

# INSPECTION REPORT

**PROPPS HALL JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY  
SCHOOL**

Failsworth

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105663

Headteacher: Mr R Partington

Lead inspector: Mrs M Lewis

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> - 26th April 2005

Inspection number: 267525

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	144
School address:	Propps Hall Drive Failsworth Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	M35 0ND
Telephone number:	0161 682 7994
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carmel Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Propps Hall School takes pupils from the ages of 3 to 11 from the local urban area of Failsworth West Ward, which is recognised as a ward of disadvantage. Several children from nearby areas of severe deprivation also attend the school. It is smaller than most primary schools, with 144 pupils on roll, including 11 full-time and 8 part-time children in the nursery. There are more boys (81) than girls (63) on roll. There are six classes and all pupils, apart from those in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6, are taught in mixed age groups. An above average percentage of pupils (almost 35 per cent) are known to be eligible for free school meals. Nearly all pupils are from white, British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. The number of pupils who leave and join the school at other than the usual time is high, at about 24 per cent for the last school year. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about average (16.8 per cent), mostly for social, emotional and behaviour difficulties, as well as learning difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need (0.6 per cent). This is about average. When pupils start in the reception class there is a wide range of attainment, which varies from year-to-year, but records show that, overall, children's attainment is below average for their age. The school is involved in two initiatives, Excellence in Cities and the Small Schools Fund. It has recently been identified for development as a Children's Centre for the area.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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15551	P Mitchell	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology
17907	M Bowers	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Physical education
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a satisfactory school** which is improving quickly under the good leadership of the new headteacher. The leadership and management of governors and other key staff are sound and improving. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the Foundation Stage have a very good start to their education and achieve well;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are identified early and fully involved in all school activities. This makes a considerable contribution to their learning;
- Standards of work at the age of 11 are below average in English and information and communication technology (ICT);
- Although satisfactory overall across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent in Key Stage 2. Planning of lessons and assessment of pupils' work are sometimes insufficient;
- The school has a good ethos. Pupils' behaviour is good, as are relationships at all levels in the school. Pupils are very well cared for, included in school activities and valued by staff.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, despite the slow progress made until very recently towards some of the key issues identified. Under the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher, the school now has a good capacity for improvement and for the further raising of standards. The school faces challenging circumstances with a high level of pupil mobility and recent staff changes and sickness. Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen but the development of ICT has been insufficient.

### 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	D
mathematics	D	C	C	C
science	C	C	D	D

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

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** Test results at the age of 11 have varied over recent years. In comparison with schools nationally, test results for the past five years indicate that English has been a weaker area, apart from in 2002 when pupils reached average standards. In 2004, results in English and science were below the national average and below what pupils had achieved at seven. A significant proportion of pupils who sat the tests in 2004 had joined the school part way through and others had left. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach the average standard in mathematics and science, but below average in English. In 2004, pupils at the age of 7 did better in mathematics than in reading, writing and science, compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, they did

better in reading, where they were average, and in mathematics, where they were above average. However, results in writing and science were well below average. The current 7-year-olds achieve satisfactorily overall and are on course to reach average standards in mathematics and science, but below average in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. The significant proportion of pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs affects the overall standard in English. Standards in ICT are beginning to improve, but due to slow progress since the last inspection, standards for pupils at both the ages of 7 and 11 are below average. Overall, children in the Foundation Stage have a very good start and achieve well. Most reach the goals they are expected to achieve by the end of reception. Their best achievements are in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils develop a growing sense of respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. They behave well and have good attitudes to others. Punctuality and attendance are satisfactory. There has been one exclusion in the past year.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall.** In the Foundation Stage, there is a significant amount of good and better teaching, which accelerates children's progress. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are consistently satisfactory or better but the quality of teaching varies in Key Stage 2, where there is some unsatisfactory teaching and less good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good quality support, which underpins their learning well. Teaching assistants throughout the school make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school has a sound curriculum which is enriched well by extra-curricular activities. In Key Stage 2, it uses expertise from outside the school to improve subjects such as religious education, science, ICT and physical education. Links with parents are good, which also improves pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher provides good leadership and receives sound support from key staff. The planning for school improvement is clear, underway and shared by staff and governors. Governance is satisfactory and financial management is good.

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

Parents hold positive views of the school. Pupils enjoy school and want to attend.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards across the school in English and ICT and ensure that ICT is used more consistently across the curriculum;
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, ensuring that the quality of teachers' assessments and planning meet pupils' needs;



- Develop further the leadership and management skills of staff to enable them to play a stronger part in the evaluation of the school's work and its future development.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but standards are below average overall at the ages of 7 and 11. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. As a result of the very good teaching they receive, most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they begin Year 1. Achievement for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. It is good for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress in relation to their starting points. Standards in English and ICT are below average at the ages of 7 and 11. In English, this is partly due to the above average number of pupils who join and leave the school part way through, although boys in Years 3 to 6 do not do as well as girls in reading and writing.

