

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS' CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106109

Headteacher: Mrs J Gray

Lead inspector: Mr A Markham

Dates of inspection: 27 - 29 June 2005

Inspection number: 267956

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: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 137

School address: Marriott Street
Stockport
Cheshire
Postcode SK1 3PJ

Telephone number: 0161 480 4742
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Mike Eveson

Date of previous inspection: July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Thomas' C of E Primary School is a smaller than average voluntary controlled primary school situated in the centre of Stockport. There are 106 boys and girls in the main school who are taught in four classes with mixed ages. In addition there is a nursery class with 31 children who attend part-time. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The main ethnic groups are Pakistani and Bangladeshi and the main languages spoken by the families are Urdu and Bengali. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and six pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Their main difficulties are moderate learning problems, social/emotional/behavioural problems, speech and communication difficulties and specific learning problems (dyslexia).

The level of mobility of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is well above that in other primary schools and the proportion of children eligible for free school meals is above average. Children's levels of attainment on entry to the school are well below average.

The school is involved in the Stockport Excellence Cluster. (An initiative to support the raising of standards.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1390	A Markham	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education
19557	E Halls	Lay inspector	
30724	D Hiscock	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Religious education
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs Science Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Thomas' CE Primary School is an improving school which provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. The headteacher leads the school well and there is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and the raising of standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's clear educational vision is giving a strong focus to improvement.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils make a good start to their learning.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all groups of pupils are fully included in the experiences the school offers.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Standards in writing are not high enough.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well below those expected.
- The higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not enable them to understand how to improve.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The key issues identified have been addressed with varying degrees of success. The curriculum has improved and good attention is now given to all subjects. Standards in science have improved, but, although a high emphasis has been given to improving the quality of pupils' writing and their skills in ICT, standards are still too low. Children make a good start to their learning because provision in the Nursery is now very good. The work of governors has improved and they now monitor the school's performance closely and are increasingly involved in setting the direction of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' performance in national tests fluctuates year-on-year because of the small sized groups. Over the last four years the Year 2 pupils' performance in national tests has improved overall in reading and mathematics, but in writing their performance has consistently been well below the level expected and sometimes in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. In this time the performance of Year 6 pupils has also improved at a rate above that nationally overall, but there has been some variation between subjects. Standards in science have steadily risen and in 2004 were around the national average and well above those in similar schools. Standards in mathematics have shown a slight improvement overall and in 2004, although they were well below national averages, they compared satisfactorily with those in similar schools. In English, standards have fallen in recent years, markedly so in 2004 when standards were in the bottom five per cent of both all schools nationally and similar schools.

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

mathematics	D	E	E	C
science	D	E	C	A

*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.*

Children enter the Nursery with well below average skills. They make good progress and achieve well in the nursery and reception classes, but, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is below the levels expected in all areas of learning apart from personal, social and emotional development and creative development. Throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils make steady progress because of the school's determined efforts to overcome the significant barriers to learning presented by the high rate of pupil mobility and the increasing number of pupils with special learning needs. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are around average in science, but below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average. These pupils have had a period of disruption because of teacher absence, but there are now signs that standards are improving. In ICT, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are well below the levels expected because not enough use is made of the computers in the ICT suite and in classrooms. In other subjects pupils' achievement is below average overall. Pupils with special educational needs, and the few with English as an additional language, make good progress. However, some of the more able pupils are not achieving their full potential.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have good attitudes to work and the majority behave well. Attendance levels are well below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some very good teaching in the Nursery. Teachers use an effective range of teaching strategies to make lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy their learning and generally work hard. Support staff are used well to ensure that children with learning difficulties are given equal access to all areas of the curriculum, but higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. A wide range of activities enriches the curriculum and there is a very good programme of support for learning outside the school day. Resource provision for ICT has improved significantly, but its use across the curriculum remains weak. Pupils are very well cared for. Their progress in learning is carefully monitored in order to plan appropriate support and guidance, but teachers' marking is not effectively used to ensure that pupils understand what they must do to improve. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership. She has a clear vision for the school's advancement and sets a good example in terms of including all pupils and meeting their diverse needs. She is successfully creating a team approach within the staff with a commitment to improvement. Governance is good; governors support the school well and have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school and the provision made for their children. Most pupils have very positive views about the school and enjoy taking on responsibility.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing.
- Raise standards in ICT and develop its use across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the work set for higher attaining pupils is suitably challenging.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are below those expected, but are gradually improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make a good start to their education and achieve well particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Standards in writing throughout the school are not high enough even though they have improved in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards are well below those expected in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

Commentary

1. Results in national tests are generally well below national averages. Performance fluctuates because of the small size of groups in the school, but there has been a gradual improvement in recent years overall. In the national tests for pupils in Year 2 performance in reading and mathematics has risen steadily since 2001. Performance in writing was also rising until 2004 when there was a dip in results. The pupils' performance compares more favourably to that in similar schools. In the last three years results in reading and mathematics have generally been above those in similar schools, but pupils' performance in writing is much weaker and is generally well below average. In 2004, standards in science, as shown by teacher assessments, were average compared with similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (15.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.1 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.1 (14.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Performance in national tests at Year 6 in English and mathematics has generally been well below national averages over the last four years. There has been a slight upward trend in performance in mathematics in this period and results were also improving slightly in English until 2004 when they dipped markedly and were in the bottom five per cent of schools. Performance in science has improved greatly over the last four years and in 2004 was average compared to all schools nationally and well above that in schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. In English and mathematics, whilst performance also generally compares better with similar schools, it is not as strong and in 2004 performance in English

