

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MERSEY VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106059

Headteacher: Mrs E Richardson

Reporting inspector: Ms A M Grainger  
20782

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2001

Inspection number: 196413

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Valley Road Heaton Mersey Stockport
Postcode:	SK4 2BZ
Telephone number:	(0161) 442 7535
Fax number:	(0161) 442 7535
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Jones
Date of previous inspection:	28 <sup>th</sup> April – 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20782	Ms A M Grainger	Registered inspector	English Art Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14324	Mr M Hudson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Religious education Equality of opportunity Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24216	Mrs M Roberts	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History English as an additional language	
24887	Mrs Y Salmons	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (Italian)	

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Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Mersey Vale Primary School is situated on the northern edge of Stockport. With 149 boys and girls on roll, and a further 27 children attending the nursery part-time, the school is smaller than many other primary schools. About half the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (45 per cent) is very high. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (20 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. One per cent of pupils has a statement of special educational need, which is below average. Most pupils on the school's special needs register have learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (22 per cent) is broadly average. There is quite a bit of movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual time of joining or leaving. Last school year this amounted to a turnover of 18 per cent of the school's pupils. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes varies from one year to the next. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery this school year was average. The nursery serves other schools as well as Mersey Vale Primary School. Not all the children entering the reception year have attended the nursery. The overall attainment of children entering the reception year this year was below average.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has some particular strengths, such as the very good provision made in the nursery and the progress made by pupils in Years 4 to 6. The standards achieved by pupils now in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and have very good relationships. There are, however, some weaknesses. Not all pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially those with potential for higher attainment, are doing as well as they should be. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The educational direction provided by the headteacher is very good, but the governing body's involvement in the development and improvement of the school is unsatisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Inspiring teaching in many lessons, together with a good range of learning opportunities, gives children a very strong start to their education.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 make good progress in English and mathematics because they are well taught.
- Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They have very good relationships and the school is a well-integrated and harmonious community.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development. In particular they are very well prepared for life in our multicultural society.
- The pastoral care of pupils is good.
- The headteacher provides a very good educational direction for the school and is well supported by the deputy. The whole staff are committed to the improvement of the school.

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

- The teaching of English, mathematics, science and history in Years 1 and 2 is not meeting the needs of all groups of pupils well enough. Standards are not high enough in these subjects in Year 2.
- Although pupils are making satisfactory progress in information and communication technology, standards are below average when pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- Attendance is well below the national average.
- The governing body has little involvement in shaping the direction of the school or checking its performance.
- Financial control and day-to-day management of finance are unsatisfactory.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1997, although further action is needed to rectify some of the weaknesses identified at that time. Now better attention is given to developing pupils' understanding and use of English. In particular, teachers take greater account of the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. Overall, better attention is given to ensuring that new work builds on what has been covered previously as pupils move up through the school. However, the needs of pupils with potential for higher attainment are still not being met well enough in Years 1 and 2. There are also other groups that are not making enough progress at this stage in their school career. Pupils now have more opportunities to work independently, particularly in Year 6. Successful action has been taken to raise standards in design and technology. Not enough action has been taken to develop procedures by which the governing body can monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and how it contributes to pupils' attainment and progress.

Standards in Year 2 have not improved since the last inspection. Although standards are not as high in Year 6 as when the school was last inspected, pupils are making good progress from Year 4 to Year 6 in English and mathematics. The school has maintained good standards in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	D	C
mathematics	B	C	E	D
science	D	C	E	E

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Pupils now in Year 6, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, have made good progress since the end of Year 2. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in the present Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. These standards show improvement on the results of 2001. In 2001, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. In all three of these key subjects, the 2001 results had been lower than those achieved in 1997 when the school was last inspected. With the exception of 2001 when standards were lower, the trend of improvement since 1997 in the school's results, for all three subjects together, has been broadly in line with that found nationally. The school is making satisfactory progress towards its targets for raising English and mathematics standards in Year 6. The targets set are reasonably ambitious.

The results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2001 were below the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing and mathematics. These results were a little better in reading than at the last inspection, but not in writing and mathematics. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' performance in science as well below average. Standards in Year 2 now are the same as in 2001, although they are a little better in science owing to the natural variation between year

groups. Significant groups of pupils, especially those with potential for higher attainment, are not making enough progress in Years 1 and 2.

