

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Millwood Primary Special School**

Bury

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105377

Head teacher: Mr Bernard Emblem

Reporting inspector: Mrs Noreen Buckingham  
16722

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 195463

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 –11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fletcher Fold Road Bury Lancashire
Postcode:	BL9 9RX
Telephone number:	0161 253 6083
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Rogers
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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16722	Noreen Buckingham	Registered inspector	History	What sort of school is?
			Geography	The school's results and achievements
			Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
				Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
23549	Helen Eadington	Team inspector	Children in the foundation stage	
			Mathematics	
			Physical education	
			Religious education	
			Equal opportunities	
10760	Pip Clark	Team inspector	English	Curriculum and other learning opportunities
			Music	
			English as a second language	
			Special educational needs	
22466	Diane Pearson		Science	
			Design and technology	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Millwood Primary Special school is one of two special schools in Bury and admits pupils from nursery age to 11 years. The majority of pupils have either moderate or severe learning difficulties, including pupils with high dependency needs, but pupils with ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) are also admitted and the school has organised two separate classes for these pupils. Some of them present challenging behaviours. An increasing number of pupils require medical attention and some have nursing care with them. Currently there are 82 pupils on roll, 55 boys and 27 girls. Nine pupils are from multi-ethnic backgrounds and where English is not the first language. Attainment on entry is very low and 79 pupils have statements of special educational needs and 3 are on assessment placements. Approximately one third of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Integration with mainstream schools is a good feature of the school and a good number of pupils are able to take advantage of this.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school successfully meets the needs of individual pupils in a flexible and positive way through class groupings, subject groupings and inclusion both within and out of the school. Relationships with mainstream schools are very good and a number of pupils spend part of their time with their mainstream peers. The personal development of pupils is very good. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well and a major factor in this is the very good planned teamwork between the adults working in the classrooms. The leadership and management of the school are sound and all those with management responsibilities have a shared commitment and work well together undertaking their responsibilities very conscientiously ensuring that the stated aims of the school are well met. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good and the school successfully meets its stated aims.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the personal development of pupils is very good.
- There is a very positive ethos in the school which supports pupils learning.
- The enrichment of the curriculum is very good.
- Relationships with partner institutions are very good. The planned teamwork between adults in the classroom is very good.
- The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is good.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well.

#### **What could be improved**

- Statutory requirements to produce written annual reports to parents about pupils' progress are not met and home/school agreements are not in place.
- The consistent use of the assessment procedures in order that they can be used to inform future planning.
- The establishment of rigorous monitoring of the curriculum, assessment and teaching to ensure that what is taught reflects the written curriculum.
- The involvement of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection in January 1997 and only two small areas from the last key issues remain and these are to do with monitoring teaching and learning and ensuring that individual learning plans have targets which are more specific. However, the school has recently

introduced 'P' scales to measure pupils' performance and plans to also introduce 'PIVATS' to support assessment. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies from which the pupils have benefited. The recent adaptations to the accommodation have enabled the school to organise classes and groups to meet individual needs more effectively. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now very good and an important element in the good teaching is the very good teamwork between all adults working in the classrooms.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by age 5</b>	<b>by age 11</b>	<b>Key</b>	
Speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	C	good	B
Writing	C	D	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school sets targets in pupils' individual learning plans which are used in all subjects of the National Curriculum but the quality is inconsistent. The best practice is seen in the under fives class where day-to-day assessment is very good and used to modify targets if necessary. This system is also in practice with pupils who have high dependency needs. 'P' scales have been recently introduced and are used well in English, mathematics and personal and social education to support target setting. All pupils generally achieve well in relation to their prior learning mainly due to the good teaching and the good knowledge all staff have of pupils and their different abilities. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder(ASD) and pupils with high dependency needs make good progress over time due to the range of teaching strategies used and good knowledge of the pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in all subjects, except ICT, and those in Key Stage 1 generally make good progress in English, mathematics and science and more variable progress in other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and work hard. They enjoy the wide range of activities available and make good use of the lunch time clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well and only a few disturb lessons but they are well managed by individual behaviour plans which are used consistently.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well together and are given appropriate opportunities throughout the school day to take on responsibilities, such as, returning registers to the office, and they can make choices in many activities during the day. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils are very good. Pupils are valued and respected and this contributes to the very positive ethos of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils are punctual in arriving at school and lessons start on time.



Pupils settle to work quickly and behaviour in classes and during playtimes is good. Pupils who attend mainstream school for part of their education get on very well with others in the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Sixty one lessons were observed and teaching overall is good. Two percent was excellent, 26 percent was very good and 37 percent good. A further 33 percent was satisfactory and only two percent was unsatisfactory. As a result of the good teaching pupils achieve well in most subjects and learning is good. All teaching in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education was at least satisfactory with some good features. Teaching for the under fives is always at least good and often very good. Teachers know the children very well and plan very effectively to meet their individual needs except on developing writing in Key Stage 2. Very good teamwork and relationships in classrooms means that every opportunity for learning is used. Where there are weaknesses in teaching it is because the activities fail to engage pupils, or they are too directed by the teacher and sometimes the focus of the lesson is lost leading to pupils losing interest. Good use is made of a variety of methods to encourage the development of communication skills especially for those pupils with high dependency needs. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced effectively and these, along with personal and social development, are given a high priority. Opportunities to develop writing skills are too few and need to be increased.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The written curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant but what is taught does not always match this. Both the Literacy and Numeracy National Strategies have been implemented successfully. Pupils' additional special needs are well met through appropriate teaching methods and additional support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. A small amount of support is available for pupils whose first language is not English and a Punjabi speaker supports pupils in the classroom. This does boost pupils' confidence but is insufficient to cover all aspects of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Both religious education and assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development and also cultural development. Pupils are given clear guidance about the difference between right and wrong and most pupils get along well with each other. There are many ways in which social skills are developed, such as, sharing in lessons and during lunch times which are pleasant social occasions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for in a safe and secure environment. Good support is available for pupils especially those with additional special needs. Procedures for monitoring attendance and behaviour are at least good. Child protection procedures are good.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance the curriculum and the school has very good links with the local community. Parents are well informed about events in school by regular newsletters and some parents find home/school books very useful but they are not used consistently throughout the school. Parents are invited to annual review meetings and have the opportunity to give their views. Some parents and grandparents help in the school. Pupils receive good support from a range of other professionals, such as speech therapists, physiotherapists and medical personnel.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Sound. The head teacher supported by the senior management team have a shared commitment to meeting the individual needs of pupils and do so effectively. Day to day management of the school is sound. Monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body supports the work of the school but some statutory requirements are not met. It does not have any formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school undertakes an annual self evaluation exercise which informs the school development plan for the following year. The drawback of this is that the information is not used as effectively as it might be to draw up a long term strategic view for development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses resources and specific grants well. There is a clear relationship between the SDP and spending decisions. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to large purchases and tenders for building works.

The school has sufficient staff for the number of pupils currently on roll and they are all well deployed. The school makes good use of the accommodation which is very well maintained. Resources are good overall but there are some weaknesses in some areas. The role of the governors is underdeveloped but they are kept well informed by the head teacher. The school provides good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and carers feel very comfortable about approaching the school</li> <li>• Children like coming to school</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about how their child is doing in school</li> <li>• Would like more work to do at home</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views of the school. The parents are right to want more information about how their child is doing and should receive a written annual report from the school. Their positive views far outweigh their concerns and pupils are very happy and secure in school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 Overall attainment is well below national averages, however, achievement is good when set against prior learning and the complexity of the learning difficulties of some of the pupils. Attainment on entry is very low and pupils can join the school at different ages as a result of identification of their individual special needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs which for the majority identify severe or moderate learning difficulties but there is an increasing number who are have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), high dependency needs or specific medical needs. Some also have additional behaviour problems and they respond well to the strategies set out on their individual behaviour plans which contributes to the satisfactory progress they make. National Curriculum Assessments this year place pupils achievements in Key Stage 1 as being within Level 1 for English, mathematics and science and in Key Stage 2 achievements range mainly between within Level 1 and Level 1 with a few reaching Level 2 in some aspects of science. These are slightly below what might be expected in similar schools. The school does not use any formal assessment methods to measure progress but has recently introduced "P" scales to support assessments and this will help in the setting of individual and whole school targets for improvement. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a positive effect on pupils' achievements in these areas and have focused teachers attention on specific teaching methods.

2 Pupils with additional special needs, such as ASD and those who have high dependency needs, make good progress overall. This is because of the different teaching methods used, the good range of resources and the opportunities to mix with more able pupils in different classes.

3 The youngest children make good progress in relation to the targets set in their individual learning plans and they achieve well in relation to their various abilities. Much of this is due to the good teaching and the good knowledge and understanding all staff have of the nature of the difficulties these children present. The organisation of groups, the teaching methods used and the very effective relationships within the unit all support children's learning. The development of communication skills is encouraged through verbal, signing, gesture and pictorial approaches and children respond well. Plenty of books are available to the children and higher attaining children are beginning to understand the difference between pictures and words and some can identify their own names and match a few words. They are given many opportunities to develop their fine motor skills and some do write some recognisable letters. Similarly their mathematical development is helped by good teaching and very good resources. Number rhymes and songs are used well to promote counting, and mathematical language is introduced, such as, "big", "little" and "round". High attainers are beginning to identify some shapes and count to five. In other areas of the Early Learning Goals children are making similar good progress and are achieve well in relation to their different abilities.

