

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Paul's C of E Primary School**

Stalybridge, Cheshire

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106233

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Hand

Lead inspector: Susan Walker

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 267920

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 290

School address: Huddersfield Road  
Stalybridge  
Cheshire  
Postcode: SK15 2PT

Telephone number: 0161 3382060  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Mr Garrie Smith  
governors:

Date of previous 21<sup>st</sup> June 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's C of E Primary School is housed in a listed building. It has 290 pupils on roll, which is bigger than other primary schools nationally. Many pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils come from the housing around the school. The area is mixed, but is broadly average in socio-economic terms. Most pupils have some form of pre-school experience and are of broadly average attainment on entry to the reception class. Pupils are predominantly of white British ethnic origin. There are four mixed-race pupils and one African pupil, none of whom is at an early stage of learning English. There are a broadly average number of pupils on the register of special educational needs, mostly at the earliest stages for lack of progress in literacy and numeracy. None has a Statement of Special Educational Need. An average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is low. The headteacher has been in post for four years and the deputy headteacher for two years. There has been little other staff movement except for maternity leaves since the previous inspection.

The school is part of the Primary Leadership Programme, which is aimed to improve standards and leadership. The school gained the Activemark in 2005 and the ECO award in 2004. It received National Science awards in 2000, 2002 and 2003. It was awarded a

Schools Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The school has been awarded the Healthy School status.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21678	Susan Walker	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs and personal, social and health education
9224	Michael Vineall	Lay inspector	
2911	Eric Steed	Team inspector	Science Art and design History Geography
22398	Lynne Wright	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Religious education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>33</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Paul's C of E Primary School is a **satisfactory** and improving school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is purposeful and the school's involvement in the primary leadership programme has sharpened up all staff's awareness of what they should be doing to bring about improvement. Teaching is overall satisfactory and this brings about broadly average standards and satisfactory achievement, although Year 6 pupils are still below average in English, mathematics and science. Value for money is satisfactory.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Although standards are improving, writing is not used well enough in lessons other than English to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in Years 3-6.
- Standards in mathematics at Year 6 are below average.
- There are well planned lessons in the reception class and for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, but teaching is too variable in other classes.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 are above average.
- Assessment is a school priority, but as yet there is unsatisfactory use of assessment to plan future learning in weekly and daily plans, except in the reception class.
- Pupils are well behaved and show good attitudes to learning thanks to good provision for social and moral development.
- There are well established and very good links with parents and good links with the community and other schools.
- Citizenship and health education are well taught and the school has provided good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to show initiative.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has maintained its strengths relating to the ethos and partnerships with parents and the community. It has satisfactorily addressed its issues for improvement in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and physical education. It has made very good improvement to the provision for the reception class and to the school building, which also sorted out health and safety issues. However, standards in mathematics, English and science, while improving, are below average at Year 6.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is now **satisfactory** due to recent improvement. The school has improved pupils' rate of progress through its involvement in the primary leadership programme. Achievement is good for children in the reception class and for pupils in the Year 2 and Year 6 classes due to good teaching. The reception class children are on target to attain above average standards as they enter Year 1. Year 2 pupils have above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and average standards in all other subjects. Year 6 pupils are below average in English, mathematics and science and average in all other subjects.

#### Year 6 results

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

Mathematics	C	C	E	E
Science	B	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*

In the 2004 national tests, standards for pupils aged eleven were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science when compared with all schools nationally. It was a similar picture when progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was taken into account. Standards for seven-year-olds were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics against all schools nationally and well above average against similar schools.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. The school has a caring and supportive ethos and pupils behave well. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**, but weekly and daily lesson plans do not show how learning is matched to children's needs. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but the use of assessment is unsatisfactory and marking needs improvement. Assessment is very good in the reception class. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but the school provides good enrichment through its programme of visits and visitors. There are a good range of clubs and provision for citizenship is good. The inside accommodation is satisfactory and the outside facilities are good. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are good, as are the procedures to seek pupils' views. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Partnership with parents is very good and links with the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership is **satisfactory**. Management is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is purposeful. She knows the school and its strengths and weaknesses well and has taken action to raise staff expectations. The role of the deputy headteacher and senior teachers is satisfactory as they take on a more strategic role in bringing about improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet all statutory requirements and have a satisfactory view of what the school provides for its pupils.

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

Pupils like their school and appreciate the opportunities they are given, especially the visits and visitors that enrich their learning. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate what it is doing for their children.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise the quality of teaching and lesson planning, so that there are more good lessons;
- continue to improve the use of assessment data and day-to-day assessment in order to accelerate pupils' progress;
- plan more writing opportunities so that pupils practise their skills in all subjects, especially in Years 3-6;
- continue to improve the standards in mathematics throughout the school.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is **satisfactory**, overall. Standards are **above average** in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2, but are **below the national average** in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave the school in Year 6.

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

- Achievement is good in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2.
- Achievement is good in the reception class.
- Pupils do not use their improving writing skills well enough in other subjects in Years 3-6.
- Progress in mathematics has not been good enough from year to year.

#### **Commentary**

1. On entry to the reception class, children attain average standards. As they enter Year 1, all the children are on course to attain above average standards. Their achievement is good because they receive good teaching and a good curriculum.
2. However, it must be borne in mind that the previous reception classes have not received the same good start. It has taken time to sort out the reception class accommodation and their curriculum. The large rebuilding programme and seven maternity leaves in three years have meant that achievement as pupils moved through the school has been very variable. It is clear from the school's assessment data that some pupils have made very slow progress over time or even gone backwards in reading, writing and mathematics. This unsatisfactory state of affairs has now been halted. The headteacher has correctly identified what needs to be done next in mental mathematics, problem solving, non-fiction writing and assessment. She has involved the local education authority to ensure that improvement is speeded up. Effective teaching for pupils in the Year 2 and 6 classes has brought about good achievement in a short space of time. Overall, achievement in other classes is satisfactory.
3. Currently, in Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average. In science, standards are average because too few pupils have attained the higher Level 3. In all other subjects, attainment is in line with what would be expected for pupils aged seven. Year 2 pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills satisfactorily to improve their learning.
4. In Year 6, standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The good and sometimes better progress which pupils have made in Year 6 has not allowed them to catch up with the national average, particularly at the higher Level 5. Improved progress has been caused by the action the headteacher has taken in identifying weaknesses and taking appropriate action, for instance teaching Year 6 pupils in separate sets from Year 5 pupils from January 2005. In all other subjects standards are broadly in line with what would be expected and achievement is

satisfactory. Pupils' achievement could be better supported by the use of ICT, numeracy and writing skills in other subjects.

## Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. In the 2004 national tests standards were in line with the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when judged against all schools nationally. Teacher assessment in science was average. However, when judged against similar schools, standards were well above average. The trend for improvement is rising.