Although pupils make satisfactory long-term progress in information and communication technology, standards are below average in Years 2 and 6. Satisfactory progress is made in religious education and standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 1 and 2. Overall standards in other subjects are as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, and all groups of pupils make satisfactory long-term progress. The exception is history. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make unsatisfactory long-term progress and standards are below those expected nationally in Year 2. Standards in Italian are good in Year 2 and sound in Year 6. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make a judgement on standards in music in Years 2 and 6, in geography in Year 2 and in physical education in Year 6.

In the reception year, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in some specific aspects of literacy. Their progress is satisfactory in all other areas, except in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world in which it is unsatisfactory. Children now in the reception year are on course to achieve the standards expected nationally in personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development. While aspects of their work in literacy and mathematics are as expected nationally for their age, few will achieve the expected standards in all elements of these two key areas. Few children are on course to reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children in the nursery, many of whom do not continue in the reception year at this school, make very good progress in all areas of learning. They achieve standards that are well above those normally expected for their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and keen to learn, especially in the nursery and Years 3 to 6. They respond well to challenging work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Lunchtimes are enjoyable social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All groups of pupils work and play very well together. The school is a well-integrated community in which pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average. However, pupils are punctual to school in the mornings.

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, together with their very good relationships and positive response to the opportunities provided for their personal development, contribute to an environment supportive of learning. Poor attendance restricts the progress of some pupils.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Unsatisfactory	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.*

During the inspection, 38 lessons were seen. Of these, almost nine out of ten were at least satisfactory. Three in ten lessons were good, and teaching was very good and even excellent in a further fifth of lessons. The very good teaching was located in the nursery, in the Year 5 and 6 class in English and

mathematics, in the Year 4 and 5 class in mathematics, and in Italian in Years 1 and 2. Instances of excellent teaching were found in the nursery. Teaching in the nursery gives children a very strong start to their education. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching is in Years 1 and 2, although there was unsatisfactory teaching also in the reception year and Year 3.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including in basic skills, is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Year 3 it is satisfactory and in Years 4 to 6 it is good. Science is taught satisfactorily overall in Years 3 to 6, but teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in science in Years 1 and 2. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6, although they are good in Italian and unsatisfactory in history in Years 1 and 2.

Children's individual needs are met very well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the reception class. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' needs are met well overall, although most effectively in Years 4 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, insufficient account is taken of pupils' individual needs. In particular this restricts the long-term progress of pupils with potential for higher attainment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. A good range of stimulating learning opportunities contributes much to children's learning in the nursery. In the reception class and in Years 1 to 6, learning opportunities are satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Over the last year, there has been improvement in the identification of pupils' special needs. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that is matched to their needs. There is very good provision for pupils with statements of special educational need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Their needs are met well in the nursery and in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides well for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Particularly good attention is given to making pupils aware of the rich diversity of multicultural Britain. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. There is good pastoral care for pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are newly introduced and not yet established across the school.

The partnership with parents is good. Good information is provided for parents, especially about their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school and is leading the staff team well in efforts to bring about improvement. The deputy provides good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the headteacher but takes little action to shape the direction of the school or to check on how well it is doing. It is starting to consider means of rectifying this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The strategic use of	Unsatisfactory. While financial resources are wisely linked to areas for

resources	improvement, there are no adequate procedures for financial control and the day-to-day management of finance. The headteacher considers whether best value is provided for pupils and their parents. The governing body does not think critically about this.
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The school has sufficient teachers, support staff, resources and accommodation to support the delivery of the curriculum.

## 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>• The school is approachable.</li><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• The nursery gives a very good start.</li><li>• The very good relationships among pupils.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