compared poorly to that in similar schools. The low performance in English is in the main the consequence of the high proportion of pupils with special learning needs in the subject and the fact that very few pupils achieve the higher levels in tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.0 (26.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.0 (23.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (25.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The majority of children enter the nursery with levels of attainment well below what is expected. Because of the teaching they receive they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and achieve well in almost every area of learning, but because of their low level skills in speaking and listening, overall they are still working at below average levels at the start of Year 1. The exceptions to this are in their personal, social and emotional development and creative development where children achieve expected standards.
4. Teachers work hard to raise standards. A determined attempt is being made to raise pupils' self-esteem and make learning interesting by presenting them with a stimulating range of enrichment activities. However, the pupils' poor language skills and limited background experiences together with the high rate of movement of families into and out of the area, has a marked effect on standards in the school. Throughout the school the majority of pupils make steady progress overall and most are now achieving at least satisfactorily, but higher attaining pupils are frequently not challenged enough and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Their needs are identified early and appropriate action is taken. Teachers make effective use of the high level of support staff and, as a result, many of these pupils achieve the nationally expected level in national tests by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic groups with English as an additional language make good progress and their achievement is similar to their peers. They are given good support, both within the class and by a teacher from the ethnic minority achievement team.
5. In English, standards are below average. The weakest area is the quality of pupils' writing and in addition their handwriting and presentation of work is untidy. The school is aware of this and a high emphasis is being given to developing pupils' writing skills. This has resulted in some improvement, particularly in Years 3 to 6, but standards are still too low. One of the main difficulties is the weak speaking and listening skills of many pupils. As a result, their descriptive language lacks depth, as they are not confident in expressing themselves orally. Standards in reading throughout the school are better and in general are close to average.
6. In mathematics, although pupils make satisfactory progress, the work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are below average throughout the school. Pupils' numeracy skills are not well developed and a high proportion of pupils are working at levels below and sometimes well below that expected for their age group.
7. In science, pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy the practical aspects of the subject and make good progress. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2, but by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are average compared to those expected. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of the need to make tests 'fair' and are developing an awareness of a wide range of topics and scientific vocabulary.

8. Standards in ICT are well below those expected. The computer suite has been re-sited and improved, but has only been available for use in the last term and pupils have consequently had little opportunity to benefit from regular lessons to develop their basic skills. As a result,

only limited attention has been given to many aspects of the subject and pupils' skills are consequently at an early stage of development in aspects such as the use of multi-media presentations, databases and spreadsheets. Computers in classrooms are often idle during lessons and not enough use is made of ICT across the curriculum.

9. **The standards achieved by pupils in other subjects are generally below those expected**, although, in the lessons seen in physical education, pupils' skills in games were around average, and in art and design the work on display indicates that standards are also around average. In religious education, standards are around average compared to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school and they behave well. Their spiritual, moral, and social development is good overall. Attendance is very low.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with others are good and newcomers quickly make friendships.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning activities and work hard.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are developed well.
- The school's efforts to improve attendance are excellent and there has been an improvement this year.
- The pupils' personal, social and moral development are strengths.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.4	School data	1.7
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.

10. Whilst attendance is very low compared with the national average, the school works very closely with the education welfare service and does everything it can to improve pupils' attendance. The majority of parents ensure good attendance but a small minority do not and appropriate action is being taken to rectify this. Pupils feel safe and secure and are enthusiastic about lessons and school life. They show a great deal of interest in their work and involve themselves fully in the wider range of activities. Children in the Foundation Stage are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals¹ in personal, social and emotional development.
11. Pupils behave well and demonstrate increasing levels of self-control. Staff have high expectations for behaviour. On the rare occasions when behaviour is less appropriate it is always challenged with the result that there is little disruption to learning. There is a positive approach to behaviour management and pupils value the rewards system. Bullying is rare and any incident involving potential bullying or racial harassment is

¹ Early learning goals: The standards expected by the time children complete the reception year.

investigated thoroughly and dealt with effectively. There has been one exclusion during the past year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	125	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

12. Relationships in the school are supportive and harmonious. Pupils' confidence increases as they move up the school. Their view of themselves and others develops well because staff value them, make time to listen and praise effort and achievement by giving rewards. They are self-controlled and are becoming more self-assured. Staff are strong role models. Pupils engage well in the range of responsibilities given to them and carry them out willingly and with pride. The playground buddies system is particularly effective when newcomers first start at the school.

13. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils become more self-aware and gain an understanding of the world and their own place in it. The quality of collective worship is good and contributes well to spiritual development. Pupils understand and discuss school rules, distinguish right from wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. They have an emerging understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely effects on others, while showing concern and compassion. The staff and pupils conscientiously uphold the school's caring code of conduct. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in their lessons and the curriculum is enhanced by additional activities and learning opportunities involving different groups that help children understand and value the diverse society they live in.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and is complemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities, which make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Links with parents are satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are soundly used to guide planning for lessons and to check that pupils are on track to achieve realistic targets matched to their ability and prior attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their first years in school and particularly so in their personal skills.
- Teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs but the majority of more able pupils are not challenged enough.
- Effective features of teaching ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and know what they are to learn.
- The school's assessment procedures and effective response to any underachievement mean that children learn at a sound pace though marking does not help pupils understand how they could improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	12	10	0	0	0