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (26.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.3 (26.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.7 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

6. In the 2004 national tests, standards were well below average in English and mathematics when judged against all schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. Standards in science were below the national average. Too few pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and science, but in mathematics too many pupils did not attain the national standard of Level 4. The school missed its anticipated targets by a long way in 2004. The school usually ensures that pupils make average progress between ages seven and eleven, but in 2004 their progress was well below average. Due to the current effective improvements standards should begin to rise slowly.
7. There is a mixed picture about the progress of boys and girls. National data says that in Year 2 girls perform better than boys in reading and writing over three years. In Year 6, the picture is reversed and girls perform less well than boys. The inspection team found from data analysis and lesson observations that girls are achieving markedly better than boys in reading and writing throughout Years 3-6.
8. The school has a register for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils have been formally identified in English, mathematics and ICT and staff have received appropriate training. Consequently, achievement is now satisfactory.
9. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the targets on their individual education plans. The school does its best to give such pupils individual support, by giving them one-to-one support from teaching assistants.

10. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school has ensured that pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT, design and technology and physical education, now that all elements of the curriculum are taught. Mathematics remains an issue, as at the time of the previous inspection, but it is improving from the standards seen in 2004 and is a priority of the school development plan. Similarly, although English and science are not as good as previously, standards in English are better than in 2004 and improving non-fiction writing is a priority of the school development plan.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. The school develops their personal qualities, including their moral and social development, **well**. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' willingness to take responsibility is very good.
- Assemblies and class discussions are used well to promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in class are consistently good, but the behaviour of some younger boys is less satisfactory outside the classrooms.
- Relationships are good between all members of the school community and respect for others is promoted well.
- More could be done to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures in Britain, and in the wider world, and to include opportunities for spiritual development in lesson planning.
- Procedures and incentives are good and improve and encourage attendance.

### **Commentary**

11. The last report stated that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good for children under five, and good elsewhere. These standards have been successfully maintained. Pupils' attitudes to learning remain good throughout the school. All members of the school community demonstrate respectful behaviour towards others, except for small number of younger boys when they are not directly supervised in outside areas. In class, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They are eager to answer questions, offer comments and ideas and to volunteer to clear up. Classroom discussions are used effectively to encourage good manners, to take turns in speaking and to respect the views, values and personal beliefs of others.
12. The last inspection found that pupils then had little opportunity to show initiative or to practise their independence. This is no longer the case. Pupils are encouraged to use their reference skills and to comment on their own findings. Older pupils take care of younger children during break times and organise games and activities for them. During the inspection, a series of science fair activities was being planned and prepared by Year 6 pupils during their lunchtimes. Citizenship is promoted well through the school council, where elected representatives represent pupils' views effectively. This leads to pupils appreciating that their views are respected, valued and taken seriously. The ECO Council and 'healthy eating initiative' are effective in enabling an even wider selection of pupils to take part in similar activities.

13. School and class assemblies contribute to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, especially in celebration assemblies when individual pupils receive special mention for their attitudes and actions. The school's good range of visits and visitors help to develop pupils' social skills well. Moral development is enhanced by enabling pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning and is particularly good for older pupils by trusting them to arrange their own rotas to carry out assigned tasks and in taking care of younger pupils. Pupils know the 'golden rules' and are aware of their teachers' trust in them. Cultural development is catered for well in studies of the background of the local area, in French and Spanish language clubs and twinning with a French school. However, relatively little is done to develop pupils' knowledge of the rich diversity of other cultures within the local area, Britain and the wider world. The school is aware of this need and is already taking steps to liaise with other ethnic groups.
14. Reception class children make very good progress towards the acquisition of the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development.

### Attendance

15. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national levels and have remained there for some years. This is despite the introduction of good incentive schemes for pupils and good work by both the school and the educational welfare officer to raise awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality. Holidays taken in term time contribute considerably to the absences seen. However, current school information shows that attendance is beginning to rise.

#### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.6	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

### Exclusions

#### *Ethnic background of pupils*

#### *Exclusions in the last school year*

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>	<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
White – British	274	2	0

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

16. There have been two recent exclusions for poor behaviour and the excluded boy is now being educated elsewhere.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are **satisfactory**. The use of assessment is **unsatisfactory**, except in the reception class

where it is very good. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, but provision for clubs, visits, visitors and citizenship is good. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**, as is the action to seek pupils' views. Support and guidance is **satisfactory**. The school has **very good** partnerships with parents and **good** links with other schools and the community.

## Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. There are **satisfactory** procedures for assessment, but the use of assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The level of challenge for pupils in the Years 2 and 6 classes is good.
- Children learn effectively in the reception class because staff plan well to meet their needs.
- Teachers' expectations have improved since January.
- There is insufficient detail in teachers' daily and weekly planning, except in Year 2.
- Not enough use is made of assessment data to help teachers plan work that meets the needs of individual pupils, except in the reception class.
- Marking is not good enough to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (9%)	19 (42%)	22 (49%)	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.*

17. The overall teaching grades show a similar picture to the previous inspection, although there are fewer very good lessons. The previous report identified that teachers' planning did not contain sufficient detail. With the exception of Year 2, few teachers are sufficiently specific about work for pupils of different abilities (and this is important in mixed-age classes) or plan to teach skills which are specifically focused on the purpose of the lesson. As a result of these factors, pupils in the same class are often given the same work or work that is too hard or too easy for them. This means that in some classes and in some lessons, brighter pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
18. However, the headteacher has wisely linked her intended improvements in the quality of teaching to staff performance management targets and brought in a range of advisory teachers to provide new ideas for improving pupils' learning.
19. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic, know their subject well and challenge pupils. Questioning was used well to correct pupils' misapprehensions and to challenge their thinking in science in both the Year 5 and Year 6 classes. In such successful lessons the pace is brisk and teachers are very clear about the time allowed for each element of the lesson.

20. Learning in the reception class is well supported by a number of adults who work effectively together. Lessons are made interesting with lots of practical activities and the way that children are encouraged to share their ideas with adults.
21. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science, but some strategies that teachers use do not accelerate pupils' learning. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not make the best use of classroom assistants to support learning in the classroom. In mathematics, pace is sometimes not fast enough to make the best use of the time available and in some lessons there are still a few classes where pupils are not given enough time to explain their working out in Years 3-6. In science, too many worksheets are used to allow pupils to explain their thinking and to develop their skills.
22. Improving assessment is a school priority. The school has satisfactory procedures for testing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at regular intervals as they move through the school. This data is passed on with each cohort so that teachers have information about each individual pupil's levels of attainment in these subjects. This gives the school a very broad view of rates of progress and where pupils have made little, or no, progress. However, this data is not analysed with enough rigour to give the school the full picture of how well pupils are doing compared with pupils nationally and with those in similar schools. Consequently, the school has been slow to identify where pupils should be doing better. Improvement in this area is recent and has not yet had time for it to have a significant impact on the current Year 6 pupils' national test results.
23. Although the data helps teachers identify the differing abilities of their pupils and to place them into sets for English and mathematics, they seldom refer to it to plan work precisely. There are no systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT and this is unsatisfactory.
24. The school's marking policy gives teachers satisfactory guidance as to how marking can help pupils identify strengths and weaknesses in their own work and what they need to do to improve. However, it is not adhered to consistently and teachers' marking generally is unsatisfactory because they do not give pupils an accurate picture of how successful they are at learning.
25. In the reception class, assessment routines are thorough and of very good quality. The information gathered is used very effectively and enables teaching to offer a consistently good level of challenge to all children so that they all achieve well.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides a **good** breadth of curricular opportunities in the Foundation Stage and a **satisfactory** breadth elsewhere. A **good** range of enrichment opportunities is in place for all pupils. The accommodation is **satisfactory**, overall. Learning resources are **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good personal, social and health education provision promotes pupils' awareness of the importance of living a safe and healthy lifestyle successfully.
- The curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities are good.