Inspection evidence supports most of the parents' positive views. Inspectors agree that there are few activities such as clubs outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' results in the end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2001, based on average point scores, were below the national average in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was average in English, but below average in mathematics and well below average in science. The 2001 results were low compared with the national picture because the percentage of pupils reaching the level above that expected of most eleven year olds was lower than the percentage nationally. In mathematics, no pupil reached this higher level. In science, there were also too few pupils reaching the level expected of most eleven-year-olds and not enough achieved the higher level.
2. The 2001 results for Year 6 pupils were lower than results in 1997 when the school was last inspected, especially in mathematics and science. They were also much lower than in 2000 in mathematics and science. With the exception of 2001 when standards were lower, the trend of improvement since 1997 in the school's results, for all three subjects together, has been broadly in line with that found nationally. The school achieved its targets for 2001 for the percentage of pupils reaching the level expected of most eleven-year-olds. Targets for 2001 are reasonable and the school is making satisfactory progress towards them. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in any of these three key subjects.
3. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows standards at this point in the present Year 6 as average in all three core subjects. The better standards this year are, in part, a result of the natural fluctuation that is often found in schools with small year groups. Pupils' overall progress from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6 is good in English and mathematics. There are, however, variations in pupils' rate of progress in the different year groups directly linked to the quality of teaching they experience. In Year 3, progress is satisfactory overall in English and mathematics. There are weaknesses in English, however, that mean that progress is unsatisfactory in writing for pupils with potential for higher attainment in particular. In Years 4 to 6, pupils make good progress in mathematics and English because they are well taught. There is some very good progress in English in Year 6, especially by the average pupils. In science, overall progress from Year 3 to Year 6 is satisfactory, with some very good progress in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language progress at the same rate as other pupils in their classes in English, mathematics and science. In Year 3, the progress of these two groups of pupils is satisfactory in English.
4. In the end of Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' results were below the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing and mathematics. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was average in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics. In relation to the national picture, the 2001 results were a little better than when the school was last inspected in reading, but not in writing and mathematics. With the exception of the reading results in 1998, the school's results have been consistently lower than the national average in all three areas since 1997. For the last three years, girls have done better than boys in writing but there is no significant difference between boys and girls in reading and mathematics. There is no evidence in pupils' school work of a variation in the rate of progress of boys and girls in writing. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' performance in science as well below average.
5. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows a similar picture to the 2001 results at this point in the present Year 2. Standards now are below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. In the speaking and listening aspect of English, standards are average. Science standards are a little better than last year, but they are still below average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making unsatisfactory progress overall in these key areas. This is because

teaching is not meeting the needs of all groups of pupils well enough. In particular, this is adversely affecting the progress of pupils with potential for higher attainment. In English, the progress of average Year 1 pupils is also held back. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs are supported to meet their targets in English and mathematics and they are making satisfactory progress. Teachers are also sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, who make satisfactory progress. Within the last year, the school found that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were not fully implemented in all classes. Consequently, the school's use of the strategies is not sufficiently established to improve progress and raise standards in Years 1 and 2. In science, however, pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language also make unsatisfactory progress along with the other pupils in their classes.

6. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception year fluctuates from one year to the next. The attainment on entry of the present group of children in the nursery was average overall, but it was well below average last year. Children make very good progress in the nursery in communication, language and literacy; in their personal, social, emotional, mathematical and physical development; and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In the language aspect of communication, language and literacy, and in creative development, their progress is excellent. Many children in the nursery are on course to achieve the standards expected at the end of the reception year by the time they leave the nursery. This very strong start is a result of very effective teaching and the provision of a good range of stimulating learning opportunities.
7. The nursery serves other schools as well as Mersey Vale Primary School. Other children enter the reception year without having attended the school's nursery; some have no pre-school experience. By tracking individual children, it can be seen that those who have achieved most highly in the nursery do not normally join the reception year. Furthermore, many of the children entering the reception year, without having attended the nursery, have low levels of attainment when they start. Taking the intake as a whole, the attainment on entry of the present group of children in the reception year was below average in all areas of learning except creative and physical development. While in the reception year, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in some aspects of literacy. Their progress is satisfactory in all other areas, except in their knowledge and understanding of the world in which it is unsatisfactory. Other than in personal, social and emotional development and some elements of literacy, few children are on course to reach the nationally expected standards by the end of the reception year.
8. Most children presently in the reception year are confident enough to speak in front of the class, although few speak clearly. Children's speaking and communication skills are the weakest aspect of their work in the area of communication, language and literacy. They are better in some aspects of early reading and writing, especially in their knowledge of letter sounds. Many children have the expected competence in listening to stories they read together as a class. While they successfully talk about these stories, skills in reading comprehension are underdeveloped and are the weaker area of reading. A few higher attaining children are beginning to read very simple texts fairly fluently. Others recognise familiar words in a text, have a satisfactory awareness of letter sounds and handle books correctly. Many children write simple sentences, and those who are higher attaining use capital letters and full stops. Although children achieve the expected standard in some aspects of mathematical development, they do less well in other elements. Most children count to 10, identify two-dimensional shapes, and use mathematical terms such as 'tall' and 'short'. Only a few higher attaining children, however, have the expected competence in addition and subtraction or in, for example, discussing the properties of shapes. The application of mathematical understanding to practical situations is a relative weakness.
9. Pupils in Year 2 speak clearly and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Higher attaining pupils are confident and articulate speakers. Many pupils read with reasonable accuracy and use picture clues and letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Many of those who are lower attaining need a good deal of adult support to 'read' words that they do not already know. The highest attaining pupils read a range of texts confidently and fluently. Standards in reading are below average because of the number of pupils who are working at the lower levels in this area. While pupils have the expected skills in spelling and use simple punctuation, few write at length.

