

INSPECTION REPORT

SPOTLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105776

Headteacher: Ms Carol McLachlan

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd June 2005

Inspection number: 267711

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 377

School address: Edmund Street
Rochdale
Postcode: OL12 6QG

Telephone number: (01706) 648 198
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr Peter Williams
governors:

Date of previous 15th March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Spotland Primary School is a large primary school with 377 pupils and another 44 children who attend the Nursery part-time. The school is situated about one mile west of Rochdale town centre in an area of older privately owned and rented houses. Many families do not stay long in the area and a lot of pupils are only in school for a short time before moving elsewhere. Nearly ten per cent of the pupils are from asylum-seeking families. Many pupils make long visits to other countries, which interrupts their learning.

Many of the pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school works in partnership with several other groups in its support for these pupils.

There is an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or social and emotional needs. Six pupils have statements of special educational need.

The school is enriched by the wide variety of ethnic minority groups in school, most of whom are from African and Asian countries. A clear majority are from families who come from Pakistan. About ten per cent of the pupils are from White British families.

The school is part of the *Excellence in Cities* project and the local *Education Action Zone*. It was awarded the *Artsmark*, *Basic Skills Quality Mark* and *Healthy Schools* status in 2005. It also has *Investor in People* status and the *Schools Achievement Award*, both earned in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design
13395	Mrs Joanna Illingworth	Lay inspector	
20326	Mr Peter Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs
30144	Mr Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Science Geography History
19765	Mrs Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	Music The Foundation Stage
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The pupils at Spotland Primary School are its pride and joy. They are a very mixed group but they all love being in school and they work very hard. This means that they learn well and make good progress. Lessons are taught well, and there are many other very good quality activities provided for the pupils to help them succeed. All the staff look after their pupils very carefully. The school provides a **good** education. It has very many more strengths than things to improve because it is very well led and managed. The headteacher has high expectations of her staff and pupils and she knows exactly how the school should develop and improve. Spotland Primary School gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well. They build knowledge and skills at a good pace.
- When they start school, most children have difficulty in speaking and understanding English, but they settle quickly and are soon enjoying their work.
- Although standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, the pupils have worked well to reach this level.
- Too many pupils miss school because they are on holiday in term time. When they return to school they have fallen behind the other pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in all parts of the school.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They behave very well and are very keen to learn.
- Relationships are excellent and there is very good racial harmony in school.
- The teaching of reading is not of the same quality in all parts of the school.
- Not all pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels in their national tests get to that level.

When the school was last inspected in 1999 it was awaiting redevelopment and not much money was spent on it. Following this period of uncertainty, the headteacher quickly formed a carefully thought-out plan to brighten and tidy-up the buildings and to improve the quality of the school's work. This has worked well and the school has made **good** improvement since 1999. There has been good improvement to achievement since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

This table shows how well the pupils in Year 6 did in their national tests between 2002 and 2004.

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

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.

In 2004, the Year 6 pupils did not reach the standards found nationally, especially in English and science. However, they did well in mathematics and science when their results are compared to pupils in schools where the Year 2 results were similar in 2000.

Inspectors judge that this year (2005), standards are well below average (E) in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, achievement is **good**. The pupils in both these years have made good progress during their time in school. Achievement in the other years in school is also good. The teaching of reading is not as good in some parts of the school as it is in others and not all pupils develop their reading skills quickly enough.

Some pupils do not achieve as much as they could. The pupils who have long holidays in school time miss a lot of work and they fall behind in their studies. The rate of attendance at the school is well below the national average. Some pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels of work do not do so.

Pupils show that they really like being in school by behaving very well, working very hard and being very polite to staff and visitors to school. Relationships are excellent and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** education for the pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** in all parts of the school. There are some very good features in teaching. The teaching assistants do a very good job of helping their pupils learn well. Teachers make sure that pupils enjoy their work and that they concentrate well. All staff are firm in their approach to behaviour, and the pupils get on with their work without fuss or silliness. Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with the same fairness and friendliness. They work to make sure that nothing gets in the way of good learning for every pupil. All the adults in school look after their pupils very well and they prepare them thoroughly for life and work after school. Pupils from all backgrounds mix well and work together in very good friendship. The school is working successfully to improve the assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge, although there are still things to do to meet this aim. The school has strong links with the local community that are beneficial for pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed **very well**. The governors are good leaders and they know the school's strengths and few weaknesses well. The headteacher gives quiet and calm leadership and is very successful in bringing very well planned improvement to the school's work. The other staff work together well as a team and they place the well-being of the pupils first.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers are pleased with the school and its work. They are growing in confidence to work with the school to make sure that their children do well. The pupils think their school is the very best. They love coming to school and they think that their teachers and other staff are very good friends.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to work with parents to reduce the number of holidays in school time so that all pupils make good progress at all times.
- Make sure that there is an equally good programme to teach reading to pupils in all years in school.
- Use the results of assessment to help all pupils, especially those who are capable of reaching higher levels, reach their targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Whilst standards are **well below average**, achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good. Knowledge and skills are built at a good pace.
- Starting levels of knowledge and skills are low, especially in speaking and understanding English, but children settle quickly and soon begin to learn new things.
- Pupils work well to attain well below average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- Many pupils have holidays in term time. When they come back to school they have fallen behind the other pupils.
- There are inconsistent approaches to the teaching of reading, which affect pupils' achievement in this key skill.
- Not enough pupils achieve the higher and harder levels in their work.

Commentary

1. The pattern of standards and achievement at Spotland Primary School is complicated by a number of critical factors. Not least of these is the erratic attendance pattern of a significant group of pupils. These pupils do not achieve as well as the other pupils because they are taken abroad for long holidays during term time and they then miss much important work. When they come back to school, the other pupils have left them behind. The school has worked hard to remind parents not to take their children out of school unless it is vital that they do so. Some parents have listened to the message and are working with the school to plan holidays when the school is closed. However, not all have done this, and the school faces a continued uphill task to convince some parents that absence from school reduces their children's chances of success.
2. The gaps in some pupils' education mean they do not reach the standards that they should. This affects the overall picture. In English, mathematics and science, standards at the end of this school year (2004-5) are well below average in Years 2 and 6. Standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education by the end of Year 6. This is, in fact, good improvement on children's generally low starting level of skills and knowledge in the Nursery.
3. About a third of pupils do not stay long in school. Many families come and go in the area. The school makes sure that these pupils make good progress whilst they are in school and it tracks their achievement well. However, its best efforts are cut short when pupils leave abruptly. Newcomers to school often have little experience of formal education, even amongst the older pupils. This means that they take considerable time to settle and adjust to the formalities of primary education in England. The school works effectively to integrate these pupils and to get them off to a good start, but the pupils' lack of confidence and feelings of awe-in-a-strange-world take some time to overcome. Their progress is, therefore slow at the start, although it accelerates as they take education in their stride.

