

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Irlam, Salford, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105915

Headteacher: Miss Catherine Green

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th June 2005

Inspection number: 267342

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	145
School address:	Cutnook Lane Irlam Salford Greater Manchester
Postcode:	M44 6GX
Telephone number:	0161 775 4772
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Lightup
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd – 25 th February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school with 145 pupils, including 15 Nursery age children attending the Foundation Stage Unit full time. The school serves an extremely disadvantaged area. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There is a lot of movement in and out of the school and an above average proportion of pupils, around a third, leaving and joining the school between Years 1 and 6. Attainment on entry is low and significantly below the nationally expected level. Two per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, mostly Black African. The remaining pupils are from white British families. Less than one per cent is learning to speak English as an additional language, which is fewer than in most other schools. A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties, and less than one per cent has a statement of specific need; there is just one pupil in the school's six-place designated unit for physically disabled pupils. The school provides out-of-school care, adult education, and family learning courses. It is involved in several national and local initiatives including Excellence in Cities and Study Support. It gained a Healthy School Award and a School Achievement Award in 2003, and a Healthy Futures Gold Award in 2004. A major proportion of the school has been rebuilt following fire damage from an arson attack last year, causing considerable disruption to teaching and learning. In addition, four of the seven teachers are in only their second year of teaching and one is newly qualified.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Music
13448	Mrs Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector	
19120	Mr Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education
4676	Mrs Mary Griffiths	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that gives good value for money. Pupils achieve well despite their vulnerability and extremely low attainment on entry because of effective teaching and good inclusion strategies. They enjoy coming, behave well, and work hard because learning is exciting and fun. Very effective leadership and management mean that the school runs effectively and efficiently and there is an enthusiastic drive towards improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Effective teaching means that pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- Learning opportunities are exciting and tailored well to pupils' needs.
- Most pupils behave well most of the time, have positive attitudes to work, and enjoy very good relationships with each other and staff.
- Very good leadership makes sure that weaknesses are identified quickly and dealt with effectively.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different situations, mathematics in other subjects is too incidental, and speaking skills are underdeveloped.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Good achievement has been maintained despite barriers that have slowed the pace of change including a high number of vulnerable pupils, staff changes, and part of the school being destroyed by fire. The provision for ICT has improved substantially and achievement in this subject is now good. Governors are more involved in strategic planning and the library has been restocked. The curriculum is now very good and leadership and management are more effective than they were.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A -well above average; B -above average; C -average; D -below average; E -well below average; E -lowest 5%
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good. Because of small pupil numbers taking the tests each year and high pupil mobility, comparisons with what is happening in other schools must be treated with extreme caution. Although few children reach the goals they are expected to reach nationally by the end of the Reception Year, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage; they do particularly well in personal, social, emotional, and physical development. Pupils' learning is built equally well from Year 1 to Year 6, even though by the end of Year 2 standards are still below the nationally expected level in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, and in line with it in ICT and religious education. Likewise, by the end of Year 6 standards are below national expectations in English, mathematics, science, and ICT. Pupils achieve well in religious education and standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well given their learning difficulties. Achievement in art and design is good and standards exceed those expected nationally. However, pupils' poor speaking skills and the difficulties they have talking with precision about what they are doing and have learnt often mask their understanding in, for example, science.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to learning and most of them behave well most of

the time. Attendance is poor, however, despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good, as are the teaching and learning.

Teaching throughout the school is lively and imaginative and successfully motivates most of the pupils most of the time. Individual needs are catered for well through different work and the effective deployment of teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. This results in pupils learning well most of the time. Relationships are very good and teachers expect pupils to work hard, a challenge to which pupils rise well. Staff understand the next steps pupils need to take and provide a good range of quality learning opportunities. Their comments in pupils' workbooks help pupils to understand what they do well and need to do to improve their work next time. However, whilst ICT and mathematical skills are taught well, pupils have limited opportunities to use them in other subjects, limiting the usefulness of these skills as a tool for learning. Whilst there are lots of opportunities for pupils to practise their writing, there are too few opportunities for them to extend their vocabulary and find ways of using language to good and accurate effect. The school provides very well for pupils' well-being and the curriculum is wide and varied and excites pupils to do well. There is a well-established and effective partnership between home and school and good links with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good. There is a clear vision for the way forward and high aspirations drive improvements well. Leadership motivates and inspires staff, most of whom are recently qualified, to work hard and focus on how they can improve their work further. There is a real commitment to inclusion and ensuring all pupils learn equally well. School self-evaluation is very good and focuses sharply on what needs doing. Newly qualified staff are inducted well and are already starting to make a significant contribution to subject leadership, guided and supported very well by the head teacher and assistant head. Governance is sound. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play a satisfactory role in shaping its direction. They fulfil their statutory duties fully.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

This school is held in high esteem by pupils and parents. Parents are particularly happy with the quality of teaching and the good leadership and management. They believe their children are treated fairly and make good progress. Pupils are equally as happy. They love coming to school and because of this join in well with what the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' speaking skills.
- Make sure that pupils use their ICT and mathematics skills to support their learning in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Achievement is very good for pupils with special educational needs. Standards are below nationally expected levels by the end of Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Given their below average attainment on entry, pupils of all ages achieve well.
- The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and because of this they all make very good progress.
- Poor language skills and a lack of precision in their speech masks pupils' understanding in many subjects.
- Some of the average attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils' artwork is of a good standard.

Commentary

1. Standards are below the national average overall in English, mathematics and science. However, due to small cohorts, high pupil mobility, and the well above average incidence of special educational needs, comparisons in how well this school achieves with what other schools achieve have to be treated with extreme caution.
2. Good achievement has been maintained since the previous inspection. However, the Year 2 and Year 6 results have fluctuated considerably over the years because of cohort changes. Often less than 20 pupils usually take the tests and this, coupled with the high rate of pupil mobility, means that comparative data must be treated with extreme caution. Although the 2004 results were low, invalidated test results show a rise this year. In addition, staff and pupils did extremely well to cope last year with considerable disruptions to teaching and learning whilst part of the school was being rebuilt after a fire destroyed several classrooms, the administration block and the computer suite.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (14.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.8 (13.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.8 (15.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (24.7)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.7 (24.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.0 (25.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage Unit. Here, as elsewhere, learning opportunities are exciting, such as when the 'bug man' visited and when children helped the visiting fire fighters to hose down their garden. Their achievement in personal, social and emotional development is very good. This is because the teacher and assistants forge very good relationships with children even before they start school, and by making each one feel special, help them to settle quickly to class routines and gain substantial confidence and security as learners. Although not many children reach the goals they are expected nationally to reach by the end of the Reception Year, some of them already recognise some written words on sight and know some letter sounds. About a third of them can count confidently up to 20 and are starting to understand addition and subtraction.
4. Although standards are still below nationally expected levels, because of effective teaching the good start continues through into Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their ICT skills and religious education knowledge and understanding are developing well and many are working at the expected level in both subjects. Similarly, from Year 3 to 6 pupils achieve well and although standards are below national levels, pupils do well to achieve what they do from their low starting point, especially given their difficulties in, and barriers to, learning.
5. However, in all subjects, pupils' impoverished language skills often mask their true understanding and make assessing how well they are doing extremely difficult. This is because pupils often struggle to explain things in words, although they show in other ways that they understand the idea being taught. For example, their labelled diagrams in science show that they have understood what they have been taught but their written explanations are jumbled.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. This is because their work is matched well to their individual needs and teachers and support assistants have very good regard to these needs in lessons. They explain things to these pupils in detail and ensure that the work builds their learning in small steps. Checks on how well these pupils are doing ensure that they are keeping up and as a result, few of them fail to reach the expected level and some even exceed it. However, whilst the least and most able do well nearly all of the time, there are times when because the support focuses on these two learning extremes, the average attaining pupils are asked to get on without adult support. These pupils are not always self-motivated learners and although the work usually interests them, they sometimes struggle to achieve without constant encouragement and support. The head teacher and assistant head have picked this up through their own monitoring, however, and have a number of strategies planned to deal with the situation.
7. Pupils' artwork is of a particularly high standard. Pupils take pride in what they do and through their studies of the work of famous artists, such as Paul Klee, use what they learn to influence their own style. Pupils' clay work is particularly good; working with a visiting sculptor, pupils of all ages have produced some exceptionally good clay tiles and sculptures.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils show real care and consideration for the needs of others.
- Most pupils behave well most of the time in response to staff's consistently high expectations.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning because teachers inspire them to try hard and do their best.

