

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEECH STREET COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Eccles

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105906

Headteacher: Mrs Pat Carr

Lead inspector: Mr Steve Bywater

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 269093

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 187

School address: Beech Street  
Winton  
Eccles  
Manchester  
Lancashire  
Postcode: M30 8GB

Telephone number: 0161 789 1553  
Fax number: 0161 921 1623

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr H Pickles

Date of previous inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2000

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Beech Street Primary is a smaller than average sized school for pupils aged three to eleven near Eccles, Salford. Most of the 187 pupils in the school live nearby in low cost private and council housing. The number of children receiving free school meals is 47 per cent, which is well above the national average. When children enter the nursery class, most arrive with low level personal, social and emotional skills and they have poor communication skills. Many pupils join and leave the school at various times of the year. Around a quarter of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs; this is about average. Most pupils with special educational needs have a learning difficulty, but a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The large majority of pupils are white but there are a few pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups. Two pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The school holds a Basic Skills Quality Mark award and benefits in a number of ways by being part of the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Eccles Education Action Zone (EAZ).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18463	Steve Bywater	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Music Personal, social and health education and citizenship
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
11816	Geoff Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Physical education Special educational needs
06282	Parveen Raja	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus  
BPS Business Centre  
Brake Lane  
Boughton  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 9HQ

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that provides good value for money. In the most recent national tests, standards in English, mathematics and science are much better than those of schools in similar circumstances. Pupils achieve well in these subjects and make good progress. This is the result of the good teaching and learning found throughout the school. The positive ethos encourages pupils to have good attitudes to learning and good standards of behaviour. Pupils show interest in their work and concentrate well in lessons. The headteacher is a good leader and she is supported well by the deputy headteacher, a good staff team and an effective group of governors.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.
- Speaking and listening throughout the school and writing in Years 3 to 6 are underdeveloped.
- Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> but there are times in child-chosen activities when children do not receive sufficient support and guidance in their learning.
- Good leadership and management ensure that there is a clear sense of purpose, high expectations in all that the school does and continual self-evaluation.
- The school offers the pupils a broad curriculum that is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular opportunities and other learning experiences outside the school day.
- This is a very caring school which has built very good links with parents. Parents are well informed and their views and ideas about the school are welcomed.

The school has improved well since its previous inspection. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly. There is still some concern over pupils' achievements in writing in Years 3 and 4 but the school is working hard to deal with this.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, pupils achieve well.** Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well overall but, by Year 1, they will not quite reach the early learning goals set for them due to their low starting points. Children achieve well in the reception class but satisfactorily in the nursery. The work seen during the inspection indicates that by the end of their time in the reception classes children are unlikely to meet the standards expected for their age in personal, social, emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are on track to meet their early learning goals in their creative and physical development. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 to 6 and achieve standards in English, mathematics and science which are close to national expectations. The weaker aspects of English which still need attention are speaking and listening throughout the school and writing in Years 3 to 6. In ICT pupils are working in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus in Year 2 and exceed them in Year 6. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in other subjects.

In the most recent national tests, for pupils in Year 6, standards achieved were in line with the national average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Standards in science were too low and the school identified weaknesses in the science curriculum in Years 3 to 6,

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

particularly in experimental and investigative work. This weaker aspect has now been dealt with.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Because of the high mobility of pupils, similar schools are those with similar numbers of free school meals.*

**The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.** This is noticeable in the friendly, supportive atmosphere found in the school and the very good working relationships. Standards of behaviour, in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime, are consistently good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and learning. The attendance rate at the school has improved consistently over the past few years although it is still below average. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**Teaching and learning are good overall.** They are good in the Foundation Stage, mainly due to the particularly effective teaching in the reception class. Although teaching is never less than satisfactory in the nursery class, there are times in child-chosen activities where children receive too little guidance and support. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well. They help to raise pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 where most pupils are keen to learn and are clear about what is expected of them. However, throughout the school, teachers do not do enough to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and there are shortcomings in the teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6. A good range of assessment strategies gives teachers a suitable overview of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and these procedures are effectively used to plan work which is suitably matched to different abilities, and to identify pupils who need additional support. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are taught and supported effectively. There is a good curriculum. The school provides a broad range of work for pupils, and a number of interesting visitors and visits support pupils' learning. A good range of extra-curricular provision effectively extends the curriculum. Care is very good and support is good; pupils are actively involved in the school's work. Links with parents are very good and links with the community and other schools are good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the headteacher is good. Supported by a dedicated deputy headteacher, the headteacher is a driving force within the school who shares a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations with all staff to ensure that the school develops and improves. The overall management of the school is good. The leadership of other key staff is good. The governing body operates efficiently and has made a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Overall, governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents hold the school in high regard. They feel that the school is offering their children a

good education and that the staff effectively involve them in the life of the school. Parents say they feel valued, supported and well informed. The pupils are very satisfied and enjoy coming to school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide more adult intervention in the nursery class.
- Improve the provision for children in the nursery class by ensuring that staff support and guide the learning in child-chosen activities.
- Improve the standards of speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Improve the standards of writing in Years 3 to 6.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards which are generally in line with national expectations.

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

- Compared to similar schools, the school's results in 2004 for pupils in Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics.
- There is good provision in the reception class.
- There are times when children in the nursery do not make sufficient progress.
- Standards in speaking and listening are too low throughout the school.
- Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are not challenged enough to produce extended written work.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and achieve well.
- Some pupils who join at various times throughout the school year struggle to achieve as well as their classmates.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most pupils achieve well from low attainment on entry.
2. Inspection evidence shows that children enter the nursery class with a limited range of educational experiences and poorly developed skills, especially in their language, communication and literacy and also in their personal, social and emotional skills. Children in the nursery class do well when they receive focused attention from staff. However, many do not achieve as well as they should because there is not enough adult intervention to guide them in their learning when they embark on free choice activities. Children achieve well in the reception class because teaching is well planned and organised to give them a good range of practical and imaginative experiences. Nevertheless, by the end of reception, their attainment is below average in their personal, social and emotional development, language, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve very well in their physical and creative development and are well on the way to meeting the early learning goals in these areas of learning.
3. In Years 2 and 6, standards are currently close to national expectations in English and science. Speaking and listening skills are below levels expected for their age throughout the school and writing is just below average by the end of Year 6. In mathematics standards are just below the level expected in Year 2 but in line with expectations in Year 6. Overall pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is good. A large majority of pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. However, the big picture shows a small but significant minority do not achieve as well as expected and the careful tracking of pupils gives reasons for this. In Years 3 and 4 in particular lower ability pupils do not do as well in writing as they should due to a lack of challenge.
4. Pupils regularly join and leave school at various times throughout the year. This high mobility presents the school with major challenges. Many of these pupils, who have experienced a disrupted education, need time to settle into a new school environment. They are often troubled by family tensions and despite very good and sensitive input from the school, some underachieve.