4 In English pupils in Key Stage 1 consolidate earlier communication skills and most pupils have a basic vocabulary and answer questions using their voice, gesture or sign. They enjoy listening to stories and the higher attainers join in class discussions and share news with others. Their confidence in speaking increases in Key Stage 2 and they answer questions using short sentences and the higher attainers like to talk to adults and visitors. The good progress they make in communicating has a positive effect on other subjects and their learning across the curriculum. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of early reading skills and by the end of Key Stage 1 can match pictures to symbols, identify the corresponding words and recognise some initial letters by shape and sound. Higher attaining pupils make progress in learning high frequency words. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are more interested in stories and read together as a class during shared reading time. They have become aware of punctuation and some know where full stops and capital letters are found. Progress is limited however by an over-reliance on sight vocabulary and a phonic approach which results in hesitancy and problems when trying to follow a storyline. A lack of any formal assessments of reading also inhibits the identification of weaknesses and monitoring progress. Pupils

make satisfactory progress in the development of writing skills in Key Stage 1. They begin by making marks on paper and as their pencil control improves they trace over letters and some can copywrite. Higher attaining pupils form their letters independently and a few can copy words and write their own names. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have fewer opportunities to practice and improve their writing skills. There is some evidence available to show that some pupils can write independently but no indication that this skill is used across other subjects in the curriculum. Much work consists of sequencing photocopied words or phrases and gluing them into their workbooks and this does not represent good practice and restricts the overall development of the pupils.

5 In mathematics pupils' progress and achievements are good across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils sort by colour, shape and size and begin to record data using simple block graphs. Others re-order numbers from one to twelve correctly. Some pupils only use numbers up to seven and match simple shapes but this is in line with their abilities. Pupils build on prior learning as they move through the school and by the end of Key Stage 2 they are confident in using numbers up to 10 and some can go up to twenty. Some high attaining pupils add three digit numbers with a carrying figure and know the time using the "hour". Pupils are beginning to understand a range of measurements and increase their understanding of additional mathematical language.

6 Pupils in science make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory and sometimes good progress in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn how to assemble a circuit and recognise and name the battery, bulb and wires. The light room is used well to allow pupils with high dependency needs to interact with lights, music and bubble tubes. Other pupils enjoy working with different materials that shine and watch with wonder at reflected light, shadows and luminescence with ultra violet light. In Key Stage 2 the pool is well used to demonstrate the forces of push and pull and others build on their knowledge of circuits and show an increasing understanding of how they work.

7 In other subjects of the National Curriculum pupils are making slightly better progress in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well in all subjects except information and communication technology (ICT) where it is only satisfactory, and in music. Whilst good progress is made in singing and using tuned and untuned percussion instruments, the elements of composing and appraising are weak. Progress and achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory in most subjects except design and technology, physical education and religious education where pupils achieve well and make good progress. In personal and social education all pupils make at least good progress and sometimes very good progress. They become more confident and are well prepared to make the move to the secondary school. There is no difference between the progress made by boys and girls and all pupils achieve well in relation to their differing abilities. As they move through the school they build on previous learning as a result of the good teaching, very good relationships and understanding of their individual needs with the exception of the continued development of writing skills.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8 Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. They like school, and this is confirmed by all of the parents. Photographs of pupils at work, for example in their Records of Achievement, show the pleasure that pupils gain from school activities. Pupils are keen to get to their classrooms in the morning, enjoy the lunch time clubs, and settle down to work quickly after lunchtime and morning breaks. They enjoy activities, for example, during a lesson in the hydrotherapy pool, a pupil with high dependency needs screwed up his face with delight anticipating the splash from his descent into the water at 'Humpty Dumpty's Big Fall', and another beamed broadly when the song 'Ring a Roses' was sung, as he looked forward to the swishing motion of the water. In a history lesson pupils excitedly dressed up in pre-war clothes which improved their understanding of that era. Pupils are proud of what they can do and keen to share their talents, for example a pupil who uses an Alpha Talker to converse, enjoys communicating socially as well as using his speaker to give answers in lessons.

9 Most pupils' behaviour is good. A few pupils do disturb lessons with their challenging behaviour and are well managed using a range of appropriate strategies to make sure that other pupils and staff are safe. Although it is only in the older pupil's classes that any rules are displayed, pupils respond well to the school's ethos and aims for good behaviour. There was one fixed term exclusion in the previous school year, but there have been none in the current school year. Pupils generally take great care of equipment and resources in the school, although occasionally the school has to make some provision, for example a secure surround for a computer, to make sure that neither the pupil nor the equipment can be damaged during a disruptive episode.

10 Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility in the school, although they respond to it in their own way. For example, some pupils taking the register into the secretary will carefully place the register on her table and straighten up the pile. Another pupil may fling the register in through the door, relieved to have reached their goal. Some pupils are starting to take responsibility for the time they should receive their medication, and will go directly to the nurse's office at the correct time. Pupils willingly offer to help tidy up the classroom after a lesson, for example putting away glue sticks, gathering up scissors or putting games back in boxes. They work together well, sharing for example a range of magnets in a science lesson, and helping each other, for example, to find envelopes containing a range of magnetic and non-magnetic objects hidden in a classroom.

11 Pupils respond well to the opportunities to make choices in the school. If possible, they choose and collect their meal at lunchtime from the kitchen servery. They take turns on play equipment in the adventure playground and are careful not to knock over more vulnerable pupils when playing outside. In classrooms pupils will wait to take their turn at a computer, and know they should, where possible, put their hand up before answering a question or making a request.

12 Pupils who attend mainstream schools as part of their inclusion target, get on very well with other pupils in mainstream schools and are for example, confident to make choices of these pupils for a partner in a physical education lesson, or share a bag of crisps out in the playground.

13 Attendance at the school is satisfactory and virtually the same as that of similar schools. The main reason for pupils being absent from school is that they are ill. Some pupils are absent from school because they have gone with their parents on their annual holiday. A few pupils have unauthorised absences where families have not given an acceptable reason to the school for their child being away from school. Nearly all the pupils are punctual to school.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

14 Teaching is good overall with some excellent teaching in music which really supports pupils' learning and motivates them well. Only one lesson observed was deemed to be unsatisfactory and this was mainly due to the lost focus of the lesson, poor organisation of resources and lack of involvement of pupils. Teaching was good or better in 65 percent of lessons of which 26 percent was very good and 2 percent was excellent. It was satisfactory in one in three lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

15 A strong feature in lessons is the excellent teamwork between teachers and nursery nurses which has a very positive impact on pupils' ability to learn. All adults know pupils so well and can often anticipate difficulties and remedy them before there has been any disruption or negative impact on learning. The consistent use of individual behaviour plans for some pupils enables others to get on with their work whilst also managing potential disruptions well. Relationships between pupils and adults are also very positive resulting in a very secure learning environment in which pupils' self esteem is developed and their confidence increases all of which supports their learning.

16 Lesson planning is satisfactory and identifies learning objectives but it could be further improved by highlighting ways of meeting individual needs and relating the content more clearly to the National Curriculum

attainment targets. This would enable subject co-ordinators to monitor coverage more easily and identify gaps. In many lessons there is a very constructive classroom atmosphere where praise and encouragement are used well to enable pupils to acquire new skills and share ideas without fear of failure and contributions from pupils are recognised and valued. When teachers are confident in their subject knowledge they use it to good effect to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the task. This was particularly evident in a music lesson when all pupils participated and enthusiastically engaged. Similarly in an art and design lesson the teacher's lively manner encouraged pupils to experiment with materials, time was used productively and pupils responded positively.

17 Weaknesses occur in lessons when activities are over directed by adults and pupils have little involvement. In other lessons the focus and direction are lost and the lesson drags with little enthusiasm in the teaching and pupils are passive. Insufficient activities and resources are not available to last the hour long lesson and pupils become restless and distracted. In addition too many mundane activities such as cutting and sticking in some lessons inhibit learning. The physical organisation of the furniture sometimes means that pupils are seated too low and pupils cannot participate in lessons fully. Opportunities to extend pupils' learning are missed when questions or responses are not followed up.

18 Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and numeracy in particular is used effectively across the curriculum, for example, counting pupils in registration groups, counting drinks etc. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in other subjects and situations in school but writing is not sufficiently well promoted to enable pupils to write confidently in subjects such as science, history, geography or religious education where there is little evidence of written work.

19 Teaching in the class for the youngest children is always good and often very good. All adults use a range of systems and strategies to encourage communication, such as, voice, signing, photographs, symbols and yes/no pads which involves all the children. Individual needs are identified quickly and learning objectives put in place and progress is then monitored very effectively as it happens by all adults. Activities and resources are well chosen and children are offered learning opportunities as soon as they arrive in school. They settle down to work and respond well in a very secure environment.

20 Teaching strategies used in the autistic unit are effective in helping pupils learn and make progress. Good use is made of pictures and symbols which give structure to the day and enable pupils to understand the daily routines. Teachers are positive and enthusiastic and have high expectations of the pupils who respond well. Pupils with high dependency needs are well taught when in their base group but there are some gaps in the planning for them when integrated in to other classes. Socially they enjoy the interactions but learning objectives for them need to be more precise. Teachers and nursery nurses in the base know these pupils so well and the team work between adults is very good. Regular recording in both these areas of pupils' achievements creates an ongoing assessment record.