- In spite of the school's vigorous attempts to improve attendance and punctuality, both are not good enough.

Commentary

8. The school encourages pupils to consider everyone 'equally different' and teaches them respect and tolerance. Through discussions and role-play in personal, social and health education sessions and religious education pupils learn about the fundamental differences that make each person unique. They learn to value everyone equally and to respect customs, beliefs and views that differ from their own. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to get on well with other people. In class, they work together well in pairs or groups, particularly when asked to share their ideas with a 'talking partner'. In the playground they join happily in games and the 'Buddy Base' helps pupils who may be left out. Everyone tries to be friendly and instances of unkindness or bullying are extremely rare.
9. The behaviour of most of the pupils is consistently good most of the time, mainly because staff make their expectations clear and use rewards and sanctions effectively. Pupils understand and comply with the simple school rules. They move about the building quietly and sensibly and are polite and friendly to visitors. They are familiar with established routines, for example in the dining hall and in the calm, orderly way they enter the hall for assembly. In lessons they listen attentively and concentrate on their work. Occasionally a very small number of pupils find it impossible to maintain the high standards expected of them. The school was obliged to exclude eight boys last year, three of them permanently, for extremes of poor behaviour. Some of these pupils are no longer at the school and those who are, are supported effectively by the learning mentor and local authority behaviour support service. Improvements to their behaviour and attitudes have come about due to the implementation of intervention strategies and a very effective behaviour policy. The rate of exclusion has fallen drastically this year to less than a quarter of what it was last year, reflecting the school's effective behaviour management strategies. There have been no permanent exclusions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	141	15	2
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	1
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0

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

10. These improvements to pupils' behaviour have come about because of the school's success in modifying pupils' behaviour and also because teachers take pains to make lessons enjoyable and fun. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. They participate eagerly, and are anxious to answer questions and to demonstrate what they know and can do. They settle quickly and enthusiastically to practical activities and are proud when they achieve their objectives and meet their learning targets. Older pupils understand the importance of making the most of their educational opportunities in order to succeed in their future careers. The high proportion of pupils who are involved in some form of extra-curricular club is an indication of their enthusiasm for school.
11. Although many pupils have good records of attendance and come to school on time, the overall attendance figures are well below those of most other primary schools. The low attendance rate is mainly due to a very small number who miss a lot of schooling but even so, many parents do not send their children to school regularly. The importance of this is stressed to parents frequently in newsletters, while personal approaches to individual parents are made by the head

teacher, learning mentor and/or the education welfare officer. A range of incentives for pupils, including attendance certificates, whole class awards and end of term treats, have had some success, while the introduction of a telephone check on the first day of absence and of the 'Walking Bus', when a member of staff walks round the estate collecting pupils, have also proved effective. In spite of these initiatives, attendance is still not good enough and too many pupils arrive at school late.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	1.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum is exciting and relevant to the interests and aptitudes of the pupils and a close eye is kept on their work. Support and guidance are good and the school makes effective use of visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' learning opportunities further.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good across all year groups. Assessment is good and the information is used well to tailor work to pupils' needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, work is tailored well to meets pupils' needs and because of this, most pupils learn well.
- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage Unit.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Effective marking helps pupils to improve standards, time limits help them to organise their work pace, and the good use of interactive whiteboards keeps them focused.
- Very effective ways in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour along with the very good relationships mean pupils focus well on their work and enjoy success.
- Writing skills are promoted well in other subjects; mathematics skills are put to good use, but more incidentally than intentionally and ICT skills are not used well enough.
- There is insufficient attention given to extending pupils' vocabulary so that they can explain their thoughts more accurately.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (7%)	7 (23%)	16 (52%)	6 (19%)	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.

12. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and many were good or better. The effective teaching seen during the week of the inspection is reflected in the good progress pupils have made since September last year, evident in their workbooks. The amount of consistently good teaching reflects how well the leadership has dealt, in the last two years, with disruptions to teaching and learning brought about by the fire, as well as inducted and supported six new

members of staff out of a total of seven, five of whom have qualified only recently. The energy and enthusiasm of the leadership, teachers, and teaching assistants are infectious and their willingness and commitment to improve their work are outstanding.

13. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage Unit. Here, teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to plan work that matches the needs of the children. Good relationships with parents, who often stay a while with their children when they bring them to school, mean that children settle well in the morning. Learning is based on exploration and observation and because of this children are excited to learn.
14. Throughout the school, behaviour management is good, embraced by very good relationships, which mean pupils want to work hard to please their teachers. This means that despite their vulnerability, pupils behave well most of the time and the rate of exclusions has fallen drastically in the last year. Pupils listen attentively to what teachers have to say because teachers fire their imagination effectively and inspire them to learn. Modelling effective teamwork, teachers and teaching assistants work together well, both acutely aware of their role and what is expected of them by the other. For example, in a Year 4/5 ICT lesson, all pupils were supported very effectively, for some of the time by the teaching assistant and some of the time by the teacher. This worked so well because the adults met beforehand to plan how they were going to work together and what each was going to do.
15. Teachers make particularly good use of assessment information to plan work for the differently attaining pupils. The notes teachers make in pupils' workbooks set the work in context and help pupils and teachers to see how well pupils have managed to do it with or without support. Marking helps pupils to see what they do well and questions make them think again, extending learning well. Pupils' written responses to these questions show that they are motivated by, and interested in, the work. Constant reminders such as "You have 20 minutes to do this" and "Five minutes left" help pupils to organise the rate at which they need to work and add urgency to the task. The use by teachers of the newly purchased interactive whiteboards to support teaching helps to hold pupils' interest and pupils particularly enjoy using the boards themselves. By pre-programming the computer, teachers show different examples of, for example, multimedia presentations, and different ways of calculation, and can return to previous pages quickly and easily.
16. The school's recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills is evident in the amount of writing pupils do in, for example, science, history and geography. Gone is the over-reliance on worksheets seen at the time of the last inspection, with pupils now expected to write about what they learn and find out. However, their vocabulary is extremely limited and their language skills so impoverished that they struggle to succeed with this. Except in mathematics, too little is done to develop and extend pupils' vocabulary and get them to find different, and more accurate, ways of saying something. After substantial improvements to the provision in ICT, pupils' computer skills in particular are much better than they were. However, they are not put to good enough use in other subjects. Similarly, pupils use the skills they learn in mathematics to, for example, measure weight and time in their science investigations, but this is unplanned and too incidental.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good range of worthwhile learning opportunities, enriched well by clubs, visits and visitors that cater for the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities are wide and varied and inspire and motivate pupils well.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is particularly effective in meeting the needs of these pupils.