5. As the following table indicates, inspection judgements are better than the school's results in 2004 national tests for Year 2. The 'dip' in 2004 was due to standards in Year 2 being seriously affected because a large proportion of pupils had special educational needs. However, when compared with similar schools, pupils attained average results in 2004. Between 1999 and 2003 improvements in test results were above the national trend due to effective teaching.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (15.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (14.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.6 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

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

6. The 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6 (see table below) showed that overall standards in English and mathematics were in line with the national average although standards in science were below average. When compared with similar schools, in English standards were above average, in mathematics standards were below average and in science standards were average. Currently, standards are similar to those found last year and this goes some way to halt the falling trend in average points scores at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, standards in pupils' writing are still not high enough and they do not get enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects of the curriculum.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (25.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.8 (25.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.5 (26.6)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

7. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics because the targets on their individual education plans are effectively matched to, what is for them, the next steps in their learning.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is also good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are interested in their lessons and work hard as a result.
- The school sets high standards for behaviour and pupils respond positively.
- Pupils' social and moral development is well promoted.
- Pupils are confident and appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions.
- The measures to promote attendance are very good, aided significantly by the additional support provided as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Eccles Education Action Zone.

**Commentary**

8. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting for the pupils in their class and, as a result, attitudes to school are positive. These sessions often contain energetic and well-planned discussions, practical activities that promote clearer understanding and lively question and answer sessions. Pupils often look forward to certain lessons and, for them, the time allocated is all too short. For example, Year 1 pupils thoroughly enjoyed a mathematics lesson that commenced ambitiously with counting in tens, hundreds and thousands and then moved briskly on to recognising odd and even numbers. Pupils were proud of their acquired skills and pleasure was evident in their faces. Such provision, which was frequently found in the school, invariably resulted in good behaviour and hard work from the pupils because they had gained satisfaction through undertaking the tasks. When working in pairs or small groups pupils of all ages in the school work together well and co-operate sensibly. These findings are supported by the results of a recent survey of pupils' views which showed that almost every pupil was happy at school. Furthermore, in a different survey, the overwhelming majority of parents indicated that pupils behaved well.
9. The school expects pupils to behave well and the response from the children is generally positive. There are clear and consistently applied procedures linked with pupils' behaviour of which all pupils are very aware. Minor misdemeanours result in privileges being withdrawn and parents of pupils are immediately involved in the event of more major transgressions. These sanctions are applied equally and fairly throughout the school and, because pupils know this, they behave well, both in the classrooms and in all other parts of the school. Unfortunately, despite all the school's efforts, it was necessary to exclude three children last year for violent or unacceptable behaviour.

## 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	135	3	1
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group	5		

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

10. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop socially and they benefit considerably from this. Pupils who are new to school and those who have no one to play with in the playground are befriended by designated 'buddies' and this has helped to prevent a feeling of loneliness and gives a good impetus for them to socialise and feel included in the school family. Year 6 pupils are developing a sense of responsibility by each being given an important task that is their personal duty to perform. They respond very well to this and know they are accountable for ensuring that the task is carried out at the right time. The school successfully builds pupils' self-esteem by valuing what they do in lessons and by celebrating their successes during assemblies. In addition, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the theme of an assembly. They are encouraged to think about what has been said and how this might affect their lives. Such opportunities develop them spiritually and help to make them more 'rounded' and self-assured people.

11. Teachers and teaching assistants take care during lessons to raise the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs through appropriate praise and by valuing their contributions to lessons. This raises their confidence, enables them to feel more positive about themselves and has a beneficial impact on their learning.
12. The school's motto is powerful: "We're all different, we're all special, and we're all individuals." This sums up succinctly the school's approach to its pupils – that "whatever your race, whatever your background or whatever your difficulties the school will always support you". It underpins all of its work. Whenever social problems occur in the younger children's classes, teachers use a doll as a vehicle to talk through difficult social difficulties. This enables children to see things from another point of view and to develop a feeling of empathy for the plight of others. In the junior classes pupils develop good social awareness and their social concerns are resolved by sitting them in a circle and examining the issues involved or by providing them with relevant scenarios for discussion in groups.
13. In addition, pupils are developing an understanding of different religious beliefs and the way people from different cultural backgrounds live. This has promoted a good sense of tolerance of the differences between people from different racial groups and, to some extent, counteracted the negative feelings of some of the adults in the area the school serves.
14. These judgements maintain those made at the time of the last inspection.

## Attendance

Attendance has risen steadily in each of the last four years and is satisfactory. The table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance was well below the national median.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.6%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2002/3).*

15. The 2003/4 attendance level, at 93.5 per cent, whilst still below the national median, maintains the steadily rising trend. Raising levels of attendance is a key school priority. Its very good measures to monitor and promote high attendance are steadily bringing about improvement. The learning mentor, provided as part of the Eccles EAZ, plays a key role. Close data monitoring, regular recognition of high attendance and sensitive 'first day absence' contact with parents are all used to improve attendance. As a result, parents now clearly understand that school places great emphasis on attendance, and most contact school in the event of absence. As a result, unauthorised absence is also low. Most pupils arrive punctually in time for school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good and the school has a good curriculum. Assessment procedures are good. The school provides a very high quality of care, and the support and guidance for its children are good. The school's partnership with parents is very good, and links with other schools and the community are good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good overall**. Assessment procedures are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the nursery class is less well organised than teaching in the reception class.
- Teachers' behaviour management is good.
- There is high quality teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are too low in Years 3 and 4 and there is a lack of rigour in Year 4.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Visitors enhance pupils' learning.
- Teachers use the results of the assessment of pupils effectively to match work to pupils' varying needs.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	6 (18%)	17 (50%)	11 (32%)	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.*

16. The quality of teaching closely matches that found in the previous inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Stage, which includes the nursery and reception class, is good overall, but has a mixture of satisfactory and very good features. Both teachers are clear about the curriculum and the way children work to the six areas of learning. They have a good understanding of young children and are very patient with them. The direct teaching and adult-led focus activities are particularly good in both classes. However, children achieve better in the reception class because firstly, the teacher and support staff create a purposeful working atmosphere and promote the good concentration and learning of the children; secondly, because the lesson planning shows clearly what is to be taught and learnt. It merges the different elements of the curriculum successfully into one topic. This ensures that children know what is expected of them in lessons and their learning is focused. The reception classroom is organised thoughtfully to stimulate children's curiosity and encourage children to become independent learners. All the activities in the nursery classroom are well thought out but the environment is uninviting. Whilst the nursery teacher has a good understanding of the activities needed for children, too little time is spent by the teacher and nursery nurses in talking to children about what they are doing. As a result, children's confidence to speak clearly is restricted, the learning intentions are unclear to them and they do not achieve well enough at these times. Children find it very difficult to concentrate, flitting from task to task without adult encouragement to persevere.
17. One of the main reasons for the good and better teaching throughout the school is the high expectation of how pupils should behave. Teachers generally manage the pupils skilfully, often through humour and praise. They make their expectations clear and let the pupils know when they do not meet them. Pupils respond very well to this and as a result most classrooms are happy working environments where pupils find it easy to learn and they consistently try their best. Pupils know that their contributions are valued and their self-esteem and confidence are high; even when answers are wrong, they know they will not be ridiculed by anyone.