4. For those pupils who are in school regularly, achievement is good overall, and sometimes very good, although there are places where it could be improved. This is especially the case in reading and amongst the pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels.
5. The school has developed a good programme of teaching the skills of good writing. Spellings, grammar and handwriting are all taught successfully across the school. However, the programme for teaching reading is not as consistent. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 especially are not heard read enough and the system of tracking achievement in reading has imperfections. The school has a planned programme of improvement for teaching reading. This is in need of extending to include the more rigorous tracking of progress.
6. In many lessons, the pupils who are capable of higher-level work are given identical tasks to the rest of the class. This does not stretch them enough. The school has firm and formal plans to improve the teaching of gifted and talented pupils. There is an additional need to focus the results of assessment on the more precise matching of work to pupils' attainment levels.
7. Standards in school move up and down each year. This is due to the patterns of attendance, families moving in and out of the area and variations in the proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Thus, last year (2004) pupils in Year 2 attained well below average standards overall in their national tests. This is summarised in the following table.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.0 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (14.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.4 (14.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Similarly, pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards overall in their national tests:

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.7 (24.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.9 (25.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.9 (26.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. The school is determined to give all pupils a good education, regardless of background, hardship or starting level. It embraces pupils of very different origins equally. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language make up the majority of the school. They are supported well and achieve well, and by the end of Year 6, most are confident in their use and understanding of basic English. Similarly, the pupils with learning difficulties and social and emotional needs make good progress in their work because of the successful support provided by their teachers and teaching assistants. School leaders know that improvements can be

made to make the inclusive approach even stronger, but the school has a very strong platform to build from in ensuring that pupils achieve well and reach best standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** as a result of the school's successful work to promote positive values and high standards of conduct. Its provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. In general, pupils' personal qualities enhance their attainment and progress. However, the above average rate of unauthorised attendance seriously impairs the achievement of some pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, are interested in their lessons and are keen to learn.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and at playtimes.
- Relationships are excellent and help to create an environment that promotes good learning and progress.
- Pupils' personal development is very good overall, thanks to the school's very good provision for moral, social and cultural education.
- Attendance is well below the national average and pupils who miss school for unauthorised reasons do not achieve as well as they should.

Commentary

9. Pupils of all ages like coming to school and are enthusiastic about learning. Their positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their good achievement. In lessons they listen attentively to their teachers, follow instructions, and work productively on the tasks that they are set. Most of them are very keen to answer to questions. At times they can hardly contain their eagerness to respond and to show members of staff what they know and can do. A minority of pupils is shy about taking part in discussions in lessons. There are also occasions when some members of the class are not fully involved in their work. This is most likely to occur when the teaching is sound but uninspiring. When lessons are well taught pupils are invariably highly motivated and are keen to do their best. This was the case in a Reception class lesson that was observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching was outstanding and produced an excellent response from the children, who were fully engaged throughout.
10. Behaviour is very good overall, and no pupils have been excluded from school in the past year. In class, pupils settle quickly and without fuss, and work quietly. When they are in the playground they are polite, orderly and self-disciplined. The excellent quality of pupils' relations with one another, and with members of staff, is one of the strengths of the school. Relationships are very securely based on trust and mutual respect. Pupils work well together in class, and socialise in a very friendly and harmonious atmosphere at breaks and lunchtimes. Bullying and aggression are extremely uncommon, and there is no evidence of racism, thanks to the ethos of the school and its very effective procedures to promote good relationships and high standards of conduct.
11. Pupils become increasingly mature and responsible as a result of the very effective way in which the school promotes their personal development. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility and to use their initiative, for example, by raising money for charities and they respond very readily to the opportunity to do so. The essential

social skills of sharing and co-operation are effectively fostered through group work in lessons. Pupils receive very good opportunities to go on residential trips and educational visits, and these are very effective in widening their horizons and promoting their social development. They also make a major contribution to pupils' cultural education. Religious education and subjects such as history, art and design and music help pupils acquire a good understanding of local culture, different faiths and the multicultural nature of modern Britain. Extra activities and special projects, such as the *Take One Picture Creativity Project* give pupils good opportunities to develop and celebrate their own creativity.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.8
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.

12. The school devotes a lot of effort to improving attendance and has put in place good procedures to tackle absenteeism. Nevertheless, its attendance rate remains well below the national average, and considerable numbers of pupils are often absent. This has a significant effect on their attainment and progress. Some parents do not support the school's work to ensure that pupils always attend school when they are fit and well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** in all parts of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some very good features of teaching and learning.
- When they start school, most children have difficulty in speaking and understanding English, but they settle quickly and are soon enjoying their work.
- The teaching of reading is not of the same quality in all parts of the school.
- Not all pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels in their national tests get that far.
- The school is working successfully to improve the assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge, although there are still things to do to meet this aim.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 65 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	9 (14%)	42 (64%)	13 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good and does not vary very much from class to class or year to year. The study of pupils' past work also showed firm evidence of

effective teaching and learning. There are some aspects of teaching that stand out as very good and which have a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. There are areas for improvement in teaching, for example the teaching of reading, but overall, pupils learn well because lessons are calm and orderly sessions.