- Support for learning outside the school day enhances curricular provision very effectively.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Accommodation is spacious and learning resources are plentiful.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is effectively broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils equally well. It encompasses all areas of learning for Foundation Stage children, all subjects of the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6, as well as personal, social, and health education, including sex education and teaching pupils about the dangers of drug abuse. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Pupils are listened to and their suggestions are valued. They learn about citizenship and the importance of learning to live in harmony with others through a carefully planned programme, along with their work on the school council.
18. Emphasis on English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education has not taken its toll on the other subjects. The school manages to give pupils a breadth of learning experiences across all subjects and areas of learning, despite some difficulties over the last year with changes to staffing and extensive fire damage to several parts of the school. The provision for art and design is particularly good, with visiting artists and sculptors working with pupils to enhance their learning opportunities, resulting in pupils reaching standards in art and design that are above those expected nationally.
19. This fully inclusive school promotes the principle that all pupils can improve and responds well to pupils' diverse learning styles. With this principle firmly embedded in its work, the school provides especially well for pupils with special educational needs. Well-trained and highly effective support staff are deployed to work with those pupils most needing their help at any given time. The learning mentor supports the school's most vulnerable pupils to help them to overcome their barriers to learning, manage their emotions, raise their self-esteem, and access what is on offer. Liaison with outside agencies is good and the use the school makes of specialist staff from these agencies enhances pupils' learning further. Individual learning targets are negotiated with the pupils and reviewed regularly, giving pupils a good understanding of what they do well and need to work on next. The designated resourced provision for physically disabled pupils is used as a therapy base; the one pupil with physical disabilities takes part in the same lessons as his classmates and has full access to all that they have, including an 80-foot climb on a residential visit.
20. Exciting after-school clubs, residential and day visits, and visitors to school enrich the curriculum well. Outings to museums, theatres, churches, garden centres and local places of interest keep pupils' interest alive and inspire them to find out about and learn new things. Broadened through, for example, the healthy school project and French lessons, the emphasis is on range and quality of learning experiences and giving pupils enjoyment. Some pupils rarely go far beyond the immediate locality, so the school focuses on teaching them new skills through a curriculum that is carefully manufactured for their needs with a big emphasis on providing them with experiences they would not normally otherwise have.
21. Good accommodation includes a spacious sports hall and large outdoor play and learning areas. The Foundation Stage Unit is of a good size with a purpose-built outdoor learning area. Resources are good in quantity and quality, including a well-equipped computer suite and interactive whiteboards in most classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Measures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school are very good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on monitoring of their academic and personal development, are good. Pupils' views are sought and valued well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention is paid to all aspects of health and safety, but the school should review its building access policy.
- Staff provide very good care and support for the individual needs of all pupils.

Commentary

22. A comprehensive health and safety policy, carefully overseen and implemented, ensures that pupils, staff and visitors to the school enjoy a healthy and safe environment. Regular checks of the building and equipment are carried out, risk assessments are properly completed and updated, and all statutory requirements are fulfilled. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to health and safety, so that they are careful to follow safe practices in lessons and to make sure that pupils are safe when they go out on trips. However, some of the outside doors are not kept locked during the day and this means that the school can be easily accessed by members of the public. The school intends to seek advice on this matter from the local authority. There are good arrangements for routine first aid and medical care and particular attention is paid to any specific needs of pupils, for example in relation to asthma or allergies. Child protection issues are handled very well and all staff have been appropriately trained to spot possible signs of abuse.
23. The school has succeeded in gaining Healthy School Awards in recognition of its achievements in persuading pupils of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. For example, they are aware of the advantages of drinking water, of taking regular exercise and of healthy eating. They are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities such as athletics, cross-country running, and 'Fitbods'. The school's emphasis on health and safety impacts very successfully on behaviour management and pupils' moral development. For example, through their study of potential hazards in the home and in school, pupils have learnt that good behaviour means avoiding risks and therefore staying safe. Sex and relationships education and the dangers of alcohol, smoking and drugs are taught in science and within the personal, social and health education programme.
24. Staff know pupils and their families well, so that they can identify any signs that indicate a personal need and take steps to meet it. Very good relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel confident to approach staff with problems of any kind. Great care is taken to support pupils with physical disabilities. They are fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils' personal development is formally monitored and arrangements made to provide any necessary support. The school works closely with parents and, if need be, calls on a wide range of outside agencies to provide whatever help is needed. Before and after school clubs have enabled some parents to return to work, while at the same time providing enjoyable and constructive activities for the children who attend. The recently appointed learning mentor works with vulnerable pupils to help them overcome emotional or behavioural problems. She seeks to build up their confidence and self-esteem, so that they can overcome their barriers to learning and achieve effectively. Her intervention has resulted in improved attitudes to learning in the pupils she has worked with, but the lack of a suitable working base hinders the effective development of her role.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and colleges and the local community are all good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality and range of information for parents are good.
- Good links with the local community enhance and enrich pupils' learning.

- The school's strenuous efforts to involve parents in their children's learning have had variable success.

