilities. However, because they are not fully extended in Year 6, their achievement over time is satisfactory.
22. There is good provision made for homework across the school, and work is usually related to pupils' current area of study. Parents report that it is regularly set and marked, and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. Marking overall, however, is not consistent, and the school's marking policy is not adhered to by all teachers. While there are examples of very good marking, there are also times when work is not marked or, occasionally, marked inaccurately. The school rightly emphasises the importance of positive comments but in practice this is not always the case, nor does marking very often indicate to pupils what they need to do to get better.
23. The school has good assessment procedures which are used consistently to give an accurate picture of pupils' progress, both for groups of pupils and for individuals. The key issue from the previous inspection concerning the accuracy of teacher assessment in English and mathematics has been effectively addressed. Results in the core subjects, both from statutory and optional tests, are carefully analysed so that teachers can respond in their planning to areas of concern. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is regular and on-going and is used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. The issue for the school now is to involve pupils more fully in their own learning, through individual targets where achievement can be measured. The positive attitude to learning shown by the great majority of pupils would support this initiative, which is already under consideration as part of the school's development planning.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is good with very good features and enables pupils to make good progress overall, although it does not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. It provides very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and varied curriculum.
- Planning for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Planning has improved since the previous inspection, but the intellectual needs of the older, more able pupils are not always met.
- The ICT curriculum has improved significantly and is developing well as a tool for learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum is very effectively enriched by the use of visiting specialists and by strong community and parental links.

Commentary

24. The school has improved features of the curriculum that were identified as satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, whilst also maintaining or improving standards in most subjects. This ensures that, for the majority of pupils, the school continues to meet its aim of providing a broadly based and challenging curriculum. However, despite revised planning, which now ensures that pupils with different abilities are given tasks which offer an appropriate challenge, those for older, more able pupils are not always sufficiently demanding. Overall, however, the curriculum offered has improved since the previous inspection.
25. The curriculum for ICT is now good. It is enabling pupils to achieve well and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' learning in other subjects. Provision has been significantly strengthened by the installation and subsequent up-dating of a computer suite, as well as the use of laptops in the classrooms. This has improved the pupils' access to good quality, well-focused teaching of ICT skills. There has been, and continues to be, strong leadership in this area.
26. There is a strong emphasis on music. Many pupils are being taught to play string, woodwind and brass instruments. The school's orchestra, which includes about a third of the pupils in Years 3 to Year 6, performs to a high standard. There is also a flourishing choir in which the singing is also of a high quality. This rich provision enhances pupils' personal qualities, raises the standards of music skills and adds variety and enjoyment to school life. The school regularly participates in local music festivals, which also contributes to pupils' social development. The school's leadership is well focused on maintaining and where possible improving this very good provision.
27. Parents value the variety of activities offered, because they believe they result in interested children who want to learn, and this is supported by inspection evidence. The range of extra-curricular clubs has been extended to include a recorder club, swimming, football, netball and a French club. Pupils in Year 6 also have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to an activity centre. In addition, specialist providers such as sports coaches, theatre groups and other outside speakers are used effectively to enhance the curriculum with their expertise.
28. Personal, social and health education is very well planned for through the school. It is integral to the topics studied, promoting a healthy lifestyle and respect for the environment, and is well supported through a wide range of resources. There are also weekly slots timetabled where pupils are encouraged to discuss and share problems and concerns. A detailed scheme of work covers sex and relationships education as well as drugs awareness, involving both the school nurse and police liaison officers.
29. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. The individual education plans for these pupils are carefully written and have clear learning objectives which are regularly reviewed. Teaching support staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and give good support. Pupils with special educational needs are often paired or grouped with other pupils in the class, which supports their learning and ensures that they are fully included. Information technology is used effectively as a tool to help them to achieve their targets. The special needs coordinator is very effective in ensuring that support is well targeted and coordinated.
30. There is a good match overall of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The sense of joint purpose that binds all staff is a strong feature and a key

factor in the school's success. The school has invested wisely in its resources for learning. In every part of the school, teachers have access to a wide range of stimulating and relevant materials. For example, the equipment for outdoor play effectively enables the children in the reception classes to develop their social, intellectual and physical skills. Individual laptops and interactive whiteboards are improving the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation has been extended and the very spacious outdoor areas have been imaginatively developed to support aspects of the curriculum. While the current library has a suitable range of books to support pupils' learning, its situation in a corridor has a negative effect on the school's capacity to encourage independent learning opportunities. The Year 6 classroom is also cramped, which in some lessons affects the quality of pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Provision of support, advice and guidance is good. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils, overall, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very safe and caring environment where pupils are treated fairly.
- The very good relationships children have with adults help to ensure they are very well cared for.
- Very good induction procedures allow pupils to settle quickly into school routines.
- Whilst pupils' views are sought informally and through questionnaires, they receive limited feedback and have limited opportunities to be involved in the development of the school.