21 The school has no formal homework policy and this results in little work being given to pupils to do at home. As a result parents are not fully involved in their children's learning which is restricted to lesson time in most instances but a few are given work from speech therapists if requested.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

22 The quality and range of learning opportunities planned for pupils are good. The written curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. All subjects are supported by curriculum policies and schemes of work, however, the taught curriculum whilst placing appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education, is not adequately monitored to ensure sufficient coverage for some subjects. In particular, individual targets are not identified in science, there are few opportunities for composing and appraising in music in Key Stage 1, there is limited access to planned teaching for information and communication

technology and the historical and geographical content of some lessons is superficial. Timetables are organised differently by groups of staff and timings and subject groupings make it difficult to monitor time allocation for different subjects. Except for English and mathematics the majority of subjects, including science, are taught through a rolling programme of topics which is different for each key stage. Termly planning follows a consistent format but the inclusion of more detail in these would help to give lesson planning a clearer focus and also enable the subject co-ordinator to monitor them for subject specific content. Whilst opportunities for cross curricular links are very commendable, the result can be a blurring of subject focus and together with insufficient clarity in individual targets coverage of subjects is hard to define. There has been marked improvement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) which now covers sex and drugs education. The curriculum provided for pupils with ASD is very good and relevant for their particular special needs. Similarly the organisation of the curriculum for those pupils with high dependency needs has been well thought out and within the school these pupils have some lessons with their peers but the planning for these inclusion lessons must ensure appropriate activities and mutual benefit for all pupils.

23 All staff are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and take into account the age, ability and gender of all pupils. The aim of the organisation of pupils throughout the school is to be sufficiently flexible to meet their individual needs and this is done well, but more rigour in planning and in setting targets in individual learning plans would improve this further.

24 Since the last inspection the staff have worked hard to develop literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. The effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies is already having a significant and positive effect on the achievement levels of pupils which can be seen in other subjects across the whole curriculum.

25 The school actively promotes a policy of inclusion. Pupils from the younger age groups visit a local mainstream nursery once a week and several groups from Key Stage 2 go into local primary schools on a regular basis. Every week a group of Year 6 pupils from Elton County Primary school spend an afternoon with pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 at Millwood School which is a highly successful and mutually beneficial experience. Relationships with these schools are very good.

26 All pupils, whatever their special needs, have full access to a wide range of out-of-school activities and enjoy a variety of curricular and extra-curricular experiences which enhance their learning and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Their learning is enriched by very good links with the local community such as visits to the Bury library, local swimming and sports facilities and includes shopping at a variety of outlets such as Asda, Marks & Spencer and Ikea. Pupils can visit local art galleries, museums and parks and take part in the Annual Festival of Arts in Oldham Civic Hall. In addition in-school there are several lunchtime clubs such as a guitar club, art club and gym club. In addition, after school clubs are in the planning stage of development which will further enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

27 Very good arrangements are made to prepare pupils for the next stage of education and their transfer to Secondary school. Parents are invited to discuss future schooling by the beginning of their child's 6th year, pupils are able to visit the Secondary school in the Summer Term before transfer and the teacher from the Secondary school visits Millwood School and meets the pupils well before July of the year of transfer.

28 The school has a clear and comprehensive policy on equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory rights and practices. Although the school has pupils with a wide range of ability and many with additional special educational needs, all have equal opportunities of access to the curriculum and the facilities available. There are no significant variations between the progress of boys and girls, or by different groups of pupils. Pupils whose first language is not English are given some support from a bilingual support worker who speaks Punjabi and this is funded separately. Pupils with additional special needs are well supported by speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and medical personnel where appropriate.



29 The school's partnership with other schools and colleges in the area is very good. The social and academic development of a number of pupils are very well supported by an active inclusion and outreach programme run by the school, where pupils have access to mainstream and special schools and resourced provision in the area, and the mainstream schools benefit from the expertise of the school's specialist teachers. A large number of colleges, universities and secondary schools place their students in the school for work experience or training placements. This is strength of the school.

30 The contribution of the community to the pupils' curriculum is very good and varied, and the school makes good use of its minibus to go out in the community and widen and enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils' use of the community ranges from visits to local shops for example to promote map making, visits to the local church to support religious education, and cultural visits to art galleries and theatres. During the summer, the school hosts a playscheme run by a local family support group.

31 Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development has improved well since the previous inspection and the promotion of pupils' cultural development has improved very well.

32 Religious education lessons and close links with the local church, synagogue and mosque enable pupils to consider the similarities and differences between a variety of world faiths, and the significance of symbols such as light and water in most religions. Celebration assemblies where many pupils receive special mention and awards for endeavour and consideration for others, effectively raise their self-esteem. Music and candles are frequently used to promote a calm, reflective atmosphere at the beginning and end of assemblies and many lessons. Pupils listen attentively to the messages of stories, have opportunities to pray, and enjoy singing hymns. There are many planned moments of excitement and wonder, as, for instance in a science lesson on electrical circuits, when pupils squealed with delight as the light came on.

33 In all areas of the school's life, pupils are given clear guidance about the difference between right and wrong. Discussion in many subjects, particularly personal, social and emotional education and religious education, provides opportunities for pupils to explore moral values and consider how their own feelings and behaviour affect other people. The majority understand how to get on with each other and to care for others. School staff are skilled in intervention, and incidents which arise are treated sensitively in ways that further help pupils to develop a sense of justice and fair play. Pupils are actively encouraged to regulate their own behaviour, and in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 they agree on their own class rules.

34 The promotion of pupils' social development is very effective and there are many planned opportunities during co-operative work for them to develop relevant personal qualities and skills. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good, and this results in mutual warmth and respect between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves. The school successfully promotes good manners and sharing, and this is clearly evident during lunchtimes, which are pleasant social occasions. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements, and frequently show care and concern for others experiencing difficulties, often in simple ways such as comforting a distressed friend. The school has very close links with neighbouring schools, nurseries and play schemes, which further promote pupils' social development.

35 Many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about and appreciate their own culture and those of others. They celebrate Christian festivals and those of other faiths, such as the Chinese New Year and Yom Kippur. Their understanding of multi-cultural issues is further promoted by having visitors to the school from ethnic-minority groups, and by involvement in local festivals. Music is an integral part of the school's life and is used well to give pupils experience of musical styles from other countries and times. Visits to art galleries, theatrical productions and local places of interest further enhance pupils' cultural development.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36 The school takes good care of pupils and has good procedures for ensuring child protection and

pupils' welfare. The school clearly identifies the designated person for child protection and all staff are aware of up to date procedures and liaise with the local area child protection committee. Safety issues in the school are monitored effectively by risk assessments, routine checks on safety and electrical equipment, regular fire evacuation drills and an active approach to checking and revising school procedures to ensure pupil and staff safety. Pupils' health and any first aid needs are well supported by the school nurse and health therapists. The procedures for dispensing medication are carefully documented and recorded for each pupil, and in addition the school supports pupils by providing staff with responsibility for specialist tube feeding programmes. All staff have experienced what it is like to be fed themselves, and this has increased their sensitivity to the social and physical aspects of meal times. Although health professionals and therapists in the school take their referrals from health specialists, staff and therapists do work alongside pupils in lessons, for example in some physical education lessons. Staff know pupils very well and use this knowledge to monitor aspects of the school's personal, social and health education policy for each pupil, for example by assessing pupil's progress in personal hygiene, their confidence in working with other pupils and guiding pupils to make the most of their abilities. The school supports inclusion opportunities for pupils within the school as for example giving pupils with high dependency needs the opportunity to work alongside other pupils in the school for some lessons. A weekly 'Good Work' assembly recognises what individual pupils have done well and provides a certificate to include in pupil's Record of Achievement. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of pupils are good.

37 The school's procedures for ensuring and monitoring good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school promotes the use of individual behaviour plans for pupils where a structured approach to a pupil's behaviour is judged to be necessary, and makes sure that a pupil's parents are consulted if for example, any short term restraints are considered part of these plans. The school seeks professional help for behavioural strategies, for example from the education psychology service. Two of the school's staff are Team Teach trainers and they encourage all staff to follow positive handling and positive approaches with pupils to manage their behaviour. Pupils respond very well to celebratory stickers for good behaviour.

38 Overall the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are very good and involve the school secretary checking the school registers, conscientiously following any absence on a daily basis and bringing in the educational welfare service if this is felt to be necessary. The school does not routinely promote attendance, but it does ask parents to request any absences from school because of holidays in term time, with the head teacher.

39 The procedures for assessment are not consistently used in all subjects. Not all areas identified for improvement in the last inspection have been addressed, for example, targets on individual learning plans are still inconsistent and not always linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers and nursery nurses know their pupils very well and are aware of their emotional, physical and intellectual needs but this is very subjective and no formal assessments are undertaken except baseline assessments when young children enter school in order to offer a range of support. Pupils who enter the school later have documents from previous schools and are also assessed by the educational psychologist. All pupils have statements of special educational needs which identify their individual needs. These are appropriately reviewed and reflected in individual learning plans in English, mathematics and PSHE.