Commentary

25. The school provides a good range of information for parents about the curriculum, pupils' progress and day-to-day administrative issues. Written communications with parents, such as regular newsletters, use a friendly, welcoming style that encourages parents to become involved in school life. Twice a year there are formal consultation meetings with teachers, while opportunities exist for informal contacts on a daily basis. Annual reports to parents are helpful and personal to each child. There are simple leaflets to help parents support their children's learning at home, for example describing how letters are formed, and special meetings are arranged to explain particular aspects of the curriculum, such as how reading and mathematics are taught. In addition, the school offers regular workshops for parents of the younger children under the auspices of the 'Share' scheme. This focuses on numeracy, literacy, ICT, parenting skills and creative activities to help parents understand how children learn and to encourage them to play an active part in that learning. Parents who have attended the Share workshops have found them helpful and enjoyable, while their children have gained in confidence as a result of sharing activities with them.
26. Teachers make good use of the local community as a valuable resource to support and broaden pupils' learning. Extensive visits to places of interest, as well as a wide range of visitors to school, all help pupils to relate their classroom work to life outside. A visit from the local fire brigade followed on from the study of the Great Fire of London in history, while a visit from a clay artist helped pupils create their own imaginative models. The school premises are used as a base for Family Learning and other community activities, so pupils are beginning to see that education is a continuous process. They make their own contribution to the local community by singing at a home for senior citizens, entertaining elderly people at their social club, collecting harvest produce and raising funds for charities.
27. Although attendance at parents' evenings is usually good, efforts to involve parents more closely in the life of the school and in their children's learning have met with a very disappointing response. Some parents are happy to come to weekly assemblies or to offer support on educational visits, and a small number of dedicated parents take part regularly in organised activities, such as Share. However, workshops have not been well attended and the school is finding it very difficult to increase parental involvement, for example in reading with pupils or ensuring homework is completed on time. The school does its utmost to provide useful and appropriate information and advice, in the hope that more parents and carers will recognise that their support is crucial to their children's personal and academic development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. Leadership by the head teacher is very good and leadership by other key staff is good. The management of the school is very effective. Governance is satisfactory and steadily improving; the governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher provides very good leadership because she seeks high standards and achievement in all aspects of the school's work and has a clear view of the way to achieve them.
- The assistant head teacher and subject leaders provide good leadership and are taking an increasing role in school development.
- Planning for school improvement is comprehensive and effective, focusing on the right issues to help drive up standards.
- The management of the school is very good and arrangements for monitoring standards and quality are rigorous and secure.

- Finances are managed prudently to ensure that funds are carefully targeted to areas of greatest need.
- The governing body is involved in checking aspects of the school's work, but is not involved as much as it could be in helping shape the school's direction.

Commentary

28. The head teacher provides supportive, reflective and purposeful leadership, which is effective in all aspects of the school's work because of her high aspirations, commitment and effective delegation. She has communicated her clear view of the way ahead and established a rigorous agenda so that all who have a vested interest in the school's development know what must be done to secure improvement. She has welded enthusiastic and able new staff into a successful and cohesive team working alongside a few more experienced colleagues to help drive up standards. She has successfully led and overseen the introduction of systems and arrangements to improve provision and secure good achievement in many subjects, such as in English, mathematics and science. Through her hard work, drive and determination to move the school forward, and with the help and support of an experienced assistant head teacher, she has gained the respect of pupils, parents, staff and the local education authority, which holds her in high regard. Under her high quality leadership, the evaluation of new initiatives is increasingly embedded in the school's work to make the school more accountable in all areas, to help give pupils the best possible opportunities to realise their potential.
29. The most important function of the head teacher, assistant head, and subject leaders is to secure the best possible quality of education for all pupils in order to raise standards. The senior management team is effective because it has clear roles and responsibilities and is leading the drive to raise standards. Subject leaders are being successfully empowered through training and support, to lead the implementation of essential improvements. As a result, they are steadily becoming more effective in finding out what works well and what needs doing.
30. Planning for school improvement is comprehensive and rigorous, and provides a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It is used well to determine the best use of available funding to support the priorities for school improvement. It is linked closely to the planned provision of training of teachers and support staff, which is given high priority, and the performance management arrangements, which are embedded in the school's work.
31. Systems are established to secure a rigorous approach to all aspects of monitoring and evaluation. The school's arrangements for evaluating its own performance are very good. Pupils' performances in the national tests are rigorously analysed, weaknesses identified, and strategies and approaches introduced to overcome them. For example, weaknesses in writing are being successfully addressed by ensuring that it is given good emphasis in all years. Pupils' progress is tracked increasingly carefully as they move through the school to help raise standards. The setting of individual targets by teachers to give pupils a greater understanding of their learning is becoming embedded in the school's work. For example, in English where it has been successfully introduced, pupils know what they need to do next to improve, which helps to explain why pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
32. The committed governing body provides sound support for the head teacher and carries out its statutory duties appropriately. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and some areas where it needs to improve. However, the governing body is not yet rigorous enough in checking aspects of the school's work and in holding the school to account for what it achieves. For example, links with subjects and classes are not yet well established in all areas to help governors gain an informed overview of aspects of the school's work. The governing body is still too dependent on the head teacher for information and updates on what is happening. As a result, it is not as involved as fully as it could be in shaping the school's future direction. However, it is steadily becoming more assertive and involved in the work of the school.

33. Regular monitoring of spending patterns helps to ensure that finance is used to benefit pupils. Principles of best value are soundly applied, and the governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. Administrative staff work hard to familiarise themselves with administrative procedures to help ensure that the school runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. Financial control is good and the school makes the most of the money it has. The governing body has agreed to maintain a budget surplus to enable it to manage effectively future reduced funding as a result of falling pupil numbers. In relation to its social and educational circumstances and to the standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 6, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	514693
Total expenditure	509009
Expenditure per pupil	3560

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69539
Balance carried forward to the next	75223

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are 15 Nursery and 15 Reception age children taught in the Foundation Stage Unit in two teaching groups. The provision for these children is good. The overall responsibility for their learning lies with the Unit teacher, who is very ably supported by a nursery officer and a teaching assistant.

Teaching is good overall. The Unit is very well organised and space is plentiful and used effectively. Adults work extremely effectively together and lessons are prepared well. Children are given lots of activities involving learning through observation and exploration, which become increasingly more structured for the Reception Year children as they prepare to move into Year 1. Assessment is thorough and the information is used to tailor work to children's needs, but there are times when some of the less mature children are asked to do things before they are ready, such as write letters and numbers, wasting time. Children are encouraged to become independent, but at times when they are working on self-chosen activities their learning lacks focus and is too incidental because they are not given specific tasks or challenges to work towards and make the work purposeful.

By the end of the Reception Year, most children reach the goals they are expected to reach nationally in personal, social, emotional, and physical development, but fall short of them in the other areas of learning. Nevertheless, achievement is good overall. Given their low attainment on entry, most children achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, well in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development, and as well as could be expected in mathematic and creative development.

The work of the Foundation Stage Unit is valued and supported by the school's senior managers, reflected in the good investment they have made in improving the learning environment and ensuring children's learning is supported by a good number of suitably trained staff. Good provision has been maintained since the last inspection and some good improvements have been made to the classroom and outdoor learning area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships help children to settle well to school routine.
- Children's concentration is developed well and because of this most children persevere with their work.
- Responsibility is promoted well, but for too much of the time play lacks purpose and learning is incidental rather than planned.
- A calm start to all sessions focuses children well and creates a good working atmosphere.

Commentary

34. Achievement in this area of learning is very good. Most children reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year due to very effective teaching and learning. Throughout the Unit, relationships are very good. Children are happy to come to school and soon develop into secure and confident learners. When dropping their children off at the Unit, parents are welcome in the classroom to help settle their children for the day. They watch computer slide shows of their children working at their activities the day before and children take pride in showing them things on display that they have done and made. This helps to create a calm start to the day, which is maintained throughout all sessions by music playing gently in the background and regular times throughout the day when children exercise their bodies and their brains by, for example, standing up, shaking themselves, and pointing to the door, floor or walls.