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

- Achievement of pupils in the Foundation Stage is good overall and, as a result, children make a very good start to their education;
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well;
- Standards in English and ICT are not high enough at the ages of 7 and 11;
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics;
- Boys do almost as well as girls in mathematics but not as well in English, and they attain lower standards;
- Most pupils who start and remain in the school until Year 6 make good progress overall in their learning.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below that expected for children of this age. For many, their communication skills, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly weak areas when they start. A strong emphasis on developing their personal and social skills helps them make very good progress in this area, which ensures a firm foundation on which to build. In both the nursery and reception classes, developing speaking and listening skills in all areas of learning is stressed by all adults and this is paying dividends. Children are becoming confident speakers and most develop their speech clearly. As a visitor arrived in the nursery, one child called out 'Here she comes again'. Children achieve well overall, and the majority of the current children are likely to meet the expected goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Their best achievements are in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.9 (15.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (19.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 18 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	25.8 (25.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.8 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.9 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds have varied over recent years, depending on the make up of the group of pupils sitting the tests and the length of time they have been at the school. The trend in the school's average national score for all core subjects was above that nationally. Standards have risen to be average in mathematics for the past two years, compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. In comparison with schools nationally, test results for the past five years indicate that English has been a weaker area, apart from in 2002 when pupils reached average standards, but nevertheless pupils have done better than those in similar schools with the same number of pupils having free school meals. However, in 2004 this was not the case, based on pupils' previous attainment in tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Results in English and science were below average in 2004, largely because of the high number of pupils joining and leaving the school. A significant proportion (25 per cent) of pupils who sat the tests in 2004 had joined the school part way through and some higher attaining pupils (around 31 per cent) had left the year group. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach the average standard in mathematics and science, but below average standards in English. Boys do not do as well as girls in English. The school has recognised this and is addressing the issue, particularly in the case of writing, with the use of booster classes to raise the attainment for pupils who are just bubbling under the expected level.
3. In the tests for 7-year-olds, results over time have generally shown an improvement in reading, although they dropped in 2004 to below average due to a significant number of pupils having special educational needs. When compared with all schools, pupils achieved average standards in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. In comparison with schools in similar circumstances, results were better in reading, where they were average, and in mathematics, where they were above average. However, results in writing and science were well below average. The current pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily overall. They are on course to reach average standards in mathematics and science but below average in reading and writing.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Work is carefully structured and pupils are taught in small steps with much individual help. The progress they make is carefully monitored and appropriate targets are set for them. There are behavioural programmes for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. These are successful and pupils are learning to control their behaviour, to concentrate and to join in lessons.
5. Standards in ICT are beginning to improve but, due to the slow progress made rectifying the unsatisfactory provision at the last inspection, this means that standards of attainment for pupils have fallen behind the expectations nationally at both the ages of 7 and 11, and are below average. Resources are inadequate and the pupils have not had the opportunity to develop their skills systematically or to use computers effectively in other curriculum areas. Aspects such as the control of objects by the computer and data handling are particularly weak.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Provision for their, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attitudes and behaviour are a result of the high expectations of all adults;
- The youngest children show very good attitudes and behave very well; this helps them achieve well and meet the goals expected of them;
- In some junior classes there are too few opportunities for older pupils to work independently and boys sometimes lose concentration in their lessons.

### Commentary

6. This school successfully puts a lot of effort into providing a caring and supportive environment. Pupils feel safe and act responsibly, resulting in their good attitudes and behaviour. Everyone is regarded as an important individual, regardless of his or her background or ability. In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants are very effective in creating a 'team teaching' environment in which all pupils are engaged.
7. Behaviour is managed in a consistent manner, high standards being balanced with understanding and additional support. This pleases parents, who consider that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils feel that the rules are fair and they are tolerant on the few occasions when other pupils act inappropriately. In the best lessons, adults keep notes to ensure that positive attitudes are commended and areas of additional guidance are put in place quickly, so that a productive learning atmosphere is maintained. At all levels, pupils accept responsibility willingly and sensibly.
8. The pupils' work books show that teachers do not regularly provide adequate guidance to show how work can be improved and, in some classes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently. Consequently, on occasions, the most able pupils do not have their potential developed fully. In some lessons, particularly in the junior classes, teaching strategies do not engage the interest of boys; as a result, tasks are not tackled enthusiastically and boys do not always achieve as well as they could.
9. The opportunities pupils have to develop an understanding of how to live in a complex community and to develop respect are promoted well. Assemblies and 'circle time' are used to explore feelings and emotions, both of the individual and others. Thoughtful discussion takes place about how people from differing backgrounds cope with life changing events, such as birth and death or changes in relationships. Discussions with adults include personal, social and healthy living topics; these are talked about sensibly and openly. There are some opportunities offered to explore self-knowledge and spiritual awareness without embarrassment.
10. Pupils' attendance matches closely the national average for primary schools and the school has good systems in place to ensure improvement. The majority of pupils arrive promptly in the mornings. Lessons commence on time.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2004*

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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

## 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	122	1	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Pupils benefit from the sound education provided. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school has an appropriate curriculum which is enriched well by extra-curricular activities. In Key Stage 2, it uses expertise from outside the school to improve subjects such as religious education, science, ICT and physical education. Links with parents are good, which also improves pupils' learning.

### Teaching and learning

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	7	8	1	0	0

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

In the Foundation Stage, there is a significant amount of good and better teaching which accelerates children's progress. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is consistently satisfactory or better but the quality of teaching varies in Key Stage 2, where there is some unsatisfactory teaching and a lower proportion of good teaching.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and assessment in the Foundation Stage are very good and children get a very good start to their education;
- Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good; pupils are provided with good quality support;
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour;
- Teachers generally deploy learning assistants and use resources well; teaching and learning assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning;
- Planning of lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, is sometimes sparse and the use of individual pupil targets and assessments to identify future work is inconsistent;
- The quality of teachers' marking to help pupils move forward is inconsistent at Key Stage 2. Teachers in some classes accept poor presentation and handwriting in pupils' work.