Commentary

31. All staff work together very effectively to ensure that the school operates as a safe and happy community. The absence of a health and safety policy was identified at the last inspection. This has now been rectified and both the headteacher and the governors ensure that all safety checks are carried out. Whilst the policy is satisfactory and is well supported by local education authority guidance, some of the procedures require expanding and making more specific to reflect the very good practice that actually take place. Supervision throughout the day is very good and at break and lunchtimes pupils play happily in the spacious grounds. The caring attitude of all staff and the way in which all pupils are treated fairly is a strength of the school.
32. All staff have received first aid training and although there is no dedicated first aid room, facilities are available for rest and treatment so pupils are well cared for. The headteacher is the child protection officer and is named in the school procedures. Staff are aware of the child protection requirements and the school works well with both pupils' parents or carers and other agencies where necessary. The very good relationships which exist between pupils and their teachers, as well as support staff, ensure that pupils know they have someone to talk to if there is a problem. There are currently no 'looked after' children in the school.
33. The induction procedures for new pupils are also a strength of the school, and are well monitored by the headteacher, who knows her pupils very well. Parents are encouraged by the headteacher to be fully involved in the process and can spend time

in school with their child initially. They are very pleased with these arrangements and pupils agree that they helped them settle to learning very quickly. Liaison with pre-school groups and a series of visits to the school ensure that pupils and staff get to know each other and that information is transferred. Pupils who join the school at various times during the year in different year groups benefit from a similar process so they feel at home straight away. This has a very positive effect on both achievement and standards.

34. Relationships are very good in the school and the staff know the children and most of their families well, enabling them to provide good support. The quality of relationships ensures that teaching and learning take place in a productive atmosphere, leading to pupils making good progress. As part of this support the school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils in a separate building on the school site. This is well attended by pupils and greatly appreciated by parents. In addition to satisfactory academic guidance, pupils' personal development is very well supported through assemblies, personal, social and health education and through informal discussion. Pupils also volunteer to play with the reception children during the lunch hour, which contributes very well to the social development of all involved.
35. A questionnaire allows pupils to express their views about the school and the friendly atmosphere allows frequent informal consultation. However, older pupils have some reservations about some of the tasks they are expected to carry out, for example specific duties such as helping in the dining area at lunchtime. These concerns, whether realistic or not, have not been addressed by the school, although it is aware of them. There is currently no regular forum for airing such issues, as in the school council system seen in most schools.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, with the community and with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very good range of information for parents which enables them to help their child at home.
- A very good partnership has been established with a local special school and this benefits pupils at both schools.
- The school contributes to and benefits from very good links with the community.

Commentary

36. The parents' questionnaires and comments made at the parents' meeting show that parents are pleased with most aspects of the school. There were some concerns about the information they received about their child's progress and the level of consultation they were offered by the school. Both of these aspects were considered during the inspection and found to be at least good, although written reports on pupils' progress could be made more helpful.
37. The school sends regular newsletters to parents and special letters as required, keeping them very well informed about the school during the year. There is also a very good web site available to parents. The information contained in both the prospectus and the governors' annual report meets requirements. Pupils' progress reports give a

personalised description of what each child has done but do not contain any targets, advice on how to improve or guidance on how well they are doing compared to expectations. This would help both pupils and parents to focus on specific areas to improve their progress. There are, however, two meetings a year at which parents can discuss progress with the teachers, and parents know that they are welcome in the school at any time to discuss aspects of their children's education with either the class teacher or headteacher.

38. A strong feature of the partnership with parents is the welcome meeting held for each year group, when parents are given information about the year's work as well as meeting the new teacher. At this meeting parents are also informed of any sex education that will take place and also about school visits during the year. The older pupils also have a homework diary which parents can monitor and use to send messages to the class teacher. Parents are occasionally consulted by a formal questionnaire and also benefit from the 'open door' policy of the school and very good opportunities to talk to the teachers when they collect their child from school. A number of parents support the school directly by being governors, by helping in the classroom or by being part of the active parent teacher association, which raises funds and organises social events. The headteacher maintains close links with individual parents and is readily available to discuss concerns.
39. The school is an integral part of the community and there are close links with the local churches and businesses. Whilst there are no opportunities for partnerships with large industries in the area, the school does benefit from links with local shops and farms as well as local small businesses that provide resources and support for the curriculum. Pupils are actively involved with participating in community events, including environmental projects and Christian festivals. There are links to other musical groups and the school visits old people's homes in the area for concerts.
40. There are very good relationships with other schools and pre-school facilities in the area. The local secondary school provides direct support through modern foreign language provision and another school supports art projects. Sporting activities take place with other local primary schools on a regular basis. Because the school is able to fully accommodate disabled pupils it has been able to build up a partnership with a special school in Oldham, enabling pupils of a similar age to work together. This is an innovative and expanding partnership which at present involves the younger children and gives them the opportunity to work with less advantaged pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds, making a very good contribution to their social development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has clear aspirations for the school and works hard in its interests. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Governance is good. The school does not currently comply with the statutory requirement to have a written policy and action plan to ensure racial equality, but this does not affect standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides clear and decisive direction which has led to good improvement since the last inspection.