35. Opportunities for children to spend time at one activity are good. In this way, most children, including the youngest Nursery age children, develop good concentration skills, learn to focus on one thing at a time, and persevere well with their work and play. However, there are too many times when children choose what they want to do and although they gain good social skills from this, because they are not given particular things to do, such as negotiate in the role-play area who is the chief fire officer or organise the toy fire engines into a fire station base, their learning lacks focus and is too incidental.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The classroom is linguistically stimulating; good displays and a good range of things to do encourage children to talk, read, and write.
- A good approach to writing and spelling means that the most able children do particularly well, but there are times when the least able are pushed too far too soon, wasting time.

Commentary

36. Given the low starting point of many of the children and their extremely poor communication skills when they start in the Unit, most achieve well. Although the greatest majority do not reach the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year, good teaching in this area of learning means that many do well to get as close to them as they do.
37. This is because children are encouraged to write, read and talk at every opportunity. Attractive book areas help develop children's love of books and by sharing books with children, adults help them to learn of the treasures that lie beneath the covers. Adults' animated story-telling enthuses children well, such as when the Nursery children listened to a well-told story of 'Elmer in the snow'. They hung on every word and gasped in amazement at Elmer's antics.
38. Talk is valued and promoted well. By encouraging children to first tell their partner what they think before telling the class, teachers promote confidence in children to have a go. They ask children to talk in sentences and encourage them to then transfer this skill to their writing. In one lesson, by showing pieces of children's writing on the large projector screen, the teacher enabled children to look at and say what they had done well and not so well, and to comment on the work of their classmates. Questions such as, "Tell me one good thing about this piece of writing", helped them to focus on what they and their classmates had done well. They identified, for example, how some children had used finger spaces well and put in full stops and capital letters. One of the most able children was delighted to be able to say, "I have done my letters the right way round...I often get them wrong". Equally they talked about things they could improve on such as making the writing neater.
39. The most able pupils do particularly well at writing and spelling. Probing questions like, "What sound do you hear at the end of 'throwing'?", encourages children to think about letter sounds and, because of this, already about a third of the Reception Year children know a good number of letter sounds and can attack simple unknown words, such as 'dig', with confidence. However, although often the questions that the adults ask are tailored to the needs of the differently attaining children, the least able children are asked to write letters and words before they have the skills to do so. Some of them can barely draw recognisable pictures, and their mark making is weak and 'spidery'. But they go through the motions of 'writing' for the teachers, when their time would be better spent developing their pencil control skills through, for example, drawing, tracing and colouring in.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good focus on mathematics in the teacher-led activities, but too little challenge in the other self-sustaining activities to interest the children.
- There is too little around the room to promote children's interest in numbers or mathematical ideas.

Commentary

40. Achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning because of sound teaching. Although not many children reach the early learning goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year, given their attainment on entry to the Unit, most children do as well as could reasonably be expected.
41. Learning in teacher-led activities is good and children concentrate well. Good questioning and lively encouragement spur children on to do well. For example, running races in the outdoor learning area and awarding each other '1st', '2nd', and '3rd' certificates generated lots of excitement and consolidated children's understanding of ordinal numbers well. This was reinforced well back in the classroom when children worked with an adult, picking out, for example, the first, third and fifth bear in a row, or saying what position the 'green' bear was in. However, unlike in communication, language and literacy, there is too little stimulation around the room for children to play with and look at numbers and shapes and carry out mathematical activities such as counting, sorting, measuring, or pattern making. In the mathematics sessions, those children not working with the adults are given a choice of activities to do, but they are reluctant to choose mathematical ones. They sometimes struggle to sustain interest without an adult present and, when they think the teacher is not looking, wander off to other activities, such as dressing up and small world play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of activities to support all strands of learning and prepare children well for their National Curriculum work in Year 1.
- Children use computers confidently and are developing good 'mouse' control skills.

Commentary

42. This area of learning is taught well. Achievement is good because of this and children come close to reaching the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Visits and visitors are used well to stimulate children's interests in the world around them. For example, a visit by a fire engine generated excitement and interest and resulted in some good fire engine cardboard models and creative role-play as children used hoses to put out pretend fires in the outdoor learning area. Collecting mini-beasts from around the school grounds and watching how they move, growing plants from seeds, and watching caterpillars hatch into butterflies stimulate children's learning well and sustain their interest in the natural world.
43. Children's computer skills are particularly well developed. Most children can control the computer 'mouse' well to, for example, paint a picture of themselves using the 'line', 'spray' and

'infill' functions. They add text to their pictures, such as their name, and can save and print off their work. They use the computers in the classroom for games and can follow instructions well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to engage in boisterous play are good.
- Children have a good awareness of bodily health issues.
- There is good provision for construction activities to help develop children's fine motor control skills.

Commentary

44. Achievement is good and children do well in this area of learning because of effective teaching. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations and most children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. This is because the provision for developing their physical skills is good. Plenty of space to move around in the outside learning area means that children learn how to manoeuvre wheeled toys well and run about with an increasing awareness of space and others. Inside the classroom, children have many opportunities to manipulate small toys and to mould modelling dough into different shapes, strengthening their fingers and helping them with their hand-eye co-ordination. In physical education sessions in the hall, they learn about how their bodies change as they exert themselves and develop an understanding about the need to warm up their bodies to avoid hurting them.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good opportunities for children to use their imagination.
- Children are developing a good repertoire of songs.

Commentary

45. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Most children achieve as well as could be expected, although not many reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. There are some good opportunities for small world play, in which they can use their imagination as they move fire officers around rescuing people in the doll's house, for example, and in role-play when they dress up as fire officers, nurses and doctors. However, these activities sometimes lack focus and play is sometimes stilted because of it. For example, one child dressed up as a doctor, but because there was no purpose to his play and no one else to play with him, he undressed and wandered off to another activity. There are some opportunities for children to create models of things, such as the mini-beasts that they have studied, and then move like them to music, exercising their imagination well. Children are learning a range of songs and sing sweetly, learning to keep the beat with tapping and the use of percussion instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
- A wide range of strategies is helping to improve pupils' reading and writing well, but weaknesses in the teaching of spelling hold some pupils back.
- Literacy skills are well promoted through other subjects and approaches to developing speaking and listening are evident, but are not planned well enough to help pupils become confident and articulate speakers.
- Leadership is effective in bringing about improvements.
- Because of effective assessment systems, pupils have an increasing understanding of what is needed to help them improve.