## Commentary

11. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. This is not as high as at the last inspection, when teaching overall was judged as good.
12. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good and the very good start that children have is a strength of the school. All adults have a very clear idea of what they want children to achieve and through detailed, ongoing assessments have a good understanding of the children's abilities and what they need to learn next. They are adept at ensuring enjoyment for the children and, consequently, provide exciting and interesting activities to stimulate them in their learning. As a result, the work planned challenges them appropriately. Children choose from tasks that are very practical and 'hands on', but at times learn to sit and listen to teachers quietly. All staff have high expectations of the children and set very good examples for them to follow. Consequently, children are well settled, happy and secure and make good progress in their learning. There are very good transition arrangements between the two classes and between the reception class and Year 1. This pleases parents who feel very involved at this stage of their children's education.
13. A key strength of the teaching throughout the school is the strong relationships between children, teachers and other adults who work with them. This underpins pupils' learning well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the majority of pupils respect and like their teachers and want to please them. Pupils are friendly and make good contributions to lessons, enjoying the responsibilities they are given. As a result, they develop good attitudes to work and make sound progress.
14. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 demonstrate sound expertise in most subjects. Although there is some inconsistency between classes in the teaching of mathematics, most teachers plan lessons carefully. They use mental and oral sessions well and question pupils effectively, encouraging and helping them to do their best. The teaching of reading and writing has been a focus and is improving across the school. Some English lessons in Key Stage 2 do not stimulate pupils enough and, when lessons are ordinary, pupils lose interest and some boys, particularly those of average ability, 'switch off' and do not make enough progress in their work. English lessons are often too long and not all pupils engage enough in their learning. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, the teacher's planning was too thin, although brief learning objectives were identified and tasks for pupils of different abilities were planned. Although pupils were brought together at the end of the lesson to discuss what they had learned, this time was noisy and unfruitful with too much time spent on behaviour management, instead of discussing what the pupils had learned and what they would learn next. There was no urgency or timed activities to encourage pupils to complete their work and, despite the long length of the lesson, many pupils did not finish or achieve enough. In mathematics and science, teachers have good expertise, make lessons interesting and build well on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. They give pupils good reminders at the beginning of lessons of what they have learned. Lessons are well organised to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and resources are mostly used well to motivate pupils. However, ICT is not a consistent feature of lessons in mathematics and science to consolidate and promote learning.
15. Teachers do not have consistent standards in their expectations of presentation and handwriting in pupils' work. Some teachers accept work of a poor standard and some do not mark pupils' work sufficiently well or give pupils enough indication of what they need to do to improve.
16. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan work that is adapted for them and learning support assistants work particularly well with them, both during whole class sessions and group work. During whole class sessions, learning support assistants are well deployed, encouraging participation and helping pupils

to understand and formulate answers. During group sessions, they work knowledgeably with pupils and keep careful records of what pupils have achieved. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson to plan and write a story, the learning support assistant discussed pictures with the pupils and helped them to order them into a story. On another occasion, a learning support assistant was particularly effective during an individual session with a pupil with specific learning difficulties, using a structured multi-sensory programme to develop literacy skills.

17. Assessment strategies are developing satisfactorily in English and mathematics and, in the majority of lessons, teachers use the information gathered on pupils' progress effectively to group pupils and match work according to their needs. Pupils' work in English and mathematics is regularly assessed during assessment weeks set aside for this and their progress is tracked carefully as they move through the school. This practice is due to be extended in the near future to other subjects, such as science, ICT and religious education. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection and has been introduced by the current headteacher. Rigorous analysis of test data by the headteacher and senior managers is helping staff to identify gaps in teaching and in pupils' learning, and to make adjustments. In some classes, pupils have individual targets to work towards but this good practice is not consistently the case.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. All subjects are taught and, with the exception of ICT, it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It provides an appropriate range of worthwhile opportunities to cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of the pupils. Statutory requirements for Collective Worship are complied with. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Religious education is planned in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school provides many valuable opportunities for enrichment including out of school activities. Accommodation is adequate and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good;
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs, who are included in all school activities;
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided and this enhances the curriculum;
- The curriculum does not cover all the identified strands in ICT;
- Some schemes of work in foundation subjects are over dependent on government guidelines and documentation. Some lessons are too long;
- Investigative activities in mathematics and science are not developed in some classes and many opportunities where subjects could support each other have not been identified.

## **Commentary**

18. The school has developed the curriculum further since the last inspection. It has improved the planning of subjects and topics to allow for pupils who stay in a mixed age class for two years. However, there remain areas for further improvement, particularly in the continual refining of schemes of work, to ensure that they guide lesson planning and provide a balanced range of activities. For example, the provision of computer work in support of mathematics and science continues to be an area requiring further development. The



school recognises this and, immediately prior to the inspection, more up-to-date machines were installed.

19. Opportunities for subjects to be taught alongside each other are not planned systematically enough. Some subjects, including science, are taught in half term blocks and are not taught frequently enough. Opportunities to use the data handling applications of mathematics and to identify patterns in the results of scientific investigations are not planned. Although most subjects rely on the recommended schemes of work some, including science, ICT and religious education, are not supported by a specific scheme of work personalised by the school. The timetable and time allowed for some subjects is not sufficiently well thought out or suitably balanced. Lessons in English and additional English in Key Stage 2 are very long, whereas time given to art and design and design and technology is insufficient.
20. A very good programme of learning is planned for children in the nursery and reception classes. It continues to be rich and varied and is appropriately based on the six areas of learning. The curriculum for these children is exciting and based chiefly on first-hand experiences. There is a very good balance between children's own choice of activities and specific learning tasks prepared by adults.
21. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at an early age, very carefully assessed and well thought out strategies are put in place to help them to succeed. Pupils have individual programmes written which identify the next stages in their learning and how these are to be achieved. These programmes are used particularly well to plan work at the appropriate level, both in class and when pupils are withdrawn for additional teaching. The special needs co-ordinators work effectively with teachers, learning support assistants, parents and pupils to review progress and set new targets. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems have individual behaviour programmes that are successful in helping them to learn to control their behaviour.
22. Through personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE), the school soundly promotes the skills necessary for pupils to become good citizens. Pupils express their opinions through the school council. Lessons in sex and relationships education and drugs awareness are supported by outside experts. However, as yet, the school does not have an agreed learning programme. Regular 'Circle Times' have been established for all classes.
23. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment. Residential visits are organised regularly for Year 6 pupils. Events have included creative arts, mathematics and Afro-Caribbean weeks to extend pupils' learning. Educational visits include local field work, visits to museums and the City Learning Centre. A very wide range of additional sporting activities are planned frequently with school staff, outside coaches and teachers from the local secondary school making very good contributions. The school is a key member of the local Federation of Schools where many challenging inter-school activities are planned.
24. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Plans for refurbishment of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are in place. The accommodation for the older pupils is limited and renewal of carpets and windows are overdue. Although staff use it expertly, it remains cramped and noisy, with pupils having to walk through one teaching area to reach their own classrooms.
25. Resources are suitable and sufficient overall. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are being improved generally although there is still a lack of software in the ICT resources. Up-to-date computer equipment is on order and plans are in place to rectify the current limited provision.
26. The school curriculum is currently being analysed as part of the school development plan. This thorough, on going evaluation is providing the headteacher and subject teams with key information to continue to amend and improve what the school provides for its pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is very good. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Care arrangements, such as child protection, safety and welfare, are followed thoroughly;
- Pastoral support, induction arrangements and trusting relationships are of a high standard;
- Consultation arrangements and a commitment to involve pupils in the decision making process are welcomed enthusiastically by the pupils.