18. There is a striking contrast between the enthusiastic teaching and learning styles seen in some classes, and the mundane teaching and learning seen in some other lessons. The school recognises the need to share the good practice that already exists. For example, there is high quality teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6 where teachers' challenging teaching captured the pupils' interest and saw pupils working at a brisk pace and being fully involved in working on relevant problems. Much of the teaching in Year 3 is also enthusiastic and of good quality. However, in Year 4 the teaching lacks rigour and pace and in Year 3 and Year 4, teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough for lower ability pupils in writing.
19. In the good lessons throughout the school, support for pupils with special educational needs and practical activities tailored to suit the needs of those who speak English as an additional language ensure that lessons are accessible. Children with special educational needs receive good quality teaching and support that is based on well-planned activities that match their needs. Teaching assistants have received good quality training for the support of pupils with special educational needs. When the teaching assistants work on a one-to-one basis or in small groups they focus carefully on specific targets and report back to the class teacher on their success or otherwise. Pupils' achievements are recorded systematically and the information is used to plan future work that will enable them to make smooth progress in acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding.
20. The school makes good use of visiting adults. For example, the school's involvement in the EAZ has made an important contribution to the range and quality of pupils' experiences. The very positive stimuli introduced by the EAZ enhance learning and help to raise standards. For example, in Year 6 the pupils performed a Caribbean Dance with a visiting dance teacher. Her lively and thoughtful contributions helped guide the dancing and supported pupils' cultural development very well. A trainee nurse who described her role to pupils in Year 2, the school dentist, and a mother with her baby were other welcome visitors to the school during the week.
21. There has been substantial improvement in the development and use of assessment since the previous inspection. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' academic progress. In the Foundation Stage, assessment procedures are good. Children's achievements are recorded regularly and, in the reception class in particular, are used to plan learning and additional support where needed. Much of the assessment information is collated half termly to provide a useful profile of the child's school experiences. Assessment throughout the school is manageable and effective. The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress are especially good in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' views and concerns are regularly sought and targets in English and mathematics are shared with pupils so that they are fully aware of what they need to do next to improve their work.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum. There is a good range of out-of-school clubs, visits, events and activities. Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are good and satisfactory for the rest of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Extra-curricular activities contribute well to the quality of the curriculum for the pupils.
- Inclusion is good and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The balance between child-chosen and teacher-led activities is not effective in the nursery class.

## **Commentary**

22. The curriculum provides a good basis for learning. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, which meets the needs of its pupils well. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils at the Foundation Stage of learning are inconsistent. In the nursery, there are often too many activities, which are not structured well enough to enable children to make the best possible gains in learning and give them a good start to their education. However, in the reception class, children take part in a wide range of planned and structured activities and experiences, to help them to make mostly good progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals. There is a good curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, in particular, pupils are provided with challenging and interesting work that is well supported by a range of good quality resources which helps pupils to work with motivation, and the pace in lessons is good. Personal development is promoted well by an effective personal, social and health education programme and through science topics. Both of these help to raise awareness and understanding of issues such as diet, drugs and alcohol abuse and the dangers of smoking.
23. A regular programme of visits and visitors and a good range of out-of-school activities enrich and support the curriculum. As a result, pupils of all ages gain valuable historical, geographical, scientific, musical and cultural stimuli and experiences. A flourishing breakfast club provides a good start for many pupils and the Beech Tree 'Out of School Club' provides good quality care for the pupils after school. Visitors frequently contribute to lessons, adding a valuable dimension to the day-to-day curriculum. In addition a wide range of visits helps pupils appreciate the wider world. For example, pupils have visited Dunham Massey Hall and took part in a Victorian Christmas, and Chester to learn about life under Roman rule.
24. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers identify pupils who have special educational needs as early as possible and make good assessments of their needs. Teachers set clear and realistic targets and, together with the support staff, regularly check on pupils' progress. Teachers plan and tailor the curriculum well to make sure the work they give to the pupils is relevant and helps them to achieve their targets. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by ensuring that their individual needs are effectively met, particularly those pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school makes good effort to establish good links with asylum seekers' families to ensure that these pupils settle into school life quickly. Consequently these pupils make similar progress as their class fellows.

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

The school cares very well for its pupils. Pupils get good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The support for pupils with family and health problems is very good.
- Pupils' good social attitudes, effort with schoolwork and achievements outside of school are very effectively recognised at weekly assemblies
- The school rightly regards the views of pupils as a key contributor to improvement in both its pastoral and academic work.

### **Commentary**

25. First aid and health and safety arrangements are clear and effective. Good arrangements are in place for child protection and looked-after children and staff know the pupils very well. The school has a very clear grasp of the types of health and family problems experienced by a minority of its pupils. These additional needs are very effectively supported by school staff and

outside agencies. The school's pupil survey confirms that almost all pupils are happy at school. The vast majority of pupils also know an adult who will help and look after them, if they are unhappy, the survey confirms. Parents are rightly very positive about the very good care provided for all pupils.

26. The arrangements for induction to nursery, other classes and the transfer to secondary school are very effective. Good social attitudes, as well as good learning, effort and achievements outside of school are very effectively recognised at weekly assemblies, to which parents are invited. Year 6 pupils say that teachers expect them to behave in a more grown up way as they move through school and inspectors agree with this. Pupils have individual targets relating to their academic progress and personal development in all classes from reception to Year 6. Staff discuss the outcomes of tests with pupils and regular marking provides helpful suggestions on how their work can be improved. This important work is underpinned by the good assessment procedures and tracking of pupils' achievements, particularly in English and mathematics.
27. The learning mentor and teachers provide highly beneficial support for pupils with emotional problems that enable them to overcome temporary difficulties in school. This gives them the stability to be able to continue making academic progress. Pupils with special educational needs complete a questionnaire at the end of each term and provide a self-review of their learning that enables them to have a good idea of how they can improve.
28. The very good relationships, between pupils and their teachers, create a very positive atmosphere in which to hear pupils' views. The school impressively regards the views of pupils as a key contributor to improvement. For example, it annually carries out an exit survey of Year 6 pupils' views on the things they like and would like to see improved at school. Subject leaders seek pupils' views about the things they like and dislike in a range of subjects. The school carried out its own wide-ranging pupil survey towards the end of the previous school year. The views of pupils have been carefully analysed and taken on board. As a result, the school has extended its work on bullying prevention and taken further steps to ensure that all pupils are recognised and rewarded for good work and attitudes. Year 6 pupils speak positively about the effects of this work. The school council, comprising three pupils from each junior class, is well established and very effective. For example, the council organises pupil discos and councillors act as buddies to other pupils. Previously, they raised funds for an attractive 'Buddy Bench', where pupils can sit, if they are feeling unhappy or in need of buddy support. Currently, they plan to install a placard, to reinforce the fact that the school is a 'No smoking area'. Pupils not directly involved in the council's work speak positively about its influence. Pupils in all year groups create a set of class rules at the start of the school year. 'Circle Time', where pupils share their feelings and concerns, is a well-established feature in classes.