Commentary

46. Standards are below national levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, most pupils achieve well in all aspects of English as they move through the school. This is because teaching is good, the subject has a high profile in the school's work, and most work is carefully matched to pupils' precise needs to enable pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well.
47. Pupils write for an increasingly wide range of purposes as they move through the school including letters, instructions, poems, book reviews, stories, play scripts and newspaper reports. When writing longer stories, which are given good emphasis, they consider plot, characters and the structure of their writing. However, teachers pay too little attention to extending pupils' vocabulary, to help them become more confident speakers and writers. Pupils rarely use ICT in the drafting and re-drafting process. Handwriting is given good attention. As a result, most pupils present their work tidily and take pride in it. However, approaches to the teaching of spelling are inconsistent and are not always effective. For example, spelling lists for less able pupils are often too difficult for them; few rarely get more than four out of ten correct, inhibiting progress and lowering confidence. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to help pupils improve their spelling by ensuring that dictionaries and thesauruses are always available.
48. The development of pupils' reading skills is given good emphasis. Pupils learn to read with increasing fluency, accuracy, understanding and expression through a wide range of successful approaches which include whole-class and teacher-led group reading sessions as well as regular opportunities for pupils to read individually. These approaches are helping standards to rise over time. However, despite employing a number of strategies, the school has not been uniformly successful in promoting support at home, and the development of research skills is limited due to the location of the school library which prevents open access by pupils. Because of infrequent use, some pupils are unsure how to use the library to locate specific information.
49. Many pupils enter school with a limited vocabulary and little confidence in the spoken word. As pupils move through the school, teachers place sound emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills, such as through the well-led questioning of pupils, drama and discussion sessions, and 'talking partners', which are used across different subjects. However,

approaches to the development of speaking and listening are not high profile enough to help pupils become clear, confident and articulate speakers by the time they leave school.

50. Teaching and learning are consistently good, and as a result, most pupils achieve well. Features of good teaching, seen during the inspection, include a confident approach based on secure subject knowledge, good questioning of pupils, a brisk pace, high expectations, and very good relationships, which successfully underpin learning. Most teachers present a language-rich environment in their classrooms to help pupils acquire a love of language. Teachers mark pupils' work very conscientiously, celebrating their efforts and referring to their individual targets to help secure the next steps in learning.
51. Subject leadership, shared by the co-ordinator and senior managers, is good overall and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has made good progress in tackling the issues identified as weaknesses in the last inspection and there are clear plans for the subject's continued development. The head teacher's rigorous approach in developing the subject leader's role is helping the co-ordinator to gain an informed overview of what is happening in the subject. Together they carry out regular monitoring of what works well and what needs doing. They analyse the outcomes of National Curriculum tests regularly to discover what pupils do well and where they need help so that weaknesses can be overcome. They also carefully track pupils' progress to help ensure that pupils make best possible progress over time.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. This is satisfactory overall. The promotion of writing in particular is good. Teachers provide many planned opportunities for pupils to write as part of their work in other subjects, which helps pupils to achieve well in writing. For example, Year 6 pupils complete written evaluations of slippers that they make in design and technology and write up outcomes of their scientific investigations. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their spoken and written language and learn to use words for effect and precision.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in an atmosphere of high expectations because of effective teaching.
- Pupils use subject language well when explaining their calculations.
- Effective marking means that pupils know what they do well and what they need to work on next.
- Work is tailored well to the needs of differently attaining pupils.
- Effective leadership has brought about some good improvements since the last inspection, including increased focus on problem solving.
- Whilst pupils apply mathematical skills to work in other subjects, this happens more by accident than intention.

Commentary

53. Standards are below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well from a low starting point on entry to Year 1. Those with special educational needs do very well because teachers and teaching assistants have good regard to their needs and build their learning in small, achievable steps. The work of all other pupils is equally well planned; it is tailored to meet their needs and the most able pupils in particular are pushed to achieve just that little bit more than could reasonably be expected, such as when two Year 3 pupils worked with Year 4 pupils solving real-life multiplication problems.

54. Achievement is good. Some of the Year 1 pupils are unable to count on and back and a few struggle to say 'one more' or 'one less' than a given number or give 'the difference between 2 and 4'. However, by the end of Year 2, they can count forwards and backwards in fives up to 50 and can identify number patterns as they add on in fives on a 100 square, and by the end of Year 6, they can count on and back in nines.
55. This good progress occurs because of effective teaching throughout the school. Teachers' presentations and explanations are lively and teachers in all year groups employ a variety of methods that hold the interest of the pupils, for example through the use of card clocks in a Year 1 lesson and real-life problem solving in Year 5. Teachers tailor the work to pupils' needs and make mathematics fun through games and their own enthusiasm for the subject. For example in a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were reluctant to stop working, they were enjoying analysing data and constructing a pictogram so much. By using the computer-linked interactive whiteboards, teaching maintains pupils' interest well. By asking pupils to explain how they have carried out a particular calculation, teaching builds pupils' speaking skills well.
56. The school's focus on improving pupils' speaking skills in mathematics is working well and has resulted in improvements in this subject that are not evident in others. Pupils are increasingly successful in explaining what they are doing and how they have arrived at a particular answer. Marking is effective in bringing about improvements to pupils' work. Useful comments from teachers mean that pupils understand what they are good at and what they need to learn next, which inspires them to improve. Teaching assistants support the least able pupils particularly well because they are well aware of the needs of these pupils and work is adapted to suit their slower learning style, building their learning in small achievable steps.
57. The subject leader is only in her second year of teaching and has made substantial gains in her understanding of subject leadership. An excellent model of effective teaching for colleagues, she is being supported extremely well by the head teacher and assistant head, who ensure that, overall, leadership is effective in bringing about improvements. She is well aware of what works well and not so well. For example, with support from the local authority consultants, an increased emphasis on problem solving has been established and is helping to raise standards. She has held problem-solving workshops for pupils and their parents to increase parental involvement in the education of their children. Her careful scrutiny of teachers' plans ensure pupils are taught what they should be each year and her analyses of test papers give staff a good idea of gaps in pupils' learning; adjustments to the subject plans ensure these gaps are dealt with the following year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. This is satisfactory, but not as good as it could be. By encouraging pupils to use a range of different strategies to solve problems, teaching enables pupils to be able to apply mathematics in a variety of situations. However, this is not planned well enough. Pupils apply mathematical skills when measuring in design and technology for example, and recording their findings on charts, tables and graphs in science. However, the promotion of mathematical learning through other subjects is not systematically planned, and learning from it is too incidental, slowing progress unnecessarily.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and pupils find the work exciting.
- Work develops pupils' understanding well and assessment is used effectively to tailor work for differently attaining pupils.
- Good leadership and management have brought about improvements since the last inspection.

- Writing skills are promoted very well through science but pupils' poor speaking skills mask their scientific understanding.
- Pupils take pride in what they do, modelled well by staff.
- Effective use of visits and other events enrich the science curriculum well.
- Opportunities are missed to reinforce numeracy and ICT skills so that pupils are not proficient enough in applying what they have learned.