- Provision in the Foundation Stage, including provision for pupils with special educational needs, is good.
- Opportunities to use skills gained in English, mathematics and ICT in other subjects are sometimes missed.
- Good curricular links with other schools ensure that pupils' transition to the high schools is secure.
- The curriculum is well resourced.

### **Commentary**

26. The deficiencies identified in the last report have largely been overcome. Contact times in the infant and junior years have been improved and are now satisfactory. All subjects receive sufficient time to teach the prescribed programmes of study. Adjustments made to planned activities in art and design, design and technology and music lessons have ensured that skills are now taught alongside knowledge. The curriculum presented to the youngest pupils has also been adjusted so that the curriculum now meets their needs well. The refurbishing of the main school building, the new building and acquisition of outside areas have resulted in satisfactory, rather than the formerly poor, accommodation. Outside facilities are good. The provision of resources has generally improved, with the deficient aspects overcome. The satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities has improved to be now good. Overall, the improvements in this section have been very good.
27. The school provides a good breadth of curricular opportunities in the Foundation Stage, this includes provision for pupils with special educational needs, and elsewhere provision is satisfactory. Adjustments are needed to the balance of the curriculum in order to raise standards in mathematics, writing and the application of skills learnt in ICT across all subjects. These needs have already been recognised by the school in their development plan. The use of a two-year rolling programme, to prevent pupils in mixed-age classes covering the same content twice, is successful.
28. Some subjects, geography and history for example, are taught discretely in blocks of time throughout the year. Although at the time of the inspection this meant that pupils' historical knowledge was greater than their geographical knowledge, planning is securely in place to cover this apparent discrepancy. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in design and technology and this requirement is provided for in future planning. There have been sound improvements in the use of ICT since the last inspection. Provision and use of ICT is now satisfactory, but there is scope for improvement in using it across the curriculum.
29. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment through a well-planned range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, visitors and visits; these include residential experiences in this country and in France. The school is aware that there are more opportunities for older pupils in its current provision and is actively seeking means to provide more for younger pupils. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the time that their teachers devote to them and were very excited about forthcoming school trips and the visit by French children from the school with which they are twinned.
30. Pupils' social and moral development is much enhanced during these activities, contributing to the good provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship. The school curriculum has a good focus on giving pupils an opportunity to develop a healthy lifestyle through its work on the ECO project. The personal, social

and health education curriculum gives full attention to sex education and drugs awareness.

31. There is good liaison between the Foundation Stage and the infant classes and with local high schools. These good relationships result in easing pupils' transition into the next stages of education.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Good** procedures ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of all pupils, while equally **good** efforts are directed at involving pupils in the day-to-day running of the school. Guidance of the pupils is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school pays good attention to all aspects of pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- Pupils are involved effectively in the work of the school and its development.
- There are good induction procedures.
- Guidance and advice to pupils are satisfactory, but are insufficiently rooted in assessment information.

### **Commentary**

32. A high priority is given in this school to all activities that ensure the health, welfare and safety of every pupil. Health and safety issues are efficiently handled, drawing upon professional expertise amongst governors, the meticulous attention of the headteacher and the practical involvement of the site manager. Risk assessments are effectively and appropriately used. Child protection procedures are led by an interested class teacher, with the headteacher closely involved and all staff trained in and made aware of the importance of this issue. All drills and checks are well activated and appropriately recorded. As a 'healthy school' the pupils are deeply into such issues, which are well reinforced by the ECO and school councils' activities.
33. A notable feature of the school is the depth of involvement of pupils in the running of the school. Pupils are consulted regularly and, through the two councils, pupils are encouraged to initiate improvements to their life in school. Many more pupils take active parts in the smooth running of the school community, for instance as prefects, play leaders or mentors.
34. Much care is taken to make entry into the Foundation Stage as easy and pleasant as possible for both children and parents and such smoothing of the path through school continues as pupils progress from year to year.
35. Advice and guidance are readily available to all pupils and are satisfactory. Guidance for personal development draws its value from the good relationships with pupils and good knowledge of them, as individuals, by all staff. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory guidance and support from all adults in line with their individual education plans. However, pupils do not receive sufficient academic guidance, for instance in the marking of their work so that they know exactly what they have to do to improve their learning. The lack of assessment in many subjects does not always allow pupils to receive work which is precisely tailored to their needs. This aspect is slowly improving in line with the school's priorities.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

**Very good** links have been established with parents. **Good** links also exist with the local community and with other local educational establishments.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good involvement with parents and appreciates their very good contribution to learning.
- The school listens very carefully to parents and includes their views in the running of the school.
- There are good and beneficial links with several parts of the local community.
- Good, close links with several local schools and colleges exist and bring many benefits to teaching and learning.

### Commentary

36. The attitudes and opinions expressed by parents about this school are very positive and supportive. Parents feel involved in the school, as indeed many are. Several help in school (with reading, manning libraries or on visits) whilst a very active parents and teacher association provides good social links between parents and staff, as well as very real, substantial financial support. Parents are well represented on the governing body, but all parents are frequently consulted and involved on issues such as homework and behaviour policy.
37. Parents are well informed about what is going on and about their children's progress. An 'open door' really exists and informal contact with class teachers or the headteacher can often be seen at each end of the day. Parents praised the three parents' evenings. They appreciate the opportunity for discussion of pupils' targets at the summer meeting. Reports to parents are good and are liked by parents.
38. Information on the curriculum is regularly sent home and some workshops providing insights into how subjects are taught have been held, although the school appreciates the need for more.
39. Links with the church are being steadily strengthened and this helps pupils' learning in subjects such as religious education. The priest now a well known part of the school community and a regular visitor. As part of improving the citizenship curriculum, the school is also building its links with local care homes where the children and the elderly may interact. Local businesses have been involved in the ECO project, whilst local retailers regularly support events such as school fairs. The school is represented and actively involved with the town's 'twinning' initiative with Armentieres. The immediate area and its facilities are used effectively to assist teaching.
40. There is an active local cluster of primary schools, but the really effective links with local schools have been built up through a specific network that provides not only mutual support, but jointly works on the problems of raising attainment. Also, as local secondary schools take on specialist status, stronger links have been built with them, drawing on such skills as sport. One benefit of this is to assist the transition of Year 6 pupils to such schools by acquainting them with these schools, their teachers and pupils.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory**. Leadership of key staff overall is **satisfactory**. There is **satisfactory** governance of the school. Management is **satisfactory** and is becoming increasingly effective.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has been purposeful in her introduction of new initiatives to raise standards.
- Improvements in school development planning are helping the school to judge the results of its actions more rigorously.
- Subject leaders do not have an accurate overview of standards in their subjects.
- There is insufficient overview of the curriculum.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they are not yet sufficiently rigorous in holding the school to account.
- The school's leadership is strongly committed to including its pupils' views in deciding its priorities.