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

There are very good links with parents. Links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' views are regularly sought and any concerns are very effectively addressed.
- Parents are making a growing contribution to the partnership with the school.
- Visitors and visits contribute significantly to pupils' personal development.
- There are very productive links with the local secondary school and its primary cluster of schools, aided significantly by Eccles EAZ support.

## **Commentary**

29. The school is rightly regarded as welcoming and open by parents. For example, they regularly attend celebration assemblies, and individual parents' concerns are dealt with promptly. The school works constructively and engages with its parents. For example, the before and after school clubs provide significant support for working parents. The school seeks parents' views annually and responds very positively to any identified areas for improvement. As a result, parents are highly satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. The quality of information provided to support pupils' progress is good overall. Termly parents' evenings, regular curriculum information and a written annual report give parents very good opportunities to find out about what pupils are doing and the progress they make as well as to discuss any concerns. The written annual reports are of good quality, clearly identifying key areas for improvement and giving parents the opportunity to comment, for example. However, the useful indication of pupil performance, in English, mathematics and science, is too complicated, in part because it is not linked to national standards. For the core subjects, the reports contain too much description of what pupils can do without any systematic reference to pupils' effort or achievement.
30. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to a review of their child's learning at the end of each term. The school tries hard to ensure that parents attend these review meetings and is happy to make alternative arrangements if the date suggested is not convenient. During these times parents are asked for their opinion about their child's progress and to make their own suggestions about priorities for learning.
31. More parents are beginning to contribute significantly to the partnership. For example, they are sending their children to school more regularly, leading to the rising attendance levels. Parents of most pupils attend the termly parents' meetings. Parent governor positions are filled. Through the parent teachers' association, parents organise successful fundraising events. These events also contribute to pupils' personal development and the positive sense of community that prevails, as staff, parents and pupils are involved in many of these events. However, a significant minority of parents do not support their pupils, by ensuring that homework is routinely completed for example. Only a small minority of parents take up the school's invitation to attend presentations and workshops on key aspects of the curriculum.
32. Aided significantly by membership of Eccles EAZ, pupils' learning benefits from a very good range of visitors. In addition, senior citizens talk to pupils and show them artefacts associated with World War II. There are strong links with the local community. Public services such as the police, Crucial Crew and the school nurse enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils visit local shops and many places of interest which enhance pupils' learning well. Pupils also take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. Links with the local churches and visiting clergy make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and opportunities for pupils to perform for parents and the local community make a good contribution to their social development.
33. Links with local playgroups and 'Surestart' are close and contribute to the very good induction arrangements into the nursery. The partnership of six primary schools and the local secondary school, formed as part of the Eccles EAZ, is of significant benefit to the school. As a direct result, pupil transfer arrangements are very well developed. For example, all the primaries provide the same pupil information and pupils do the bridging units in literacy, numeracy and science, prior to transfer. There is increasing use of the high school's resources, such as the use of software packages, to support less able pupils with literacy and numeracy. Gifted and talented pupils visit the new computer learning centre whilst others take part in the 'best of Eccles' talent show at the high school. More widely, there is now real dialogue between staff, especially headteachers in the different primary schools, about sharing good practice and working on common issues. Student teachers, from Manchester Metropolitan University, take part of their teaching practice at the school. The school provides work experience places for pupils from local secondary schools and students from local colleges.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher, key staff and governing body is good. Management is also good. This maintains the level of judgements made at the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body works hard and acts in the capacity of a critical friend to the school.
- The headteacher has clear ideas on how to improve the school's work and implements these carefully.
- Key members of staff identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding and implement collectively agreed strategies to improve standards.
- The school is managed well and processes have been established to drive forward its improvement.

### Commentary

34. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses because it receives and discusses analyses of pupils' examination results as well as the subject co-ordinators' action plans. Governors ask searching questions and make frequent constructive comments about the actions the headteacher and staff intend to implement in order to improve specific weaknesses in pupils' learning. They work hard to ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties and to make certain that every pupil is considered equally and that opportunities are available to all. Governors take the trouble to monitor the school's budget very carefully to ensure that it remains in a solvent position. As well as challenging the school, the governing body is also highly appreciative of the hard work carried out by the staff, and members take the trouble to communicate their gratitude.
35. From the time she was first appointed, the headteacher has had a very clear idea of what developments were needed and has set about the job of implementing them in a purposeful manner. Behaviour has been improved by the simple method of pupils, in conjunction with teachers, devising their own set of rules and being reminded to observe them. Pupils achieve well in their learning because aspects of what they have difficulty in knowing, doing and understanding are continually being identified and improved. Pupils' progress is continually checked to ensure that all are continuing to make the progress of which they are capable.
36. The whole process of improving the work of the school is led well by the headteacher and implemented by the staff. Key members of staff contribute effectively to decisions on the best courses of action to bring about improvement. The senior management team meet together regularly and on two occasions per year spend a whole weekend together to confer, consider and draw up draft courses of action to improve the school and construct a draft school improvement plan. Other members of the teaching staff discuss the proposals rigorously, and amendments are made before the governing body considers and approves it, providing there are no disagreements or causes for concern. In this way all people linked with the management of the school are closely involved with making decisions and there is a high degree of accountability. For example, the school identified science as a major issue and produced very clear plans, including training implications, in a determined drive to raise standards. This is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the co-ordinator. She makes sure that teachers provide her with the necessary information so that she can construct new individual education plans that have specific and measurable targets that coincide with their needs. She provides the impetus to lead the process and ensure that all teachers are aware of what needs to be provided.

38. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory and the headteacher and deputy headteacher recognise the need to ensure that child-chosen activities in the nursery class are more closely monitored to ensure that children are well supported in their learning.
39. The headteacher manages the school effectively. A meticulous self-evaluation is organised annually and the findings are used to make the school even better. Pupils' answers in national tests are analysed carefully and areas of the curriculum where their answers indicate a general weakness in understanding are identified and appropriate action is taken. The process of performance management is run effectively. Objectives are set that are in line with the school's needs and a review is sensibly carried out at the mid-year stage to ensure that individual teachers are on course to achieve the objectives. Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses in order to familiarise themselves with suitable strategies to assist improvements in their pupils' performances.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	502537	Balance from previous year	50560
Total expenditure	540400	Balance carried forward to the next	12697
Expenditure per pupil	2890		

40. The school's careful management of finances plays a large part in achieving the priorities in its improvement plan. The EAZ, of which the school is a part, has also been very useful in achieving the school's priorities because it provides extra finances and personnel to support these. Taking into account the effectiveness of the education provided, the school provides good value for money. The social disadvantages affecting a large proportion of pupils are clear barriers to raising achievement but the aids include the high aspirations and dedication of the headteacher, staff and governors, and the willingness of pupils to improve their work.