They do not, for example, develop ideas well enough and do not have the expected awareness of story structure. Very few pupils have sufficient awareness of the reader. Although handwriting is usually neat, even higher attaining pupils are only just starting to join their letters. Standards of literacy in other subjects in Years 1 and 2 are at a lower level than normally found at this age. Pupils do not sufficiently develop and apply literacy skills in subjects such as science or history.

10. Most Year 2 pupils count to 100 and identify odd and even numbers, although a small number occasionally reverse digits. Most have the expected understanding of addition, and identify two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. Pupils are less confident in multiplication. Many have difficulty in finding the correct mathematical language to explain their practical investigations. Many also have difficulty in identifying the operation needed for both practical and written exercises. There are also some weaknesses in pupils' work on shape, space and measure. Mathematical skills are not used well enough in subjects such as science.
11. In science in Year 2, pupils pose some simple scientific questions and a few higher attaining pupils successfully predict what might happen in an investigation. Many pupils' work in this area is at a much more simple level than is normally expected at this age. Pupils have the expected skills in observation and have some of the body of knowledge expected across the areas of study required by the National Curriculum. Their knowledge and understanding are not, however, as well developed as they should be, especially in life processes and living things.
12. By Year 6, pupils listen attentively for quite long periods of time. During one-to-one conversations, they give extended answers and explanations. Pupils read a wide range of novels, and most have favourite authors. They have the expected knowledge and understanding of the texts they read, both fiction and non-fiction. Many pupils have a clear awareness of how to alter the style and language of their writing depending on its purpose. While higher attaining pupils achieve a good standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar, those who are lower attaining are inconsistent in their use of simple punctuation. Most pupils have a fluent, neat style of handwriting. Standards are still low in literacy in other subjects in Year 3. In Years 4 to 6, there is improvement. Standards are much closer to those expected nationally once pupils are in Year 4.
13. In mathematics by Year 6, pupils are far more confident and competent in carrying out practical investigations in mathematics and in identifying the correct form of computation required to tackle a problem. Only a few pupils still have difficulty in explaining their work. Most pupils are confident in using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, although a few are unsure in saying their times tables. Most pupils accurately use decimals to two and three places, including in the context of measurement and money. Pupils have the expected understanding of fractions, and aspects of shape and measurement. They collect and analyse data at the level expected for their age. The standard of numeracy skills in other subjects is much the same as those in literacy. They are low in Year 3, and show improvement once pupils reach Year 4.
14. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory awareness of what makes a scientific investigation fair. They do not, however, have the independence expected at this age in devising investigations or in selecting their own equipment. Their awareness of scientific vocabulary is not as wide as it should be. Nevertheless, pupils have a satisfactory body of knowledge overall of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and of physical phenomena.
15. Although pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school in information and communication technology, standards in Years 2 and 6 are below those expected nationally. Although many pupils can undertake many of the activities expected for their age, they require considerably more support from adults than is normally the case. The school has only just got a new computer room and electrical problems are preventing its full use. Skills are also restricted by the use of computers and other new technology not being well enough developed across the subjects. Teaching and learning are, however, satisfactory overall in this subject and staff are receiving training to ensure that effective use is made of the new computer room.
16. Standards in religious education in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus. In other subjects generally, other than history in Year 2, standards in

Years 2 and 6 are as expected nationally, and all groups of pupils make satisfactory long-term progress. History standards are below those expected in Year 2, and pupils are not making enough progress in Years 1 and 2. Progress in history is restricted by weaknesses in teaching. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make a judgement on music standards in Years 2 and 6, for geography in Year 2 or physical education in Year 6. Italian is taught throughout Years 1 to 6. Standards in Italian are good in Year 2, and sound in Year 6.