Commentary

59. Achievement is good, especially when set in the context of low attainment on entry, small cohorts (making comparisons with how well other schools do in science unreliable), and high mobility. The increased emphasis on investigative work means that pupils are excited by their tasks and are inspired to work hard and learn from what they do. They respond enthusiastically to the comments teachers write in their books, and present their work tidily, clearly taking a pride in what they produce. This is helped through the way in which teachers present pupils' workbooks and model good handwriting. Pupils' interest is fuelled further by visits to the local science museum and the annual science investigation week held in school.
60. The school promotes writing through science well by drawing pupils' attention to the skills they are being taught in literacy lessons, such as handwriting and punctuation. In a bid to encourage pupils to write more accurately, the use of worksheets is kept to a minimum. However, pupils do not score very highly in tests and results are generally below nationally expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, from talking to pupils it is clear that their understanding is better than their written work shows. For example, when asked what makes a test fair, Year 6 pupils struggled to give a clear explanation. Yet, when asked how they would plan a test to see if the higher a ball was dropped from the higher it would bounce, they showed that they knew how to make it fair by explaining how the pressure on the ball and the surface on which it bounced always needed to be the same. Similarly, the good emphasis the school is now placing on recording investigations using pictures and labelled diagrams shows a more accurate and positive picture of pupils' knowledge and understanding than their written accounts and conclusions.
61. Teaching is good throughout the school. It is lively and enthusiastic and inspires pupils to learn. Subject language is used well by teachers and teaching assistants, who encourage pupils to use it in their explanations. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were told by the teacher, "These are the words I expect to hear you use in your explanations today". They included, for example, 'vibrate', 'solids' and 'air column', which pupils put into sentences such as, "The floor vibrates when there is an earthquake" and "The guitar strings vibrate to make a sound". The work builds pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding well over time and is adapted for differently attaining pupils. Pupils' involvement in assessing how well they are doing is becoming embedded and is giving pupils a good understanding about how successful they have been. They are encouraged, for example, to think about better ways in which they could have investigated something and to ask themselves "What would happen if...?"
62. Subject leadership is good. The new inexperienced co-ordinator is learning well about how to lead and manage this high-profile core subject, supported very effectively by the head teacher and assistant head. Between them, they scrutinise planning, observe and evaluate teaching, and examine pupils' work. They identify gaps in pupils' learning and decide how to deal with this. Because of effective ways in which weaknesses in teaching are identified and tackled, pupils make more rapid progress than they did at the time of the last inspection. However, whilst the subject leaders discuss with class teachers how well pupils are doing during the year and whether or not they are on course to do as well as they should, checks on the consistency of pupils' progress from year to year is less embedded and too little is done to find out in which year groups the most and least progress is made in order to raise standards further.

63. Nevertheless, effective management systems have brought about good improvement since the last inspection. There is now much more emphasis on recording results and less reliance on worksheets that require little written response from pupils. Science vocabulary is promoted more effectively and pupils have a better idea of fair testing. However, the use of ICT is still not good enough and is high on the school's list of priorities for improvement. In addition, whilst pupils use their mathematics skills for example, to measure temperature and time, these opportunities are unplanned and too incidental to impact well enough on pupils' learning in mathematics.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of teachers' infectious enthusiasm for the subject, effective deployment of teaching assistants to support learning, and good planning.
- Teachers' good use of the national subject guidelines and effective implementation of assessment procedures ensure pupils' learning is built well over time.
- A wide range of ICT skills equip pupils well for work in other subjects, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the range of equipment available or to use their skills in different situations.
- Good subject leadership has brought about very good improvement to the provision for ICT since the last inspection.

Commentary

64. Achievement is good and pupils do well to reach the nationally expected level in ICT by the end of Year 2. Most pupils, for example, can enter, save and retrieve their work and can combine images and text. They program a floor robot to move in different directions and understand the need to frame questions simply, such as "Have they got blonde hair?" in a game of 'Guess Who'.
65. Although standards are below national expectations by the end of Year 6, this is mainly because of the amount of catch-up needed following the fire damage to the computer suite and the school managing without it or the classroom computers from June 2004 to March 2005. Their word-processing editing skills are developing soundly and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are starting to compile multimedia presentations and developing an understanding of how to combine text, sound and graphics. However, because of damage to the network cables, pupils are only just learning to use electronic mail. They have not yet had chance to use the newly-purchased sensory equipment for measuring temperature and sound. Nor have they yet used digital cameras, which are being purchased this financial year.
66. Nevertheless, improvement since the last inspection has been substantial and the school has lived up to the expectations of the last report that, although it was not meeting statutory requirements, it was well placed to improve. Effective subject leadership has meant that whilst little direct teaching of ICT skills was going on at the time of the last inspection, since then an ICT suite has been built, and rebuilt, and is now used well to teach computer skills to pupils of all ages.
67. Teaching is now good. This is because effective in-service training, and initial training for a major proportion of the current staff, have improved teachers' ability to teach ICT; training for the teaching assistants is now starting. Teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is picked up by the pupils, who talk excitedly about what they are doing and have done. They enjoy the way in which teachers use the newly purchased interactive whiteboards, which they say are "good

because we can join in and use them ourselves” and “we can see more”. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils in the computer suite and because of this, pupils get the help they need when they need it.

68. Good use of the national teaching guidelines to plan the ICT curriculum gives teachers clear knowledge and understanding about what pupils of different ages should be taught. The effective assessment procedures recently implemented involve pupils in assessing their own learning. Using a list of criteria from the subject guidance, pupils of all ages assess what they can and cannot do, what they need more practice at, or when and if they need to move on to some new learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. This is satisfactory. Pupils increasingly use ICT to support their work in other subjects, but this is too variable. For example, they use the Internet to research Henry VIII and to produce computer-generated pictures. They word-process stories and poems in literacy and compile graphs and charts in mathematics. However, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to apply the skills they acquire in ICT lessons in different situations. Insufficient use is made of classroom computers in particular, which means that pupils do not choose, for example, to write stories or accounts on computer or to check grammar or spelling.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

70. Too few history lessons and no geography lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of provision in either subject. From what was seen, however, standards in both subjects are in line with what is expected nationally at the age of seven and eleven, indicating good achievement over time.
71. In geography, for example, pupils in Year 2 learn about different places in the world by following the travels of ‘Barnaby Bear’. Postcards from different places help pupils realise that people live differently in different countries and that the climate changes from place to place. In history, pupils in Year 1 have written about the Great Fire of London and drawn well-depicted scenes to illustrate their stories. History was brought alive for Year 2 pupils when the teacher dressed up as Florence Nightingale and answered well thought-out questions from the pupils. From this question and answer session, pupils, for example, grasped a good understanding of what prompted Florence to become a nurse. Because the teacher had taken time to research the topic, she was able to give pupils good factual knowledge, heightening their interest and providing them with a lot of relevant information. Similarly, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have discussed what it was like to live in Britain during World War 2, and have produced some emotive poems about life in those times. They have visited the Imperial War Museum to help them understand more by looking at artefacts from the era. ICT is currently being used well in Year 6 to find out and present information about Henry VIII and his six wives.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, varied teaching of religious education means that pupils are interested in the subject and standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- There is equal focus on learning from religion as on learning about it.