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

14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children in the Nursery get off to a flying start in their education because teaching is very good and they are presented with some exciting and relevant activities indoors and out, that help them to learn quickly and independently. They then settle quickly into reception where the focus of planned activities continues to develop children's personal skills, but there is less rigour in the challenges set for their needs and progress slows to a satisfactory rate.
15. During the inspection a number of the lessons seen in Years 1 to 6 were of good quality, but a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the overall quality of teaching in these years is satisfactory. In most lessons teachers make good use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboard, to ensure that tasks are interesting and challenging. In the more effective lessons a key feature is the clear communication by the teacher of what the pupils will learn and the teachers' willingness to let pupils have the chance to explain their thinking. This enables pupils to work things out for themselves. On the downside, teachers' marking of pupils' work contributes little to pupils' understanding of how to improve. Nevertheless, the school's assessment procedures track pupils' progress towards year group targets well so that dips in pupils' progress are identified and buoyed up by a raft of support to smooth learning and progress. This is a robust improvement and augers well for the school's next plans for improvement in teaching and learning.
16. Teachers' planning generally ensures that activities are suitably matched to the capability of pupils. Teachers cope well with the high rate of pupil mobility and modify their lessons well to meet the needs of pupils who enter school other than at the start of the year. Many of these pupils settle well and feel at home in the school and say so. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is well focused on the targets in their individual learning plans, which are clear and realistic. Teachers use teaching assistants effectively to provide another layer of discussion and reinforcement to help these pupils, and others who have gaps in their knowledge, to understand new ideas. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as another language have additional support and they achieve similarly to their peers.

However, activities are often not challenging enough for the more capable pupils. For these, the level of challenge could be greater so that that they reach a higher level of attainment.

17. The school is aware that during this last year problems with teacher absence have caused discontinuity in teaching, particularly in the Year 5/6 class. A determined effort has been made to keep this to a minimum, but pupils' progress has been adversely affected to some extent. The situation has been monitored very carefully to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of their studies. Teachers' knowledge has been enhanced and much additional support for pupils' learning has helped to boost progress in English, mathematics and science. As a result a substantial proportion of the pupils have made reasonable gains in their learning when their attainment is compared to the level they reached at the end of Year 2.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in the Foundation Stage, providing suitably for pupils' needs. There are good opportunities for enrichment and very good support for learning outside the school day. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
- There is very good support for learning outside the school day.
- The activities presented to higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenging enough.
- Not enough attention is given to aspects of the ICT curriculum.

Commentary

18. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good overall, with a particular richness in the nursery, and this meets the needs of young children well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
19. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and meets all subject requirements. The school now has an overall plan of what is to be taught in each subject in each year and this has resulted in a satisfactory improvement in the breadth and balance of the curriculum. A good improvement in the provision for the investigative element of science since the last inspection has led to the raising of standards in the subject. However, whilst resources and provision in ICT have improved, there are areas of the ICT curriculum, such as the use of spreadsheets, databases and multi-media presentations, that need further development.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has introduced a good range of strategies and intensive support programmes to meet the pupils' needs effectively. The very good level of support in class from a generous number of skilled support staff helps children to achieve well. However, many of the activities presented to the higher attaining pupils are not challenging enough and this limits their achievement.
21. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, which is embedded in the curriculum. Sex education and drugs awareness are dealt with satisfactorily through the science curriculum and through information from visitors to school, though the school is looking to extend the

curriculum in these important areas through specific lessons and the involvement of parents. Healthy eating is supported well by contributions from the Dental Health Team and the school nurse.

22. There are good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils can participate in a wide range of sports, including judo, short tennis and sailing, with guidance from specialist coaches. A good range of visitors provides interesting experiences through drama workshops, theatre groups and

The Bugman. Provision for learning outside the school day is very good, with residential visits to France and London and a valuable Breakfast Club.

23. A suitable number of qualified teachers are employed to deliver the curriculum. A very good number of support staff, including skilled classroom assistants, a learning mentor and a behaviour support assistant, make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation and resources are good overall.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good quality care and support for pupils overall. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are satisfactory. The school involves pupils well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles.
- Staff know the pupils' individual needs well and provide very good care for each of them.
- Pupils' relationships with staff are very good.
- The quality of, and support for, pupils' personal development are strong.
- Very good support is available for pupils with additional or special educational needs.

Commentary

24. Since the last inspection, high standards of care and welfare have been maintained and good improvements have been made to the support available. Staff are vigilant in safeguarding pupils' welfare. It is clear that in this school every child does matter and this means that pupils have the greatest trust in staff and relationships are strong. Pupils feel very safe and happy. The determined approach to providing effective pupil support is enabling all pupils to benefit equally from what the school has to offer and enjoy their learning.
25. Child protection and the arrangements for health and well-being are very good. If they have a problem, pupils are confident they can go to any member of staff and get help. They know who to go to when they are feeling unwell or need first aid treatment. Pupils confidently talk to staff, who listen carefully and always provide help or reassurance.
26. Overall, there are satisfactory procedures and practices for monitoring pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Staff cater for the individual needs of each pupil very well because they know the children well. They use tracking systems to monitor the progress of every pupil, particularly pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. This has a significant impact on the development of pupils' personal qualities. Consequently pupils are becoming increasingly independent, self confident and aware of healthy and safe living. However, pupils are not fully involved in target setting or knowledgeable about their own targets.
27. The newly formed school council ensures the views of pupils are regularly obtained and the school takes their concerns seriously and acts upon their suggestions. The school equips pupils well with the skills necessary to move on to the next stage in their

education and become good citizens. Induction arrangements for pupils ensure that all are assured of a caring and sensitive beginning to their life at this school. For the youngest children, this is based on good opportunities for parents and their children to get to know the school, supported by good information and close links with the pre-school prior to starting. For some pupils who start school at other times, the thorough assessment of each child ensures that an informed picture is identified early, they are welcomed and they settle quickly.

28. Pupils with special needs are very carefully assessed and staff diligently follow individual education plans. The coordinator ensures pupils who require further support have access to it. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive additional support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with the community and with other schools is good. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school employs a good range of initiatives to involve parents with varying success.
- The information for parents about the work of the school is satisfactory.
- The wide range of effective links, with schools and the local community, has a positive impact on pupils' learning experiences.