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

17. Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and response to the opportunities provided for their personal development are all good. Their relationships with each other and with the adults in school are very good. The school is a well-integrated community, in which there are many harmonious relationships. The standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships all help to create an environment conducive to learning. All the strengths found in this area at the last inspection have been maintained. A weakness, however, is the low attendance rate. Levels of attendance in the school have not improved since the last inspection.
18. Children in the nursery have a high level of independence as learners. They respond very positively to the many good and stimulating learning opportunities provided for them and are curious and keen to learn. They follow well the example set by the staff and are caring towards each other, thinking of each other's feelings. In both the nursery and reception year, children share toys and resources well. This is seen, for example, as they use the large toys outdoors or play with role-play clothes or construction kits indoors. Children have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They behave well. Overall attitudes and behaviour in the nursery and reception year are better than when the school was last inspected.
19. Other pupils are also happy to learn, respond well to challenge, sustain interest and enthusiasm, and remain attentive in lessons and assemblies. They work effectively both on their own, such as when printing in a Year 3 art and design lesson, and in paired and group activities such as in a numeracy exercise during a Year 4 and 5 lesson. Pupils take pride in their efforts and are keen to share their pleasure in achievement. Pupils enjoy lesson activities, for instance making garlands in Year 3 to heighten understanding of a religious tradition. The last inspection found that, on some occasions, not all Year 2 pupils aspired well enough to high standards. Now, even when not sufficiently challenged, all pupils of this age maintain an interest in learning, even finding a continuation activity for themselves on completing their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are better at undertaking independent research, such as for their Viking project in history, than at the time of the last inspection.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, as it was at the last inspection. Parents are happy with the standards of behaviour achieved. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and school and class rules well, taking good account of them. Behaviour during assemblies is very good. Pupils move from their classrooms to assembly, or to the hall for physical education lessons, very sensibly. Only on very rare occasions do pupils not maintain these good standards. In Years 1 and 2, pupils occasionally do not behave as well as they are capable of doing. This is when they are not managed well enough as was seen in a physical education lesson when they pushed each other out of the way to use the apparatus. At playtimes, pupils behave well. They respect school property, such as computers and displays. At lunch, pupils are well mannered and friendly, making it an enjoyable social occasion. During the inspection there were no signs of abuse, harassment or aggression. No pupil has been excluded from school for the last three years.
21. Most pupils are self-assured, have high personal esteem and organise themselves effectively. They are pleased when their efforts and achievements are recognised at celebratory assemblies. Pupils who lack confidence or are socially insecure respond well to the personal advice and support they receive. Pupils enjoy responsibility and carry out any tasks they are given with diligence and pride. All pupils have classroom tasks, while those in Years 5 and 6 undertake whole-school duties such as supervising playtime snacks. Pupils have a strong sense of citizenship and appreciate the importance of charities. Pupils noticeably mature in Years 5 and 6.

22. Relationships in the school have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils respond very well to the consistent and sensitive approach of staff. They trust and have affinity with their teachers. Relationships among pupils in classes, and between older and younger pupils, are very positive and friendly. Those from different social and cultural backgrounds interact comfortably. Pupils of differing ability mix together well. They support each other well, especially pupils with special educational needs or those at an early stage of learning English. Pupils have marked respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and clearly understand the impact of their actions. Playtimes are lively but congenial. During wet playtimes older pupils help younger ones with indoor games. Although pupils sit very happily together at lunch, mixed gender tables are uncommon.
23. Attendance is poor and in the last school year it was well below the national average. The attendance rate within the school is very similar to that at the last inspection. It is because the school is not properly recording unauthorised absence, that authorised absence is so high. Much of the absence is a result of pupils taking extended holidays to visit relatives overseas, as was also the case at the last inspection. The absence rate is also exacerbated by some pupils leaving the school, and their parents not providing confirmation that they are registered elsewhere. Nevertheless, the poor attendance restricts the progress and the standards achieved by some pupils. Punctuality is satisfactory and lessons start on time.