- While co-ordinators lead their subjects effectively, other leadership and management roles are under-developed.
- Good management systems underpin the work of the school.
- Governors are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Good use is made of finance to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

41. The headteacher has led the school effectively for a considerable period of time, during which improvement overall has been good. She makes a strong personal contribution to all aspects of the school's development, having a clear vision and a whole-hearted commitment to ensuring this is fulfilled. Her influence can be seen in the school's success in maintaining high standards in many aspects of its work, including both the academic and social achievement of the pupils. Her commitment is recognised and appreciated by the school's staff, governors and parents.
42. Co-ordinators lead their subjects effectively, producing action plans to take provision forward. They have a good understanding of the curriculum and ensure that pupils are taught both the knowledge and skills they need to make good progress. However, while monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, it is not systematic, and subject co-ordinators have limited opportunities to see lessons in other classes. They see teachers' planning and are encouraged to scrutinise pupils' work through the school. This helps to ensure that most pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, co-ordinators' ability to identify where provision might be further improved is not as good as it could be if there were greater opportunities to observe teaching.
43. All staff and governors are involved in the construction of the school's development plan. This is a useful document in terms of direction, but many of the success criteria are based on producing documents, rather than measuring its achievement by its effect on pupil performance, whether academic or otherwise. This to some extent echoes a concern of the previous inspection.
44. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is experienced and offers very good leadership in this area. Together with the headteacher she is building helpful links with the Kingfisher Special School, involving both classes and staff to mutual benefit. Very good use is made of learning support assistants, who are fully involved in regular reviews of pupils' progress.
45. There is no leadership and management structure between the headteacher and subject leaders in this primary school of average size. This is not a requirement, and it does not appear to significantly affect either pupil performance or the smooth day-to-day running of the school. It does, however, place much of the burden of leadership and management on the shoulders of the headteacher, without giving her the support and sounding board which senior staff provide, as well as a range of views formed from other perspectives. There is evidence that at least one leadership and management role is allocated but not effective. A middle layer of management would allow the delegation of key tasks and at the same time encourage both professional and career development.
46. Day-to-day management is very good, aided by very effective administrative staff. The headteacher is very aware of all aspects of the school's performance and ensures appropriate responses, such as the focus on writing for more able pupils in Years 1

and 2. Performance data is used, together with internal assessment, to monitor performance on a regular basis, and there is evidence of action being taken in response to this. However, this is not yet fully effective in addressing the achievement of more able pupils in Year 6. Performance management supports the professional development of teachers, and there are plans to extend this to non-teaching staff. The latter already have good training opportunities which are tailored to both personal and school needs, as in the case of one who is undertaking training in the 'Sports Leader Initiative'.

47. Governors are closely involved with the school and have a good knowledge of the provision it offers, talking in good detail about strengths and areas for development. They receive an annual audit of each subject, produced by the subject co-ordinator. Governors are welcome in the school and several are regular visitors. Committee structures are well developed and effective, and the governing body is involved in both approving and reviewing the school's development planning. While the statutory requirement to have a written race equality policy and action plan is not yet in place, this is in draft form and awaiting governor approval.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	568,341	Balance from previous year	27,814
Total expenditure	562,417	Balance carried forward to the next	33,738
Expenditure per pupil	3,056		

48. Financial management procedures are clear and are used to support the school's intentions. For example, the school spends an above average amount annually to employ support staff, but well below average on supply teachers. Results indicate that this is effective, as is the employment of a specialist music teacher and ICT technician, and the training of a support assistant as a school sports co-ordinator. Governors are well aware of the school's budget position and the needs of the pupils. There has been an effective and continuing focus on improving the school's accommodation, but this has not distracted governors from their primary responsibility for supporting the pupils' education through carefully targeted expenditure. With broadly average expenditure per pupil providing a good education, the school gives good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. Provision for children in Foundation Stage is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Almost all children come to the school with some pre-school playgroup experience. Children enter the reception class with higher than average attainment overall, although there is a wide spread of ability. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority are working above the expected levels in all areas of learning. Children achieve well during their time in the reception class because of good teaching and an interesting, relevant curriculum which meets their particular needs. Notably, there are now good opportunities for teaching and learning outside, as well as inside. The spacious outdoor area effectively promotes learning in all areas of the curriculum.
50. The induction procedures for children joining the school are very good and greatly appreciated by parents. There is plenty of useful contact with pre-school groups which helps staff to be aware of specific children's needs. A number of visits are made by children and their parents before the children start school. Parents are made to feel very welcome and are given the chance to look round the whole school, as well as join their children in the reception class.
51. Teaching in the reception class is consistently good. The class teacher works closely with the nursery nurse and both understand the needs of young children and make learning fun. Children's progress is frequently assessed and the information gathered is used effectively to plan the next step in their learning. Leadership and management are good overall. There is a clear understanding of how the Foundation Stage should provide for the learning of young children and this is put into practice effectively. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very positive relationships throughout the reception class, and adults provide very good role models for the children.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop independence and to take responsibility for their actions from a very early age.

Commentary

52. The classroom has a very warm, welcoming atmosphere in which young children feel safe and secure. There are very high expectations of children's attitudes and behaviour, but these are very well related to the children's social development. The staff themselves give a very good example of how other people should be treated, and this helps the children to appreciate the importance of good social behaviour. Children know the class rules and many are developing an understanding of how their actions affect others. Children's independence is developed effectively, as is their ability to work and play alongside others. For instance, in the role play area outside children

worked together cleaning the cars in the 'car wash depot'. Children play happily in the many stimulating activities in the classrooms, and are expected to change activities by themselves without fussing. They learn to tidy away the resources that they have used. Children's confidence develops rapidly so that by the time they start in Year 1, all will have reached the early learning goals for their age and most will have attained beyond this, achieving well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and attain standards which are higher than those expected by the end of reception.
- Good opportunities for speaking help children to communicate confidently.
- Children are encouraged to write from an early stage.
- There is good provision for developing children's reading.