14. The teaching assistants do a very good job of helping their pupils learn well. The teaching assistants work alongside teachers in lessons and often work with small groups of pupils outside the classroom. Their work is well planned and the teaching assistants know what skills and knowledge to develop with the pupils. The school values its teaching assistants and there is a good programme of professional development for them that results in consistent good quality support for the pupils, whatever their individual needs.
15. Teachers make sure that pupils enjoy their work and that they concentrate well. The conditions for learning are good in virtually all lessons. Pupils know that when a lesson starts they have to listen and learn and then to work hard and sensibly. Pupils concentrate well and they work productively. This assists the progress they make, which is usually good.
16. Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with the same fairness and friendliness. The staff respect the pupils and they celebrate the differences between them. In return, the pupils respect the staff. The school works hard to ensure that pupils' individual needs are catered for successfully. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, for example, are taught well. There are some innovative strategies to help them develop good skills of English use. The system of *Talking Partners* is a good example of the school's approach to the development of English and the well-judged use of bilingual support values the pupils' origins, builds their self-esteem and gives them confidence to tackle difficult work.
17. The school recognises that improvements can be made to some aspects of teaching and learning. It has recently started to introduce a new programme for teaching reading. It is too early to judge the success of this, but it is evident that this is a timely change. The current programme for teaching reading is not as consistent or as successful as it could be. Older pupils are not heard to read regularly enough and the records that track progress are incomplete. The school has made good improvement to writing over recent years. Now is the time to focus on reading.
18. Whilst the school generally caters well for pupils of different backgrounds, the pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels of work do not always do so. The school is in the process of introducing a structured programme to ensure that pupils with special gifts and talents develop more advanced skills and knowledge. The partnership with a local secondary school to develop artistic flair and talent is a promising start to this work. There remains a need to ensure that the information provided by assessment is used to plan more difficult tasks for those with the potential to do particularly well in English, mathematics and science. At present, these pupils are sometimes given the same tasks to complete as the other pupils in the class. This is not demanding enough and so these higher attaining pupils do not all reach their best levels of work.
19. There is a satisfactory system of assessment overall. In some respects, assessment procedures are good. These include good assessment in English and mathematics and the very careful analysis of results to show how individual pupils have moved on in their learning. There is some powerful data available in school to help it target the

learning of specific groups or individuals. The next step is to introduce a consistent approach to this task.

The curriculum

Provision in the curriculum is **good** with some very good features. The quality of the accommodation and resources is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good breadth and balance in the curriculum overall.
- There are very good enrichment opportunities through the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for pupils with additional language needs is very good.
- Accommodation has been well re-furnished and, together with resources, is a good support in developing the curriculum effectively.

Commentary

20. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It prepares children very well for work in later classes. The Foundation Stage classes are continually developing their working practices into a one-unit response to meeting children's needs. Already, there is a progressive nature to the children's learning. However, this is being developed from a low basis with many children having little or no English when they start in the Nursery class. The focus on developing language and literacy skills at this early stage is vitally important. The children leave this stage of learning well prepared, but still a long way from achieving to the level of most children of the same age.
21. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has been improved since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met and teaching time is used effectively and efficiently. Teachers and support staff work well together in a team approach to developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding in a good variety of areas. This impacts positively on the pupils' learning. This is very important in a school where pupils move in at different year groups and many take extended holidays abroad. These pupils need to be brought back into learning and are enabled to do so because the curriculum is broad enough to meet needs appropriately.
22. The school uses the literacy and numeracy strategies confidently to support the development of the pupils' learning. The way in which opportunities are created for speaking and listening skills to be developed, in many subjects, tackles a need effectively. The pupils are given many chances to make verbal contributions, which are not always taken up immediately. However, teachers work patiently and encouragingly to get pupils to talk and listen with confidence. The need to be active listeners is stressed and responded to positively because the very good relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils wisely. Pupils are beginning to transfer skills into their writing. However, not enough consistent attention is being given to developing reading skills systematically throughout the school.
23. The school is particularly strong in ensuring that all pupils are given equal access to learning. As many of the pupils have additional language learning needs the intervention programmes are carefully considered and imaginatively presented to pupils. The school is rightly proud of the attention that it gives to the equal opportunities given to pupils. Provision for pupils with special needs is good. Some sharper targeting is not always consistently shown in Individual Education Plans.

However, pupils with special needs are well supported by teachers and support staff. There is also a lack of consistency in developing the skills in reading, which does not beneficially support the pupils. However, the school is aware of this and is in the experimental stages of considering how this can be improved.

24. The school extends and enriches the learning opportunities for pupils very effectively. There is a very good programme of after-school activities in sports and the arts. All staff make some contribution to these activities as a confirmation of their strong commitment to their pupils. A very caring staff pay thoughtful attention to developing the personal, social and health education of their pupils. Staff from outside also make significant contributions to the sports programme particularly. There is an extensive programme of visits made that enhance the pupils' curriculum understanding. There are also many visitors who come into the school to further support the pupils' learning, such as visiting artists and authors.
25. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils from one stage of education to the next. Internally, the pupils move very smoothly from one year group to another as the teachers and support staff work so well as a team. There are very good relationships with secondary schools that ensure that pupils move on with confidence. The high schools work closely through teachers taking classes at Spotland and carefully structuring induction days because they have already gathered knowledge of the pupils.
26. Overall accommodation and resources are good. The accommodation has been thoroughly re-furnished and has made a positive impact on the learning environment created in the school. Every little bit of space is used thoughtfully so that the intervention programmes are interwoven successfully with work that is taking place in well-organised classrooms. A computer suite has already been well established and used well. The interactive whiteboards often feature well in the way that learning is developed in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support is **good** overall. The school gives pupils **very good** personal support and guidance. Arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils greatly enhance the quality of support and guidance.
- Pupils' personal progress is well monitored and supported.
- The school values all its pupils and celebrates their achievements.
- There are very good arrangements for inducting children into the school.
- Pupils receive good preparation for the next stage of education and for life outside school.

Commentary

27. The school has created a caring environment in which each pupil is valued and well looked after. Pupils recognise and appreciate this. They feel safe and secure and are very satisfied with the care that they receive, thanks to their excellent relationships with adults in the school and with one another. Peer support is a strength of the school's arrangements. There are

good formal programmes such as *Massage in Schools* and *Playground Pals* that foster good relationships and encourage children to look after each other. Pupils respect and trust members of staff and have great confidence in their ability to deal with problems. They are therefore willing to talk to teachers about their worries and concerns. The system of rewards contributes positively to pupils' well-being. Teachers use praise and merit stickers very effectively to celebrate good achievement, raise self-esteem, and promote pupils' enjoyment in learning.