Commentary

29. The school works hard to encourage a strong partnership with parents based on mutual trust and confidence. The school is approachable, welcoming to parents and fosters good relationships with them. Consequently, parents are encouraged to come into school and join in special activities, for example the cookery club where they watch their children preparing and cooking a meal and then take home the ingredients to make this at home. The school is keen to seek, value and act on parents' views and provides good opportunities to help parents support their children's learning by:
- Providing literacy and numeracy curriculum information for each year group.
 - Setting up a good range of courses for parents and regular in-school events that help parents understand how and what their children will be taught and how to help them at home.
 - Sending postcards home to notify parents of pupils' achievements.
 - The use of homework planners for both infants and juniors.
30. Parents are kept informed by letters from the headteacher, but are not sent information about the topics being studied and given ideas about how they can be involved. The pupils' annual progress reports are satisfactory and some help parents to understand what their children need to do next. Information for parents whose children have special educational needs is very good.
31. The school's relations with other schools and the community are good. Pupils benefit greatly from the many and varied community links built up by the school, including the close links with the church. Close relations with the playgroup on the school site ensure that induction arrangements for children are good. Parents who have been involved in the 'Share' programme have appreciated the opportunities to find out about how their children are learning and how they can support learning at home. The links with other primary schools are effective and enhance learning opportunities. The school's close links with Stockport College and nearby secondary schools, together with the use of a range of visitors from the community, including the police, local nurse and fire brigade, enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership of the headteacher is good. She is successfully developing a committed team approach within the staff with a determined approach to overcoming the barriers to learning presented by the pupils' well below average attainment on entry, a high rate of pupil mobility and the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear educational vision for the school with a strong emphasis on raising standards.
- The governing body has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a result of their effective monitoring and support.
- There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The school is developing effective systems to monitor and evaluate its work in order to improve.
- A strong emphasis is given to developing the quality of teaching through well-planned professional development of staff.
- Coordination is developing but is less strong in the non-core subjects.
- The school improvement plan is a useful tool for improvement, but does not clearly specify the action to be taken in order to fully enable progress to be monitored.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school, ensuring that there is a clear educational direction with a commitment to improving the quality of education and raising the standards attained by pupils. Shortly after her appointment two years ago the school faced closure as a result of reorganisation in the area. She has worked hard to overcome the low staff morale this created and there is now a developing sense of teamwork across all the staff. Relationships in the school are good and there is a very caring approach to the welfare and development of pupils with a strong emphasis on equality of opportunity. The headteacher's determined efforts have been much appreciated by staff, governors, parents and pupils. Standards in English, mathematics and science fluctuate, but have shown an overall upward trend in recent years. This has been achieved despite a period of significant staffing instability. However, although standards are improving, there is still much to be done before all pupils are reaching their full potential, particularly the more capable ones.
33. The school is well managed. Procedures for evaluating the work of the school are effectively organised. Strategic planning is well-focused on the raising of standards and the school improvement plan is consequently a good reflection of the school's current needs. For example, the school has recognised the need to increase the challenge presented to the higher attaining pupils and that standards in writing are not high enough. The plan is well drafted, but does not give sufficient detail of the action to be taken to fully enable progress to be monitored and evaluated. High priority is given to continuing professional development of teachers with an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is also a determined approach to developing teachers' subject leadership and management skills. This has resulted in effective coordination of English and mathematics, but the coordination of other subjects is less well developed. The school is involved in a Local Education Authority

intensive support programme and an Excellence Cluster initiative to support the raising of standards. The headteacher and governors are managing this provision effectively.

34. The performance management process is used well. A close link exists between the objectives set for teachers and the priorities in the school improvement plan. Teachers benefit from regular review of their performance and work hard to achieve the objectives that they are set. An emphasis is given to ensuring work-life balance and the school is well set to meet the requirement to remodel the workload of the workforce and provide planning, preparation and assessment time for staff.
35. Formal assessment procedures are good and pupils' attainments and progress are tracked and analysed thoroughly in order to plan additional support. As a result, the support given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is well organised and effective. The effective manner in which support staff are used is an important factor in the good progress that these pupils make. However, the higher attaining pupils are less well supported and often the work they are set is not challenging enough to enable them to fulfil their potential.
36. The governors effectively support the headteacher and staff. They carry out their statutory duties well and have a committed approach to supporting and challenging the school. Governors are linked to a teacher and meet with them to review their work as coordinators. This gives the governors a good awareness of the work being carried out in the school, the areas of strength and those areas in need of development. Financial management is satisfactory and the budget is closely monitored. The weaknesses from the auditor's report have been addressed. Spending is closely linked to priorities in the school improvement plan that accurately reflects the educational needs of the pupils. The governors work closely with the headteacher to ensure that the principles of best value apply in all aspects of the school's work. They have rightly made a conscious decision to use the larger than average carry forward from 2004 to ensure that staffing levels are maintained in order to ensure good quality support for pupils and to make improvements to the building.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	463,660
Total expenditure	404,127
Expenditure per pupil	2,768

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,695
Balance carried forward to the next	83,228

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. When children start in the Nursery, their attainments vary but are well below what is usual for their age overall, particularly in speaking and listening skills. The good induction arrangements, and close links with the playgroup on site, ensure that the children who attend the nursery part time, settle quickly. The curriculum is good overall. It is very good in the Nursery, where a very interesting range of practical activities encourages good attitudes to learning, and satisfactory in Reception, though the range of activities is not always well matched to children's needs. Resources are of good quality and are used well to assist learning. The indoor accommodation is bright and attractive, with vibrant displays to enhance and celebrate children's learning. The school has invested considerable resources into providing a very good outdoor area to considerably enhance learning in the Nursery. However, the reception class is restricted to 30 minutes access each day and this limits children's learning opportunities.
38. Teaching is good overall. It is very good in the Nursery, where the well-planned activities have a very clear purpose and stimulate a desire to learn. Sound teaching in the reception class provides for children's steady progress though standards remain below average as children start in Year 1. All adults work well together as a team. There are good procedures for assessing children's progress, though these are not always used effectively to plan work for different groups. However, the good level of support staff and early identification of children's needs enable children with special educational needs to achieve well. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well and consequently good improvement in provision has occurred since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very interesting range of activities in the nursery encourages children to want to come to school.
- Relationships are good.
- An effective system of Golden Rules and rewards promotes good attitudes and behaviour.
- Staff give good attention to developing independence in children.