### **Commentary**

27. High standards of care are effective because everyone works together to ensure the well being of pupils. The strong caring ethos within the school was a high priority in both of the last inspections and has been maintained. Good policies and expertise combine to ensure regulations and guidelines are followed. Adults undertake the correct training, so that first aid, medication, child protection and other safety arrangements are very securely in place. The school has recently had work done to eliminate some outstanding risks from asbestos and to ensure that there is no risk from an outbreak of legionnaires disease.
28. Pastoral support, both to pupils and families is very good because the school has comprehensive arrangements in place to ensure the needs of each are met. There are very effective induction arrangements including home visits for children starting in the nursery, and these help children to settle quickly. Pupils who join the school at varying times are equally well treated and they settle quickly. Arrangements to provide advice and guidance, based on monitoring, are less effective. Pupils are not able, readily, to explain what their targets for learning are and their work books are not often annotated by teachers with guidance to improve.
29. The school has recently established a school council and this initiative has been welcomed enthusiastically by the pupils. They are developing a keen sense of awareness of the benefits of healthy living and life styles. They know what is needed to make improvements in the school. The role of playground buddies is regarded as a privilege by the older pupils and is taken very seriously.

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

The school has good links with parents and other educational services. The links with the community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a comprehensive range of information to parents; this has improved since the last inspection. Some parents would like more;
- Consultation and review procedures are effective;
- Links with the adjacent sports college provide both enrichment and a good bridge to secondary education.

## **Commentary**

30. The school has worked hard recently to improve the quality and range of information it provides to parents and carers. Annual reports now include examples of what has been achieved during the year and future targets for learning. Information for parents on half termly curriculum topics is included in regular newsletters. Formal consultation procedures, including home visits, are in place to establish trusting relationships between home and school. The recently established Friends Association has been welcomed. A number of parents who returned the questionnaires said that they would like to be better informed about their children's progress, but the present range of consultation meeting and literature, including the governors' report, fully reflects the practices usually seen. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to help in school. A particularly good example of this was seen in the reception class where, for the first half hour in the morning, a large number of parents help groups of pupils with their reading. This makes a good contribution to the progress that children make. Parents also help with educational visits and this increases the adult child ratio.
31. The school has good links with the neighbouring specialist sports college, enabling pupils to enjoy exciting and skilfully conducted sports activities and physical education lessons. These enable sound relationships to be established and the pupils fully understand the routines they will have to follow on transfer to secondary education. Local, national and international charities are supported. An electronic correspondence link with Ghana is enabling the pupils to explore what it must be like to live in a very different environment from their own. These aspects combine very well to fully prepare pupils for secondary education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher's leadership of the school is strong and effective. Management is satisfactory and set to improve, as planned systems of development are achieved and other staff are helped to play a greater part in school development. Governance of the school is satisfactory overall. Financial management is good. Governors are developing a clearer understanding of how the school should develop.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The effective leadership of the headteacher is moving the school forward rapidly;
- There is good teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governing body in moving the school forward;
- There is scope to develop the leadership and management skills of other key staff.

## **Commentary**

32. The strong and effective leadership of the very recently appointed headteacher is the driving force for school improvement. In a very short time, he has successfully managed to win the confidence and trust of staff, pupils and parents. This is because of his skill, dedication and hard work. He has been effectively supported in this by the increasingly active governing body and the willingness of the acting deputy headteacher and the senior teacher to play their part. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting praised the headteacher for his leadership and what he has accomplished for the benefit of their children since he took over in an acting position at the beginning of the school year. The children themselves are also pleased with the changes that have taken place and the part they have been given in developing the school. The headteacher has set a very clear direction for the work of the school and governors and staff share his vision and take it on board.

33. Since the last inspection little had been done until recently to address the key issues identified. The new headteacher has clearly identified the most pressing issues and prioritised these effectively in a thorough, workable interim school development plan. This is continually being updated as action is taken and new priorities emerge. It has guided the work of the school well through a transitional period.
34. The governing body are beginning to play a full role in the school's development. They are becoming more involved in the strategic planning for the school in the school development plan which, until now, they had not been encouraged to do. They now have a much clearer idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, because they are not only provided with good quality information on which to base their judgements but are also welcomed and encouraged to find out about the work of the school first-hand. This is already enabling them to be more closely involved in key aspects of the school's work, such as ensuring adequate staffing arrangements. A good achievement has been the prudent use of funds to provide more non-teaching time for staff, to allow them to carry out their role more effectively and put new systems in place in advance of the requirements due to come into effect in the next school year. This has not yet been in place long enough, or evaluated yet by the school, to see the effect that this is having on teaching and learning and on other areas of the school's work.
35. Financial management is good. The headteacher has been involved in the budget since his appointment as deputy head almost three years ago. The Chair of the governors' finance committee is very well informed and experienced, which gives her a good understanding of the budget to enable governors to make informed spending decisions and to check on the value they receive. The school works within its budget and balances are earmarked for contingency, to improve resources, particularly for further administrative support, and to sustain staffing levels. The school secretary provides efficient and effective day-to-day support, which enables the headteacher and staff to get on with their jobs without unnecessary distractions.
36. Other staff with management responsibilities have had little recent training or encouragement to enable them to carry out their roles to maximum effect. The headteacher and acting deputy are currently working alongside staff to ensure they have a good knowledge of their areas and can take an increasing share of the workload of managing the school and evaluating its work. A positive start has been made but there is a need for key staff to develop their skills further. A real success story is in the area of special educational needs, which has been totally re-organised by the co-ordinator in conjunction with the headteacher. As a result, there are now appropriate systems in place for the identification and support of these pupils and the impact can already be seen in the progress they are making.

***Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	446,191	Balance from previous year	28,011
Total expenditure	427,474	Balance carried forward to the next	18,717
Expenditure per pupil	2,989		

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

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

Provision for children in the nursery and reception is very good and has maintained the high standard that was reported at the last inspection. Children achieve well because the teaching is very good. The curriculum is planned thoroughly to provide a wide range of interesting activities matched to the children's needs. Consequently, they are well prepared for their transfer to Year 1. Adults set excellent role models for the children and kind, friendly and helpful relationships exist between the children themselves and all staff.