Commentary

53. Children enter the reception class with generally better than average language and communication skills and they are provided with good opportunities to develop them further. Teaching is good, with the teacher and support assistant giving a high priority to extending children's language skills. This ensures children continue to make progress and the majority will exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. This represents good achievement.
54. Good routines for speaking and listening are in place right from the start so that children learn how to listen to each other and take turns in speaking. Both staff provide good opportunities for children to speak, encouraging them to discuss experiences both in groups and in their 'talking partner' pairs. This helps to give children confidence and encourages those few who are more reluctant speakers. Staff use questions and discussions effectively to extend children's vocabulary. This results in children being generally confident speakers, who take turns in speaking and listening and communicate easily with adults and each other.
55. A good range of varied activities promotes the development of children's writing well. For example, there are opportunities to write and post letters at Diggle post office, make lists or make notes on a telephone conversation. The teacher challenges children to write in other contexts, with good questions such as 'Can you write down the ingredients you will use?' More formal teaching of handwriting begins at an appropriate stage, so by the time the children enter Year 1 most achieve well in this aspect of their learning.
56. The development of reading skills has a high priority and is effectively supported by parents. Children handle books confidently and have a different sound to learn each week. All children have embarked on a systematic reading scheme and are making good progress with their reading. They listen to stories with interest and concentration and most can retell them accurately. Children enjoy the opportunities they have to share books with other children and adults.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching uses a variety of approaches and children achieve well.
- Good practical activities and an emphasis on appropriate mathematical vocabulary support children's learning effectively.

Commentary

57. Teaching is good, with staff making good use of a variety of activities to promote children's mathematical development. There is a good focus on appropriate mathematical language and on understanding through practical experience. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce children's understanding in counting and ordering numbers, and as a result many children can count in twos and understand the concept of doubling. The frequent singing of number songs also encourages confidence and makes children familiar with number patterns. All this ensures children's learning is good and contributes to the progress they make, so that the majority achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and many exceed them.
58. Good displays and use of mathematical phrases such as *more than*, *less than*, *empty* or *half full* effectively promote children's learning. In practical lessons staff use an interesting range of teaching methods and resources, including ICT, so that children develop a good understanding of all aspects of mathematics. During the inspection children were seen working on the language of direction, controlling the movement of a floor robot by giving it a series of commands. This experience developed their understanding of sequencing numbers and the importance of accuracy when giving instructions. The outdoor area is well resourced to reinforce children's knowledge of shape. Most children are able to name shapes such as squares, triangles, and circles. Mathematical language is woven into everyday activities well and this makes learning very relevant.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a broad range of experiences and achieve well.
- The outdoor area is used very effectively to promote and support children's learning.
- Good use is made of the local area to provide first-hand experiences.

Commentary

59. Teaching is good. The children are provided with a good range of practical opportunities to learn about their world, extending their horizons effectively. The school's outdoor area is a very good resource for encouraging children to use all their senses and to promote their learning about plants and habitats. The staff use it very well indeed, representing a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

60. Children's interest is engaged through very good displays, including the use of books and pictures to stimulate discussion and support learning. There are many opportunities for independent learning. For instance, mixing their own ingredients for a 'toy party' provided good opportunities to manipulate materials and helped children to understand change. When working with the computers most children are confident, with good mouse control, and many are able to move the cursor around the screen. Some children are able to control a floor robot by giving a series of instructions.
61. Very good use is made of Diggle village for children to learn about the world from first hand experiences. For example, they use the locality to explore their immediate surroundings and visit the different shops. A recent visit to Diggle post office stimulated a range of writing activities. The semi-rural environment offers many opportunities for them to explore and investigate. The children are knowledgeable about farm vehicles and animals. Through thoughtful and well planned activities they gain an awareness of other cultures and beliefs. Religious education forms an appropriate element of the curriculum, with an initial focus on children's awareness of themselves developing into an appreciation of the diversity of different faiths and celebrations. Most children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, and many will exceed them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to work with a variety of tools.
- The outdoor areas are used effectively to promote children's learning.
- The hall is used well to develop children's control and co-ordination skills.

Commentary

62. Teaching is good, ensuring children's learning is also good. Children have a good range of opportunities to extend their skills with various tools and equipment in the classroom and these are effective in helping them make progress in developing their hand and eye co-ordination. They are given good opportunities to manipulate small construction toys, for example through imaginary play, and show a good level dexterity.
63. Their development in this area of their learning is also promoted well outdoors. When working outside they have good opportunities to move, ride and balance, and many show a good level of confidence as they steer the bikes, scooters and cars. A good range of equipment is helping children to develop an appropriate awareness of space and enabling them to learn to control their own bodies in various situations. This contributes effectively to children's learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed at this stage, however, to reinforce children's learning outdoors or to challenge them further. Lessons in physical education in the hall are well organised, allowing opportunities for children to explore space, direction, speed and balance for themselves. The majority of children reach the goals expected of them by the end of reception and most will exceed them, indicating good achievement.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy the range of activities provided for them.
- Good opportunities are provided to encourage children to work co-operatively together.