40 Assessment procedures are very good for under fives and for pupils on the autistic continuum and those with high dependency needs. Day-to-day assessment in these areas, especially for under fives and pupils with high dependency needs is very good and is used well to modify teaching. "P" scales have recently been introduced but insufficient data is available to be used to set future targets and insufficient evidence as yet to monitor progress, especially with cohorts of pupils, and so raise standards. Pupils are taught in ability groups with targets for groups and in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, individual targets are set. The subject expertise of staff is used well to support learning and nursery nurses record responses during certain lessons. Targets for science do not reflect the individual needs of pupils sufficiently and this is similar in other subjects where the targets stem from the schemes of work regardless

of ability. The head teacher also intends to introduce 'PIVATS' assessment closely linked with the "P" scales and in line with the baseline assessment which will ensure a whole school understanding and approach and also improve the recording of academic achievement. The consistency of assessment procedures to inform planning should be improved and monitored systematically. No written information is provided for parents to give them a full and clear picture of individual attainment and progress against National Curriculum subjects.

41 Team work in classrooms provides stability and staff use professional judgements effectively meeting twice a week to share information in order to support each other and the pupils. Individual learning plans are monitored by class teachers but can only provide limited information when targets are general. Individual behaviour plans are used particularly well to provide a consistent and supportive approach with pupils. The quality of the records of achievement has improved and they are attractively recorded with certificates and photographs. Parents are involved in annual reviews of statements of special educational needs and are invited to provide written comment. A cohesive approach to evaluation and assessment will ensure a whole school system and build on the existing very good practice in certain areas.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42 The parents' views of the school are very good and they are unanimous that they feel comfortable about approaching the school to discuss any problems or concerns. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. Parents are encouraged to attend the Parents Support Group and the Friends of Millwood meetings, but the attendance of both groups suffers from the distance the school is from parents' homes. Nevertheless parents support the school's fund raising activities, and attend performances and come into some assemblies. The school supports the use of the hydrotherapy pool for pre-school children with special and complex learning needs; this enables the parents of nursery age children with a place at the school, to become familiar with the school before their children have to formally attend. The impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is good and a small number of parents and grandparents help in the school. Parents have a standing invitation to join the managed physiotherapy sessions with pupils, and they are able to observe their children in class, for example to pick up strategies for managing behaviour. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the annual review of their child's statement of special educational needs and medicals and many attend.

43 The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The school is failing to meet its statutory requirement to provide an annual written report of pupils' progress in all subjects and activities studied as part of the school curriculum. The school has also not consulted all registered parents of current pupils to adopt a home-school agreement and associated parental declaration. The provision of information for parents on a regular basis through home-school diaries is not practised consistently across the school but parents do understand that as pupils get older and if their communication skills improve, there is less need for daily written information, but they do not appreciate the lack of input on whether home-school diaries are to be used or not. Parents, whose children require specialist tube feeding, generally receive a regular record of their child's day. The school sends out frequent newsletters to parents on day-to-day school activities. If necessary, the school does ensure that parents, who do not have English as a first language, will have help with understanding the school's information. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Where class teachers provide homework, parents are pleased to support this provision, and a number of parents would like homework to be provided across all of the school. The introduction of a homework policy and the consistent provision of homework would be appreciated by parents. The school works closely with parents on inclusion programmes for a number of pupils.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44 The head teacher and management team have a shared commitment to meeting the special needs of individual pupils and are successful in achieving this aim. To this end they have a flexible approach to the

organisation and structure of groups within the school and also endeavour to make the most of integration opportunities with mainstream schools. The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher are sound and ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth and efficient. All staff work well together successfully and this goes a long way to creating the very positive ethos evident in the school. The aims and values which the school supports are very well met and underpin the work of the school.

45 An annual self evaluation process informs the school development plan (SDP) and subsequently spending decisions. However because this process occurs annually the management of the school does not have a planned strategic long term view for the future development of the school although there are ideas about the immediate direction for the school. Added to this is the absence of any whole school targets for improvement but this should be remedied soon when the information from the “P” scales and ‘PIVATS’ assessment procedures will give the management team sufficient material to set not only whole school targets but more specific targets for pupils. The current SDP has a range of relevant targets which deal with immediate needs and these are monitored by the management team and staff and progress is reported at governors meetings.

46 Subject co-ordinators monitor termly planning but have insufficient opportunities to observe colleagues teaching their subject which would make their paper monitoring more realistic. Similarly the school has yet to systematically monitor teaching in a formal way which would enable good practice to be identified and shared and therefore improve the overall quality of teaching.

47 The governing body meets regularly and is very well informed of the school’s activities by the head teacher. The chairman is a regular visitor to the school but does not focus his visits on a specific area although he feels he knows the school well and has looked particularly at health and safety procedures. Developing their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school would give governors good insights into all aspects of the school, such as, seeing how far the policies they agree impact on raising standards and how effective their spending decisions are on improving resources and pupils’ learning. Also working with the management team to formulate a long term strategic development plan would give governors some ownership in the future direction of the school. In addition, not all statutory requirements are met in that the school does not provide parents with a written annual report about their child’s progress in subjects of the National Curriculum nor does it have a home/school agreement with parents.

48 The ratio of teaching and support staff to pupils is in line with national recommendations. All staff are well qualified with a good range of expertise in subjects and special needs. The nursery nurses are particularly skilled in supporting and teaching pupils while working in staff teams. The teaching provision for pupils on the autistic continuum and those with complex learning difficulties is very good and gives these pupils every opportunity to benefit from what the school provides. All pupils have equal access to the speech and language therapists, physiotherapist and school nursing provision. Teachers and nursery nurses have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and this contributes well to their very good team work which supports pupils’ learning.

49 A new policy for induction has been recently introduced but procedures currently are very informal but staff are very supportive of each other and support new colleagues. Performance management has been introduced with targets recently set for the head teacher and teaching staff, but not yet monitored. It is proposed to extend this to include all staff next year. Secure appraisal and staff development is embedded in the school planning for all staff and relevant staff development is planned annually in line with the school development plan. Co-ordinators have written comprehensive policies and schemes of work, this is an improvement since the last inspection but staff new to a co-ordinating role require mentoring and support. All staff have appropriate job descriptions which are negotiated annually and staff meet weekly to discuss curriculum and share expertise and good ideas.

50 The adequacy of the school’s accommodation is good. Pupils have access to specialised outdoor play areas with a range of large play equipment. Three sensory stimulus rooms support the development of

pupils with high dependency needs well and the school's hydrotherapy pool is a good resource well used by those pupils as well as being shared by pre-school children with special needs. Very good displays of pupils' work provides a stimulating learning environment for the pupils especially those which are interactive and which encourage pupils to develop their tactile responses and visual awareness. There has been a good improvement in classroom size and preparation and storage areas since the previous inspection. The school's Premises Manager works very hard to keep the school very clean and tidy and he undertakes some repairs in order to maintain the school in good condition. Despite the very great care taken by staff to ensure the privacy and dignity of pupils when they are being changed, limitations in some changing room accommodation and resources still do not ensure these aspects for pupils and this is unsatisfactory.

51 Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the range and quality of resources which are now good and sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Resources are very good in English, mathematics, art and design, music and physical education, good in science, information and communication technology, religious education and design and technology but only satisfactory in history and geography. There are two designated library areas, one for general books and one specifically for science but there is no suitable area where pupils can sit quietly to look at books for themselves. There is sufficient specialised equipment to meet the needs of pupils with physical and sensory difficulties. Pupils' learning is enriched by the use of a wide variety of external resources such as the Public Library in Bury and many out of school visits to museums, parks, art galleries and theatres.

52 The school secretary runs the office efficiently and the day to day administration is good. Only basic financial matters are dealt with by the school and a Local Authority budget manager supports the school to deal with the bulk of the budget. The annual budget is based on historical spending and the lack of a long term strategic plan does inhibit any planned spending or savings. However, the budget is closely monitored by the deputy head teacher who reports regularly to the finance sub-committee. The school currently has a large surplus with no firm plans for its use and whilst the school wisely maintains some contingency funds, long term planning would identify better use for this money. Near to the close of the financial year staff bid for additional monies with which to further enhance resources for subject areas. The last audit by the LEA took place in September 1998 and recommendations have been acted upon appropriately. The principles of Best Value are adhered to when tendering for large items or building projects and money for specific grants is used appropriately and very effectively in such areas as the provision for pupils with ASD.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

53 In order to raise standards further the governors, head teacher and staff should:

1. Increasing the involvement of governors in :
  - monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their spending decisions on raising standards,
  - evaluating the effectiveness of their policies in practice by making focused visits,
  - working with the SMT to develop a long term strategic plan against which to set the future direction of the work of the school.  
(Paragraph 47)
2. Improve the overall leadership and management of the school by
  - Establishing a systematic method of monitoring the quality of teaching by senior managers and subject co-ordinators, (Paragraph 46)
  - Establishing more rigorous monitoring of the taught curriculum, including lesson plans, to ensure that what is being taught reflects the written curriculum, (Paragraphs 16, 22, 23, 91, 94, 97)
  - Reviewing the content of the curriculum so that it provides a better breadth and balance in all subjects, except literacy and numeracy. (Paragraphs 22, 80, 98)

3. Identifying examples of good practice in assessment, develop these further across all subjects to ensure a systematic and consistent approach which is regularly monitored. (Paragraphs 39, 40, 41, 97)
4. Ensuring that statutory requirements are met in respect of giving parents a written annual report about their child's progress in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and establish a Home/School agreement with parents. (Paragraphs 40, 43)

In addition to the above key issues the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- Extend opportunities for writing across all subjects of the curriculum.
- Formulate a common format for class timetables.
- Continue to find ways to ensure the privacy and dignity of pupils at all times.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	26	37	33	2	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	82
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	10.9

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0.2

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	2

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	9

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	666

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	763,518
Total expenditure	756,657
Expenditure per pupil	10,658
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,601
Balance carried forward to next year	26,462



***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

82

Number of questionnaires returned

38

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	29	0	3	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	39	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	40	10	3	7
The teaching is good.	68	30	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	18	11	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	24	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	8	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	34	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	36	6	0	8

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

54 The unit for the youngest pupils in the school comprises a mixed age group of seventeen children. The majority are younger than six years of age, and a small minority are in Year 1. The curriculum for all these children is based on the Early Learning Goals, with individual learning plans to meet the needs of all children. The unit's accommodation includes a fenced outdoor area with a rubber surface and a small grassed area. Indoors, the children benefit from the use of a stimulating classroom environment, dedicated space for messy activities, a well-equipped sensory room and close proximity to the hydro-therapy pool.