### Commentary

41. The school has recently experienced an unsettled period, not least of which has been the upheaval arising from a major rebuilding programme. The headteacher has emerged from this with a strong sense of purpose and an awareness of the need to change the culture of the school. She was instrumental in involving the school in the 'primary leadership programme', which has supported both her and the leadership team in working in a more focused and determined way towards school improvement. The school development plan now gives greater direction to the implementation of planned developments and more rigour in evaluating the success of its actions. This has helped the school focus much more clearly on what it needs to do to raise standards and is an improvement since the last inspection.
42. The leadership team has been in place for two years, but it is only recently getting into its full stride as its members build on and evaluate the results of their early decisions. The team shares with the headteacher a common sense of purpose and urgency to improve standards in learning. However, adequate minutes of team meetings are not kept, or decisions written down, and this means that the team sometimes works on assumptions rather than as a fully cohesive group. Recent management initiatives, such as 'booster classes' and the introduction of Year 6 sets in English and mathematics, have halted the downward slide in standards at Key Stage 2 over the last few years. Pupils in the current Year 6 classes have made at least satisfactory progress in their learning over the last six months, and some of them have progressed rapidly, so that standards this year have risen in English, mathematics and science. A weakness in the school's management is the lack of a curriculum co-ordinator so that there is no regular and accurate review of the effectiveness of the curriculum on learning across the whole school.
43. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good because the co-ordinator ensures that the curriculum is geared closely towards meeting the learning

needs of young children. She has played an important role in improving the quality of provision in the reception class.

44. The role of subject leaders is satisfactory, overall. There has been limited monitoring in the core subjects over time and subject leaders scrutinise teachers' planning and advise them on aspects of teaching. However, monitoring is not consistently rigorous or evaluative enough to have a bigger impact on ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The school has just identified leaders for English, mathematics and ICT throughout all areas of the school to help to address this issue and to establish stronger links with other subjects. Some subject leaders and other staff have worked hard to ensure that the school has acquired a range of local and national awards.
45. The school places great value on the well-being and happiness of its pupils and all staff reflect this concern for their pastoral needs strongly through their relationships with the pupils in their care. Pupils are regarded with respect and their views are taken into account. Boys and girls have equal opportunities to take part in sports and activities. The variable quality of the planning for lessons means that pupils do not always have equal opportunities to learn at their own rate.
46. The governing body is conscientious and committed to moving the school forward. Through regular visits to the school, the governors have a sound oversight of what the school provides for its pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, but as yet they lack sufficient rigour in acting as critical friends capable of holding the school to account for the standards it attains. Their willingness to develop their understanding of how best they can fulfil their role bodes well for the future in supporting the headteacher in raising further the quality of education the school provides for its pupils.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	847,938	Balance from previous year	59,557
Total expenditure	803,752	Balance carried forward to the next	103,743
Expenditure per pupil	2,980		

47. Day-to-day financial management is very good. Although systems for assessing the impact of major spending decisions are satisfactory, they do not focus strongly enough on raising standards. The large amount of money carried forward resulted from an unexpected reimbursement of building costs from the local education authority. In the most recent financial year, this has been reduced to an average level through expenditure on the outside environment, which is now judged to be good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

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

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

There has been very good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. A good quality early years curriculum is firmly in place which gives the children a good start in learning about themselves and their community. The curriculum now gives a good balance of activities for learning and is well planned to enthuse and involve all pupils. The quality of teaching and learning remains good with a significant improvement in the level of support given by all staff. The early years team works very well together to ensure the children receive a good quality education. The children's attainment on entry to the reception year is average, overall, in all areas of learning. Very good assessment systems, applied regularly and rigorously, ensure that all children receive a good level of challenge in their learning. Because of good expectations of what the children can achieve, all children make consistently good progress in their learning and achieve well in all areas of learning. All children are on course to achieve the national targets for their age and about half will exceed them so that standards, overall, exceed expectations.

Leadership and management are good and the team leader has a clear vision of how young children learn best, a firm sense of purpose and high aspirations for all the children. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the split into two separate rooms and an outside play area detached from the classroom do not make best use of teaching staff. Resources, including the outside area, are of good quality and used well. Some displays on the wall do not celebrate the good work going on in the classrooms as it is too adult-centred and much of the work is done by adults so that the learning environment is less stimulating than it might be.

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

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

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

- The caring and supportive environment and positive relationships support children's progress well.
- Learning is made interesting and fun, which promotes an interest in learning and the development of positive attitudes and self-confidence.

#### **Commentary**

48. Teaching and learning are good and result in children's positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of school. All children achieve well to attain, and even exceed, the early learning goals because they are highly valued and well supported in all that they do. In consequence their self-confidence grows rapidly and they are willing to 'have a go' at new things. Children settle happily to class routines and copy the very good role model of teaching staff. All staff make learning interesting so that the children are often avid learners and are proud of what they have learnt. The high expectations that children will behave well towards each other are met and they take turns easily and

play with a high degree of co-operation. They are expected to develop an independent approach to learning and are willing to work things out for themselves, helping each other if they see the need.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The well-planned range of activities extends learning effectively in all areas of communication.
- The reception class staff promote the correct use of language at all times.
- Speaking and listening skills are not specifically planned into every area of learning.

### **Commentary**

49. Achievement is good as effective teaching promotes good learning. All pupils achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and about half exceed them. There are clear objectives to promote the children's speaking and listening skills within this area of learning, and discussions and activities ensure good development. The children are expected and encouraged to join in class discussions and to offer their own ideas and comments. This they do with confidence and growing fluency so that a class discussion can flow for some time. The learning environment is lively and often exciting which creates in the children an interest in developing their communication skills. Role play areas provide constantly changing contexts for talk and introduce a widening range of vocabulary and styles of talking. The teaching of reading and writing is effective. All children handle books confidently and with pleasure. Many read familiar words in different combinations in a complete story and deduce the character's actions from their words. They have their own ideas of 'what happens next'. Many opportunities are provided for writing and the children use labels and captions confidently, although these are not displayed around the classroom enough in real situations. Many write at least one sentence and use capital letters and full stops correctly to structure a piece of news. Good teaching promotes positive attitudes to reading and writing.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Mathematical concepts are reinforced well through a wide range of interesting activities.
- Good use is made of the computerised whiteboard to promote a good understanding of number.