Commentary

64. Teaching in this area of learning is good overall. The teacher plans an appropriate range of activities that stimulate children's imagination. As a result their learning is good and they make good progress towards the goals they are expected to achieve. Some children will exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.
65. Children experiment with colour mixing as they paint or print. They enjoy the role-play opportunities they have, using the props provided to support their play effectively. These stimulate good interaction as children work together in pairs or small groups. Staff provide good opportunities for children to sing simple songs and rhymes and to dance. Children clearly enjoy these activities and enter into them enthusiastically. They also contribute to their creative development and cultural awareness, for example the role-play linked to the 'Rain-forest' theme. Children show good concentration as they work at their pictures or models and are proud of their achievement. They relate well to each other as they work both within and outside the classroom.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- There are very good opportunities for developing literacy skills, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Parents give excellent support to help improve their children's reading.
- The focus on writing over the last year has led to good improvement.
- Assessment is not used effectively to set individual targets for pupils so they understand how to improve.
- The school marking policy is not used consistently.

Commentary

66. The 2004 results of national tests indicate that standards in English were well above the national average by the end of Year 6 and were above average for similar schools. Results for pupils in Year 2 were well above the national average in reading, but average in writing. Compared to similar schools nationally, reading was also well above average, but writing was below average. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that standards are currently well above the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6 in all aspects of the subject, and pupils are achieving well.
67. An action plan to focus on and improve writing has been effective in raising standards. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills and to write for different purposes. Year 2 pupils have written interesting diary entries, which are well set out and presented. Higher attaining pupils produce imaginative writing of high quality using vivid description, for instance 'Her cloak is dark black with sparkling jewels'. Less able pupils are able to write several simple sentences with support. By Year 6, the majority of pupils write confidently. The more able pupils produce work of a high standard and use a range of sophisticated vocabulary and techniques intended to have impact on the reader. Their performance here, both in the work seen and in the percentage attaining the higher level 5 in last year's national test results, is better than in mathematics or science, further evidence that the focus has had a positive effect.
68. Pupils' reading benefits from the excellent support given by parents. Most pupils have access at home to books which interest them, and they receive encouragement from parents. The school is very appreciative of parents' efforts. Standards in reading are well above average, although pupils are not always sufficiently encouraged to tackle reading books which will challenge and stretch them. Pupils of all abilities in Year 6 read with confidence and expression. Many pupils are very articulate. Year 2 pupils are encouraged to talk about topics in pairs, and this develops both oral and social skills. Year 6 pupils enjoyed an animated discussion about voting on national Election Day.
69. The quality of teaching is good overall and is never less than satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers expertly manage pupils' learning. They choose topics and materials which engage pupils, set a very good pace for the lesson and provide the right amount of challenge and support. Teaching support staff are effective in meeting the learning

needs of individuals and small groups of pupils. As a result, pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well; this includes pupils with special educational needs, who are making good progress towards meeting their personal targets. On the whole, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this helps support their progress.

70. Resources for learning are good, although the library is located in a corridor as there is no room available to house it. This is not a satisfactory arrangement since it limits pupils' opportunities for independent learning and research. The Year 6 classroom is very cramped, which at times impacts on pupils' response, and therefore on the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils express their concern about this lack of space.
71. The subject is well led by the coordinator although time is needed for direct monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Assessment data is thorough and well analysed to monitor strengths, areas for improvement and pupil progress, but is not yet used to set individual targets to help pupils focus on what they need to do to improve. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Pupils benefit from a very good range of opportunities for developing their literacy skills. The focus on cross-curricular literacy is having a positive impact on standards. Teachers display and explain key words. In history and geography, pupils enjoy writing articles for the front page of a newspaper on the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun and about local housing and geographical features. ICT is also well used to support literacy skills, for instance for drafting and redrafting work and for spell checks. Work is well written and presented in the different subjects and this is contributing well to developing literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall, and mental skills are particularly well taught.
- There are good assessment and tracking procedures, but more use could be made of the information provided to share targets for improvement with the pupils.
- Leadership and management are effective in moving the subject forward.

Commentary

73. Standards in mathematics are above average at both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection, representing satisfactory improvement. In the national tests in 2004, pupils in Year 2 performed very well, attaining well above average standards when compared with schools nationally, and being above average when compared to schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to a free school meal. These pupils are achieving well.
74. In national tests in 2004, pupils in Year 6 did not achieve as well as the school expected. While almost all attained the expected level 4, comparatively few managed the higher level 5: many fewer than in English and science, for example. While the

overall results were above the national average, when compared to schools whose pupils attained similar (very high) standards in the national tests four years earlier they were well below average. The targets set for the current Year 6 pupils are similar to those for last year, with almost all in line to attain the expected level 4, and a third the higher level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are in line to achieve these results. Because their attainment in the Year 2 tests was only just above the national average, they have made good progress and are achieving well overall.