28. The school makes good arrangements to promote the welfare and progress of pupils from the time that they join the Nursery to the day when they leave Year 6. There are very good arrangements for the induction of the new intake into the Nursery unit. Home visits by staff and taster sessions are very effective in helping children to settle in. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment receive good personal and academic support. Where necessary, they are withdrawn from lessons to work in small groups on improving their skills, such as their use of spoken English. These sessions cover a wide range of needs and are very effective in promoting inclusion. The school's comprehensive curriculum of personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a valuable contribution to advice and guidance. It helps pupils to develop good relationships with others and to understand their feelings, and gives them good preparation for life outside school.
29. The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. Child protection procedures are effective. Provision for health and safety is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The school gives pupils very good personal support and guidance and has developed satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting their academic progress. Arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are good.
30. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good. In the case of personal development, much of the tracking is done informally but very effectively. Teachers know pupils very well, quickly identify any members of their class who seem unhappy or who are failing to thrive, and give them appropriate help. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. They receive sound guidance on their work and have an adequate understanding of their own learning. However, target-setting is not always as effective as it should be. Some of the individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics are very general and do not give pupils specific and helpful advice on how to raise their attainment. Provision for self-assessment is limited and has been identified by the school as an area for development.
31. The school has good arrangements for seeking pupils' views and, wherever practical, acting upon them. For example, class rules have been determined by negotiation with members of the class. The school council meets regularly and acts as a sounding board for pupils' views on whole school issues. The council has a real influence on the running of the school. It has recently helped to secure improvements to the playground and to equipment for use at playtimes.
32. There are good procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. The issues arising from the condition of the school's accommodation, which were noted in the previous inspection report, have been addressed. Arrangements for risk assessment, first-aid and child protection are thorough and effective. A breakfast club provides good care before the start of the school day. The school's programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes to pupils' health and safety by giving them good advice on how best to look after themselves.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has developed **very strong** links with the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold positive views about the school and their partnership with it.
- The school values parents' views and works hard to involve them in their children's learning.
- The school's very good links the community enrich the its curriculum and enhance pupils' learning.
- Spotland Primary School has a very effective partnership with other schools and colleges.
- Some parents condone their children's absence from school, and this has an adverse effect on the attainment and progress of these pupils.

Commentary

33. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the school and believe that they have very effective partnership with it. They value the ease with which they can approach and talk to members of staff, and say that they have ample opportunities to meet their children's teachers. Inspectors agree with parents' views. In their judgement, there are good links between home and school, and these have a positive effect on pupils' learning.
34. The school makes extensive arrangements to secure parents' active support for their children's learning. Members of staff make every effort to welcome them and to help them to feel at ease. Teachers go out into the playground to meet and talk to parents, creating a strong and effective line of communication between home and school. There is very good provision for family learning through the school's collaboration with the Partnership in Education Service. Parents are offered the opportunity to attend courses and take part in activities where they can learn alongside their children. The take-up is very good, although in effect confined to pupils' mothers. The courses are very successful in helping parents to acquire the skills and knowledge that they need to help children with their work. Some parents have gone on to become learning mentors and volunteer librarians.
35. Arrangements for seeking out parents' views are very good. The school carries out annual surveys of their opinions and takes action to address any issues. The quality of information for and feedback to parents is good overall. It is very good in respect of teaching methods, topics of study and school routines. For example, the school arranges briefing sessions on curricular matters and every term sends home a written summary of the curriculum. There are good arrangements for formal discussion between parents and teachers on pupils' progress. The quality of written reports is satisfactory overall. They provide good accounts of what pupils have learned and can do, but are less informative on weaknesses and what pupils need to do to raise their attainment.
36. Parents' response to the school's effort to involve them in pupils' learning is generally good. They come to consultation evenings, open days and curriculum meetings, and they give good support to fundraising and social events. Parents of pupils with special educational needs invariably attend the meetings to review their children's individual education plans. The majority of families are supportive about attendance and ensure that pupils are not away from school without good reason. However, some of them do

not appreciate the importance of good attendance and punctuality. They are willing to condone absence and in effect encourage their children to miss school, to the detriment of their attainment and progress. Another area of weakness is effective support for pupils' learning at home. Many pupils come from home backgrounds where the support that can be given is limited, even though the parents are very keen for them to do well.

37. There are very strong links with other schools through Excellence in the Cities and the local Education Action Zone. The school's participation in the latter has significantly enhanced its provision for its gifted and talented pupils. Spotland also has a special partnership with Parkfield and Holmes Chapel Primary Schools. All pupils gain from the opportunity to meet each other and learn about their very different social and cultural backgrounds. The school works very closely with Falinge Park, the neighbouring High School. There are strong curricular links in science, French and dance, and there is very good co-operation over the transfer of Year 6 pupils to secondary education.
38. Links with the community are very good. The school makes very good use of the resources of the local area to enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' experience. It organises a wide variety of educational visits, such as the trip to Chester Zoo, and makes very good use of visiting speakers from the local community. Lessons in personal, social and health education have benefited from the input of fire officers, police officers and health professionals. The school is very supportive of the local and wider community. It acts as host to the Partnership in Education Service, the organisation that runs the family learning courses, and Spotland's pupils raise large sums of money for good causes, such as the Tsunami appeal.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership by other staff and governors is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good; she gives purposeful, quiet and calm leadership that is totally focused on school improvement.
- The governing body is very well led and this in turn makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- All staff, including the hard-working deputy headteacher, are very good role models for pupils.
- Target setting and tracking systems are not fully focused on helping pupils to reach their targets, especially those who are capable of reaching higher levels.
- Financial control and management is very good.

Commentary

39. Spotland Primary School is a happy place of work in which the majority of pupils learn well and make good progress. The school does everything it can to close the gaps in learning of the group of pupils who have holidays in term time or who do not stay long in school. This is in no small measure due to the very effective leadership and management steer given to the school by the headteacher. She has been responsible for the building of a very united team who are very good role models for each other and for all pupils. The majority of parents are very happy about how the school is run

and, not surprisingly, the school has a very high reputation locally. The headteacher is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, a hard-working Foundation Stage leader who has successfully welded together an accomplished team of skilled staff who between them add measurable value to a pupil's education when they first start school. Very high aspirations are the trademark of the headteacher and this has been communicated very well to all staff, including the large number of effective teaching assistants. The majority of subject leaders work hard and have a good collective impact on pupils' overall good achievement, especially in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Collectively, pupils who attend school regularly now achieve more than they did six years ago. This improvement since the previous inspection is good overall and in turn reflects the good school effectiveness.