### **Commentary**

50. Teaching and learning in this area are good because the teacher organises a good range of well planned activities to make number and mathematics relevant to the children's lives. She has high expectations of the children's involvement and effort and they learn mathematics with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The teacher and support staff work well together to provide teaching at a level that challenges pupils of all abilities. This ensures that they all reach the expected levels and many exceed it. Good use of

the computerised whiteboard leads to rapid learning, helping the children to make good links between numbers and operations. Children enjoy counting and relish their ability with 'big numbers' up to fifty. They have a good understanding, aided by the computerised whiteboard, of patterns in counting. Adults' use of mathematical language helps the children to develop a good mathematical vocabulary and understanding of the terms. Further reinforcement of this is given by their use of a programmable floor toy. Basic mathematical concepts such as sorting, ordering, shape and measuring are developed well through many activities in other parts of the curriculum so that the children regard mathematics as a part of life.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Themes are developed well in order to provide interesting first-hand experiences to help the children make sense of their world.
- The outdoor area is used well to enhance children's learning about their environment.

### **Commentary**

51. Good teaching in this area promotes good learning and achievement so that all children meet the early learning goals and many exceed them. Most children enter school with average knowledge of their own world. The good range of planned practical learning activities encourages children to develop a lively interest in what is happening around them. The 'plant shop' helps children to become familiar with plants and what they need to grow healthily and they enjoy touching and smelling them. During the summer months the immediate vicinity is explored so that the children gain a good understanding of where they live and what it is like to live there. Explorations of scientific phenomena, such as magnetism, are planned well so that all understand and use the term 'attraction' and begin to link to metal objects. Religious education is planned thoroughly and knowledgeably so that the children understand the concepts of sharing and the purpose of prayer both in Christianity and some other faiths. The children are very competent and confident users of ICT, as the teacher requires them to be. The computerised whiteboard has given them a very good idea of basic computer processes and they navigate around a program with great enthusiasm.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The play area is used regularly to promote physical skills.
- Lessons in the hall enable the children to develop a good sense of space.
- There are not enough wheeled toys to cater for all the children as they grow.

### **Commentary**

52. Teaching and learning are good in this area, as is children's achievement. All children meet national expectations and many exceed them. They are skilled in their use of push, pull and pedal toys and are physically adventurous, but safe, in their movements. As the children grow some of these toys become too small for them which limits further achievement in some aspects. The regular use of the school hall enables the children to develop a good awareness of space, which they maintain over a lesson. The teachers' high expectations of thought as well as physical effort results in well-controlled and thoughtful patterns of movement. The many opportunities offered to practise finer body movements and control ensure that learning is good in this area and pupils handle scissors, pencils and art equipment very confidently and skilfully.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Creativity and imagination are encouraged in well-planned activities and careful displays of children's work.
- There are plenty of planned, regular opportunities for role play.

### **Commentary**

53. Good teaching and learning enable all children to make good progress and achieve well so that all attain the expected standard and many exceed it. There is a strong emphasis on art and design activities, closely linked to current topics. The focus on spring and growth has resulted in some good quality, well-observed pastel drawings of plants growing in the outdoor early years area. The children enjoy using the good quality materials and are proud of their achievements. The clay models of wild animals have character and correct detail, showing good levels of skills in shaping and joining materials. 'Junk' modelling shows confidence and imagination. The work is finished and decorated well and some of the models are of very high quality. The display of this work is put together well by teachers with captions, which focuses the children's attention towards evaluating the work. Time, space and good resources are given to the development of role play in a number of areas so that the children have plenty of opportunity to develop their imagination and the use of imaginative language, although this is not a specific part of the teachers' lesson planning.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in reading and writing in Year 2 because basic skills are well taught.
- While standards in writing are improving, pupils need to use their skills more often in other subjects in Years 3-6.
- Day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' planning is too variable, but it is good in Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy reading.
- Resources are good and so pupils enjoy using them.

#### Commentary

54. In Year 2, current standards in reading and writing are above the national average. In Year 6, standards are below the national average in writing. Reading is the stronger element and pupils attain average standards. Early indications suggest that more pupils have gained the higher level in reading than in 2004. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school.
55. In the 2004 national tests pupils in Year 2 were average against all schools nationally and well above the national average against similar schools. Year 6 pupils were well below the national average. At Year 6, too few pupils reached either the expected or the higher levels and the school missed its targets by a long way. The problem was identified as poor standards in writing and the school has made improvement a priority.
56. Overall, current achievement is satisfactory but assessment records show that, as pupils have progressed through the school, they have made too little progress due to the disruption caused by building works and temporary teaching staff. Observation in lessons and the school's assessment system show that girls are achieving markedly better than boys in reading and writing in Years 3-6. Year 6 pupils have achieved well this year from the levels they had reached at the end of Year 5, due to improved arrangements for teaching by ability in small groups in Year 6. The impact of the school's initiative in non-fiction writing has been good and so achievement has improved this year.
57. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. Good teaching occurs in Years 2 and 5 and very good teaching occurs in Year 6. This good provision is generally for the more able pupils in the upper sets and learning is faster in these classes. Teaching elsewhere is improving slowly through guidance from advisory teachers, training and improved resources. The Year 2 teacher has high expectations of what her class can do, maintains a fast pace and ensures that basic skills are practised in interesting ways. The computerised whiteboards enhance learning satisfactorily. They are well

used to present poems and texts so that pupils can see them and take part in the ensuing discussion. In the Year 6 lesson seen pupils' views were sought and evaluated and this helped their understanding well.

58. Reading is well taught in Years 2 and 6 and it is clear that pupils have good attitudes to reading. Year 6 pupils have been effectively taught about a good range of authors, themes and events and many of the books that they read have challenging links with the period they are studying in history. They used all their English skills well when they reviewed a set of science books as part of a national project. Year 2 pupils are confident and fluent readers who have been taught basic skills well and are happy to talk about their books.
59. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 sometimes do not make the best use of classroom assistants to support pupils' learning. Classroom assistants take pupils out of the classroom individually to practise their basic skills and opportunities are missed to improve their achievement by taking part in whole class tuition on improving writing. The last inspection pointed out that there was considerable variation in the standard of weekly and daily planning and this is still the case. This is delaying improvement in teaching and the progress of pupils. The best practice is in Year 2 where planning is clear as to how the needs of different pupils will be met.
60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two co-ordinators are both absent on maternity leave and the headteacher has successfully taken charge of the writing initiative to improve non-fiction writing. Staff have been trained and resources have been improved. Assessment procedures for optional and national tests are satisfactory. However, day-to-day assessment is not good enough. Teachers do not keep satisfactory records of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' reading, for instance in guided reading, so that they can show pupils how to improve. Marking is too variable and seldom refers to how well pupils have met learning objectives or their personal targets for improvement, except in Year 6. There are the beginnings of good practice when pupils occasionally assess their own work. The subject is enriched by visits to local libraries, book weeks and theatre visits.
61. Overall improvement is satisfactory. Standards are rising and library provision has improved since the last inspection. The library is well resourced and is now situated in a new block and pupils have computerised access to the books.