Commentary

39. A high priority is rightly given to this area of learning which permeates all aspects of school life. The very good range of interesting activities on offer in the Nursery helps children to want to come to school and to develop a good attitude to learning from an early age. Teaching is very good so children achieve very well. They make very good progress to reach the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The good relationships between all adults and children provide a secure environment in which children flourish. The staff work well together and this provides a good

example for children to follow. Simple 'Golden Rules' are clearly explained and consistently applied so children know what to do, for example, listening to each other, putting up their hands and sitting on the carpet at the end of group activities. Independence is encouraged from an early age with nursery children putting their card on their peg when they arrive, placing their own paper on the easel for painting, and reception children moving quickly to their independent activity without a fuss.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Children develop a good attitude to reading.
- Letter sounds are not taught systematically.
- Extensive use of worksheets in reception inhibits the development of independent writing skills.

Commentary

40. The vast majority of children start school with very limited language and literacy skills, particularly in speaking and listening. Teaching is good and so children make good progress and achieve well, but standards are below the expected level by the time they enter Year 1. All adults promote speaking and listening skills very well by conversing with the children at every opportunity. Children with speech difficulties are referred quickly to specialist agencies for support. In the Nursery, adults join in activities such as Bob the Builder's Workshop to encourage children to speak as they play. In reception, children with immature speaking skills are encouraged to retell stories, for example, using flannel characters to assist in the retelling of the story of the Three Pigs.
41. A good emphasis is placed on reading through regular story time sessions and the ready availability of books. Children take a book home regularly to share with their parents and they develop a good attitude to reading. By the end of Reception higher attaining children are reading confidently at above the level expected for their age, whilst lower attaining children are keen to discuss the pictures in books and can retell a familiar story in detail. However, not enough attention is given to the systematic teaching of letter sounds to help children to sound out new words.
42. The development of writing skills is satisfactory. Children in the nursery learn to make marks, with many progressing to writing their own name. Children make sound progress in writing in reception from copying the teacher's sentence to making a good attempt at writing their own. However, the extensive use of worksheets inhibits the development of independent writing. Progress is most marked in more creative writing activities such as making their own book of houses or writing a list of food for the Hungry Caterpillar.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting skills are promoted well in the Nursery.
- In Reception, work is not always well matched to children's needs.

Commentary

43. Whilst children's achievement is satisfactory, standards are below those expected by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall and children make steady progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. Children's use of mathematical vocabulary and counting skills are developed well in the nursery through a good range of practical tasks that are carefully planned to suit the needs of different groups of children. For

example, they learned to count to three by placing three orange segments on a plate and consolidated this by then counting three biscuits. The teacher skilfully raised the level of challenge for higher attaining children by asking them to work out how many pieces there would be if she put two more on the plate. In Reception, children make satisfactory gains in their learning because of the good level of adult support. However, activities are not always well matched to the needs of young children. For example, in a lesson where children were asked to identify which tube had three clips in it by shaking, the attention of lower attaining children wandered and they became restless because they did not understand the task. Whilst lessons in the week of the inspection showed differences in the tasks for different groups, examination of children's books shows a considerable reliance on a similar worksheet for all children, indicating that work is not always well matched to specific needs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside area is very well planned and organised to extend the knowledge and understanding of children in the Nursery, though access for children in Reception is limited.
- Children have good experiences of making models.

Commentary

44. There has been a very good improvement in the outdoor accommodation since the last inspection and this is helping to extend the range of experiences on offer in this area of learning. Teaching is good and children achieve well, though fewer children than average reach the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1. In a very good outdoor session nursery children made good gains in their learning through rolling cars on a ramp down a hillock to see how far they travelled. They learned to count as they shovelled stones into a wheelbarrow in the Builder's Yard and stretched their imagination and understanding in the small world play area. In all the activities adults took every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary well. Unfortunately, reception children have access to this area for only a short time each day and this limits their experience. Children gain good experience of construction toys and making models. This was seen in reception when children made good houses for the Three Pigs using wood, straw and bricks. They judged the suitability of each material and were confident in using glue to join different materials. Children in the reception class benefit from using the computer suite to develop their skills.

PHYSICAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

45. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in these areas of learning as no lessons were observed. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills through using a good range of tools and implements such as pencils, brushes and small hammers. They show a good sense of space when using the outdoor area and have good access to a range of wheeled toys. Reception children use the large hall to develop their physical skills. Work on display shows that children's creative development skills are around those expected for their age. Children in the Nursery produce very good pictures in the style of Monet using pastels

and their painted self-portraits are very detailed. Children in Reception draw snails from close observation and have included good detail of the spiral shapes. Children enjoy playing in the imaginative play areas and acting out the story of the Three Pigs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' reading skills and their awareness of what they are to learn in lessons help them to understand what is expected of them.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and more able pupils are not challenged enough in the writing tasks they are set.
- The school identifies pupils' needs well and pupils have personal targets but marking does not help them to understand if they are meeting them.