40. The school's commitment to meeting the needs of all its pupils is very good. The special needs co-ordinator works hard to ensure the overall provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. She is a knowledgeable leader who manages provision in a well-organised manner. Reviews of individual pupil's needs are carried out on a regular basis so that changes can be acted upon and implemented. The school governor responsible for monitoring provision is also the chair of governors. He is knowledgeable and confidently holds the school to account through visits and discussions. The school is aware of the need to implement its own *Access Policy* in line with recent government guidelines regarding special educational needs provision in school. At present, facilities to cater for disabled pupils and adults are extremely limited in terms of disabled toilet facilities, which is at present unsatisfactory.
41. School governors work effectively for the good of the school. The chair leads the governing body very well and has been very influential in helping to guide the school through its planned work to brighten up the interior and exterior features. The recent erection of security fencing around the perimeter of the school site has also been noticeably successful in terms of reducing vandalism. Governors ensure that the principles of Best Value are followed rigorously to all carefully budgeted projects. Governors clearly share the headteacher's vision for the future and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties well. The different skills of the governors are used very effectively, for example, the very positive links that exist between the school and community.
42. The school is very realistic in its evaluation of its own performance. The use of available data is a developing strength. However, the school reflects on the need to refine and fine tune present systems relating to pupils' targets to ensure that pupils capable of reaching higher levels reach their targets. Performance management and staff development are closely linked to the needs of the school and to individual needs. For example, substantial well-focused staff training events have underpinned recent improvement in the provision of ICT. The school's commitment and contribution to the training of future teachers is also very good.
43. Financial control is very good, clearly reflected in the very positive recent financial audit by the local authority. All office staff undertake their duties in relation to everyday management in a cheerful, friendly and effective manner. The school budget is costed and managed very well and funds are carefully matched to priorities. The carry forward appears relatively high, but this has been carefully planned to maintain present staffing levels and to improve Foundation Stage facilities. The good level of education offered by the school, the good achievement by the majority of its pupils and its good improvement since the last inspection indicate that the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,304,481
Total expenditure	1,355, 038
Expenditure per pupil	3,226

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	114,527
Balance carried forward to the next year	88,649

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff cherish all children.
- Teaching is good and as a result children achieve well.
- They settle in quickly and work from an interesting curriculum.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.

Commentary

44. When children join the Nursery, most have difficulty in speaking and understanding English, with very low skills because it is an additional language to their mother tongue. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is at least good and, at times, very good and excellent. As a result, most children achieve well although their skills remain low by the time they leave Reception. However, many children miss school because they are on holiday in term time, which means they miss a lot of important learning experiences. Assessment information is used well to plan activities that are closely matched to children's learning. There is good support for children who have special needs and the children who are early users of English. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The leader is highly experienced and has led the team successfully in developing a fully integrated curriculum to start in September.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning are focused on promoting children's confidence, independence and social skills.
- The support staff make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- All staff take very good care of the children, and relationships are excellent.

Commentary

45. Children enter Nursery with a wide range of skills. Many lack the confidence to mix and play together and have immature social skills. Teaching is very good in Nursery and Reception classes. Consequently, children make very good progress and achieve very well in developing their social skills. By the end of their time in Reception, most are just below average in their social skills with a minority achieving all their early learning goals. Admission arrangements are effective, with very good relationships between staff, children and parents. All the staff are very caring and use every opportunity to praise children's independence and encourage those who have special needs. The teachers are very well assisted by the team of enthusiastic and knowledgeable support assistants. Nursery staff establish secure routines so that all children feel safe. This helps them settle easily. Reception staff provide further opportunities for children to become more independent through taking part in games

and being responsible for equipment used. Children respond very well to the daily soother sessions where they work in pairs. Staff provide a stimulating curriculum. However there are missed opportunities for the two separate Reception classes to mix. There are very good arrangements for children to move from Nursery into Reception and then into Year 1. All staff have high expectations of behaviour. Children respond very well to this and as a result their behaviour and attitudes are very good. Children enjoy school and show real interest in what they are doing. They are eager to start the day and learn!

Communication, Language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very well taught and achieve well because all staff take every opportunity to develop language skills.
- Many children miss a lot of important language experiences because they are on holiday in term time.
- Children with special learning needs and those whose first language is not English are well catered for and are fully included in all activities.
- Many children have difficulty expressing their ideas and recording work.

Commentary

46. When children enter Nursery most have difficulty speaking and understanding English because it is not their first language. Teaching is very good. However, many children in Nursery and Reception classes make less progress than they could because they are on holiday in term time, which means they miss a lot of important language experiences. By the end of Reception, although most make good progress and many make very good progress, they are not yet able to communicate fluently and confidently in English and most do not reach their early learning goals. However, staff work hard to develop individual confidence in speaking. An impressive feature is the regular use by staff of children's home language in Nursery and Reception classes. For example in a very well taught lesson in Nursery, both the teacher and support assistant used the children's home language to help them join in with a shared book. Reception staff provide many opportunities for children to explain their learning in very small groups. Particularly effective is a talking programme for both Reception classes, where practical games are played to develop specific vocabulary. For example, playing with and talking about farm animals in advance of a farm trip. This programme gives very good opportunities for less confident children to talk in sentences rather than one-word answers and more fluent communicators to extend their vocabulary. All support staff make a very good and at times excellent contribution towards helping extend communication skills in very small groups and in the imaginative play areas.
47. Nursery and Reception currently plan separately but meet regularly to ensure that the children's skills are build upon effectively. Nursery staff lay the foundations for establishing positive attitudes to reading, through sharing attractive big books, familiar rhymes and traditional stories. In Reception classes, children's early reading and writing skills are extended through regular letter and word games. The planned use of interesting weekly stories such as *The Enormous Watermelon*, and *The Hungry Caterpillar* ensure skills are taught in a lively and enjoyable way. Consequently there are positive attitudes to reading. However, many children need more encouragement to look at books independently during choice times. Good opportunities are provided

to write for a range of purposes. Whilst every effort is taken to develop writing skills, many children have difficulty forming their letters fluently or recording their work independently.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's numeracy skills through a practical, interesting curriculum.
- Many parents make a very good contribution at the weekly drop-in Reception sessions.