55 On entry to the unit the staff operates a baseline assessment, and progress assessments are in place. The children enter with very low levels of attainment. Given their special educational needs, it is unlikely that the children under six years old, or those older children for whom a foundation stage curriculum is appropriate, will reach the early learning goals by the time they transfer to the main school. However, due to good teaching, a wide range of stimulating activities and resources, and effective use of the accommodation, the children make good progress towards the targets in their individual learning plans. Day-to-day assessment is good and all staff record on 'post its' any achievements made by children and in this way modifications to plans are made immediately. Children achieve well in relation to their abilities. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.

56 The children enter the unit with very immature skills in personal and social development. As a result of well-structured support, and encouragement from all members of staff, children make good progress in relation to their individual targets. They are, for example, encouraged to take responsibility by taking the register to the office, accompanied by a member of staff, and to communicate by words or signing their choice of drink at snack time. All children are given opportunities of taking the lead during games and other classroom activities, and this effectively promotes their self-confidence and self-esteem. Adults provide very good role models, and because of this, children learn to relate to staff and each other in a respectful, caring way. Expectations for behaviour are high. Teachers and nursery nurses explain clearly the difference between right and wrong, and as a result, behaviour is usually good and often very good. Children who have difficulty in controlling their emotions and behaviour are very well supported with individual behaviour plans which are used consistently and successfully by staff. The children begin to understand that others have different needs which should be treated with respect. The use of a candle as a focal point during the daily prayer before lunch provides a good opportunity for children to reflect on what they and others have done well.

57 The development of children's language and literacy skills is good overall. Children begin to answer to their own names, listen to stories attentively and use books for pleasure. They are encouraged to answer questions and to talk about their daily lives and stories they have heard. They join in and answer well. For example, while listening to "We're going on a bear hunt", children counted the bears, used terms such as 'over' and 'under' and began to anticipate repetitive phrases in the story. They were encouraged to think carefully about the sequence of events, and higher attaining children were able to relate parts of the story in their own way. The children benefit from the good use made of signing and symbols, and most use signing and oral communication well to join in with rhymes and songs, using the appropriate actions. High levels of adult support ensure that all children have opportunities to express themselves. Higher attaining children understand that pictures and words in books are different, can identify their own names in a group of three, and can match up to four words. Pupils with complex needs identify their own photographs by eye-pointing and show pleasurable responses during stories. Their understanding is supported by the sensory experiences they are given. Writing skills are at an early stage of development. A small number of pupils can write some recognisable letters, and children benefit from opportunities to develop their fine motor skills with jig-saws, Lego activities, drawing and colouring.

58 Children's mathematical skills develop well in relation to their abilities. Children develop their understanding of number, shape, space and measures by exploring and investigating the very good resources provided by their teachers and nursery nurses. For example, they play with sand and water, and adults focus their attention on filling and emptying containers. A very good range of number games has been produced by the staff to further pupils' understanding. Very good use is made of number songs and rhymes to promote children's counting, and develop their understanding of adding on and taking off. Children begin to use mathematical language, and describe things as 'big', 'little' and 'round'. The most competent children identify a circle and a square and count to five. Pupils with high dependency needs eye-point to a red object on request, and, with support, reach for a switch to find a hidden object. Pupils learn to sort objects by colour and size.

59 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world increases well throughout their time in the unit. They use their senses to explore and investigate objects and materials. They plant seeds and bulbs and visit the local park to see things growing there. Daily weather observation helps them become aware of similarities, differences and changing patterns over time. During outside play, children experience different forces as they push and pull large toys. They blow bubbles and watch them float away and burst. There are good opportunities for children's learning to be supported with the use of information and communication technology. For example, they use the roller ball to move icons on the screen, and, with help, 'dress' a teddy bear using a touch screen. They begin to understand the passing of time when they talk about important events such as birthdays. They are introduced to aspects of their own culture and those of others, through celebrating festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and the Chinese New Year.

60 In relation to their individual targets, children make good progress in their physical development. The facilities for physical activities are good in terms of specialist accommodation. There is a well-equipped, stimulating outdoor area, and indoors children benefit from the use of the hall and a good range of equipment for physical activities, a sensory area and a hydrotherapy pool. They are given many opportunities to develop their skills. For example, they play on large wheeled toys such as cars and bicycles, and use the climbing and balancing equipment. Children frequently need help and support from teachers and nursery nurses, and adults intervene very well during these activities, challenging and supporting the children to improve their skills and confidence. During indoor activities there are good opportunities for children to develop body and spatial awareness through rolling balls, running quickly and slowly and stopping on the teacher's command. Children develop manipulative skills with increasing dexterity through using play dough, scissors, pencils and paint brushes, and when controlling the computer mouse.

61 Children make good progress in their creative development and achieve well in relation to their abilities. They learn how to use different materials such as paint, different papers, fabrics and glue to make pictures and collages, and they experiment with play dough. Higher-attaining children draw people with recognisable detail whilst others make marks on paper with crayons and paint. Teachers make very effective use of music, and children have many opportunities to explore sound with the use of tuned and untuned instruments. They learn to match sounds to instruments and to play loudly or softly on request. Children respond in a wide variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel. For example, they enjoy responding to the different sounds and coloured lights in the sensory area, and expressing their feelings when smelling and touching spices and perfumes. They express their ideas through imaginative role-play with dolls, small toys and during cooking sessions.

62 The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good, and is frequently very good. There are detailed written records of children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This information is shared with parents and with teachers in the main school. Parents are very appreciative of the information and support they are given by staff. Individual learning plans are carefully targeted and are regularly reviewed, and information about children's progress is well used to inform future planning. The teachers in the unit are secure in their knowledge in all the areas of learning. Team work between the teachers and nursery nurses is effective, and all staff are very well deployed. They ask the children challenging questions,

explain tasks and new ideas clearly and encourage children to think carefully when solving problems. Staff group children appropriately, and during the wide range of activities encourage the children to take responsibility when selecting activities or materials. Boys and girls of all abilities are supported in taking part in all activities, and extension work is provided for those who finish tasks quickly.

## ENGLISH

63 Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school in speaking and listening. Pupils' achievements in reading are good in Key Stage 1 but achievement in Key Stage 2 is restricted by the lack of introduction to a wider variety of decoding strategies. Pupils' achievements in writing are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 where they develop early writing skills but in Key Stage 2 progress is affected by the limited opportunities for the development of independent and creative writing. During the inspection very little writing was seen in other subjects across the curriculum.

64 The majority of pupils come to school with poor communication skills and little if any language. By seven years of age most pupils have a basic vocabulary of nouns, are able to answer questions using voice, gesture or signing, can sit and listen to a story and enjoy exploring sounds and words through nursery rhymes and number songs. Pupils with more significant needs and those with high dependency needs develop effective means of communication and are encouraged to vocalise as much as possible. The more able pupils take part in class discussions and can share special items of news with the group. By 11 years of age most pupils are confident to answer questions and when reporting news speak in correctly structured sentences for example "I went with my Mother for a walk with the dog". The more able pupils can hold short conversations with teachers and friends and sometimes with less familiar people such as the Inspectors. The progress made by the majority of pupils in developing speaking and listening skills has an impact on their achievements in other subjects such as in music where they learn the words of a variety of songs and enjoy singing together. The good progress made in speaking and listening can be seen in other subjects and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the curriculum.

65 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in acquiring early reading skills so that by seven years of age most can match pictures to symbols and some can identify the corresponding words. They can recognise the initial letter of their own name by sound and shape and learn the names of familiar objects such as colours and characters in the 'Big Books' the class read together. The pupils with high dependency needs are able to identify themselves from a choice of photographs and know the names of class members, for example they are able to respond correctly to the question "Where is Alex?". The more able pupils can match words to words, recognise and select the correct word from a choice of two, make progress in learning high frequency words and one pupil was able to follow the sequence of a story and name some of the characters. By 11 years of age pupils show an increasing interest in stories and enthusiastically read together as a class during shared reading activities. They enjoy looking at books and show respect for them turning the pages carefully. They are aware of basic punctuation and a few know where these should be found, for example "full stops are at the end and capital letters at the beginning". The more able pupils enjoy reading and a few can retell stories using picture cues. However, progress towards fluent reading is limited by an over-reliance on sight vocabulary and a phonic approach which results in hesitancy and problems in following the storyline. The recent introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on pupils' interest in books and stories and as reading skills improve should have a positive impact on learning throughout the curriculum.