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

62. This is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills in other subjects. The overuse of worksheets or copying word-for-word from the board in subjects such as science, religious education and history does not allow pupils to write at length or for different purposes. Where writing skills are used well, as in a Year 5/6 geography lesson, then pupils get good opportunities to refine their skills in note taking and in making bullet points. In most lessons pupils get satisfactory opportunities to use their reading and speaking skills.

### **French**

63. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The majority of Year 6 pupils speak relatively little French, but they enjoy the lessons and are keen to acquire new

vocabulary. Lessons are fun and pupils are willing to 'have a go'. The strength of the provision is that some pupils have visited France with the school and the children from their partner French school were visiting Stalybridge after the inspection. This experience has given a really good focus to pupils' learning in English, history and ICT as they prepare a multimedia presentation for their visitors and has improved their cultural development well. The French club enhances pupils' experiences.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Not enough pupils achieve at the higher levels at both key stages.
- Pupils achieve well in the Year 2 class and in Year 6 because of good teaching.
- New initiatives and support are bringing about improvement in provision.
- The interpretation of assessment data, and its use to help teachers plan for the learning of pupils of all abilities, is not rigorous enough.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards in mathematics, as shown by the results of end of Key Stage 2 tests, have been very variable over the past four years. In 2004, results were well below the national average and that for similar schools and many pupils made unsatisfactory progress. School records show that, of pupils in the current Year 6, more than half made no progress or regressed in their learning from Year 4 to Year 5. This indicates unsatisfactory teaching and inadequate monitoring and analysis of data to give an overview of standards and progress in the recent past.
65. The school's participation in the 'primary leadership programme' and the good support of the local education authority is beginning show recent and modest results. Standards in the current Year 6 are now below the national average at the expected level. The percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level is slightly lower than last year and remains below the national average. However, this represents good overall achievement for these pupils, with a good percentage achieving very well indeed as a result of good teaching, more effective setting arrangements and higher teacher expectations in Year 6.
66. At Key Stage 1, test results in recent years have shown standards to be generally above average. However, there is a dip in standards this year. Although there has been a slight improvement at the expected level and standards remain above average, they have dropped to well below average at the higher level. This is largely because of disruptions to the pupils' education in Year 1 so that the current Year 2 teacher has had to make up ground. Year 2 pupils in the mixed-age class achieve satisfactorily and in the Year 2 class achievement is good because of good teaching. Across the school standards and achievement are variable and depend upon the route the pupils have taken through the school in mixed-age or single-age group classes.
67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. Teaching is good in the mathematics co-ordinator's class in Year 2 and in the Year 6 sets. Across the school, pupils' books show better progress and achievement since January, with higher teacher expectations. This is partly due to the good support from the local education authority

in demonstrating good teaching and in help with planning. This has resulted in teachers now taking into account the abilities of all pupils in a set, not just those in the middle, and pupils are now taught from the appropriate programme for their year group. Teachers structure their lessons satisfactorily and they move at a satisfactory pace, but they do not always signal higher expectations by moving learning on at a more rapid pace. In some classes, teachers do not always give the pupils the opportunity to answer or describe their methods of working, although this is a developing feature of teaching. The push towards improving the oral and mental mathematics and problem solving aspects is evident in teaching and pupils' books. This is now a feature of most lessons and is leading to more 'real-life' contexts for learning, which pupils enjoy.

68. In the better lessons, teachers use the computerised whiteboard well to inject a good pace into the learning and to establish what the pupils already know and understand. The teachers' high expectations, varied, well-targeted activities and enthusiasm motivate pupils to work hard and do their best. Pupils in Year 2 used computers confidently to play a calculator game requiring them to add or subtract three numbers to arrive at a given answer. All understood which operation to use and quickly checked if they were right. Standards here were average and pupils' achievement was good. The teaching assistant helped pupils' learning effectively in this lesson. In a very good lesson in the top Year 6 set, the context of football league tables captured all pupils' interest so that the level of mathematical talk was high and their achievement was very good in determining the *mean*, *median*, *range* and *mode* of goal scoring. About a third of the set was working beyond the expected level.
69. In both lessons the teachers showed a good awareness of their pupils' levels of progress and attainment and used it to plan effective lessons. Generally, most teachers do not have such a clear idea of standards or analyse test data carefully enough to ascertain progress. This means that planning is still not targeted to provide an appropriate level of challenge for different groups of pupils. Marking of pupils' work is generally unsatisfactory, not closely enough related to the pupils' targets and does not help them to see how they can improve.
70. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator works hard to develop an overview of standards and provision, but she has little time allocated for monitoring teaching which makes it difficult for her to identify areas for improvement. Overall, there has been recent but satisfactory improvement in the subject.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. It supports learning in science, ICT in the computer suite and geography satisfactorily. The learning environment in classrooms and around the school does not reflect the high priority given to raising standards in mathematics in the school development plan, as there are few displays or anything to help pupils to see the relevance of mathematics to their everyday lives.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' assessments and planning are not focused closely enough on raising standards for the more able pupils.
- Pupils enjoy science because they are engaged in practical activities.
- ICT could be used more effectively to help pupils' learning.

## Commentary

72. At the end of Year 2, standards are average, but the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is below the national average. This was the position in 2004, although there are now more pupils gaining the higher Level 3. At the end of Year 6, standards are below average because too few pupils attain the higher Level 5. This was also the position in 2004. Both results are broadly the same as those reported at the time of the last inspection.
73. The current Year 6 class was unfortunate in experiencing disruption in their learning earlier on in their junior years owing to two class teachers taking maternity leave. This factor, coupled with less satisfactory teaching by temporary teachers, resulted in below average standards by the beginning of Year 6. Good teaching by the Year 6 teachers has brought the pupils to the current satisfactory position at Level 4, but insufficient time or booster classes have been available to raise sufficient numbers of pupils to Level 5.
74. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study their bodies and learn how to keep themselves healthy. They learn about electricity and how to construct a simple circuit. They give reasons why a circuit may not work. Higher attaining pupils can say how some materials are changed by heat and which changes may be reversed or not reversed. These pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of why a test may be fair. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced satisfactory coverage of the prescribed programme of study. They have probed the qualities of materials, living things and physical processes more deeply and have gained additional knowledge of scientific method and vocabulary. For example, they carry out practical investigations to discover the effects of friction on everyday situations.
75. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attitude to science is good. In the lessons seen, pupils were focused on their tasks, collaborated well during practical work and were willing to provide answers and comments about their work. The pupils who were interviewed readily stated that they enjoyed science because of the practical work undertaken. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates. The needs of higher and lower achieving pupils are not consistently met with sufficient focus because presented work is not always targeted to their individual needs. Workbooks show that the same tasks and worksheets are regularly given to all members of a class. This practice too often results in lower attaining pupils not finishing tasks, and so having insufficient revision materials, and the higher attaining pupils not being sufficiently challenged. The quality of lesson planning is variable. For example, in the Year 2 class good planning included details of what pupils were expected to learn, together with the assessment opportunities to check that individual pupils had gained understanding. Year 2 pupils in another class were not subjected to these necessary plans and checks.