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

24. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. There are considerable variations, however, in different parts of the school. Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and are good overall in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, 38 lessons were seen. Of these, almost nine in ten lessons were at least satisfactory. More than half the lessons seen were good or better, including a fifth in which teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in just over one in ten lessons. The instances of excellent teaching took place in the nursery, as did much of the very good teaching. Examples of very good teaching were also seen in Years 4 to 6 in mathematics and in the Year 5 and 6 class in English. A very good Italian lesson was taken by a specialist teacher from the Italian Consulate. Although there was more good or better teaching than when the school was last inspected, the teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 were not as good as at the last inspection.
25. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is good overall, although it is better in Years 4 to 6 than in Year 3. While teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory in Year 3, there are unsatisfactory elements in English. These weaknesses restrict the progress made by Year 3 pupils in writing, especially that of pupils with potential for higher attainment. In English, there is also some very good teaching and learning in the Year 5 and 6 class. This is reflected in the very good progress made by a significant number of Year 6 pupils since the start of this school year, especially those whose attainment is average. In science, the overall quality of teaching and learning is also unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although it is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In English, mathematics and science, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is not sufficiently meeting the needs of all groups of pupils. Again, it is the pupils with potential for higher attainment who are most adversely affected. This is also a feature of history teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, which is unsatisfactory.
26. In most other subjects, teaching was satisfactory and occasionally good or very good. Not enough information was gathered to make firm judgements for music throughout the school, geography in Years 1 and 2 and physical education in Years 3 to 6. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the reception year is satisfactory, although it is unsatisfactory in the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. There are some good elements within the teaching of literacy, as well as in personal, social and emotional development. The teaching of design and technology is better now than when the school was last inspected. This improvement is a result of teachers' increased confidence and expertise in this subject. Weaknesses have emerged in the

teaching of English, mathematics, science and history in Years 1 and 2 that were not found at the last inspection. The last inspection did, however, identify a need for pupils with potential higher attainment to be challenged more in English in these two year groups. There has not been enough progress in the period since then in dealing with this shortcoming.

27. What distinguishes the very effective teaching in the nursery is the way in which the teacher and other adults constantly encourage children to take control of their learning and to develop independence. Children are treated with courtesy and respect and, in turn, learn to behave in a similar manner towards each other. In particular, these aspects of teaching contribute very strongly to children's emotional, personal and social development. They also give children the confidence to explore and investigate for themselves and encourage their natural curiosity. This is an important feature in their very good learning about the world in which we live. Adults capitalise on this very well with the provision of an extremely rich and stimulating environment for learning both indoors and in the outside area. Children make exciting discoveries, for example as they delight in the bright windsocks and windmills outside or use black play dough to make creatures, adding brightly coloured legs and wings. There is very good attention to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. An excellent feature is the way in which adults continually engage children in talk about what they are doing and participate in imaginative play. In particular, this supports the rapid development of children's speaking and communications skills. Another excellent feature of the teaching is the provision for creative development in which children achieve very high standards. Inspiring teaching gives children in the nursery a very strong start to their education.
28. In the very good lessons seen in mathematics in Years 4 to 6, and in English in Years 5 and 6, teachers were very effective in meeting the range of pupils' needs in the mixed age and ability classes. The teachers had high expectations and were very focused on what they wanted pupils to learn. This was communicated clearly to pupils who, in turn, knew what was expected of them and what they were aiming to achieve. The very good mathematics lessons were conducted at a brisk pace so that not a moment was lost in which learning could be taking place. It is the effective attention to pupils' individual needs and the continual review of these which characterise the good English teaching throughout Years 4 to 6. In mathematics, teaching is effective overall in these year groups because attention is given to rectifying areas of weakness, such as in practical problem solving and the use of mathematical terminology.
29. In a very good Italian lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher helped pupils rapidly to develop their speaking skills through the use of gesture. Pupils very quickly learned the names of the parts of the face in this way. The strong role model provided by the teacher, a native speaker of Italian, ensured that pupils not only widened their vocabulary, but also that they developed a very good Italian accent. Other features of good Italian teaching include the use of well-selected resources, such as the use of colourful cards in a Year 4 and 5 lesson. Good science lessons in Year 3 and in the Year 5 and 6 class were well focused and explanations and questioning were clear. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson some very searching questions required pupils to reflect on earlier investigations into evaporation so that new learning built well on what had gone before. In the same class, a good geography lesson showed effective attention to pupils' differing needs in the complexity of the maps used and in the tasks that pupils were asked to carry out. A feature of many good lessons is the attention given to discussion, which especially benefits pupils learning English as an additional language.
30. In the reception year, the teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good because it also has some elements of the strong features evident in the nursery. This is mainly in the encouragement given to children to make choices and to direct some of their own learning, and in the provision of a secure and caring atmosphere. There are occasions, however, when adults direct children's learning too much. This is the reason why the teaching and learning in this area are not as effective as in the nursery. Elements of the literacy hour are used well in the reception year to develop basic reading and writing skills, especially children's knowledge of letter sounds. The teacher is not, however, sufficiently mindful of how language and communication might be developed through constant discussion with children about their work. Hence, this outstanding feature of nursery practice is not continued in the reception class. The same picture is seen in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Skills such as counting are developed well through specific