66 Pupils' achievement in developing writing skills is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 where they learn to make marks on paper, hold a pencil and begin to recognise that words go together to convey meaning. By seven years of age most pupils are able to hold a pencil correctly and have sufficient control to trace over dotted letters and some then use this as their model for copywriting. Pupils with more significant needs and those with high dependency needs are encouraged to grasp and hold objects and enjoy touching a variety of different textures and shapes. The most competent pupils can form their letters independently and a few can copy words and write their own name. Progress in Key Stage 2 is less well developed. Although many pupils can talk in correctly structured sentences which may be scribed by the staff for copying few

opportunities were seen when pupils attempted to translate their ideas onto paper for themselves. The majority of the work seen in writing was cutting out photocopied words and simple phrases which the pupils then sequenced and glued into their books as answers to questions. Evidence from past records showed that a few pupils are able to form letters well, write in sentences and produce a piece of creative writing such as New Year Resolutions. The most competent pupils also have spelling books which give further evidence of their writing abilities. The fact that more opportunities are not provided for the development and extension of these emerging skills not only in English but in other subjects across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

67 The quality of teaching in English is always satisfactory, usually good and sometimes very good in both Key Stages. Lessons are clearly planned and take into account the learning and behavioural programmes for each individual pupil. The calm and supportive atmosphere, very good knowledge of the pupils and excellent teamwork with frequent praise and encouragement for everyone's individual effort increases pupils' confidence and self esteem which results in most pupils working hard and making progress against the targets set. The recent successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is already having a positive effect on the interest pupils have in books and the pleasure and enjoyment they show when listening to stories. Where difficulties do occur it is usually because the use of the extensive range of very good resources becomes a distraction rather than acting as a support for the storyline and occasionally there is too much talking so that pupils are not sure of the purpose of the task and lose the thread of the story.

68 Over the four years since the last inspection the co-ordinator has worked hard to provide a firm base for English as central to the school's curriculum. She has rewritten the English policy, completed writing the scheme of work which was only in the early stages of development in 1997 and has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy ensuring that all staff are trained and confident in its implementation. Currently there is little formal assessment of pupils' reading abilities and therefore staff are unable to measure progress accurately. 'P' scales are beginning to be used effectively to set targets for pupils' individual learning plans. Resources are now very good with areas for the display of books in all classrooms and a designated library area although this is not large enough or suitable for quiet reading being located in the main thoroughfare at the entrance to the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69 Pupils' achievement and progress in mathematics are good throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in numeracy because they are well taught and are set challenging targets. Teachers promote numeracy opportunities within most lessons during the day, and this reinforces pupils' learning very effectively. Assessment is well used to identify individual learning objectives. Work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and planned to ensure success. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. The two mathematics co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and they support colleagues well with clear advice and guidance. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this is a significant feature in the good, and often very good, teaching throughout the school. Teaching overall has improved well since the last inspection.

70 By the time they are seven years old the most competent pupils sort articles by colour, shape and size, reorder a number line from one to twelve and work out that 'five take away two leaves three'. They are beginning to record data using simple block graphs. Pupils with more significant needs recognise and match colours and simple shapes and identify missing numbers in a line of one to seven. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder(ASD) have a growing understanding of the sequence of daily activities and, with support, take turns in number games using numbers up to five. Pupils with high dependency needs make good progress in clapping to two or three with help. Pupils with these additional special needs make good progress because tasks are at appropriate levels, and teachers and nursery nurses demonstrate patience and understanding in allowing pupils time to respond.

71 As they move through the school pupils continue to build well on their learning. By the time they are 11 the majority have a sound grasp of number bonds up to ten, and many are confident to twenty. They

use their knowledge of numbers, shapes and colours to play mathematical games, can reorder the days of the week and recognise lines of symmetry in geometrical shapes and patterns. A small minority of more competent pupils add together three-digit numbers with a carrying figure. The majority of pupils can identify times to the hour on work sheets, and write the time legibly underneath. Pupils have a growing understanding of a range of measurements, and use appropriate mathematical language such as 'longer/shorter', 'heavier/lighter' and 'wide/narrow'.

72 Pupils throughout the school are eager to learn in mathematics lessons. This is because they are highly motivated by the wide range of methods and exciting resources teachers use, and by the success they experience when they learn new skills. Many opportunities are created for pupils to recognise their own success, and this reinforces their confidence and self-esteem. Relationships are very good and most pupils are pleased when their friends do well. Pupils maintain their concentration for commendable periods because teachers include a variety of tasks, such as class discussion, playing number or shopping games in groups, and working in pairs or individually. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The support pupils receive from nursery nurses is of very high quality, and makes a significant contribution to their progress.

73 Subject co-ordination is good. Planning documents, including the scheme of work and the mathematics targets in individual learning plans, are detailed and specific, and provide good support for teachers. Assessment procedures are used consistently throughout the school, and assessment information is used effectively in teachers' planning following the recent introduction of 'P' scales. Resources to support teaching and learning have improved well since the last inspection and are good in range and quality. They include very good materials produced by the staff to ensure that work is well-matched to pupils' needs and interests

74 Discussion and small group activities in mathematics make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

## **SCIENCE**

75 Progress in lessons is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory to good in Key Stage 2. Young pupils and those with high dependency needs experience appropriate play through knowledge and understanding of their world. Within Key Stage 1 pupils, with support, are learning how to assemble a simple circuit. Most can name three electrical items such as the battery, the bulb and wires and with help they put the batteries into the holder and screw in the bulb. The most able pupil was able to help his friend to put the battery in. Good attention is given to speaking and listening to understand the task. The pace of the lesson is slow at times which results in pupils becoming restless. The teacher has high expectations that the pupils will work as independently as possible to achieve the task. Pupils respond well to the supportive team work of the staff and show great excitement when the circuit works. One pupil said it was like a torch. In a carefully planned lesson young pupils with ASD enjoy and respond with wonder to objects that shine as they watch reflected light, shadows and luminescence with ultra violet light. The sun and natural light are used to change the effect of shiny surfaces where the staff encourage pupils successfully to create light effects for the fun and wonder of it. Pupils with high dependency needs give good attention and show delight when they interact with adults, light switches, music and bubble tubes in the light room.

76 Within Key Stage 2 pupils anticipate their turn in the hydrotherapy pool. They enjoy the experience of push and pull in the warm water and one pupil begins to solve problems using cups of water to fill and pour and puts an object that floats in the cup. A pupil can push a large empty container across the pool and begins to recognise something has changed when water is added. The good use of praise and correct use of terms enables pupils to complete and record their work in circuit making. One pupil said the light would not work because the wires were not together and all pupils can name their two pictures and all the parts of a circuit. The circuits are small and fiddly but the pupils concentrate well helped by the nursery nurse and a sense of humour by the teacher helps pupils to be calm and enjoy the task. One pupil tried to explain how a toy would

work. In Year 6 pupils concentrate on a video, one pupil could remember that some objects stick to magnets. The very enthusiastic teaching conveyed the excitement of scientific discovery. The pupils know they are scientists and are encouraged to think that science is an ordered activity. The very good planning and exciting pace of the lesson ensures pupils carry out their experiment to find out which objects stick to a magnet and show wonder at the keys which are attracted. They can identify objects which are attracted and those which are not. Other pupils recognise various properties of different paper and card. They relate well to the video about the source of paper, two pupils say it comes from trees. One group prepared a collage using different papers to recognise textures, they were encouraged to work hard to produce a high quality piece of work. A second group experimented with the absorbency of paper.

77 The excellent team work with pupils with high dependency needs ensures the lesson is relevant and pupils make good progress. Pupils show by facial gestures that they know when a taste is sour or sweet. The experiment to change a sour drink to a sweet drink and crush the ice to change its property was a successful experience. Other pupils enjoy foot-spas, aromatherapy and interaction with objects in the light room. They show awareness of objects and sensations and changing properties while a few give good eye contact and respond well to an adult.

78 The most effective learning takes place where the lessons are well planned with sharp small step targets linked to clear learning outcomes. In many lessons good examples are provided for pupils with excellent team work and support given by nursery nurses and pupils respond well. In addition there is a good working atmosphere and nursery nurses record achievement which complements the set targets Vocabulary for scientific terms is used well but not always planned for. Occasional lack of planning for the lesson and restricted specific targets results in missed opportunities for learning. More thought is needed when designing work sheets to ensure pupils know what they are recording and why. Very few pupils can read or understand the worksheets or record with writing. All lessons have a scientific base and are well planned to make the best use of time, although a few lessons are too long and pupils become restless. A range of work is covered with good use of relevant resources. Young pupils and those with high dependency needs experience appropriate play through knowledge and understanding of their world.