Commentary

48. Children enter Nursery with a variety of mathematical skills, with most having limited experience in using mathematical language. Teaching is good overall, and at times very good, and children achieve well because there is a focus on first-hand practical activities using attractive resources. The contribution by the support assistants is consistently very good in motivating the children to learn. However, by the time they leave Reception, most children still have difficulty explaining their learning or using mathematical language. As a result, most do not attain their early learning goals. In the Nursery, children learn to count and join in with familiar number rhymes. Every opportunity is taken to extend children's mathematical skills. A range of sand, water and larger mathematical equipment are in constant use so that children can use their mathematical language. Reception staff build on these practical experiences well. Particularly impressive are the weekly drop-in sessions where parents join both classes. Children are clearly proud and happy to see members of their family helping them with their number activities. In a well taught lesson, children worked enthusiastically with parents and staff on a range of practical activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of good teaching, which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.

Commentary

49. There is a good range of activities for children to develop their senses and widen their understanding and curiosity about the world. Very good use is made of social and snack times to help children learn about being healthy. In an excellent lesson seen, the higher attaining children were fully challenged as they sorted fruit seeds with the class teacher. Other groups were given excellent encouragement by the support assistant as they used their senses to learn about different fruits. In both Nursery and Reception, children develop their knowledge through a very good range of trips and visitors to school. There are good opportunities to learn about living things, for example growing plants. However, not all classes have investigation areas for children to explore equipment informally. This is a missed opportunity. Staff successfully build up children's pleasure and confidence in using computers by providing daily opportunities to develop their skills. Staff widen children's understanding of different cultures, by learning about special times of the year such as Harvest, Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year and Christmas. Children achieve well in learning about the world

about them, but most will not achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave Reception.

Physical development

Because it was only sampled, no judgements about teaching and learning or standards and achievement are made in this area of learning.

Commentary

50. Planning shows that children have daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. The outside Nursery area is well equipped. The school has fully addressed the lack of an outside Reception area identified at the time of the previous inspection. Reception children have a secure sheltered outside area and have daily access to the infant playground, which has fixed climbing equipment. They also have regular sessions in the hall to help them develop their physical skills and learn to respond to music. Children develop their manipulative skills by handling dough, scissors and small toys. For some, their hand-eye co-ordination remains weak, which affects their ability to hold and use pencils.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Imaginative areas are used well to extend children's creativity and language skills.

Commentary

51. Children enter Nursery with a range of skills, with many having limited experiences of playing imaginatively. Teaching is good and by the end of Reception children achieve well in developing their artistic and musical skills. However, most have difficulty expressing their ideas and a few remain shy and lack confidence during imaginative play sessions. Therefore, most do not attain all the learning goals. There is regular access to a good range of materials, with many planned opportunities to paint, draw and make models. Each room has attractive imaginative play areas, which are currently a *jungle*, *garden centre* and *travel shop*. Care is taken to provide topics and resources to appeal to both boys and girls. Children enjoy playing in these areas but those who are less confident make better progress when joined by adults. There are regular planned opportunities for children to sing rhymes and explore musical instruments informally, which they do with real pleasure.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are well below average.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress as a result of good teaching throughout the school.
- There is a lack of consistency in developing aspects of reading skills.
- Pupils work hard and respond positively as a result of very good relationships.

Commentary

52. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6. This is the same picture as showed in the results of the 2004 national tests in English. There are a number of reasons for this. Amongst the most important are that many pupils move into and out of the school in different year groups. Many of the pupils do not go all the way through the school. Other pupils take holidays abroad in term time and this disrupts their learning considerably. Those pupils who stay all the way through the school without long absences are the core pupils who do well. Most of the pupils come into the school with little or no English. The school has to build from this low base as well. The school makes sustained efforts to give the best education possible to its pupils. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well when the starting point is taken into account. Most of the pupils have additional English language needs and the school promotes their learning effectively. Well-devised and structured interventions to support learning promotes good achievement. The high level of support from teachers and support staff is particularly evident in the support given to pupils with special needs. They progress as well as all pupils. The school continually reviews its provision to improve in aspects of English through the clear direction of the headteacher.
53. The standards achieved in speaking and listening are well below average. However, the school makes determined efforts to stretch the pupils into improving their skills. When they start in the Nursery class, many have little or no English at all. Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils are engaged in discussions in order to develop the attitudes to speaking and listening acutely. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are expected to be active listeners as well as speakers. Pupils invariably respond positively to their teachers and support staff. They enjoy being involved in practical activities, that interest them. As a result, because they are taking part in such carefully planned and resourced activities they make great efforts to achieve well. This response is firmly based in the very good relationships that are the cornerstone of the very effective encouragement for pupils that is provided by all staff. Perceptive interventions by adults develop pupils' reactions and extend their banks of words that are increasingly used with growing confidence. Innovative work such as the *Talking Partners* groups are giving pupils better opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
54. Standards in reading are well below average. There is a lack of consistency to the approaches to teaching and learning in reading throughout the school. Not enough attention is given to continuing the development of the skills in reading. Currently, different systems are in place for recording progress. The recording is not targeted to what skills have been learnt and how best the pupils can improve. The school is experimenting with systems of developing skills. It is aware of the need to make a firm decision on what it needs to do in order to improve the skills of pupils. Many pupils

come from home backgrounds where the support that can be given is limited. However, reading is given some profile in the school. Pupils throughout the school loan books from the well stocked library that is encouraging them to realise the importance of reading. When the higher attaining readers read with fluency and expression there is still a lack of understanding of some of the most difficult words.

55. Standards in writing are below average. Throughout the school, teachers plan imaginative tasks that develop writing from a small to an extended amount. Pupils are introduced to good writers and make good attempts at writing in similar styles. A love of poetry is being generated together with opportunities to write in different ways. At times, marking of work is helpful to pupils because it indicates clearly to them what needs to be done in order to improve. Although work is regularly marked sympathetically, it is not consistently telling pupils what they need to do in order to improve in all classes. Handwriting and spelling are being taught as discrete skills in a systematic way throughout the school. This ensures that work is being presented with good levels of care as pupils are transferring their learning into their independent writing.
56. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They are as committed as teachers to improving pupils' skills. They are often actively involved in opening discussions by teachers as well as making a high quality input into group work. They work in small intervention groups to develop skills carefully. As a result, they make a significant contribution to the progress being made by pupils. The pupils achieve well because they are given such dedicated support and help with their work.
57. The subject leader for English is dedicated in her work. The school has ensured that there are challenging overall targets for pupils to help them achieve as well as possible. However, there is more careful tracking of pupils' progress in writing than in reading. There is firm evidence of the school's good potential to help build for improvement in English and to raise standards further.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

58. The use of spoken language is being carefully nurtured throughout the school. Written work in subjects such as history and religious education is being encouraged profitably in junior classes. However, the school recognises the need to develop further the skills of reading and writing across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils' achievement is good. However, it could be better if attendance rates were improved and long holidays during term time reduced.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is a lack of consistency in the use of developmental marking of pupils' work.
- Good leadership provides positive support and direction for the subject.