There is a good ratio of adults to children. The newly appointed reception teacher who co-ordinates the Foundation Stage provides very strong leadership and expertise for the department. All staff work as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring the children's progress. Children's work is respected and appreciated and, consequently, they become confident members of their class. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are both suitable and sufficient. The learning environment is carefully organised to give children a wide variety of stimulating and challenging activities from which to choose. However, the nursery classroom is small and the hard surface of the outside play area is uneven.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well because of very good teaching and high expectations;
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development;
- Excellent relationships are established so children feel confident and happy.

#### **Commentary**

37. Children achieve very well in this area of learning and are on course to meet or exceed the expectations for their age. Children clearly enjoy coming to school. They enter the teaching areas with a spring in their step and an eager anticipation of the activities planned for them during the day. The personal, social and emotional development of many children was below that usually expected when they join the nursery. These children had underdeveloped social skills and found it difficult to accept the routines within the classroom or to conform to the high expectations set by staff. However, the presence of clear boundaries and the consistent, excellent role models set by the adults ensure that the children know what is expected of them. They quickly learn the correct way to behave.
38. Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve. This pleases their parents, who feel that they settle well into school and mature quickly. They are taught to share and take turns amicably and to put up their hands when prepared to answer a question. The excellent teamwork of the adults enables children to see the importance of being co-operative, working together in a calm and orderly atmosphere and treating each other with respect. All staff listen attentively to what children have to say. They give them lots of praise and encouragement, for example to sing a solo, speak to the group or play a musical instrument on their own. As a result, children's confidence and self-esteem grow quickly. In this calm and considerate atmosphere, levels of trust are high. First class relationships ensure children feel secure and confident to seek help when required.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and teaching overall is very good;
- The introduction of accurate vocabulary is a key aspect of all areas of learning;
- Parents spend time with their children looking at their reading books and children show them their work.

### **Commentary**

39. Children are making good progress and most are in line to achieve the expected levels. They achieve well because they are given plenty of opportunities to develop their early reading and writing skills. In both the nursery and the reception class, adults read stories and nursery rhymes in a lively way that grabs children's interest and attention. In the reception class, very good use is made of an adapted literacy strategy which challenges all children so that they know the difference between a story book and a book of facts. Parents spend regular and frequent time in school, looking at and discussing books with groups of children. Children's competence is effectively assessed and enables the more able children to move on quickly. For example, during a very well planned whole class carpet session at the end of a lesson, children recognised initial sounds in words and were beginning to write simple sentences, starting to sequence two or three sentences together. The use of 'talking partners' challenges children to develop their conversational skills and to share their thoughts and ideas with a partner and the whole class. Many of the children understand that words carry meaning and accurately use picture cues to gain meaning from the words below the illustrations in their books. In this language rich environment there are many opportunities for children to peruse books and engage in 'writing' messages as an integral part of their role play. Many activities are planned to enable children to practise their emergent writing and all make good attempts to write their name. Where a child is involved in emergent writing, clearly defined letters are present and the child can read back to the adult what he or she has written.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan varied activities to support learning, which ensures that children achieve well;
- Many opportunities are grouped into activities to promote children's mathematical development.

### **Commentary**

40. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote children's mathematical understanding. Consequently, they make good progress, with most on line to achieve the expected levels by the time they begin in Year 1. Reception class children accurately count numbers to 6 and begin to add sets of objects together by counting on. More advanced children identify patterns in numbers and complete early

addition sentences. Through their play, younger children gain an early understanding of volume, weight and measurement through pouring water into containers, filling them with sand, building up higher and lower towers using building blocks and comparing the heaviness and lightness of everyday objects. Adults plan their time very well. At the end of the day children sing songs that reinforce such mathematical vocabulary as heavy and light, long and short, high and low. Activities such as these strengthen their work completed during the day and bring the whole class together to celebrate their achievement. All children join in and many are happy and pleased to be asked to sing a part of the song on their own.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff plan stimulating activities and use questioning very effectively to enhance children's knowledge of the world around them;
- Good use is made of ICT;
- Good links are forged with other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Most children are working at the expected levels for their ages. A very good variety of appropriate activities are planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. Computers are used well and pupils are supported by parents and learning assistants when developing skills for operating the mouse. Children in the nursery are involved in planting seeds, carefully watering them and writing their species on a label. They listen to stories about how God made the world and enthusiastically join in a role play and songs about the Creation with the use of props and pictures. Reception children are taught to use a book index to gain information. They learn about the needs of growing babies when they take part in a doll washing session, carefully immersing their doll, drying it off and dressing it. There are excellent links with science and personal development as the children learn about how young babies are so dependent and how they have to be carefully handled. Other such links bring mathematical and language development together, as children sequence photographs of children of various ages. They carefully identify the changes in appearance as the children grow into adults.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- This area of learning is carefully and effectively planned;
- Good use is made of the school hall for dance and movement activities;
- Some of the outdoor marking is faded and hard to discern.

### **Commentary**

42. Indications are that children are on line to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. Teachers plan carefully and pupils in both classes have opportunities to use the outdoor



area on a regular planned basis. Nursery children ride wheeled vehicles energetically, safely and enthusiastically and involve themselves in imaginative role play. They show typical gains in balancing and sliding when they work on the climbing frame. The outside area is due for renovation in the near future with the building of the Children's Centre, but currently there is no soft play area and markings are old and faded.