79 The provision for science is good throughout the school. The policy and scheme of work is comprehensive and shows good improvement since the last inspection but what is taught is not always in line with the written curriculum. A range of work is covered with good use of relevant resources except ICT and this inhibits the investigation opportunities. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. The light rooms and resources for science are used well by all staff across the school. Assessment is inconsistent and targets are general for a group and do not always reflect the precise learning needs of each pupil making it hard to measure individual progress. In addition the fact that science is included in the topic system sometimes blurs the clarity of the subject content in a lesson especially when planning and learning outcomes are not very specific.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

80 Pupils' achievements in art and design are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 where they are given a wider range of opportunities to experiment with different media. Generally, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. In Key Stage 1 young pupils have opportunities to work with paint and crayons when making butterflies and others explore rubbing crayons on different textures to make fish patterns using various colours after listening to a story about 'The Rainbow Fish'. In another lesson pupils are cutting and sticking pictures from a toy catalogue to make their own and others enjoy using sponges to make patterns. Pupils enjoy art and design in Key Stage 2 and work very hard when choosing and using a wide range of materials and techniques to make clown faces. This is linked to the topic of "Entertainment and Leisure". The results of their work are very colourful and interesting demonstrating good creative skills and imagination. In this lesson they have the opportunity to use playdough, paint, pencils, crayons and collage materials and the lively approach and encouragement of the teacher is instrumental in the production of such good quality work. Pupils with high dependency needs are given a good range of tactile

experiences using their hands to explore the texture of paint and paint mixed with sand. With some help they make prints and demonstrate their pleasure in the results by facial expression and gesture.

81 The products of pupils' work are very effectively displayed around the school and analysis of work shows that pupils are given opportunities to work with different media in a range of ways especially in Key Stage 2 where the standards of art and design can be very good. Less breadth was evident for pupils in Key Stage 1. Older pupils have contributed to a local art exhibition with an excellent interpretation of work by Monet. Pupils are given opportunities to visit art galleries to look at the work of other artists. This is also included in the scheme of work but none was currently on display in school. Sketch books have been introduced to older pupils to record their observations and they have begun to do this successfully. A lunch-time art club has recently been started and is proving popular with pupils.

82 Teaching is at least satisfactory and often very good especially in Key Stage 2. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge which they use enthusiastically to motivate pupils and stimulate their imaginations. In addition good use of technical language to extend pupils' understanding and technique is helpful in enabling pupils to acquire new skills. The pace of these lessons is brisk and feedback and suggestions to pupils is helpful and improves the finished piece of work. In this way pupils are involved in their own learning. Good use of praise and encouragement gives pupils pride in their work and they work hard being very keen to finish their work and talk about it during the plenary session. They are responsive to ideas and will try and improve their own work. Weaknesses occur when activities are over-directed by adults and pupils have little involvement in the creative process of choosing their own materials and some pupils are not taking a full part in the lesson.

83 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and gives good support to colleagues. She has developed a very appropriate scheme of work supplemented by good packs of ideas for less confident teachers. Resources are good and are easily accessible to all staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

84 Pupils throughout the school achieve well within their different abilities and make good progress overall. Within Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in problem solving and they quickly understand which way a vehicle goes and how many wheels it needs. The correct use of terms such as 'Capsella', motor unit, gears and battery captures the pupils' attention. A few pupils know which cog turns the wheel and which one needs a wire in order to work. They show great delight when their vehicle works and propel it across the room. Pupils enjoy constructing models from Lego and construction toys. Good use is made of photographic evidence to record pupils' achievements. Pupils also enjoy tasting and identifying different ingredients as they learn how to make a sandwich with an adult. Large story books and interactive drama is used well to involve pupils especially those with ASD. This ensures that pupils develop early play and interaction skills while experiencing food. The pupils are given equal time to respond to the staff and one pupil matches cups to plates.

85 Within Key Stage 2 very good use of the senses and speaking and listening is encouraged throughout a lesson to make a salad, meat and cheese sandwich to take home for tea. Pupils can express a preference for brown or white bread and they taste and make decisions about salad and cheese. One pupil follows the story line well in order to say what comes next. He can remember that the first item of six was the cheese with holes in it. Two pupils could recognise that the sandwich was too big and would have to be cut. Pupils with ASD make good progress to make choices and actually taste unfamiliar foods. The nursery nurse has noted very good progress with one boy who will now sit on a chair and take part in the lesson. When making choices to make old-fashioned toys the teacher encourages pupils well with a variety of resources and good examples of toys. Pupils contribute well to say what works and what does not work. One pupil could design her puppet and make it with a little help. With careful questioning from the teacher the pupils are beginning to understand why something does not work and they could see that the spinning tops worked best. Two pupils put on a puppet show at the end of the lesson for the rest of the class showing pride



in their achievements.

86 Teaching overall is good. Work is planned well to meet individual needs and staff teams support each other and pupils learn very well. Pupils work successfully in ability groups and often help each other which supports the development of their personal and social skills. All staff have good relationships with the pupils and encourage them to be sensible and complete the tasks. Pupils enjoy the work and concentrate well. They are encouraged to answer carefully phrased questions and ideas from pupils are picked up and used appropriately to extend their thinking. The most successful teaching occurs where the planning of time and objectives are very clear. A good range of work within topic areas fully supports pupil experiences and learning.

87 The scheme of work is comprehensive. The co-ordinators for primary and secondary technology work successfully together in order to plan for continuity and progress. There is good improvement since the last inspection with good use of resources, especially the food technology area. Assessment and recording achievement require further development to inform future work. ICT has been used for clip art to design, make and draw designs, however, none was seen in the week of inspection. A technology trolley provides good access to basic small jigs and tools. A multicultural element is introduced when tasting and experiencing food for the Chinese New Year and Festival celebrations.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88 Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography overall but it is best in Key Stage 2 where pupils are given a more extensive range of experiences. In Key Stage 1 the main thrust of learning is for pupils to find their way around the school and locate different rooms. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection especially in Key Stage 2. Only two geography lessons were observed during the inspection but topics such as the weather and locating specific areas of the school are reinforced each day in most classes during registration. The majority of pupils can distinguish between a cloudy day and a sunny day. Some pupils with high dependency needs could find their way to specific locations such as the pool and dining room, with support where necessary. Activities in the pool included directional tasks, for example turning around, changing direction of movement and being encouraged to locate objects around the pool but the geographical content was not always sufficiently emphasised. In Key Stage 2 a very good lesson involved pupils discussing their recent visit to a local park and identifying different ways the area had been used for a variety of activities from photographs. They could make choices about preferences for activities in their own “park” by placing pictures in different locations.

89 Teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Pupils learn well, especially in Key Stage 2 when the task is very clearly explained and resources are well prepared. Good use of questions extends pupils’ thinking and they acquire new knowledge and understanding about the topic. Because pupils are interested they behave well and work hard, some doing so independently. However too many activities involve cutting and sticking as a recording method and insufficient opportunities are made available for pupils to develop writing skills whether it be overwriting or copying.

90 The co-ordinator has only quite recently taken on the role and is not fully confident about the subject or the role. An appropriate policy and scheme of work has been produced but monitoring what is being taught and when it needs to be a priority in order to move the subject on, especially in Key Stage 1 when experiences tend to be restricted to mundane tasks and expectations. No formal assessment procedures are in place and targets on individual learning plans tend to be the same for the whole group and stem from the scheme of work. Analysis of pupils’ work shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 have a wider range of activities than younger pupils but visits have been used well to introduce them to the local environment. Field visits have also been made to look at, for example, canals, Bury town centre and Rivington Pike. There is little written work in geography and recording seems to consist of cutting and sticking photocopyable pictures as evidence of topics covered. Resources are only satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

91 Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in history but it is best in Key Stage 2 because they are given a wider range of opportunities and resources are very well used to stimulate pupils' interest. This shows some improvement since the previous inspection. The topics for this term are "Toys and Pastimes" for Key Stage 1 and "Entertainment and Leisure" for Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 pupils with ASD watch a video of themselves and their visit to the Megabowl the previous day. Most can identify themselves and key words, such as, 'yesterday', 'Tuesday' and 'before' are highlighted to reinforce the idea of time. Others are developing an awareness of time by looking at a range of old and new toys and also by following the routines of the day. In Key Stage 2 younger pupils are developing an awareness of old and new by looking at a selection of old toys. The selection of the toys makes it difficult for some to do this as the differences are not very obvious. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 find that very imaginative use of teddy bears helps them to develop sequencing and the passing of time. This is effectively reinforced with the use of a time line to arrange dated teddies chronologically. In another lesson miniature furniture and people are used very well to give pupils a sense of times gone by and the difference in status of certain people who they would not be familiar with now, for example, a butler or maid.

92 Teaching in history ranges from satisfactory to very good. It is always very good for pupils in Years 5 and 6 when very good resources catch pupils' attention and interest and this has a very positive effect on their learning. When looking at miniature figures from a dolls house of the Victorian era pupils are entranced by them and can identify differences in their clothes and they listen intently to images of life in those times. They are excited when they can dress up. These practical activities make learning come to life and they ask and answer questions sensibly. Good vocabulary is used to reinforce the idea of old and new. Weaknesses in some lessons occur when the historical content is sketchy and pupils are more interested in playing with the toys.

93 There is a good scheme of work in place using the termly topics well but the history content in lessons is sometimes weak and not all staff use the scheme well. The co-ordinator has been absent for some time so the impetus to monitor and move the subject on has been diminished. There is little evidence of recorded work and no formal assessment procedures are in place. Individual learning plans tend to show similar targets for groups of pupils and stem from the scheme of work. Resources are satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

94 The previous inspection indicated that progress in this subject was satisfactory and no significant improvements have been made since then. Only on a few occasions was ICT used across the curriculum during the week of the inspection nor is it planned as a discrete subject for all classes. The school has recently changed to PCs with enough computers to ensure all pupils have access and at present there is a discrete area for teaching skills and at least one computer in each classroom. A range of software which is predominantly literacy based, coloured printers and speakers are available along with a very good range of interactive equipment in the light rooms. Some pupils, especially those with high dependency needs, use this equipment well and switch access is encouraged in order that pupils have access to their immediate environment and are able to make choices where possible. Pupils' skills in using a mouse, roller ball, touch screen and keyboard are improving. One pupil has an alpha talker and uses this well to communicate with his friends.