75. Results over time in the national tests have been well above average at Year 6, suggesting that these issues may well be short-term ones. However, the quality and quantity of work in pupils' books in Year 6, together with lesson evidence, indicates that more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the activities and tasks they are given. There is some work which extends them, for example in problem solving, but when compared with the efforts of more able pupils in Year 5 progress is only satisfactory. This judgement is supported by the comments of some parents and pupils, who refer to some of the work they are given as boring. In a lesson seen, more able pupils were well challenged by the eventual problems they were given to solve. However, the preceding twenty minutes of teaching was directed at fairly basic revision of simple fractions, and it was clear that a significant minority of these pupils lost interest and attention at this stage because they already understood the concept.
76. Teaching in mathematics is good overall, but lacks the consistency apparent in some other subjects. Lessons seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to excellent, and while the work in pupils' books usually indicates pupils are making good progress year on year, there is some fluctuation. Marking in particular varies, ranging from helpful and informative comments to work which is not marked at all or, occasionally, marked correct when it is not. The presentation of work in some classes is untidy, which also affects accuracy.
77. There is a good focus on problem solving but less evidence of pupils being given open-ended investigations which challenge them to use their mathematical skills. This is a missed opportunity, because pupils are encouraged in most lessons to think mathematically, and as a result they are confident and enjoy being faced with a challenge. There is also a good emphasis in all lessons on acquiring the mental calculation skills which give pupils the confidence to tackle new ideas.
78. An excellent lesson for Year 5 pupils illustrated all the strengths of mathematics teaching in the school. Pupils were given a range of problems where the solution lay in looking for patterns in the data provided. The teacher's high expectations and encouragement resulted in pupils of all abilities making excellent progress, as the tasks were very well selected to provide appropriate challenges. Excellent relationships meant that pupils worked very well together, sharing and exchanging ideas and information. While less able pupils were supported sensitively, the more able responded to very high demands, to the extent that two were able to provide a mathematical formula ($x = [n \times 3] + 2$) to demonstrate how they had solved a problem.
79. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is carefully tracked, and triggers intervention if pupils make less than the expected amount of progress. Key objectives for the year are shared with pupils and parents, which is good practice, and pupils are made aware of how well they have done in assessments. While teachers make lesson intentions clear to pupils, there are at present no specific, written, short-term targets for individuals or groups of pupils against which they can measure their own progress.

80. There is not much evidence of mathematics on display round the school, and very little of what there is celebrates pupils' achievements by showing how they achieved a particular task. Given that mathematics is well taught and pupils enjoy the subject, this is a missed opportunity to encourage them further, perhaps through class or whole-school problems and challenges. Homework, on the other hand, is regular, related to topics pupils are studying, and usually provides interesting tasks.
81. Leadership in mathematics is shared between two co-ordinators who teach in different key stages. This gives them a good perspective of mathematics across the school. They are both experienced and well informed, and have provided staff training within the school. While they monitor the subject through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' books, there is no regular opportunity to observe teaching and learning taking place in classrooms. Leadership and management is good overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory, although it is not specifically planned for. In ICT, for example, pupils use spreadsheets and create graphs to support their work in other subjects. In science, again, tables and graphs are used to give information or display findings in a precise and easily understood way.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is planned well with a strong emphasis on practical investigations.
- Pupils achieve well and have good scientific knowledge.
- Teaching and learning are good but there are few opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Assessment is accurate but is not consistently used to match work to pupils' abilities.

Commentary

83. The emphasis the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor in the above average standards achieved. This was also a significant feature in the previous inspection. Pupils also do well because they have a firm understanding of a broad range of topics. Pupils in Year 6, for example, know how to separate substances like sand and water, or salt and water. They are aware that when some changes are made, they cannot be reversed. Pupils in Year 2 closely observe mini-beasts and, as they develop their knowledge and understanding, they learn how they move. Pupils have developed a secure understanding of what is meant by a fair test and confidently make predictions about possible outcomes. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson when investigating the time taken for candles to be extinguished in a variety of sealed jars. Pupils carried out tests to find out if the size of the jar affected the length of time the candles stayed alight. As a result of such activities, pupils achieve well.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers give careful explanations of what pupils are to do, so that they are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. There is good management of pupils' behaviour and successful use of praise to encourage pupils' confidence and raise their self-

esteem when carrying out investigations. Pupils learn how to carry out and record investigations systematically and this reinforces their good learning. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to plan and record work in their own way. Teachers tend to adhere to standard schemes of work, expecting pupils to complete worksheets rather than planning experiments for themselves. Throughout the school, teachers' marking, while accurate, does not usefully suggest to pupils how they might improve their work.

85. There is a good range of books and equipment that support learning well. A developing strength is ICT, where pupils appreciate the contribution made to their learning through the use of interactive whiteboards and virtual experiments.
86. The subject benefits from having joint co-ordinators because they share ideas and work closely together. They have identified ways of raising standards, especially in Years 4 to 6, mainly by raising the expectations of staff and through teachers working in pairs to improve teaching and learning. However, they do not have the opportunity to observe teaching in other classes, and so influence the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. There are good procedures to check how well pupils learn, but teachers do not make full use of this data to set work at the right level for all pupils, especially the more able, which would help to improve standards further. Overall leadership and management are good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, and pupils are achieving well.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
- The school uses ICT well to support learning in other subjects.
- The subject co-ordinator does not have sufficient opportunity to monitor the work in classrooms.

Commentary

87. Standards of work in Year 2 are above average. Standards in Year 6 are firmly in line with those in most other schools. Given the rapid rise in ICT standards nationally, and the fact that standards were below average at both Year 2 and Year 6 at the last inspection, this represents very good improvement. Standards at Year 6 are not as high because these pupils have been in the school longer, and have therefore had more catching up to do. The school's position as a leading school for ICT in the local authority underlines the progress that has been made.
88. Several factors account for this improvement. Resources have been greatly improved through the installation of a purpose built computer suite and the provision of laptop computers and interactive whiteboards. The teaching of ICT skills is regular and thorough and has made pupils more confident in their own abilities. Staff confidence and expertise have risen significantly due to good quality training and teachers make good use of the resources. Finally, both the ICT curriculum and teaching have benefited from the support and expertise of a technical assistant.