43. Reception class children take part in movement sessions in the hall where they enjoy themselves, demonstrating good control of their bodies. Teaching is very good because children are challenged to think. Lessons are planned well and build upon what children have already learned. For instance, in a very good example the lesson moved forward quickly with a very good pace. Children were constantly challenged by the teacher to improve their performance with questions such as 'How can we make this better?' Poetry is used effectively to help children develop their movement repertoires further.
44. A good range of activities which develop children's fine motor skills and hand to eye co-ordination are organised. A full range of tools such as pencils, scissors, paint brushes and construction kits are readily available. Children are taught to make choices in both the nursery and reception classes.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided for children to be involved in role play activities;
- Children use materials imaginatively to create unique images and representations;
- Creative development is built into all areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

45. Children's achievement is good and they have plenty of opportunities to work with different materials. The youngest children create stories from their favourite books, carefully creating scenes and images from the story. They know and use techniques for mixing paint to form the colour and shade they require. Children in the nursery, for instance, explore how different materials such as cooked spaghetti feel and extend their vocabulary with the imaginative use of words. They describe it as 'slimy, wiggly, sticky and smooth'. Older children continue to enrich their creative skills with observational paintings of fruit, butterflies and other natural objects. There are clear links with knowledge and understanding of the world, when children help create mobiles representing life under the sea. Children confidently involve themselves in role play, experimenting with language and copying the roles of adults in their world. They assemble imaginative buildings using construction kits and immerse themselves in imaginative play. Teaching is good because careful planning enables children to become involved in activities that enhance these skills.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards reached at the ages of 7 and 11 are below national averages, but are average when compared with standards reached in similar schools;

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6;
- More able pupils achieve well throughout school and reach above average standards; pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets;
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in Years 3 to 6;
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are variable throughout school.

## **Commentary**

46. In Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities are achieving well because teaching and learning in the lessons are good. Work is well matched to individual needs and challenges all pupils to do their best. More able pupils reach higher than average standards, especially in reading. There is, however, a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, who also achieve well but do not reach average standards of work.
47. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve steadily; however, variable progress is made by different groups of pupils and in different classes. More able pupils achieve well to reach above average standards in reading and writing. Harder work is planned for them in lessons and they are encouraged to become independent in their reading and writing. By the time they are in Year 6, they are able to write a story using an imaginative range of vocabulary to make the writing exciting, edit it to correct spellings and punctuation and word process it. They enjoy the challenge, work hard and are proud of their achievements. One pupil writes 'As I spiralled down and down I saw everything around me spinning as if I was trapped within a tornado'.
48. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In lessons, they receive good quality help and support from learning support assistants and work is adapted for them. Learning support assistants use the pupils' individual programmes as they work with them to ensure they are working at the correct level towards their targets. Additional provision is well thought out to meet individual needs. For example, a daily session of multi-sensory teaching with a learning support assistant for a pupil with specific learning difficulties is contributing well to the good progress being made.
49. There is, however, a significant percentage of average pupils, mainly boys, who could achieve more. They do not always receive as much help as they need in lessons and often find it difficult to complete and record their work accurately. They do not always have a positive attitude to work, soon becoming restless and losing concentration. The school has identified this and strategies are being put in place to help boys to become more motivated and to enjoy learning. For example, new non-fiction books have been bought, although these initiatives are too recent to have yet had an impact.
50. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and below average speaking and listening skills. Some strategies are well used to help pupils develop these; for example, pupils discuss ideas with a 'talking partner'. However, other strategies such as drama and pupils questioning other pupils or adults are not systematically planned.
51. Standards in reading are improving steadily throughout the school. Many initiatives have been put in place to bring this about, although most are recent. Resources have been improved, there has been a reading week to encourage pupils to enjoy reading and home reading books have been introduced. These are proving successful in raising standards for some younger pupils, although less so for older pupils. Particularly successful is the daily 'guided reading' session. This is imaginatively used to provide a range of activities to promote literacy. For example, older pupils read plays in groups and poetry independently, listen to a recorded story, read in a group with a teacher, play word games and work with a learning support assistant to read and discuss persuasive writing.
52. Standards in writing are also starting to improve, although not yet by as much as reading. This has been identified as an area for development by the school and strategies to help develop writing have been introduced. Pupils use a framework to help them plan stories and

jot ideas down on individual white boards. By Year 6, pupils have had opportunities to write in a range of styles and have addressed handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation systematically in the literacy lessons. However, their use is inconsistent, even with more able pupils. There are too few opportunities throughout school for pupils to re-draft and correct their work, using dictionaries to correct spelling mistakes and using their 'best' handwriting.

53. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2. A wide variety of activities and strategies are used to interest and motivate pupils. The very good relationships between the adults and pupils help pupils to try hard and develop confidence. A daily session to teach phonics is proving successful in improving reading, with pupils working in groups according to need.
54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but variable in Years 3 to 6. In response to some ordinary and uninspiring teaching, there is restless behaviour and lack of interest in work that is limiting the achievement of many pupils in Years 3 and 4. Better teaching for older pupils is more enthusiastic and motivating, providing a variety of activities to help pupils to learn, adapted to meet the needs of different abilities. Teachers question pupils well to encourage them to think about the words they are using and why, and helping them to improve their vocabulary. However, literacy lessons are often over an hour long and some activities last too long, resulting in some pupils, often boys, losing interest.
55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has introduced many initiatives, which are helping to improve achievement. Pupils' work is scrutinised and the performance of pupils in national tests is analysed to find out where there are difficulties. However, there is not yet a cohesive, whole school approach for the planning and teaching of literacy. The newly introduced termly assessment for each pupil is useful but this information is not used to set individual targets for pupils to achieve. Some pupils, mostly in Year 6, use ICT to word process their work. However, computers are not used enough to support literacy.
56. Since the last inspection, there has been insufficient improvement in the standards achieved, although these are now starting to improve.

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

57. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum. For example, pupils write factual reports in science, and stories and accounts in religious education.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards in Year 2 have improved since the last inspection;
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons do not always challenge pupils enough;
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully and learning assistants make a good contribution to teaching and learning;
- Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve;
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed;
- Mathematics is not used effectively in other subjects; the use of ICT is underdeveloped.

#### **Commentary**

58. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are average. In the 2004 national tests, almost all 7-year-olds reached the expected standard but slightly less than the average number of pupils achieved the higher level. Year 6 pupils achieved similar results,

with eight out of ten achieving the expected level and one quarter achieving the higher level. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and learning assistants, and achieve well. Girls outperformed boys in the most recent mathematics tests for Year 2 pupils. Year 6 boys have almost closed the gap when their performance in the subject is compared with girls. Comparisons with the previous attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 indicate that these pupils achieved well.

59. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2. Frequent changes in the school population have made it difficult to ensure that pupils new to the school immediately make the progress of which they are capable. Most pupils enter the reception class with below average mathematical understanding. By Year 2, most are working within the expected range for their age, developing a knowledge and understanding of place value and recalling addition, subtraction and number facts to at least 10. They are taught to identify two-dimensional shapes, recognise number sequences and solve number problems. As they move up the school, the speed and range of mental calculations increase. By Year 6, pupils accurately calculate complex long multiplication problems, change fractions to decimals, then percentages, and investigate three-dimensional shapes.
60. Throughout the school, the use of computers to practise numeracy skills in classrooms is unsatisfactory. The school recognises this and immediately prior to the inspection was taking ownership of numerous up to date machines as part of a new initiative.
61. Assessment of pupils' ongoing achievement in mathematics is not secure. A tracking system to measure pupils' rates of progress has recently been introduced but, as yet, is not an instrument to help teachers plan the next steps in learning. Sound progress has been made in the identification of learning objectives, which are shared with pupils at the commencement of lessons.
62. In all the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in Years 3, 4 and 5. It was good in Years 1, 2 and 6. When lessons are good strengths include:
- careful planning which includes clearly defined work for pupils of all levels of achievement;
  - good emphasis on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary;
  - good use of mathematical equipment to help pupils gain understanding;
  - encouragement to feel secure, work hard to achieve success and do their best;
  - well briefed learning assistants leading groups effectively on specific tasks;
  - questioning used well to check pupils' understanding and advance their thinking;
  - challenging questioning and mental tasks used as a valuable revision strategy in preparation for national tests.
63. Adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis for planning, together with the use of a commercial scheme, has made a significant contribution to teachers' skills and confidence. However, the clear planning identified in all lessons is not always fully delivered. Where teaching is satisfactory, some opportunities are missed to follow the planning through. Less mature pupils are not fully catered for and soon lose concentration. Occasionally, pupils with special educational needs do not understand what is expected of them. Where teaching is satisfactory, the quality of the drawing together of the lesson objectives at the end of the session is not fully extended, because teachers do not ask pupils, for example, to explain how they calculated their answers.
64. The co-ordinator has yet to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, this is planned for in the immediate future.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. The involvement of mathematics in other subjects is underdeveloped. Opportunities to link data handling with ICT and science, or use mathematics in history and geography investigations, have not been systematically identified.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to work and enjoy lessons;
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and setting targets have improved;
- In Years 3 to 6, there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations and in the quality of learning;
- ICT is not used sufficiently throughout the school to support learning in science.

### Commentary

66. At the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils reach the standard expected for their age. Average standards have been maintained overall since the previous inspection.
67. In the most recent national tests, fewer than expected in Year 6 attained the higher Level 5. Over time, girls' performance has been slightly better than that of boys. In the current year, however, with a stronger emphasis on practical work, it is likely that girls' and boys' achievement will be similar. In 2004, the overall performance was below that of pupils at the end of Year 2 but in line with that for schools in similar circumstances.
68. At the end of Year 2, previous standards were very low compared with the national picture. No pupils were assessed at a higher than average level. Stronger teaching in that year group suggests that a bigger proportion of pupils is likely to reach the expected standard, bringing about a slight improvement.
69. Pupils make steady progress throughout the school and achieve satisfactorily. At the end of Year 2, for example, pupils gain sound knowledge about living and non-living things. They know what their bodies need in order to stay healthy. Pupils in Year 6 understand how their body works, know the major organs such as heart and lungs and how they function. Practical work features strongly in lessons. This provides interest and motivation for pupils and contributes to their good attitude to learning. Pupils in Year 2 apply literacy skills effectively when recording by writing step-by-step instructions about how to test which materials stretch most. Recording skills are less well developed in some classes where there is an over reliance on the use of worksheets, so that pupils have too little opportunity to plan their own methods. Throughout the school, ICT does not feature strongly enough in science planning and there is too little software available currently to support learning effectively and help pupils to achieve more
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers generally manage pupils well. They establish good relationships so pupils generally behave well and work hard. Lessons are made interesting by the use of practical work and first hand observation. One class spent some lesson time searching the school grounds to identify the different habitats occupied by various mini-beasts. Classroom assistants are an effective part of the teaching team and contribute well to pupils' learning by sharing the input for the lesson and monitoring pupils' progress. There are some inconsistencies evident in the quality of teachers' marking and the expectations that pupils will present their work well. The best marking challenges pupils' thinking about what they have done and provides guidance about how to improve. In some books, however, marking is superficial and it is not made clear to pupils whether or not the objective is achieved. Work is left incomplete and presentation is indifferent because pupils are not challenged to improve.

71. New systems for assessment provide a basis for setting end of year targets for pupils, but ongoing assessments do not provide clear evidence as to whether or not those targets are likely to be met. This makes it difficult to plan work which specifically meet pupils' different needs.
72. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum are beginning to take shape under the new leadership of the school. However, these are recent and the impact has not yet been evaluated. Resources for science have seen some improvement but they are still lacking a good range of equipment for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry and recording skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- New subject leadership is positive and has increased the capacity for improvement;
- Standards are below expectations throughout the school;
- ICT is not used sufficiently across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

73. There has been too little improvement of provision in ICT since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below average. However, since the appointment of the current subject leader there have been some good improvements. ICT hardware has been significantly enhanced. Computers have been repaired or updated to allow Internet access. All are networked, so that pupils can use them more flexibly. The co-ordinator has enlisted the help of the local authority adviser to help with a subject audit and provide the basis for an appropriate and workable action plan. This has resulted in a productive secondary school link, whereby Year 6 pupils are taught weekly by an ICT teacher from Failsworth College. The next stage of the action plan is to assess the level of teachers' competencies and to provide necessary staff training.
74. Although pupils are beginning to make some progress because they have more regular access to computers than previously, they have not kept up with the expected levels of skills over time. Pupils in Year 6 show acceptable levels of competence in word processing, but their knowledge and appreciation of control, modelling and of multimedia use is not sufficiently developed. A significant proportion of pupils has access to computers at home but the school is not yet able to build on what those pupils can already do.
75. Teaching over time has been unsatisfactory so pupils have not achieved as well as they should. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were taught well by the visiting teacher. In the lesson, pupils learned how to create slide/multimedia presentations, which for them represented good achievement and progress. The lesson had pace and purpose and pupils benefited from the teacher's experience.