95 Pupils with ASD can use a touch monitor and one boy can type his name on the computer which supports his developing literacy skills. When using a touch screen pupils are forming a link between pressing the monitor and finger pressing and give eye contact to the screen. One pupil can anticipate the next sequence but others are more random making success much more variable. Pupils within Key Stage 1 use a touch screen with eagerness to control a mouse or roller ball to click on the screen icon making the connection between the screen and the mouse. They can change the icon and follow instructions from an adult successfully. "Tac Pac" is used well for communication and interaction with pupils with high

dependency needs. These pupils respond well to an adult, the music and the associated props. Pupils within Key Stage 2 use “clicker” to write a story. They follow a story from the reading scheme that the class teacher has read to them but no pupils are able to work independently. A few pupils are able to identify the characters and the words and others follow instructions to complete the task. One boy can press the print button and all pupils are excited when their work is printed. Another knows that the full stop comes at the end of the sentence, others know the arrow button is for rubbing out and another is able to read his four sentences.

96 The co-ordinator recognises the need for more precise staff training in a comprehensive development plan although a few nursery nurses have attended extended courses and are proficient. There is a lack of coherence in the planning, a lack of consistently taught skills generally and targets on individual learning plans are too broad. These weaknesses, together with the absence of written assessment criteria for ICT, means that staff cannot monitor progress appropriately. Pupils really enjoy the use of ICT and further development will help pupils in their skills and learning across subjects, especially to word process

## **MUSIC**

97 Pupils’ achievements in music are satisfactory overall and good in singing and exploring a range of musical instruments both tuned and untuned. There is less evidence of progress in the use of sounds to compose simple musical patterns or opportunities to record and evaluate their efforts in Key Stage 1.

98 Music is used frequently throughout the school day and to support most subjects of the curriculum. For example, in assemblies, in the M.O.V.E programme for pupils with additional learning difficulties, to develop mathematical awareness through number songs, to enjoy a variety of different musical styles from a wide variety of cultures and opportunities to develop an interest in playing the guitar through a lunchtime club. In all these areas music is a strength of the school.

99 By seven years of age most pupils can take part in group singing of nursery rhymes and have learned the words for some other songs such as those used in assemblies. They participate in action songs and follow-my-leader activities such as ‘Simon Says’. They can clap the beat of their own name and most can follow a 4/4 beat using drums and shakers accompanied by the class teacher on guitar. They enjoy moving to music and most can keep to a rhythm when jumping and dancing. Pupils with high dependency needs have experience of the sound and feel of music and explore these through a variety of techniques including sight, sound and touch.

100 In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to enjoy singing together and developing a sense of rhythm. They begin to learn a simple form of musical notation and the basics of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo to control their playing and singing. By 11 years of age the majority understand changes such as ‘fast/slow’, ‘high /low’ or ‘loud/quiet’ and can follow the lead of a conductor to stop and start on command. The less able need one-to-one hands-on guidance from the nursery nurses but with skilled support everyone participates to the best of their ability. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of specially adapted notation to follow a simple musical pattern, compose a tune and record it on tape usually playing untuned instruments such as drums or tambourines. Pupils also have opportunities to explore more complex tuned instruments such as how to blow a trombone. Through listening to a wide variety of music and experiencing music outside school pupils are able to begin to recognise their likes and dislikes and make choices based on preferences. Pupils with additional difficulties are fully involved in musical experiences using whatever medium they can such as sight, hearing and feel to enjoy the different activities.

101 Pupils enjoy music which is a part of their everyday school life. Teaching is always at least good and in one lesson it was excellent. Enthusiastic teaching, good planning and well used resources along with very good teamwork, very good knowledge of the subject and high expectations for attention builds pupils’ confidence and ensures everyone achieves and makes progress to the best of their ability. Of particular note is the skilled way in which the teacher involves and incorporates the pupils from Elton Primary School so they actively participate in the lesson and consolidate their own skills for example playing an instrument or acting

as a conductor when the group are playing instruments together.

102 The subject is well managed, resources are very good and pupils are given opportunities to take part in the Oldham Musical Festival where, for the last four years, they have been chosen to be the Finale. Pupils' learning is enhanced by trips to the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester for various performances including 'Live Music Now' concerts and taking part in workshops such as one on Indonesian music in Bury Art Gallery. The co-ordinator liaises closely with the music therapist who visits the school once a week.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

103 Pupils throughout the school achieve well in physical education, and make good progress overall. The good standards identified in the previous report have been maintained. Owing to timetable constraints no swimming lessons were observed during the week of inspection, and therefore no judgements can be made about pupils' achievement and progress or about the teaching of swimming.

104 Younger pupils of all abilities follow instructions, some with adult help. They understand or experience the concepts of 'under' and 'over' through teachers' good use of large toys and equipment in the outside play area and the hall. By the time they are seven years old many pupils are beginning to undress and dress themselves. They are developing a range of ball passing skills. They understand how to change the speed and direction of travel on the teacher's command, and learn to throw and catch bean bags and balls.

105 Between the ages of seven and 11 years pupils learn to climb, run, jump and roll with increasing precision and safety. By the time they are 11 years old, most pupils follow routines based upon relevant and challenging targets to promote their physical and communication development. They follow instructions to combine movements into a sequence and can, for instance, balance along a form, climb up and down steps and throw a large ball at a ring goal post.

106 Pupils are aware when they achieve well, such as when they devise different ways of moving along a form and landing with a roll, and they applaud each other's success. Teachers and nursery nurses provide very effective role models to show pupils what to do as they perform alongside them. This helps to raise the standard of pupils' performance. Music is very motivating to pupils and many respond well to changes of tempo, altering their pace of movement accordingly.

107 Good use is made of the hydro-therapy pool for pupils who require it. They respond very positively to their favourite songs and changes of position and movement, and all relax and gain confidence as lessons progress.

108 The quality of teaching overall is good, and has been effectively maintained since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has a high level of expertise and high expectations of pupils' achievement, and this is a significant factor in promoting progress. Arrangements for supporting individual pupils within lessons are good, and nursery nurses play an effective part in promoting pupils' progress. Teachers' careful planning ensures that lessons engage pupils' interest and provide good motivation. This means that pupils start lessons with positive attitudes and try hard to succeed. They receive well focused praise for their efforts and success. This, together with the application of effective behaviour management strategies, ensures that behaviour in lessons is usually good. Occasionally, when teaching groups are too large or too many activities are introduced, a small number of pupils are off-task for short periods and learning opportunities are missed.

109 The co-ordination of the subject is good. The schemes of work address the National Curriculum programmes of study and provide good guidance for non-specialist staff. However, assessment is unsatisfactory, and the co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils' physical development is enhanced by the lunchtime games and gym clubs. During these sessions particularly good use is being made of a wide range of high quality resources, acquired recently through a national scheme for pupils with special educational needs. This is having a significant effect on

pupils' enthusiasm and the development of games skills.

110 Through opportunities for undressing and dressing, communication and co-operating with others, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social skills.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

111 Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Achievement and progress are good because teachers plan lessons and assemblies carefully and have high expectations of pupils' work and progress. Throughout the school pupils with additional needs and those with high dependency needs also make good progress. They extend their concentration, recognise they are part of a group and learn to make and indicate choices. The good use of signing and symbols enable them to become familiar with daily and weekly routines. Their self-esteem is very well promoted by the individual support they receive from all staff.

112 By the age of seven most pupils understand there are special times such as birthdays and Christmas which are celebrated in particular ways. They know that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus who is a special person. They learn that God cares for them, and that there are other people, such as their parents and teachers, who also care. The idea of sharing is well promoted, and pupils are given many opportunities of developing a caring attitude towards others.

113 Between the ages of seven and 11, pupils hear stories from the Old and New Testaments. These increase their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the life of Jesus. They benefit from the celebration of Christian festivals, and those of other world faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and the Chinese New Year. Pupils begin to recognise the importance of light and water in many religions, and to understand that all places of worship should be treated with respect. This was evident during a visit to a local church where the vicar explained the main areas of the church, and encouraged pupils to handle artefacts. They participated thoughtfully in a 'baptism' and joined together in praying and singing a hymn. Assemblies also provide elements of religious education, such as considering the importance of individual effort to the life of the school.

114 Pupils are attentive and keen to contribute to discussion and activities. Most become increasingly sensitive to the needs of others. Their understanding and use of subject vocabulary develops well because teachers explain difficult ideas very clearly and use interesting and relevant resources. Teaching is never less than good and sometimes it is very good. Planning is clear and learning objectives identified. Resources are well organised and appropriate to the context of the lesson. In one lesson candles were used very well to set a calming atmosphere and settle pupils down. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to record their learning, and this restricts their ability to write for a range of purposes.

115 Religious education is managed well. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good and the increased range and the use of resources are also promoting pupils' learning effectively. Work is underway on developing assessment procedures which ensure that pupils build systematically on their learning. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.