76. There is no whole school system for planning that uses the results of assessment to ensure that a balance is attained whereby all pupils receive tasks that are challenging but can be completed so that each pupil acquires the knowledge and understanding needed to make progress. The marking of pupils' work is also variable. Whilst all marking is regular and usually encouraging, there is sometimes insufficient information given to inform pupils of what must now be done in order to improve the standard of current work. Too often marking points out that work is unfinished, but work remains in this state. The general lack of assessment opportunities in planning, which was a weakness stated in the last report, means that some teachers do not have secure knowledge of the needs of individual pupils and this is a major reason why so few pupils gain the higher levels. Too little use is made of ICT to help pupils to gather and analyse data and to support their accounts of investigations and experiments.
77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The committed, enthusiastic co-ordinator has good subject knowledge that she willingly shares with her colleagues. However, she does not have opportunities to monitor regularly the standards of teaching and learning in classrooms, although she does monitor pupils' achievement through analysing the work in their books. She runs a successful lunchtime science club that pupils attend voluntarily and this provides some booster learning opportunities. She ensures that the resources for the subject are audited, in good condition and readily available. Good relationships have been maintained with the high school so that members of staff and the use of their resources support science. Educational visits and visitors enhance the curriculum, as they did at the time of the last inspection.
78. Satisfactory improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Time allocated to science is now sufficient, resources are now good, the accommodation has much improved, the school grounds are used well and library resources are sufficient to enable pupils to carry out their own investigations.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources for learning are good, but the lack of a step in the computer suite prevents all pupils from accessing the computerised whiteboard.
- The full time ICT technician is available to support pupils' learning.
- ICT passports encourage pupils to recognise what they have achieved.
- Pupils enjoy their learning.

### **Commentary**

79. Standards in ICT are in line with national average and achievement is satisfactory at both Years 2 and 6. This was the situation at the time of the previous inspection.
80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons seen during the inspection were taught by the ICT technician who successfully ensured that pupils understood the task and remembered the skills they needed, for instance for inserting hyper links into a multimedia presentation. However, the pace of this part of the lesson could have been brisker. The school is well resourced for ICT. There are, for example, computerised

whiteboards throughout the school and a well designed computer suite. However, staff make varying use of these resources and some teachers too often use the computerised whiteboard simply as a writing surface, to write down the purpose of the lesson. The school is aware that some teachers still lack confidence and training is being organised to remedy this. Steps, however, are needed to ensure that all pupils can reach the whiteboard and are able to touch the relevant parts of its surface to activate the program.

81. Pupils are enthusiastic about the tasks that they are set. They work together well in mixed-ability pairs to solve problems and to access programs. The school recognises where pupils are gifted and talented in ICT and uses them well to demonstrate their skills to the rest of the class.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils' learning is satisfactorily supported by ICT clubs in each key stage and these are used to monitor what pupils can do and understand. The ICT passports allow pupils to celebrate what they can do. The school has organised good technical support to iron out the day-to-day problems with computers so that pupils' learning is not slowed down. Rules for Internet safety are displayed in the suite so all pupils understand how to keep safe. At the time of the previous inspection all parts of the curriculum were not being taught. This is no longer the case as there are a secure scheme of work and ample resources to teach control. Improvement therefore is satisfactory.

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

83. The use of ICT across the curriculum is broadly satisfactory, but it is not yet sufficiently written into daily and weekly plans in all classes to guarantee that learning is good. ICT has quite a low profile around the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had a good focus for their multimedia presentation about Stalybridge as they were aiming to show the finished production to their French visitors. There is too little use of ICT to help pupils gather and analyse data in science. ICT is used well in Years 1 and 2 to reinforce basic skills.

### **HUMANITIES**

84. Pupils' work in **history** was not a focus for the inspection, so no judgement on provision is possible. Because history and geography are taught in discrete blocks of time within the two-year rolling programme, history was not being taught during the inspection. Evidence from teaching plans, information in pupils' workbooks and discussions with both pupils and staff show that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Knowledge and understanding within the subject are greatly enriched through well-planned visits that coincide with the learning taking place in the classrooms. Pupils interviewed were clear that history is a favoured subject. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

### **Geography**

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good provision for visits enriches pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The presentation of identical tasks to pupils does not challenge the more able pupils and are too often too difficult for the less able.
- The teaching and use of *mapping skills* throughout the school are a strength in provision.

### Commentary

85. The last report stated that standards were satisfactory and that skills and concepts were used effectively to aid understanding. These standards have been maintained successfully in the intervening years in Years 2 and 6 and all pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
86. Overall, improvement is satisfactory. The time allocated to geography was judged to be insufficient to enable progress and continuity to be maintained. This is no longer the case and adequate time is now allocated to the subject in all classes. This fact, coupled with the use of discrete blocks of time within the two-year rolling programme, has resulted, for example, in pupils' understanding of *mapping skills* being developed regularly as they move through the school.
87. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate sound directional skills; they are able to offer clear directions to their own homes, using appropriate geographical language. They know the countries that make up the British Isles, few have knowledge of capital cities, but most know the names of local towns. Higher attaining pupils explain that maps and directions can take one to a location and be used to return. By Year 4, pupils know something of the different scales available in maps and that each has a specific purpose. In Years 5 and 6, where pupils were preparing for field visit to Castleton, they used a range of maps, coupled with use of index and grid references, and secondary information sources to plan the visit. They demonstrated sound knowledge of land uses and of man-made and physical features. Workbooks show that pupils' comparative studies include locations within the local area and further afield.
88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers ensure that the programme of study is covered, but planning does not always enable all pupils to carry out work that is designed to help individuals to develop their personal skills and understanding. Too frequently, all pupils receive the same task and assessment opportunities, aimed to check understanding, are rarely included in lesson plans. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and generally supply interesting tasks. A strength of teaching and learning within the subject is the planned use of field trips that enable pupils to practise skills learnt in the classroom. Pupils' attitudes to the subject were good during lessons; they co-operated and collaborated effectively during tasks and this helped them to learn. Pupils who were interviewed stated their enjoyment of geography, especially the practical work and field trips.
89. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator does not have opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms, but does carry out a scrutiny of pupils' books to monitor achievement and talks to colleagues in order to ensure that coverage is secure. Resources are of good quality, sufficient and are used effectively, especially during the teaching of *map skills*.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Curriculum plans ensure that religious education is taught thoroughly.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- There is not enough opportunity for pupils to use and extend their skills in writing.
- Class teachers do not have an accurate enough idea of the standards their pupils are attaining.