Commentary

59. In the 2004 national tests, standards in Year 2 and 6 were well below the national average. However, when compared with schools of a similar social population, standards achieved reflected very favourably, being well above average. Inspection findings indicate a similar picture.

60. For those pupils who attend school regularly, achievement is good and sometimes very good from the very low level of skills and knowledge that pupils have when they join Year 1. There are places where it could be improved. The overall pattern of achievement is a complicated affair. Erratic attendance, many pupils joining and leaving the school at various times, extended holidays abroad and new arrivals with limited English language skills all have a negative impact on whole-school achievement. The gaps in some pupils' education mean they do not reach the standards they should. The group of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is well supported by the very skilful team of teaching assistants and most make good gains in building mathematical skills.
61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The focus of much of the work in mathematics is on numeracy. In most classes, pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics and behaviour is very good. They co-operate very well and show an eagerness to succeed. Relationships are excellent and most pupils are keen to demonstrate their mathematics skills. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 6. Key strengths of teaching include very positive insistence on very good standards of behaviour, effective teaching methods and good pace of work. A feature of less successful, but otherwise satisfactory, lessons is the overuse of commercial workbooks. This restricts levels of achievement for potentially higher attaining pupils. All too often they complete less demanding work before moving on to work that is more taxing. Marking could be used more clearly to show pupils how to improve their work and there could be more opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work in lessons.
62. The leadership and management of the subject leader is good. She is a good teaching role model and has a realistic picture of teaching and learning in the school. Overall provision in mathematics has been improved well since the previous inspection and standards are gradually rising. She has actively helped other teachers to improve and has been at the forefront of analysing data to inform the current subject's strengths and areas for development. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain the good achievement it adds to pupils' learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. The skills of basic numeracy are taught well across the school. There is evidence of these skills in science and design and technology, for example when weighing and measuring. In discussions with pupils they flag up mathematics as one of their favourite subjects and enjoy being able to put their numeracy skills to good use in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well and apply themselves very well to their work.
- Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn well.
- Progress is slowed for pupils who have gaps in their attendance.
- A good science curriculum is offered.

- There is good leadership of science.

Commentary

64. The results of the national tests at the time of the last inspection indicated that standards in science were very low. Since then, standards have risen overall across the school and steady improvement has been maintained. The results in the 2004 national tests were higher than those in 2003, although they were still well below average overall at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates that by Year 2, pupils' knowledge of science is building well, but attainment is below average as the pupils have much to make up from their low starting base when they started school.
65. Pupils work hard in lessons and show a very keen interest in their studies. They make good progress considering their very low starting point. Knowledge and skills are acquired at a good rate, and pupils show consideration to others when working in pairs or groups. For example, when Year 6 were investigating the size of shadows they took turns well in operating the light source and measuring its distance from the object. Their results are carefully recorded, sometimes in a table or as a conclusion involving their own prediction and the result. They understand fair testing and apply it in their investigations. Pupils demonstrate the capacity to work very well independently.
66. Achievement is good for most pupils because of the overall good quality of the teaching. Some pupils miss important parts of the work because they are on holiday during term time, and this restricts their progress. Staff work well to overcome this barrier to achievement in science. Lessons are well planned, methods of teaching are effective and resources of good quality are provided for pupils to use. Relationships are strong and pupils behave well. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to those pupils who need additional support, either for language or because they have special educational needs. The use of ICT supports learning soundly, and teachers use their interactive projectors to good effect. A good programme of homework supports pupils' learning effectively. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and sometimes indicate the steps for pupils to take in their learning. However, this is not consistent practice and is an area for further development. Links with mathematics allows pupils to use their numeracy skills for measuring, and in recording their investigations using graphs and charts to good effect. Whilst the higher attaining pupils are showing improvement, still more needs to be done to raise their achievement levels higher.
67. The subject is led and managed effectively by a conscientious leader. He has put in place a well-balanced curriculum ensuring there is continuity and progress, and this is clearly evident in the sample of pupils' work. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning enables him to have a good overview of standards. Assessments of progress are carried out and detailed analysis of the data identifies areas for development. The school is well focused on improvement to achievement and provision in science and its capacity to meet its challenging targets and priorities is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement to ICT and pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good because the new ICT suite is used effectively.
- ICT is well led and managed.
- There is some useful development of ICT skills in other subjects, although this could be increased.

Commentary

68. The fourth key issue in the 1999 inspection report focused on the improvement of teaching, learning, progress and standards in ICT. The school has worked well to improve the resources for ICT and to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. All pupils now benefit from much more regular computer use and the curriculum is very firmly focused on the development of skills and knowledge. The good improvement to ICT reflects the effectiveness of subject leadership and the systems to check the quality of teaching and learning.
69. Standards in ICT are average by the end of Year 6. In some cases, standards are above average, as witnessed in a very good quality Year 3 lesson that focused on the composition of a four line musical piece. In this lesson, the use of computer technology gave learning experiences that would have otherwise been difficult to provide. The pupils investigated the power of the software with enthusiasm and they created musical pieces of quite complex rhythmic and dynamic structure. These Year 3 pupils were making very good progress in their building of ICT and music skills. It is evident that generally, achievement is good in ICT.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good. ICT lessons are well planned on the whole, although there are times when planning could be more tightly focused on the extension of higher attaining pupils' skills. Nonetheless, learning is productive and purposeful and lessons are calm and orderly sessions where time is used well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning.
71. The subject leader is hard-working, committed and knowledgeable about the quality of provision in ICT. Overall leadership and management is good. There is good potential for the school to maintain its rate of improvement to ICT, especially as it introduces interactive whiteboard technology to boost learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. As identified above in the case of music, there is some very effective use of ICT to develop skills in other subjects. There is good evidence of ICT linked to work in English, mathematics and art and design. However, the school recognises there is a need to broaden these links. There is a good action plan to further this aim. This is an appropriate priority for the development of pupils' skills and knowledge in ICT and the linked subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' understanding, respect and interest in different faiths and beliefs.
- Leadership of religious education is good.
- Older pupils do not regularly research information for themselves.