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

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

41. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. There are currently 21 children attending full time in the nursery and a further 27 children in the reception class. Children enter the nursery with a low level of skills, especially the social and personal development and skills in communication, language and literacy. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well across most areas of learning. However, despite their good progress, the majority of children do not meet expectations in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. They achieve the early learning goals in their creative and physical development. Planning ensures that a good range of activities matches children's needs well and this helps them to gain confidence. However, whilst planning incorporates the required areas of learning well in both the nursery and reception classes, the balance between teacher-directed and self-chosen tasks is not always suitably planned in the nursery class and some children spend too little time on some activities. The reception classroom is organised thoughtfully to stimulate children's curiosity and encourage children to become independent learners. Children are well prepared to make a smooth transition to the work of the National Curriculum by the time they leave the reception class.

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

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

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

- Staff establish good routines to encourage children to settle in.
- Relationships with adults and peers are very good.
- Staff do not pay sufficient attention to the development of children's independence.
- Experiences encourage children to behave well.

#### **Commentary**

42. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are low on entry and children do not find it easy to settle when they first arrive in the nursery. They soon begin to do so as staff establish routines. In both classes, the teachers and support staff encourage children to register themselves as they arrive but the encouragement of independent learning is still underdeveloped. Although staff encourage children to be independent in some areas, for example to change for physical education and put on aprons for art and craft activities, not enough opportunities are provided for them to do more for themselves with adult guidance. Children are also encouraged to tidy up at the end of sessions. Overall, children's achievement in this area of learning is satisfactory. However, this represents a dip in provision since the last inspection
43. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the teachers, nursery nurse and classroom assistants establish warm relationships with the children along with clear expectations of good behaviour. Teachers value each child's efforts and give lots of individual praise and encouragement which build children's self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning and in their relationships with others. A positive feature of this area of learning is the way that staff speak to children (often using dolls as a resource) about important issues such as bullying and caring for people. However, lunchtimes are wasted opportunities to develop children's personal and social skills. Lunchtime staff have a tendency to rush meal times and cut up children's food whether or not

they can manage it themselves. The net result is that children have no time to chat with their friends and develop social skills.

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but standards are still below the levels expected when children join Year 1. Staff in the nursery consistently make their expectations of children's behaviour clear but many children are impatient and find it difficult to take their turn. They concentrate well when they are supported by adults, but many tend to wander from activity to activity when left to their own devices and this lack of guided activity encourages self-reliance. In the reception class, children are well motivated to learn, settling to tasks and concentrating well for more extended periods of time. The teacher regularly reminds them of what they should be doing and they behave well and handle equipment carefully. They share snacks well and are encouraged to say 'thank you' and get on well together.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage children to develop reading and writing skills through a range of interesting activities.
- There are too few opportunities to develop speaking skills in the nursery class.

### Commentary

45. Children enter the school with limited language skills. On entry to the nursery, many children need much encouragement to communicate in more than single words or gestures. Staff work hard to promote children's communication and literacy skills, especially when children are working directly with staff. When children are working on focused activities with their teacher or nursery nurse they listen attentively and achieve well. However, in the nursery class, a disappointing aspect of this area of learning is the proportion of time that children do not have the support and guidance of an adult when they choose activities and consequently do not have the opportunity to extend their speaking skills. Although there are sufficient staff, they are not used effectively enough to support these activities. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in, as in *The Three Bears*. In the reception class, children express themselves with increasing confidence and communicate their ideas simply, for example when they sit in a circle and discuss issues of interest. From their earliest days in school, children's interest in reading is encouraged by regularly taking home books to share with their parents. By the reception class, they are confident in handling books and the higher attainers recognise familiar words and are beginning to associate letters and sounds. Most are on the initial stages of reading and all enjoy 'sharing' a book. Teachers carefully prepare activities which stimulate children's interest and encourage writing; for example, children are keen to 'write' letters and lists. Higher attaining children write their own names and some are beginning to write simple words and phrases independently. Most hold their pencil effectively to make meaningful marks and understand that writing conveys meaning. Teachers maintain records of aspects of children's progress. They track achievements in communication, language and literacy thoroughly and use assessment information directly to inform the planning of future work to ensure that it provides enough challenge to move all children further on in their learning. Despite the overall good quality of teaching and learning, and children achieving well in this area of learning, standards are below the levels expected when children join Year 1. This is a similar position to that found during the last inspection.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their mathematical skills and understanding.
- Children in nursery are not provided with sufficient support to develop a wide and correct mathematical vocabulary.

## Commentary

46. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are taught and encouraged to develop their sense of number, order and sequence through daily counting routines. For example, children in nursery count the number of children present each day and count the number of milk cartons needed at break time. Others sort the small plastic animals and recognise their colours. They learn shapes and mathematical language well through topic-linked activities, such as creating collages using coloured paper squares, rectangles and circles. In the reception class, most children confidently count beyond ten. The teachers regularly introduce number songs and rhymes that successfully reinforce children's learning. Staff direct questions well towards individual children to promote thinking; for example, the reception teacher uses the puppet 'Freddy the frog' asking which numbers are missing from a number line. However, there are not enough procedures in place in the nursery class for systematically observing, recording and updating what children know and can do as they play in sand and water. Although there are continual opportunities available for children to use sand and water, staff are not organised well enough to ask children questions such as "Is that full" or "Is it under the sand"? This observation of children's understanding is needed in order to provide detailed information on which to plan the next stage of their learning. However, in the reception class, a higher attaining child expertly used the water and jugs to create his own 'water falls', recognising that the biggest jug came first and the smallest one came last. Despite good teaching and learning and good achievement overall, standards are below the levels expected when children join Year 1. This is a similar position to that found during the last inspection.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned and linked to first-hand experiences.
- Activities are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Support staff are not being utilised enough to help children to communicate orally.

## Commentary

47. Children achieve well as a result of good teaching in this area of learning. However, standards are below the levels expected when children join Year 1. This is a similar position to that found during the last inspection.
48. Teachers successfully plan a good range of stimulating topics that enable children to acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. Where possible, teachers link areas of learning together. For example, in a topic about 'Myself and my family', children were thrilled by a visit by a mother with her very young baby and watched 'bath time'. They discussed how they had changed since they were babies and excitedly pointed out photographs of themselves when they were babies. As part of their work looking at healthy diets, children have tasted numerous fruits, vegetables and other foods and know how materials change when making porridge. Children in nursery discuss the properties of fruits as they feel, touch and taste the 'bumpy, scratchy and hard' pineapples and other fruits. However, the weaker aspect of this

area of learning is the lack of discussion and development of children's vocabulary in child-chosen activities.

49. They learn about the properties of sand and water by handling and working with them. In the reception class, children build on their understanding through practical activities, such as planting seeds and watching them grow. They are interested in learning about the living world. Children have regular opportunities to use and become familiar with the classroom computer. They develop good levels of independence and by the reception class they demonstrate basic competence in a range of simple programs and confidently operate other forms of technology, such as the tape recorder.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a good range of activities to help children develop their physical skills.
- Planned adult intervention is not so clear for outside experiences.