- Effective leadership has meant that religious education has maintained its prominence in the school's curriculum.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve well and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. They do well in religious education because of the focus this subject has and its high profile within the school's curriculum.
73. Pupils of all ages are developing a good understanding of the different world faiths represented in Britain, and an awareness of how belief can inspire people to work hard and do well. Debates that go beyond facts about religion help pupils to realise that religion affects the way in which people choose to live and can determine the rules by which they live. For example, a discussion about whether or not King Henry VIII had the right to be head of the Church of England after taking six wives generated a heated debate among a class of Year 6 pupils. Similarly, pupils in Years 4 and 5 discussed ideas about how Jewish people keep a 'kosher' home and lifestyle. They showed good knowledge about the Jewish religion knowing, for example, that the Jewish place of worship is a synagogue.
74. Year 2 pupils' study of the Muslim faith has given them a good idea of how Muslims welcome a new baby. Whilst they can talk about this better than they can write about it, they all know that Muslims pray to Allah. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a secure understanding of Christianity through listening to and discussing Bible stories, such as 'The prodigal son'. By varying her teaching style in one lesson, and by introducing some role-play, the teacher held pupils' interest well.
75. Good teaching supported by a wide range of artefacts from different world faiths means that pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of different religions, including their celebrations and symbols. Good use of the locally agreed syllabus ensures pupils are taught what they should be and regular visits to different places of worship help pupils to appreciate the way in which people worship their deity in different ways. Imaginative ways of teaching, such as using a 'Muslim' puppet in a Year 1/2 lesson at which pupils could direct their questions, maintains pupils' interest well. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants supports pupils' learning well.
76. Effective subject leadership, with the newly appointed subject leader coming to the end of her induction programme with the local education authority consultants, has meant that the religious education has retained its importance in the school's curriculum. Supported effectively by the head teacher and assistant head, she has managed to bring about improvements to learning resources in particular, hold the interest of staff, and offer subject guidance and advice when required.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

77. Inspection time constraints meant that not enough lessons were seen in music to make a judgement about provision, standards, achievement, or the quality of teaching. However, from talking with pupils, listening to them sing, and examining some of the school's documentation, the subject is well represented in the curriculum. Music is used effectively by some teachers to create a calm atmosphere at the start of lessons and as a stimulus for good movement in physical education lessons. Specialist teaching has resulted in some very lively singing in assembly which is tuneful and rhythmic. The choir has performed at the local theatre and pupils are encouraged to attend Saturday music workshops with pupils from other schools. Most of the teachers have received some recent training in the teaching of music and more is planned for next term in order that they can add to the specialist teaching at other times throughout the week. Visitors to enrich the music curriculum include percussionists, members of the Salford music and performing arts group, and musicians performing African music during arts week.

Design and technology

78. There was insufficient time to see any design and technology lessons and so judgements about the quality of provision for this subject cannot be made. However, from the examination of the curriculum plans, the subject is secure and from the work on the walls and in pupils' folders, pupils in all years design, make, and begin to evaluate a range of different products as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and made playground equipment, employing words and pictures to explain their designs. By the end of Year 6, pupils make slippers using a range of materials, paying careful attention to their function and the quality of finish, and distinguishing between what works well and what could be improved.

Physical education

79. Not enough full physical education lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of provision in this subject. From what was seen, physical education is well represented within the school's curriculum and is popular with pupils. In the only lesson seen, pupils performed a high quality dance routine to music. Features of very good teaching evident in this lesson included secure relationships, which underpinned learning, and strong leadership, which ensured instructions were clear and that there was a clear focus on developing important skills. Pupils were required to evaluate the performances of others to aid learning and received much encouragement to enable them to take pride in their work. As a result, they made very good gains in learning. Older pupils engage in competitive team games with pupils from neighbouring schools, such as through athletics meetings and cross-country events. They take part in adventure activities, such as canoeing, on an annual residential visit. Salford Sports' Development Group provide good support for pupils to help them develop important skills, such as throwing and catching, which were seen in a Year 1 lesson during the inspection.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national levels and many pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are good, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The subject is led well and there are clear plans for its further development.
- Clay work is given a high profile and is linked well to other subjects.
- A good range of visits and visitors enriches the art and design curriculum well.

Commentary

80. Standards in art and design are above what is expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers ensure that pupils develop skills in a consistent way, building up knowledge and understanding effectively over a period of time. For example, Year 2 pupils investigated and used a range of techniques, materials and processes to make patterns and impressions on clay tiles to standards above those seen nationally. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made attractive hangings with willow withies. By the end of Year 6, pupils complete high quality work when, for example, they observed flowers and used various art forms to create their own representations.

81. Teaching and learning are good. Good features were observed when pupils in Years 4 and 5 learned how lines are used to create patterns to produce pictures in the style of Paul Klee. In this lesson, and others seen, relationships were very good, presentation was lively, which kept pupils involved, the teacher paid attention to developing important skills of line and tone to facilitate learning, and much encouragement was given to persuade pupils to take pride in their work. As a result, pupils usually make good progress and show much enthusiasm for the subject.

82. The head teacher provides good leadership because she knows what works well and what needs doing. She has begun to compile a portfolio of work to help teachers assess pupils' work to National Curriculum requirements, following the destruction by fire of the previous portfolio. Despite this setback, provision is good and standards remain high as at the time of the last inspection.
83. Clay work is strongly emphasised, with high quality pupils' work in evidence to extend learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 completed tiles with a seaside theme while pupils in Years 4 and 5 made tablets which conveyed the emotions of victims in the Second World War. By the end of Year 6 pupils complete ornate jewellery boxes to good standards.
84. All strands of the art and design curriculum are represented, although the development of painting skills and techniques has rightly been identified for further development. Visiting artists and visits to galleries extend pupils' learning further. For example, different artists worked with Year 2 pupils, who learnt about proportion through their drawings of houses while Year 6 pupils sketched then painted wooden panels with acrylic paint to show aspects of the local environment. Year 2 pupils' visit to the Lowry Centre provided the stimulus for them to re-create his style through drawings and portraits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. Due to time constraints, no discrete personal, social and health education or citizenship lessons were seen during the inspection and so no judgements can be made about the overall provision, standards, achievement, or the quality of teaching. However, from talking with pupils and looking at the school's documentation, pupils have a good understanding of this aspect of their lives. This is because good use is made of the school's teaching guidelines and teachers are clear about what pupils should be taught.
86. Pupils in Year 6 have ambitions for their future and talk confidently about what career they wish to pursue, such as a plumber and "someone who looks after pets". They are aware that some of the things they are doing in school could well help them in adulthood, like, "learning how to get on with other people".
87. Good modelling of working together from staff, such as when staff and governors went on the same residential visit as the Year 6 pupils as part of a team-building exercise, helps pupils considerably to get on with others. Rules around the school remind them how to create a harmonious atmosphere and discussions in lessons help them to understand how important it is to get on with others. When asked what kind of place they would like their classroom to be, some responded with, "Where people behave themselves". They are taught to look for the good things in others, for example by choosing a 'special person' and saying something positive about them.
88. The school promotes healthy living well. Pupils are well aware of the dangers of alcohol, smoking, and drug abuse and of the need to try to resist temptation from others to try them. They know what makes them healthy, such as a balanced diet and plenty of exercise.
89. They are particularly proud of the work of their school council. They feel it gives them an important voice in the school and are pleased with what has been achieved through it. With help, Year 6 pupils could relate the concept of a school council to parliament and elections with "choosing a prime minister".

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)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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