### **Commentary**

90. Standards have been maintained at the level noted at the previous inspection and remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The previous inspection found that insufficient teaching time was allocated to the subject and this has been rectified. The curriculum for religious education is taught in full across all three strands and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall, in all areas. The teaching of major events in other faiths and explorations of beliefs and rituals of other faith groups make a sound contribution to the pupils' cultural development. Discussion and time for reflection in the lessons seen support the pupils' spiritual and moral development well. These contribute soundly to the development of their speaking and listening skills, although this area is not identified in lesson plans.
91. Although curriculum plans follow a thematic approach, there are too few links with other subjects and teachers do not fully exploit the opportunities offered to link work to the development of writing skills. There are some exceptions to this, notably in Year 6, where some extended writing enables the pupils to interpret stories and languages of different faith groups to help them understand their own experiences.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is variable, but is satisfactory overall. Teachers' expectations in lessons are often 'comfortable' rather than high and this leads to lack of urgency in the pace of learning. The over-reliance on worksheets and copying from the board as a means of recording pupils' knowledge limits their achievement, especially of more able pupils. It also makes it difficult for teachers to assess pupils' understanding and standards in religious education with any accuracy. There is no formal whole-school assessment process for religious education and this is unsatisfactory. In a very good lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher's enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge, together with her high expectations and very good class management, involved the pupils totally in making a Hindu home shrine. Their knowledge of Hindu gods was impressive. Time given for meditation enabled the pupils to absorb the smells and sights of a holy place, which they did with due solemnity. Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies and is unsatisfactory where it does not offer suggestions for improvement, thus preventing the pupils from developing an accurate idea of how successful they are at learning.
93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and gives good support to her colleagues. She has a good overview of standards and achievement across the school through her scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils about what they know. However, she is given no time to monitor

lessons because it is not a current focus of the school development plan. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

94. No judgement on provision in design and technology or music can be made because no lessons were seen. Very few **design and technology** lessons were timetabled for the week of the inspection as the curriculum focus this half term is on art and design. Curriculum maps show that sufficient time is now planned for the development of pupils' design and technology skills, a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. From the limited amount of work on display and in pupils' books, standards match expectations at both key stages. Achievement and progress are satisfactory, which is also an improvement since the previous inspection when progress at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. The moving pictures made by Year 1 pupils and the work in progress in Year 6 on battery-driven fairground rides are average in quality. This, and work in sketch books, shows that pupils' skills and understanding of the design process are in line with national expectations. Good attention is paid to researching a design brief and there is evidence that ICT is used effectively in this.
95. In **music**, no lessons were seen, but Year 6 pupils sing tunefully and with good diction in French lessons and in assemblies. The school has satisfactorily sorted out the amount of time devoted to music, which was an issue at the previous inspection. Teachers' skills and confidence in teaching music have been satisfactorily supported by demonstration lessons from the local education authority. The curriculum is enriched well by opportunities to see professional musicians in a variety of venues. A small number of pupils benefit from tuition from peripatetic musicians.

### **Art and design**

Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for pupils to use their drawing skills in other subjects is good.
- Provision for pupils to study and use three-dimensional skills needs attention.
- Standards displayed by recognised talented pupils exceed national expectations in the use of drawing skills and colour.

### **Commentary**

96. Standards are in line with what would be expected nationally at Years 2 and 6. All pupils make satisfactory progress in drawing and colour work throughout the school and they achieve satisfactorily. In all classes there are a few pupils whose talents are recognised and their abilities are fostered and developed by the co-ordinator. The last inspection report stated that drawing was the strongest feature of pupils' abilities. This remains the case, but the use of colour, especially pastels, is now also a strong feature of pupils' work. Drawing continues to be used effectively in other subjects, particularly to illustrate work in science, geography and history. Improvement is therefore satisfactory.
97. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are eager to talk about it. They are not afraid to experiment with colour and can

explain how colours were mixed and how various effects achieved. They are not so confident in saying how their work might be improved. It was good to see that the studies of famous painters had resulted in images being produced in the style of those painters, rather than in the mere copying of their works. This was particularly evident as pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class prepared to paint a study of Stalybridge in the style of David Hockney. In Year 2, pupils were helped to observe the colour, texture and shading on fruits before carefully mixing and matching paints. In this lesson there were good cross-curricular links with science which helped pupils to further their understanding. Sketchbooks are used well in the school. In addition to developing techniques and trying them out, pupils are encouraged to collect images, patterns and textures that interest them as possible inspiration for their own future work. Owing to the observational skills approach to drawing, younger pupils in particular gained spiritual moments, for example as they studied brightly coloured peppers and the cross-sections of fruits.

98. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but there is the potential for them to be good. The part-time position of the co-ordinator in the school does not enable her to monitor standards of teaching and learning in classrooms or to share fully her expertise with other members of staff. She does run a successful lunchtime club to sustain and nurture the talents of pupils identified by her colleagues. Resources are checked regularly and are of good quality. The subject makes only a limited contribution to cultural development. For example, the range of painters studied is narrow and could be widened to include both artists from other ethnic groups and to promote the study of religious and secular art from other periods. This would broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultural traditions. The co-ordinator has above average subject knowledge, a factor that has contributed to the school winning a number of local art awards.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has gained the Activemark.
- Coaches are used very well to support pupils' learning.
- The scheme of work is only just being introduced.

### **Commentary**

99. Standards at Year 2 and 6 are in line with those expected nationally and achievement is satisfactory. Virtually every Year 6 pupil can swim the nationally expected distance of 25 metres before they leave the school.
100. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but are very good when provided by sports coaches. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the effect of exercise on their bodies because all staff stress this aspect. Teachers make satisfactory use of pupils to demonstrate good movements and skills to the rest of the class. In addition the Year 5 teacher provides good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performance and this accelerates pupils' learning. Year 1 and 2 pupils are very keen to participate in the athletics lessons taken by the sports coach and they show a very

good sense of self-discipline in these lessons. Activities are challenging, proceed at a good pace and progress is acknowledged and rewarded.

101. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is improvement since the previous inspection. The school has tackled the issue about standards in dance, which were a cause for concern at the previous inspection. The development of the accommodation has improved the school's facilities considerably and sorted out health and safety issues in the hall. However, it has taken a very long time to put a full scheme of work in place to support teachers in their planning and so challenge pupils. There is good liaison with outside agencies, and particularly with the local high school, which benefits pupils' achievement in swimming and sports. Boys and girls can join in all sporting activities.
102. The Activemark is given to schools which show a strong commitment to the benefits of physical activity and offer good provision. The school has benefited from the extra resources, which are part of the national sport and play initiatives.

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

Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has gained national awards to support this area.
- Pupils' views are sought regularly.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship skills.

### **Commentary**

103. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are involved in change and their voices are heard in the school. They are given regular questionnaires and give their views freely through class and council meetings and circle time. Year 6 pupils get good opportunities to chair meetings, for instance when voting on the best science books. They become prefects and sort out their own rotas and take responsibility. As part of the school's ECO council, pupils throughout the school develop their citizenship skills well through picking up litter, switching off lights and recycling materials. They develop a good awareness of healthy living through lessons and through Year 5 pupils running a 'healthy snacks' scheme.
104. Teaching and learning are good and based on a good curriculum, which is enriched by visits from the mayor and by workshops. Issues are sensitively handled by class teachers, as when Year 6 pupils discussed their worries about transition to secondary school. Sex education and drugs awareness are handled well through the curriculum.
105. Leadership and management are good and shared between several members of staff. The co-ordinator has put a satisfactory scheme of work and resources in place.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<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>4</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	5
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	4
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).*