### **Commentary**

50. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Due to their low personal, social and emotional development on entry, children in nursery receive much support to prevent them from rushing around and are given guidance to move around sensibly. Children in reception move safely and confidently in and around the classroom. The reception class children enjoy regular opportunities to be active in physical education lessons and they work on apparatus and develop an awareness of space and how to move about safely, with due regard to others. They learn to balance and move carefully, supporting each other if necessary. Teaching is good overall.
51. The designated secure outdoor nursery area is used by both nursery and reception classes and there are good arrangements for children to move freely between indoor and outdoor play. Both classes go out for 'vigorous' free play and have access to a range of large wheeled vehicles and toys and these enhance provision for this aspect of development. In the outdoor activities observed during the inspection, children had a free choice of activities. However, staff did not always actively intervene to help children develop and improve their skills. Although inspectors appreciate the school's philosophy of giving children a balance of adult-directed and child-chosen activities over time, there were some missed opportunities to help children achieve higher standards by planned intervention.
52. Within the classroom, teachers plan activities which promote well children's physical development alongside other areas of learning. Children regularly choose to build models using a range of large and small construction materials and demonstrate sound manipulative skills. They use scissors, paintbrushes, moulds and small equipment confidently and appropriately. Standards are in line with the levels expected when children join Year 1 and teaching is good. This is a similar position to that found during the last inspection.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a wide range of different activities to stimulate children's creativity.
- Children's confidence is carefully developed.
- Staff do not sufficiently involve themselves with children's own experiences.

## Commentary

53. Children enter the nursery with limited creative development. Teaching is good and, as at the last inspection, children achieve well and they are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In both adult-led and child-chosen activities, staff are keen to promote children's confidence in experimenting and trying different ways to express themselves, with good opportunities for children to try out different media and skills, particularly with paint and collage. Staff collate ongoing notes about what children do and say at the end of sessions to help plan the next steps in learning.
54. Children always have the opportunity to paint whenever they wish, but different activities are promoted every day to develop skills and techniques. During the inspection children were encouraged to create a picture using natural materials such as conkers, acorns and leaves. They concentrated well and observed carefully, responding very positively to the pictures by the artist Andy Goldsworthy. In the reception class, children see themselves as artists, and proudly point out their work on the attractive displays that value all children's best efforts. Very well observed still life pictures in pastels of bowls of fruit showed a maturity in composition and observation of detail not usually found in children of reception age. Because of the good teaching of specific skills to individual children in this practical subject, children are very well supported and their achievement is very good. Children have many opportunities to experiment with different malleable materials, including clay and dough.
55. Staff are not always sensitive to children's ideas and do not always act effectively to help the children develop their ideas and to achieve success. For example, children enjoy acting out everyday experiences such as in the dentist's surgery, but during the inspection, there was very little input from adults.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of English is good and most pupils achieve well.
- Lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not achieve as well as they should in their writing due to a lack of challenge.
- The strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills is having a positive impact on standards but speaking and listening skills are not developed systematically through the school.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use books and extend their writing across all subjects.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Overall, teachers have made a concerted and successful effort to improve standards of writing.
- The teaching of handwriting is not consistent enough and some pupils' work is untidy.

## Commentary

56. Standards continue to be in line with national expectations in Year 2. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average standards, they achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and attain average standards. Over the past four years, standards in Year 6, standards have improved significantly and are now very close to average standards. The 2004 unverified national test results show good improvement with pupils in Year 6 achieving average standards. This is because the school analysed all these results and recognised that pupils were not doing as well as they could in writing. Improved provision in the teaching of English is now in place and contributes well to improvements in standards. Although standards in writing are still slightly below average, this represents good improvement. The overall standard in reading has risen well. For example, in 2004 national tests, 92 per cent of the pupils achieved Level 4 or above, compared to 50 per cent achieving the same level in writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills and achieve average standards. In Years 3 to 6, achievement in speaking and listening is satisfactory, although standards are below average. This is because about 20 per cent of the pupils joined the school at other than the usual time with poor language skills. Moreover, pupils have fewer planned opportunities for extending and practising their spoken language. The school exceeded its targets in English over the past two years.
57. The main reason for the improving standards is the good teaching and the effort teachers have made to raise the profile of writing in the school. For example, in most English lessons, pupils write for a wide range of purposes, such as poetry, stories, letters and instructions. They improve their writing by good use of verbs, adverbs and adjectives to make their arguments and thoughts more persuasive and effective. For example, pupils in Year 5 were helped by the teacher's very good knowledge of English teaching and very good planning to extend their understanding of the structure of a play and of how to make characters come alive. Younger pupils use their developing phonic knowledge well to improve spellings. Teachers' marking is good in English and their comments are constructive and help pupils to improve. Over the last two years good assessment procedures have been introduced and these are generally used well. Teachers' expectations are mostly high and they provide suitably varied work for different levels of ability in the classes. However, in Years 3 and 4, where teaching is overall satisfactory, expectations for the lower and the slightly above the lower ability pupils are not high enough and their progress over time is slower. In Years 3 to 6, teachers do not consistently insist that the presentation of the work in books is neat or provide regular opportunities for handwriting practice. As a result, some of the pupils' work in books is untidy and some pupils mix cursive writing style with printing.
58. The subject is well led and very well supported by the headteacher. The newly appointed co-ordinator already has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. The action plan correctly identifies speaking, listening, handwriting and presentation standards as key areas for improvement. The well-stocked library and the wide range of books in each classroom develop good regular reading habits but there are few opportunities for pupils to use books for individual research and many pupils find it difficult to locate books to research topics. Most pupils enjoy reading and all are encouraged to take books home regularly.

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

59. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise skills learned in literacy lessons, although the school has made a good start by teaching literacy through topic work. For example, very effective practice was seen in Year 2 lesson where pupils learnt to write directions for travelling to the school and planning a route by using their knowledge of the immediate locality and using websites. Very good links are established between literacy, geography and ICT. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils practised report writing through reporting on the blitz during World War II. However, the school is aware that more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to write at length in other subjects. Links with art and design and design and technology are good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in this subject is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attainments are assessed carefully and their progress tracked, resulting in good achievements in mathematics.
- A wide variety of teaching methods enables pupils to acquire mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding effectively.
- Mathematics is well led and managed, resulting in above average standards compared with those of similar schools.
- There is good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
- Higher attaining pupils in some classes are not always challenged sufficiently.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.