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

76. Pupils have not learned to apply skills across a range of subjects because of a lack of resources in the past and an insecure curriculum for ICT. There is some evidence of pupils' word processing in literacy but this tends to be work which is copied into the computer, rather than drafted and edited on screen. Overall, the use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

## HUMANITIES

77. Work in **geography** and **history** was sampled so there is no overall judgement of provision in these subjects. On the evidence of pupils' work seen, standards and achievement are satisfactory in both subjects. National subject guidance is used to ensure pupils follow an appropriate curriculum. There are good displays of work in geography, which was the school's focus during the inspection. A colourful map of the 'Isle of Struay' helped pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, visualise and understand what life might be like on an island. In the junior classes, work on coastal erosion, rivers and the local area is also well represented. Photographs record a rewarding day for Year 6 pupils at 'Daisy Nook' where they saw different features along the course of a river. Pupils recall the history topics they have learned, as well as the visits to places of interest which help bring the subject to life.
78. In history lessons, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were encouraged to empathise with the experiences of people who lived during World War II. An air raid shelter, with siren recordings, popular songs of the day and staff in World War II costume, helped to create a 'feeling' for those times, and added some meaning to pupils' learning.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils at Year 6 have a sound understanding of the different chosen religions they study;
- Visitors to the school, different initiatives in the school and assemblies contribute well to the subject;
- Leadership and management of the subject are new and not yet fully underway; the policy is in need of renewal;
- Assessment of the subject is not in place.

## Commentary

79. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged 11. Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The school has maintained the standards in religious education found at the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and the quality of teaching for pupils in Key Stage 1.
80. The curriculum effectively ensures that pupils discuss and reflect upon what they have learned. For example, during their work on the importance of the Bible to Christians, pupils in Years 3 and 4 interviewed a visitor who was the leader of the local Salvation Army group. The discussion, and the thought beforehand that the pupils had put into their prepared questions from a previous lesson, helped them understand more fully the importance of the Bible as a sacred book and its uses. The knowledge and understanding of major world faiths is taught soundly because teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Older pupils in Year 6 talk confidently about what they have learned about Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They say that they find it interesting to find out about how people of faiths different from their own practise their beliefs and live their lives. They show empathy with pupils at a school in Ghana that they know about through a video link. They understand the difficulties the children in Ghana face on a daily basis and have helped raise money for them and other charities.



81. The Christian religion is taught securely. The pupils benefit from close links with local churches, which extends their learning about key people in the Old and New Testaments, festivals, artefacts and symbols used within Christian places of worship. Strong links are made with the school's assemblies to extend children's own beliefs and spiritual development through, for example, providing good opportunities to reflect on the need to work together to cope with difficulties.
82. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and has not yet really come to grips with the role due to a period of illness. The curriculum is planned on the guidelines of the new locally agreed syllabus and teachers also use elements from the nationally recommended guidelines. The school is working towards specific school designed units. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning each term to ensure appropriate coverage of the subject. Pupils' written work in some junior classes is often poorly presented. As yet, there is no assessment in place to ensure what pupils know and understand.

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

83. No lessons were seen in **art and design** or **design and technology**. Very little work was available in either subject so no judgements are made about the quality of provision. In both subjects, the school follows government guidance for a scheme of work, although this is not personalised for the school. Subjects are blocked into different terms and half terms. The curriculum in art is restricted, with limited opportunities for three-dimensional work, collage and printing. Pupils in Year 6 produce careful, detailed paintings of the surrounding landscape based on the work of Lowry. A 'Caribbean Week' included a wider range of art experiences, such as mask making and printing. However, too often painting is used to illustrate work in other subjects at the expense of teaching art skills.
84. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, from viewing the planning and from discussions with teachers, it is evident that all strands of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are taught regularly. The standards of swimming remain very high as they were at the previous inspection. Very good use is made of the facilities of the local secondary school and secondary teachers deliver a programme of lessons for older pupils that include dance and netball. Local coaches give specialist training in physical education skills. The older pupils benefit from residential visits to outdoor centres, where they are introduced to such activities as climbing, canoeing and team building exercises.
85. The school contributes well to the neighbourhood physical education federation. This enables many competitive games and sports activities to be organised and for teachers to gain new subject skills. There are very good links with the local secondary school. Here, secondary pupils preparing for a leadership award work with the primary aged children in the school. Physical education is led and managed enthusiastically by the co-ordinator, who ensures that a full range of after school clubs and competitions take place regularly. The overall provision in physical education has improved since the previous inspection.
86. One lesson was seen in **music** so no overall judgement is made on provision. Parents, staff, governors and pupils spoke highly of the concerts that take place at festivals such as Christmas and harvest. Pupils in the junior classes sing tunefully and enthusiastically in assembly and music is used well for listening as pupils enter and leave the hall. Confident teaching was a good feature of the lesson enjoyed by pupils in Years 1 and 2. The pupils explored pitch successfully and, by the end of the session, were able to identify accurately the pitch of notes in a short melody, record it on a simple graphic score and position the pitch of notes in the air with their hands.

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

### **Commentary**

87. Appropriate emphasis is placed in the provision of personal and social education, including drugs awareness and what is involved in becoming a good citizen. 'Circle Time' sessions are used to reinforce positive messages. The recently established school council is being used effectively to develop the concept of citizenship and how consultation and involvement brings with it responsibilities. Topics such as drugs awareness, healthy living and the promotion of positive behaviour are taught as discreet lessons. The pupils say that they value the helpful sex education lessons given and that their behaviour is good because the rules are understood; however, some policies are due for review to ensure that they reflect current trends. These are not yet linked coherently to the curriculum planning process. In 'Circle Time' pupils have good opportunities to express their feelings and emotions. Teachers encourage shy or vulnerable children to develop their confidence and to feel valued.
  
88. Other opportunities to undertake responsibilities, such as playground buddies, are undertaken with pride. Community involvement includes good links with the local sports college; these provide very good sporting activities and specialist teaching, for example in ICT lessons.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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