89. Year 2 pupils quickly gain confidence with a wide range of ICT skills. In their English work, they demonstrated skills in searching for information from a website to find out the habitats of animals. They worked enthusiastically and with impressive concentration, producing detailed notes on pond, farm and woodland animals. They are able to use a digital camera independently and to add text to the imported image, for instance when comparing and contrasting village life in Diggle and India. Work on display and on stored pupil files from the previous year shows that, by the end of Year 2, most pupils are proficient in all the required aspects of ICT, often to a higher level than expected for seven year olds. For example, they are able to program a sequence of instructions into a floor robot and re-write the program independently to improve it, learning that computers only respond to the instructions they are given. The majority of pupils in Year 3 were able to use and navigate an Internet search engine to find out about the Ancient Egyptians. They were able to import pictures from different documents and combine them with text.
90. By Year 6, pupils undertake their own Internet research independently and combine text, graphics, tables and sound. Images are repositioned and re-sized to suit the purpose of the document. They create spreadsheets and produce a variety of charts and graphs to show the results of their scientific work. They use graphics programs well to create multi-media presentations on a design for soup making. In their control work, they use software to monitor their pulse in science. This is a distinct improvement in all aspects of ICT since the last inspection, when standards were below average.
91. The quality of teaching and learning, observed through lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and apply it well to provide pupils with appropriate learning experiences which build on their prior learning. They demonstrate techniques clearly and effectively, making good use of the interactive whiteboards to support learning. Pupils are encouraged to investigate what the computers can do and this helps them to learn from their mistakes and explore new ideas. As a result, pupils have a zest for the subject and approach it enthusiastically. Pupils' learning is good. They are given sufficient time to practise their skills and most show good knowledge and understanding of the programs they are using. A significant feature is the very good use of an ICT technician to support teaching. This strategy results in small group teaching which enables pupils to make good progress in developing their ICT skills. Good links with other subjects develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of how ICT can be applied to benefit learning.
92. The co-ordinator is active, committed and works closely with the ICT technician. A lot has been done in short time. There is now a comprehensive curriculum, a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The way forward for the next year or so is clear with a well organised action plan. The co-ordinator provides staff training and monitors planning but needs more opportunity to monitor and evaluate formally the quality of teaching. Assessment arrangements are at a developmental stage. When these are in place they should provide further support for the achievement of high standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills well through most subjects. For example, in design and technology, graphics programs are used to improve the design skills of Year 6 pupils. In Year 3, pupils have researched information on the Internet about the Ancient

Egyptians. ICT is also used effectively to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 use an ICT program to develop their reading skills, and pupils produce and interrogate graphs and spreadsheets in mathematics. The school's ICT club is popular with the pupils and provides opportunities for many of them to develop their skills further.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

94. Only one lesson of **history** was observed in the inspection. Displays, together with the work in pupils' books, indicate that standards are above average in both Year 2 and Year 6, an improvement since the previous inspection. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place and pupils spoken to clearly enjoy the subject and have a good range of knowledge and understanding. There is a good variety of resources for teaching and learning. Visits and visitors are used effectively to enhance pupils' knowledge and experience. History also plays a part in developing pupils' literacy skills through employing a range of different writing skills.
95. No lessons were seen in **geography**. A range of evidence similar to that seen in history again suggests that standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, but are less well informed about other faiths.
- Teaching encourages pupils to think and ask relevant questions, rather than just imparting facts.

Commentary

96. Three lessons were seen during the inspection. These, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and that achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are learning about an appropriate range of faiths, although discussion with pupils indicates that while their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the Christian faith is well established, they are less sure of facts about other religions.
97. Two of the three lessons seen were well taught, while the other was satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding indicates that teaching is satisfactory over time. The strongest feature of the teaching was the way in which teachers used questions effectively to encourage pupils to think about what they were learning; for example, why symbols are important in ceremonies such as baptism, or the idea of the church as an extended family. The effectiveness of this approach was underlined by Year 6 pupils, who talked with interest and sensitivity about different aspects of religion. While it is apparent that they have some knowledge of different faiths such as Judaism and Islam, they are much more confident when discussing aspects of Christianity.

98. Teachers ensured a good level of discussion and gave pupils plenty of opportunity to raise interesting points of view. Pupils were encouraged to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups, ensuring that all were able to put forward their point of view. However, the written activities provided tended to limit learning rather than extend or reinforce it, as they lacked relevance and were neither demanding nor informative. While Christian festivals are celebrated by the whole school, either in school or within the local community, the festivals of other faiths are mainly covered only in the reception class, which means they are not considered in sufficient depth. Local ministers take some assemblies; the one seen during the inspection was very good and made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual understanding.
99. The subject is currently being led by the headteacher as an interim measure. There is an appropriate scheme of work which offers some assessment opportunities, and pupils are given a level annually. The subject is not formally monitored, but the headteacher is aware of where the strengths and weaknesses exist. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected in full and is reported below. Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