## Commentary

60. Standards in mathematics are just below the national average for pupils at Year 2 but above average compared with similar schools. Standards in Year 6 are close to the national average and well above average for schools serving children from a similar background. This represents good progress in their learning and good achievement.
61. Mathematics lessons are planned carefully so that in most classes the needs of three different levels of pupil attainment are met. Information from class teachers' records is used to ensure that the work planned for pupils enables them to achieve successfully the next step in their learning. Teachers use a variety of appropriate sources to obtain this information. At the conclusion of every mathematics lesson teachers assess the extent of each pupil's understanding. When they mark pupils' work they log information on their records when it is very clear that individual pupils have acquired a new skill. Alternatively, they provide written advice to pupils on how to overcome obstacles to understanding mathematical ideas. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans to guide their planning of work for those with special educational needs. In addition, these pupils are well supported by skilled teaching assistants who ensure they understand mathematical ideas. Teachers analyse pupils' answers in mathematics tests and take note of overall strengths and weaknesses in order to identify focuses in the near future. The National Curriculum level in mathematics is judged regularly by class teachers and recorded. Each pupil has a clear chart of the progress made from when they were first admitted to the school and this is used effectively to check that continuous progress is being made.
62. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to ensure that every child in their class is enabled to learn and make progress in mathematics. A wide range of practical activities is used so that pupils can gain understanding of new ideas through first-hand experiences. On other occasions everyone in the class is expected to respond quickly to oral questions from the class teacher and write answers on their own personal whiteboard before showing it simultaneously to the class. In this way the teacher has a foolproof way of finding out whether pupils understand, or whether they have acquired skills in mental calculations. Teachers also use interactive whiteboards in highly effective ways to promote gains in knowledge and understanding. This use of technology has provided teachers with a first class way of providing access to an array of useful and instant teaching aids that benefit pupils' learning. Pupils are often asked to work together in pairs to give them opportunities to talk through their understanding with a partner and hence to clarify their mathematical thinking. This good range of teaching methods allows pupils to learn in different ways and consolidate their mathematical achievements.
63. Although pupils achieve well in both key stages there is not enough done to extend higher attaining pupils in some classes. Occasionally these pupils are given the same work as average pupils in the belief that more able pupils will work faster and progress to the more challenging questions in the latter part of the session. This often does not happen and they miss the opportunity to be challenged and to extend their knowledge and understanding.
64. The mathematics co-ordinator provides good leadership and gives the drive to ensure that class teachers analyse the performance data in mathematics to identify the strengths and weaknesses that relate to their class. A range of mathematics lessons is observed to make sure that the quality of teaching is maintained. An informal feedback is provided for class teachers, that includes a useful discussion on the lesson strengths and points for developing the teaching further. Targets are set for mathematics during the performance management process which is managed well.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Although there are examples of mathematics being used in subjects across the curriculum there are not enough instances to ensure that this subject is applied and used in subjects other

than mathematics. Work carried out by pupils in Year 2 as part of a series of geography lessons included gathering information about recent holiday venues. Pupils constructed block graphs to illustrate the frequency of holidays to particular seaside resorts. In addition, pupils occasionally use their skills in data handling during science lessons. However, there is little other evidence of mathematics being used in a range of subjects.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching challenges and supports pupils' learning well by skilful questioning, well-managed investigations and good strategies to manage behaviour.
- Pupils' below average writing skills sometimes hinder their ability to record findings.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support or record learning in Years 3 to 6.

### Commentary

66. Standards attained in the 2004 national tests were well below the national average in Year 2 and Year 6, but better when compared with similar schools. It is possible to explain the low standards in Year 2 because 40 per cent of the year group had special educational needs. In Year 6, 92 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level but very few achieved higher levels. Over a number of years, a poor diet of teaching, including low teacher expectation and very limited investigation and experimental work in Years 3 to 6, has slowed pupils' progress. In some year groups very little science work was done at all. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator correctly identified the weaknesses and action has been taken as a matter of priority.
67. Since September 2004, the majority of work is now based on investigation, enquiry and first-hand practical learning with greater attention given to pupils' knowledge and accurate use of scientific vocabulary. As a result, standards of work produced by pupils in Years 3 to 6, other than those on the special needs register, are now at the levels expected for their age. Pupils learn to become scientists, to plan investigations and to test out their ideas. This contributes to improved standards. Higher ability pupils in Year 6 are working at above average levels. This matches the position found at the last inspection and shows good achievement throughout the school.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is now good and has improved in Years 3 to 6 since last year. Teachers plan lessons well and explain carefully what pupils will be doing and why. Subject knowledge is good leading to skilful questioning, probing learning. There is a clear commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in the learning opportunities, by providing practically based lessons, high expectations of behaviour and tasks that provide sufficient challenge.
69. Learning through first-hand experiences and good questioning are key features of the teaching. This contributes to pupils' positive attitudes and improved standards. Teachers generally plan practical tasks that capture pupils' interest and make them enthusiastic about what they are doing so that they learn well. As a result, most pupils try hard, enjoy their work and achieve well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully built on their knowledge of medicines, drugs and healthy lifestyles when discussing these and other issues with a trainee nurse who visited the school. In Year 3, pupils planned a 'fair test' when investigating the absorbency of types of paper. They collaborated well in small groups, sharing ideas and coming to a conclusion. They are beginning to recognise that fair tests need to be repeatable. Year 6 practical work drew upon their understanding of magnetism, filtering and dissolving. Most pupils record their findings carefully using charts, graphs and tables. However, many pupils do not

enjoy, and are not sufficiently skilled at, recording their work in writing in their books. Neither is enough use made of ICT to support learning and record findings in classes in Years 3 to 6.

70. Leadership and management of the subject are now good, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The current subject co-ordinator had been absent for some time and is now working closely with the headteacher on a plan to raise standards and review progress. Assessment procedures are effective. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are tested at the end of each unit of work and the results of these findings are used to plan future work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good evidence in a number of subjects of pupils using ICT to support their learning.
- Pupils enjoy using computers and treat equipment with care.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards are in line with national expectations, both at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils achieve well where ICT is taught as a separate subject. The use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum is currently satisfactory overall but is good in some subjects. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. ICT provision was a key issue at that time and the vast majority of the issues raised then have been corrected and the subject has made good progress.
72. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with most of the basic skills. These include using a mouse, finding letters on a keyboard and basic word-processing skills. Planning for the subject indicates that pupils use computers for elements of control. There are good examples of work done in other subjects. Pupils in Year 2, for example, use various websites to support their learning in geography, science and personal, social and health education. Pupils draw pictograms, produce bar graphs and label plants and creatures as they store and display information. Year 2 pupils use computers to edit and record their work.
73. By the end of Year 6, pupils carry out basic work using computers and can load, save, use websites, send e-mails, use the word processor and use spreadsheets. When writing in a variety of styles, pupils use colour and various fonts to word process some of their stories, reports and poetry for display. Older pupils use *clip art* to add pictures to their work. Pupils in Year 4 are able to give instructions to the computer in order to draw the initial letter of their name. This aspect of ICT was weaker at the time of the last inspection and modelling skills are now much more secure. All pupils confidently log on and access the programs, and pupils are now showing more initiative and independence in using search engines to collect information from the internet. Pupils in Year 6 use computers competently to make, use and amend a worksheet.
74. Teaching and learning in ICT are good. This is the same as found in the previous inspection. Many teachers have improved the level of teachers' expertise by attending training and all are competent with the basics of ICT. When teaching is in the computer suite, good management of pupils is a strong feature of the teaching. This means that pupils do not waste time and equipment is looked after properly. Pupils behave well and treat equipment with care. Where pupils work together with computers, there are good relationships and pupils happily help each other with difficulties. Many of the pupils who are confident support classmates who have difficulty.