Commentary

46. The school's results in national tests compare unfavourably with all schools. The standards of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are below average overall, but show an improvement on the standards attained in the national test in 2004. However, bearing in mind the level at which pupils enter the school, the high number of pupils with special educational needs, and the high rate of pupil mobility, achievement by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is satisfactory. The school is putting a high level of effort into raising standards and the current pupils' work indicates that this is having a positive impact. The school's determined approach to raising standards is reflected in the progress made by the Year 6 pupils who have remained in the school since they were in Year 2, which is good in both reading and writing. However, few pupils achieve the higher levels in tests. The school recognises, and the inspection findings agree, that in writing in particular, all pupils could be challenged more and especially the more able pupils.
47. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below those expected. A strong emphasis is placed on improving pupils' skills in this area in order to also impact on the quality of their writing. Teachers use questions well and encourage pupils to make extended responses. Most pupils make good use of time planned to help them to describe or explain to others in lessons. Throughout the school pupils are gaining some important skills for learning when they exchange views with a partner in lessons.
48. Most of the pupils enjoy the books they read, though pupils in Years 5 and 6 are reliant on the teachers' selection of the "author of the week" to guide their preferences. These pupils have had an unsettling number of different teachers this year but this has been largely countered by the additional support the school has provided to boost their knowledge about reading and writing so they have a broadly typical breadth of knowledge. For example, most know many of the features and techniques used by authors to write information and fiction. Their skills of applying this knowledge are not as robust. Most can structure a piece of writing effectively because of the good emphasis the school places on this to support writing. However, many pupils have an inconsistent style of handwriting, gaps in their writing skills and more able pupils use too naïve a range of punctuation in the stories they write, which hampers their achievement. Sound teaching in Years 1 and 2 provides a reasonable breadth of writing, but there is an over emphasis on writing simple sentences rather than a richer

style of writing. Assessment is helpful in tracking the progress that pupils make, but stops short of ensuring that more able pupils make faster progress.

49. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Year 3/4 class the teacher's knowledge and methods meet the needs of individual pupils well. Teachers plan their work consistently, explain what pupils are to learn in the lesson and expect them to check what they have learned at the end

of each lesson. Pupils enjoy this. For those pupils with special educational needs, the support of teaching assistants helps them to deal with their work with greater confidence and to rehearse what they want to say. They do this well.

50. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The subject coordinator recently left the school and the headteacher has temporarily taken over leadership and management of the subject. She is successfully ensuring that the impetus to improvement is not halted even though progress has been slowed by significant staffing changes and absences.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils' use of literacy in other subjects is satisfactory. The school strives hard to widen the scope of pupils' experiences so that the qualities of language used are enriched. However, there is some way to go and the school is realistic in its approach and direction. Although pupils make sound progress in their reading, the richness of literature and magical effects of language are not used well enough yet to show pupils how to write for themselves. This hampers their achievement. There is some use of ICT, but not enough to make a difference to the work of the more capable pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are gradually rising and the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily, but pupils' attainment is still below average throughout the school.
- Teachers make effective use of teaching assistants to support those pupils with special learning needs, but the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to mathematics.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not indicate how improvement can be made.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in learning mathematics.

Commentary

52. Results in national tests fluctuate as a result of the variation in the number of pupils with special needs in the small sized groups. However, a gradual improvement in the performance of pupils in the tests at Year 2 has occurred over the last four years and in 2004 results were around the national average and above those in similar schools. This improvement is less pronounced in the performance of pupils in the tests at Year 6, but results in 2004 showed an improvement on the performance in 2003 and initial information about the results in 2005 show that this improvement has continued. However, few pupils attain the higher levels in both year groups. The current standards of pupils are below average at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils begin Year 1 with below average abilities overall and the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily, but the achievement of more capable pupils is limited because work is generally not challenging enough to meet their needs. Those pupils with special learning needs make good progress because they are supported well by adults in the classroom and the pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

53. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but, although elements of good practice are found across the school, there are areas of weakness that adversely impact on pupils learning. Teachers tell the pupils what the objectives of the lesson are and generally use questions well to ensure that pupils know what they have to do. For example in a lesson with Years 3 and 4 the teacher was very precise in her questioning of pupils when asking them to work out double 4

then double 40 and double 400. They use resources well to make learning interesting, for example, effective use is made of interactive whiteboards. They have high expectations for behaviour and this has a positive impact in most lessons. Teaching assistants are used effectively in all classes to support learning in a variety of ways. However, staffing difficulties have adversely affected the learning of particular groups of pupils, notably those in the Year 5/6 class, and this has had a detrimental effect on the standards achieved by these pupils. Teachers' lesson planning does not always ensure that the learning needs of the more capable pupils are accurately met. The marking of pupils' books is inconsistent and does not help them to understand how they can improve and work is often untidy because the teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work are not high enough. In addition, little use is made of computers to support pupils' learning of mathematics.

54. Subject leadership and management are good. The curriculum is well planned, although the high emphasis given to number results in some aspects of mathematics, such as shape and measure, receiving minimal attention. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the subject are well organised. Formal assessment procedures are good and enable pupils' attainment to be recorded and individual performance to be tracked. Good data is consequently now available to enable the planning of support for groups of pupils. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, they make some use of charts and graphs to show results in science and design and technology but, in general, this is not a strong feature of the teaching.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in national tests at Year 6.
- There is not enough challenge for potentially higher attaining pupils in Year 2.
- Opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate are improving, though these could be extended further.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

56. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 attain standards that are below average. In the national tests at Year 2, the number of pupils attaining the level expected for their age has improved, but the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is weak, as at the time of the last inspection. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good level of support they receive, this has resulted in the improvement in the number of pupils achieving the level expected for their age. Potentially higher attaining pupils do not

achieve as well as they could because the planned activities do not provide the necessary challenge for them to attain a higher level.

57. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are average for their age and their achievement is good. The current emphasis on the more practical aspects of science has resulted in a good improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in national tests. The high level of support from the headteacher and external agencies has been a crucial factor in the improving standards and greater achievement for all pupils in Year 6.

58. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and pupils learn at a steady pace. There has been a recent change in the organisation of learning in class to enable the teacher to work with a small group at a time on a science activity. This is helping to develop pupils' skills well, for example using a measuring tube for water when testing materials for waterproofing, though this intensive direction from the teacher inhibits the development of pupils' own ideas and independence. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory overall, though there has been considerable variation over the recent past. Older pupils have experienced significant staff changes and interruptions to learning over the past year. However, the school has galvanised significant teaching expertise for this Year 5/6 class, to mitigate the effect of disruption and help them to learn well. This has included intensive support from the headteacher and an advanced skills teacher within the authority, and four specialist workshops. Analysis of pupils' work over the year shows that, though the pattern of work is irregular, the activities are of good quality to enable pupils to make good gains in their understanding.
59. Learning is enhanced by a good range of visits, for example to the Science Museum, and by visitors to the school such as The Bugman. However, the use of ICT is not sufficiently integrated into lessons to make an impact on learning. Assessment procedures are sound overall with specific tasks to test pupils' knowledge throughout the year, though the information is not used to track pupils' progress through the school. Marking of pupils' work is not specific enough to help pupils to improve.
60. The subject is led and managed well. The skilled and knowledgeable coordinator has provided a good model of classroom practice, particularly during the staffing difficulties in Year 5/6. The emphasis on improving opportunities for practical work is helping to raise achievement in Year 3 to Year 6, though more remains to be done in Years 1 and 2. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and have good attitudes to the subject.
- The recently developed computer suite is not used enough by all teachers.
- The contribution of ICT in the learning of other subjects is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

61. At the last inspection, standards were below those expected nationally overall. Standards have fallen and are now well below national expectations by Years 2 and 6. The newly developed computer suite has only recently become available for use and this has slowed progress. As a result, pupils' skills are under-developed and their achievement is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this and a determined effort has been made to improve resources and there are plans to provide in-service training to raise the quality of teaching of the subject.
62. There are indications that standards are set to rise. In the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy working on

computers, but have had very limited opportunities to do so and this is reflected in the low level of expertise they demonstrate. An examination of the work produced by pupils shows that not enough teaching has taken place in the past and pupils have yet to benefit to any great extent from the new computer suite. Most pupils' awareness of the keyboard is well below that expected and they type in instructions slowly. Their word processing skills are adequate, but

their skills in the use of spreadsheets, databases and multi media presentations are well below average. In a lesson with Years 5 and 6, the teacher worked hard to ensure that pupils made reasonable progress in the use of a multi media program but the skills demonstrated were at a very basic level of development. Teachers use the new interactive whiteboards with reasonable confidence and this makes a good contribution to the quality of teaching.

63. The relatively new headteacher is well aware of the potential of ICT and is providing firm leadership in moving the subject forward. A teacher has recently been given responsibility for the leadership and management of the subject and she has a clear view of the developments necessary in order to improve provision. New curriculum guidance has recently been obtained and the coordinator is monitoring teachers' planning to check that coverage of the different aspects of the subject improves. When compared with the school's position at the time of the previous inspection there has been unsatisfactory improvement in the provision for this subject, however, the effective work of the subject coordinator, combined with the interest levels of pupils, is aiding the process of improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The use of ICT in other subjects is very limited and this remains a weakness. During the inspection there were very few examples of pupils using ICT in other subjects. The Year 5/6 pupils are starting to use the PowerPoint program to create a presentation on the Anglo-Saxons in history, but the use of ICT was not a common feature evident in pupils' work. Computers in classrooms are not used enough in lessons, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Consequently, important opportunities are missed to extend the learning of the more able pupils and to provide much-needed practise of reading, writing and number skills, for all pupils.

HUMANITIES

65. Only one lesson was seen in geography and one in history. It is, therefore, not possible to judge the quality of provision in these subjects. Inspectors had discussions with pupils, and looked at teachers' planning and samples of pupils' current work.
66. In **history**, pupils are working below the expected level at Year 2 and Year 6. Whilst all the topics for their year were introduced these were often dealt with at a superficial level. There are some examples of pupils using and developing their literacy skills well, for example Year 6 pupils give different views about Boudicca, written as if they were there. However, the extensive use of worksheets, and cutting and sticking pictures to sequence events inhibits further development of history and literacy skills through the school.
67. In **geography**, pupils are working below the expected level at Year 2 and Year 6. Topics are not covered in sufficient detail to help pupils to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. However, the lesson observed in Year 3/4 and the work in these pupils' books gives a more positive picture. These pupils have studied the environment carefully and produced a good survey of noise around the school and analysed their results to identify quiet and noisier areas. The lesson was well organised with clear explanations so pupils were able to get on quickly. The good use of the interactive whiteboard to display a large world map helped pupils to match the suitcase contents to the country they were visiting.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, which is supported by the regular links with the Church.
- Pupils' understanding and reflection on big ideas is enhanced by the use of the interactive whiteboard and opportunities to talk with each other.