100. Pupils have good skills in making a variety of items in **design and technology**. Discussions with pupils, as well as looking at teachers' planning and at saved work, show that pupils have a good understanding of the planning, design and evaluating aspects of this curriculum area. They draw pictures and simple diagrams of their designs, make lists of materials required and often evaluate the finished work. For instance, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated skills in adapting soup recipes to make their own soup. They drew up a list of ingredients and used a range of 'taster' sessions to evaluate the quality of their product and produced written comments on the final outcome. A constant and significant feature is the effective links made with other subjects. For instance, pupils in Year 6 produced a 'PowerPoint' presentation of their soup-making activities, thereby reinforcing and developing their ICT skills.
101. In **music**, many pupils clearly benefit from a range of very good activities. Music enjoys a high status in the school and is positively promoted by teachers, some of whom are capable musicians themselves. Standards and achievement in the performing elements of music were identified as good in the previous inspection. Standards have improved and are now well above those expected by Year 6, indicating very good achievement. These outcomes are the result of very good specialist teaching and the fact that a significant minority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive instrumental tuition on a range of string, woodwind and brass instruments. There is also a flourishing choir in which boys and girls sing to a high standard. These skills have a major impact on the high standard of music making in lessons and assemblies. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 3, all pupils performed as an orchestra creating an Ancient Egyptian 'sound' underpinned by the song 'Frere Jacques'. They demonstrated good rhythmic and technical skills and the ability to play in time when performing their particular part.
102. Both the choir and orchestra perform during the celebrations of major Christian religious festivals, in school productions and in local musical festivals. This subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal and cultural development and fosters effective links with the community.

103. No lessons were seen in **physical education**. Discussions with the headteacher and the school sports co-ordinator indicate that the subject is thoughtfully and innovatively planned for and that pupils are provided with a range of good opportunities, both in and out of school. Initially the subject was organised by a specialist teacher brought in to develop policy and resources, as well as teaching the subject in Years 3 to 6. Her role has now been taken over by a well qualified coach, a parent who worked with this teacher and as a learning support assistant in the school and who has considerable expertise. She is supported by the headteacher, who also teaches gymnastics to pupils in Years 3 to 6.
104. The school is part of a local cluster of schools which are linked to a sports college. As a result physical education has a strong profile in the school and already almost meets the target of two hours curriculum time each week. In addition, there is a wide range of extra-curricular sport, often run by outside coaches who bring a good level of expertise. The school takes part successfully in a range of competitive sports. Swimming is also regularly taught and all pupils achieve the national expectation of swimming 25 metres unaided by the end of Year 6 with the majority achieving well beyond this. Resources are very good, with imaginative use being made of available funding.

Art and design

Provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high throughout the school and pupils achieve very well.
- Art is very well taught, with a strong focus on skills development.
- Good opportunities are provided to work in a wide range of media.

Commentary

105. Art has a very high profile in the school, with a wide range of work to a high standard being very well displayed. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and demonstrate both enthusiasm and the capacity to work for long periods with good levels of concentration. They are given the opportunity to use a wide range of different media, and resources are carefully chosen to give pupils the right equipment for the task. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
106. By Year 2 pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is built on effectively so that by Year 6 standards are well above those expected. Year 6 pupils are very clear, for example, about the difference between copying a painting and painting in the style of an artist, and their work clearly exemplifies this. As well as painting and drawing, they are familiar with collage techniques and printing. They have worked in three dimensions, producing balsa wood 'sculptures' in the style of Henry Moore and creating and firing ceramics in a good link with a local high school. They realise that while a photograph is an exact image, an artist interprets what he sees, making additions and changes.
107. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was very good overall, and in one lesson it was excellent. In all cases there was a very good focus on skills development, with helpful advice, while at the same time giving the pupils the chance to make their

own choices and interpretations. Sufficient time was allowed to give pupils the opportunity to produce something worthwhile, with no sense of rushing, and pupils responded very well, with even young pupils maintaining an impressive degree of concentration. Resources are of good quality, so that pupils working on a small scale in watercolours used both fine brushes and proper watercolour paper. This valuing of their work by the teacher means that pupils value it too.

108. The subject is very well led by an experienced co-ordinator. She offers encouragement to both teachers and pupils. Skills are very well planned for, building progressively through the school, and this is very evident in pupils' work. She has developed good links with a high school situated in the centre of Oldham, which has specialist art status, and these are used very effectively to broaden pupils' experiences.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship was sampled.

109. There is a carefully planned programme in place which supports pupils' personal, social and health education. Sex and relationships education and awareness of drug and alcohol abuse are covered at different times through different areas of the curriculum, and this coverage meets statutory requirements. The programme is well focused and effectively contributes towards pupils' social and moral development. Very good support is provided by local health workers and the police, and the school makes effective use of their expertise.
110. Short sessions of 'circle time' were observed taking place in two classes. The session in Year 4 was the more effective, as pupils talked about moral and social issues and many expressed their feelings well, for example about vandalism and the importance they attached to being nearer to their grandparents. The topic in Year 6, 'How I feel about SATs', while relevant and immediate, was very closed, and left pupils with little to say other than 'I'm worried' or 'I think I'll do well'. In both cases, the use of the whole class as a listening group with only one pupil speaking limited pupils' opportunities for dialogue and failed to engage some pupils.
111. Pupils are able to talk to staff with ease but there is no school council through which their views and opinions can be captured more systematically. The headteacher uses a questionnaire to gain an insight into pupils' views of their school, but there are no formal opportunities for pupils to influence decisions. For example, it is evident that the great majority of Year 6 pupils resent acting as monitors in the dining hall, and the school is aware of this, but there has been no discussion to explain why the school feels this task to be important. There is a planned programme to develop citizenship in the curriculum, but the effect of this on pupils' knowledge and understanding is not yet monitored or evaluated.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	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	4
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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