75. One of the criticisms of the previous inspection was that the school did not have essential equipment to teach ICT. This was corrected. The computer suite provides good accommodation with a good number of up-to-date computers. These are supplemented by interactive whiteboards which are skilfully used by teachers in the suite and in a number of classrooms. Parents of all pupils have signed an Internet Safety form which gives pupils the opportunity to use the World Wide Web. The school is currently developing its assessment procedures to track which skills pupils are learning and to ensure that, as pupils systematically move through the commercially produced scheme of work, their achievements are recorded. The current subject leader has shown good leadership and management in addressing the issues raised in the previous report.

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

76. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. During the inspection there was evidence that pupils were using computers effectively to support work in literacy, especially through word processing, and in mathematics, through the use of a commercial mathematics program, spreadsheets and data bases. In addition, ICT is used frequently to produce art work, and CD-ROMs and websites support pupils' work in geography, history and religious education. Insufficient use of ICT is made in science.

### **HUMANITIES**

77. Religious education was inspected in full and is reported on below. History and geography were sampled.
78. The school links **history** and **geography** as often as possible and teachers consider the subjects under themes. For example, Year 2 pupils studied the theme of 'holidays' and researched into what British seaside towns were like one hundred years ago. In addition, Year 6 pupils visit places of historical interest such as Dunham Massey Hall. This often results in vivid pieces of writing such as descriptions comparing life in a poor Victorian household with life in a rich one. The links with geography were also apparent when pupils examined maps of the area as it was in 1848, 1908 and now. Pupils made deductions about the changes in lifestyle in these times using the maps as a basis for their ideas.
79. History is brought to life by visits such as the one from a group of old age pensioners who brought artefacts from World War II to show Year 6 pupils as well as arranging drama activities based on the wartime conflict. Pupils examined items such as ration books, old coins and gas masks, listened to the experiences of the senior citizens and were able to ask questions to further their understanding of historical events. Pupils often learn about geography in conjunction with history. They learned about the geography of modern day Greece and compared it with ancient Greece as part of their study of the Olympic Games, and Sparta and Athens. They learn about map reading, and features of different geographical areas and in so doing develop an understanding of the water cycle, and the formation of rivers and linking factors such as valleys, water falls, gorges and tributaries.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attainment levels of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are above average.
- The quality of teaching in the subject is good.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of a range of religious beliefs and practices.

- Teaching encourages pupils to find out information for themselves, to think for themselves and to apply their knowledge.
- A variety of educational visits to places of religious interest and a range of visitors to the school enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education.

## Commentary

80. Pupils are taught well and acquire an above average knowledge of the different religions covered by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Standards are in line with the expectations of the syllabus by the end of Year 2.
81. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They have a good knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam for their age. They know and understand many of the differences and similarities between religions and also many of the teachings arising from the holy books of different religions. For example, Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of different religious celebrations and understand why Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter and why Muslims celebrate Eid and the reasons for Hindus rejoicing during the time of Diwali. At the end of Key Stage 2 Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the Bible, including a good understanding of a wide range of stories from the Old and New Testaments as well as a good understanding of the five Pillars of Islam.
82. Pupils are encouraged to use the Internet to find out information during religious education lessons as well as using the information books in the library. Both types of research make the work they undertake more meaningful and help to consolidate their learning. They write their own prayers that result from visits or following lessons and are expected to think carefully and draw their own conclusions during lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils are encouraged to think carefully about the symbolism involved in lighting candles or incense and suggest links between what is seen and a religious belief. During an interesting Year 3 lesson pupils considered what food was allowed and what was forbidden to Muslims, using the proper names of 'halal' and 'haram'.
83. Pupils also visit a variety of different places of worship representing different religions to enhance their learning of religious education. For example, Year 5 pupils recently visited the local Anglican Church to learn about the main features of a church building. They subsequently used the Internet to build their knowledge further. They visit a mosque as well as other religious buildings during the course of the period of time they are attending the school. Furthermore, a number of visitors come to the school to support pupils' learning. The local Anglican priest visits the school frequently to assist with expanding pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a parent visitor answered questions about Islam and showed pupils the kind of clothes she wore.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. The subjects of art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were all sampled. In addition to observing one lesson in art and design, inspectors spoke to subject leaders and pupils about their work and analysed a sample of work in some subjects.
85. In **art and design**, sketchbooks have been introduced and pupils regularly plan their designs and decide on materials before starting their artwork. This was clearly evident in the lesson seen in Year 5, in which pupils had planned making a 'headdress'. Pupils gain valuable experience of art from other cultures by focusing on art themes such as Black American Artwork. Work on display shows that pupils are taught a variety of techniques in creating expressive pieces of artwork, which develops their understanding of the elements of art. A good example was seen in Year 3 investigating patterns by creating symmetrical repeat patterns using three colours very effectively. The pupils' artwork on display was of good standard. Art is

well linked to other subjects, particularly ICT because pupils use art-related websites to become familiar with the work of famous artists and to generate designs. Assessment of art has been introduced. Pupils effectively develop their skills in evaluating their own and others' work.

86. In **design and technology** very little work was available for scrutiny because of the time of the inspection and most classes were taught art and design this half-term. The few examples seen showed average standards of work. Discussions with the pupils revealed that they have sound understanding of design and of the 'make and evaluate' cycle and most pupils enjoy the subject. Design and technology is well linked to other subjects, which enables pupils to make topic-related objects. In the Year 5 art lesson, pupils used skills well in cutting, joining and gluing materials to make headdresses and demonstrated a growing understanding of choosing materials with fitness for purpose in mind.
87. In **music**, pupils receive support from the local education authority music service and all classes from Year 1 to Year 6 have regular lessons with a specialist music teacher. Pupils say they enjoy singing a range of songs and competently add percussion accompaniment to their performance. The school offers a recorder club and choir to extend the curriculum and pupils occasionally perform for their parents. Music plays a positive role in pupils' spiritual and cultural development as they have opportunities to reflect on various styles of music and have enjoyed visits from a drummer who played Brazilian rhythms, and from other musicians.
88. In **physical education**, the planned programme of activities meets statutory requirements. Additional funds are raised and used well to enhance the provision. For example, Lottery Funds were spent on new equipment and to provide coaching in basketball skills. After-school clubs for football and inter-school competitions in athletics provide valuable extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to practise skills. Most pupils enjoy playing games and taking part in sporting activities.

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

89. This area of learning was sampled.
90. There is a good policy and programme in place, which help the pupils to have an understanding of their own lifestyle and that of other people. There is good involvement from outside visitors, for example to support the Drugs Awareness Programme. The school makes good use of the 'Crucial Crew' programmes provided by uniformed services to deal with issues such as citizenship and caring for others. Sex education is dealt with effectively by using health professionals. The programme helps pupils to achieve well in their physical development. Good interlinking of subjects enables pupils to recognise the issues of healthy lifestyles and issues of importance such as pollution and conservation.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<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>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*