Commentary

73. The place of religious education within the overall curriculum is good. The school uses the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus, which has a good balance between learning about and learning from religion. No overall judgement is made about achievement of infant pupils, as most work is not recorded. The planned curriculum for the infants focuses on pupils talking about and acting out simple religious stories and events. In the Year 1 lesson observed, teaching was good and pupils achieved well. The teacher used attractive pictures to stimulate discussion about the importance of special events such as weddings and christenings for different religions.
74. Work examined from all junior classes shows that pupils are well taught and achieve well. Over the four years, pupils study each major religion in depth. From discussion with Year 6 pupils, they enjoy the subject, have very positive attitudes and are keen to share their learning. They have good factual knowledge and understanding of each major faith. They can explain their ideas confidently and most use correct subject vocabulary. In Year 6, pupils tend to rely on information provided by the class teacher. This is a missed opportunity for pupils to research the subject themselves using the library or computers.
75. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss and reflect on intangible aspects of life such as injustice, poverty, and global issues and the work and impact of various charities. A particular emphasis is placed on pupils' understanding and respect for the values and beliefs of different religions. Discussion with Year 6 pupils show that they are able to link religious teaching with everyday life. They know that all religions have special rules to live by and can discuss similarities and differences between faiths. They have a clear understanding of what it means to belong to a religious community and the significance of symbolism and festivals to various religions. Good use is made of visitors to lead assemblies and talk with pupils.
76. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader is highly knowledgeable and very committed to the subject. She ensures that religious education has a high profile within the school. The leader has improved resources, which were inadequate at the time of the previous inspection. She knows the strengths and weaknesses of the subject well and is determined to bring about even greater improvement. The capacity for such improvement is good.

Because of the focus of the inspection on English, mathematics and science, there was not a great deal of time available to investigate the following six subjects. 13 lessons were observed across these subjects and a sampling of pupils' work was completed for four of them. Thus, each subject is treated briefly in this report.

Geography

77. The curriculum is based upon the national guidelines and provides a satisfactory basis for the development of learning in the subject. The sample of work indicates that pupils develop

appropriate geographical knowledge by the end of Year 6. As in many other subjects, the well below average standards of writing impact on pupils' geography skills, as many do not write with enough fluency and accuracy. Resources have improved since the previous inspection, and the use of the ICT projector provides teachers with a very effective resource.

History

78. A balanced curriculum based upon the national guidelines is provided in history and pupils show the expected level of historical knowledge by the end of Year 6. However, historical skills of research and investigation are limited by pupils' weak writing skills. The programme of visits to museums and places of historical interest enhance the history curriculum well and give good stimulus to learning. There are good resources for learning, including the ICT projectors in the classrooms, which are also used effectively to interest and motivate pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

79. Pupils have an appropriate curriculum for art and design that is focused on the development of skills, knowledge and techniques in both two- and three-dimensional art. The curriculum is very well enriched in a number of ways, not least through the partnerships formed with local secondary schools, the *Education Action Zone*, the artist in residence, and galleries in Rochdale and Manchester. Some high quality project work is completed, such as the *Take One* cross-subject project that linked art and design and English in particular, and which led to some very creative artwork. This project built very successfully on the partnership with parents and the community. Art and design is a well resourced subject and the indications are that it is effectively led.

Design and technology

80. From the sample of work it is evident that standards are at least at the expected level by the end of Year 6 and that all aspects of the subject are taught. The curriculum for design and technology is satisfactory. The subject leader is well involved in developing provision and the subject is well resourced.

Music

81. The teaching observed in music ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the very well taught Year 3 lesson, very good use was made of computers to assist pupils' composing skills. Analysis of planning shows that the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The school has fully addressed the issue identified at the time of the previous inspection when the curriculum was too narrow. Music now has a higher profile in the school and all the aspects are planned for. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through a range of visitors to the school. A small junior choir has good opportunities to perform both in and out of school. They sing at a local church and participate in the local music festival. Although the choir is open to boys and girls, no boys currently take part. The infant pupils who sang during an assembly did so with enjoyment and confidence. The school provides recorder sessions for a small group of pupils. A number of older boys and girls have specialist tuition, five of who perform in the local youth orchestra. Resources are good, with a wide range of music tapes to extend pupils' appreciation of music around the world. All of these musical experiences make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

Physical education

82. It is evident that all the strands of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are regularly taught. Pupils benefit from weekly swimming sessions throughout the summer term and indications are that the majority of pupils are on track to meet the requirements to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
83. The school employs a specialist instructor to take physical education lessons and to give instruction in a variety of sports. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are regularly given access to a wide range of coaching sessions during lunchtime and after school. Good use is made of the spacious school hall, shared playing field and hard playing surfaces, which benefits all pupils. In the lunchtime extra-curricular activity observed, the majority of pupils made good progress in their throwing skills. The clearly planned activity provided good opportunities to practice and consolidate skills in games of athletics related to javelin throwing. These activities contribute very well to pupils' personal, social and moral development because much of the emphasis is on taking part and being a member of a team that pervades much of the fabric of the school. Enthusiastic leadership by the specialist games instructor provides good opportunities for competitive sports with local schools. However, an overview of whole-school strengths and areas for development is limited by insufficient opportunities for systematic monitoring and evaluation and the assessment of pupils' skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Because not many formal sessions focused on pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship were observed, this area is also only reported on briefly.

84. The observed sessions for personal, social and health education and citizenship were of good quality and this is clearly the overall quality of its work in this area. There is a detailed and appropriate programme of education about the dangers of smoking and drug abuse, healthy eating and living and for sex education.
85. The school places the well-being of its pupils at the heart of its work. It is successful in developing very good racial harmony among the many different ethnic groups, and a very positive approach to work in the pupils. It also works effectively to ensure that pupils who are not in school long, those who take extended holidays in school time and those with very little or no English settle well to their work and benefit from their time at Spotland Primary School.
86. The pupils are prepared very well for the next stage in their education and they develop skills and knowledge that will be very useful in the outside world. There is a strong sense of community in the school and the pupils develop many skills that are vital for responsible and successful citizens.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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).