Commentary

68. Achievement of most pupils at the end of Years 2, 4 and 6 is broadly typical of pupils of these ages. There is a refreshing response from pupils to new and interesting knowledge about religion. In the two lessons seen, and the assemblies attended, pupils were interested and responsive to the good breadth of resources and to ideas that opened up conversation productively. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection.
69. Pupils in Year 2 understand that everyone is special and that their views are important in school. In a good lesson where these pupils studied "The Lord's Prayer" there was a huge amount of animated conversation and thoughtful contributions about the meanings of words and phrases. Pupils achieved well and shared their ideas of "heaven", "Our Father" and "Kingdom" with each other well. Some pupils could explain "Hallowed be they name" well. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the skills and confidence to ask questions about the images of wildernesses they see on the interactive white board. They compare and contrast the features of these landscapes well and in doing so gain a deeper understanding of how a Hebrew person might have felt in this Biblical place. Pupils learn about events from a Christian perspective and apt links are made to the practices of other religions by way of comparison. Year 6 pupils learn about the practices of Judaism and Islam and know some of the day-to-day practices that are important to Muslims. Islamic pupils in school share their faith well with others to explain the importance to the faithful of the daily Prayer sessions as well as some facts about the religion. Their studies help the pupils to note the significances of the beliefs held by people other than those who subscribe to Christianity.
70. In the small number of lessons seen teaching and learning were good. One of the strengths in lessons is the way that pupils can explore the facts presented and relate them to their own experiences of life. They achieve well because staff and pupils show respect for the values of others. Pupils learn that religion is part of the lives of many people and that there are differences that mark the journey through life. In assemblies, visits from the vicar involve pupils well in the central message of the day. There is a sound balance between pupils' growing understanding of the beliefs of their own family, that of the faith communities locally and their knowledge and understanding of the three world faiths they study.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator maintains a good overview and has led the work well to implement the newly revised syllabus for Stockport and assure that the curriculum is covered systematically.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Two lessons were observed in physical education. No lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology or music. Each of these four subjects was sampled.

73. In **art and design**, the examples of pupils' current and past work displayed around the school indicate that standards are around average compared to those expected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make reasonable progress throughout the school and their achievement is satisfactory. The range of work is satisfactory overall, with pupils having opportunities to work with clay and ceramics and to produce drawings and paintings using a range of media. Drawings in sketchbooks

show the progressive development of skills and techniques using pencil, crayon, pastel and charcoal. Three-dimensional work is less well developed, although the clay models of African round houses produced by pupils in Year 1 are attractive and well-crafted, and the ceramic pictures displayed in the hall, produced by pupils when working with a visiting artist, are of good quality. Generally the work on display supports other subjects, such as in history where Year 3 and 4 pupils have produced paintings and charcoal rubbings during a visit to the nearby churchyard. However, there is little evidence of computer-generated art and few examples of the use of the work of famous artists' to develop pupils' skills and critical awareness. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has a clear view of areas for development and the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily.

74. In **design and technology**, the good amount of pupils' work from Years 1 to 4 indicates that pupils' achievement is at least sound and there are indications that pupils' work in the lower juniors is good. Some exciting designs in Years 3 and 4, with ingenious decoration on photograph frames, shows good achievement. However, pupils have made the objects they designed more competently than they write about their effectiveness. Some of their worksheets are not marked well enough to help them to see how to improve their work. Discussions indicate that although the subject is interesting for younger pupils, Year 6 have much less to say about the subject than most their age.
75. In **music**, pupils in Year 6 say that they enjoy making music and recording it using notation they have devised for themselves. However, their understanding of musical terms and vocabulary is below that typical of pupils their age. The school has a well mapped out programme of activities in place and provides some of the more vulnerable pupils with additional support; specialist skills in music are used well and pupils gain a lot from these sessions. Pupils explore rhythms and the patterning of music and some pupils develop a keenness for music that has revealed some mathematical talent. Pupils look forward to the performances they take part in and are proud to say that they all learned the songs for "Joseph" in just 3 weeks!
76. In **physical education**, the focus for the two lessons observed during the inspection was games. There is consequently insufficient evidence to make judgements about overall provision in the subject. However, in both the lessons observed teaching was good and there was a clear indication that standards are around those expected for pupils of primary school age. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the subject and plan their lessons carefully. They give clear instructions and use praise well to reinforce good effort and practice, as seen in a lesson with Years 1 and 2, where the teacher's use of praise raised the level of pupils' performance when throwing and catching a ball and passing it to their partner. Teachers generate a supportive and encouraging working atmosphere that helps to develop pupils' confidence and enjoyment of the subject. Most pupils work well on their own and in pairs or group activities. Their behaviour and attitudes are good. They put a great deal of effort into activities and achieve well. Teachers' planning shows that due attention is given to all aspects of the subject and pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have swimming lessons. Records show that virtually all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the age of 11.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned and is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities including judo, sailing, basketball, orienteering, short tennis, netball and football. Links with a local

secondary school are being developed and good use is made of external coaches. For example, pupils have had coaching in football skills by coaches from Stockport County Football Club.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. No lessons were seen during the inspection. Planning shows that this area is mainly taught through other subjects in the curriculum. Consequently, no judgement is made about overall provision. However, it is obvious from other evidence that this aspect of learning is given good attention. The school cares for its pupils very well. The school has attained the Healthy Eating Award and careful attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of the value of a good diet, sex and drugs education and personal health and safety.
79. Pupils are given opportunities to express their views, and this develops their confidence and sense of responsibility. The members of the new school council take their responsibilities seriously and are starting to make positive suggestions about how to improve the school. These views are given close attention by the school and pupils are consequently developing a good awareness of the democratic process. Circle time sessions (whole class discussion sessions) enable pupils to examine relationships and develop their awareness of the needs of others. Pupils collect for a number of charities and show a care and concern for others.
80. Pupils are given the task of being 'playground buddies' in order that individuals feeling insecure may be given support at playtimes. Pupils relate well to their peers and to teachers, and relationships in the school are good. The range of responsibilities presented to pupils is successful in developing their social awareness and they demonstrate mature approaches to life in the school. The ethos in the school is good, it is warm and friendly and conducive to developing a sense of security and well being in pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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