mathematical activities related to the workbooks used for this area of learning. Adults do not, however, support and encourage children well enough in applying mathematical skills to practical situations.

31. Where teaching is satisfactory, such as in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education throughout the school, teachers provide learning experiences that appropriately develop pupils' basic skills. They give clear and careful instruction, usually providing demonstration when needed. In a Year 3 art and design lesson, for example, pupils satisfactorily developed their awareness of pattern and their skills in printing as a result of such teaching. In religious education lessons, questioning successfully encourages reflection on ideas and beliefs. Throughout the school, support staff work effectively with teachers to benefit pupils' learning.
32. There are some areas of improvement needed, even where teaching is satisfactory overall. Occasionally, introductions to lessons are too long and time is lost for other activities to develop pupils' understanding. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 and 5 science lesson. Throughout Years 3 to 6, teachers appropriately involve pupils in practical investigations, but they do not give them enough opportunities to devise investigations themselves or to pose their own scientific questions. Even in otherwise good teaching in Italian, sometimes too much time is given to speaking activities when pupils might progress more quickly through, for example, practising their new language in pairs.
33. In the unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 in English, mathematics, science and history, not enough attention is given to meeting the range of pupils' needs in the mixed age and ability class. In science, all pupils are given the same worksheets to complete. These do not challenge pupils with potential for higher attainment and are more often suited to the needs of the Year 1 rather than the Year 2 pupils. In English, higher attaining pupils are sometimes occupied with time-filling activities such as colouring because they have completed the task set. These pupils are not given activities that challenge them, such as in story writing. Too many pupils are reading books at the same level in the reading scheme rather than having books carefully matched to their stage of development as readers. Occasionally, pupils read books that are too difficult, but more often they read books that are too easy. In mathematics lessons, there is not enough attention given to developing pupils' skills in mental mathematics. Too little is done to ensure that all pupils are involved in the lesson and there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' understanding and use of mathematical terminology. While teachers in Years 3 to 6 use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, and the National Literacy Strategy supports learning well in Years 4 to 6, there are weaknesses in the use of both strategies in Years 1 and 2. In history in Years 1 and 2, all pupils are required to do the same work without any additional challenge for those who are capable of working at a higher level. In an unsatisfactory physical education lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, pupils were not well enough managed during work on the apparatus. As a result of these features of teaching, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not learning well enough.
34. Marking is inconsistent throughout the school. In English, it is done well in most classes and supportive comments are made. In the Year 5 and 6 class, marking provides a good dialogue between the teacher and individual pupils, which has a beneficial effect on their progress and attitudes to learning. While marking for average attaining pupils in Year 2 gives them pointers for improvement, there are missed opportunities to extend the pupils capable of higher attainment. These pupils tend to be given only ticks and words of praise. In mathematics, marking is undertaken promptly but comments of advice or praise are not always added where needed.
35. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers and support staff have a clear understanding of pupils' special educational needs. They work closely together and arrange a suitable range of activities and work for them. Positive relationships are established and help and support are constantly provided. Very good teaching and support are provided for pupils who have statements of special educational need. Teachers are also sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Support is matched to their needs in lessons. Better attention is given to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language than when the school was last inspected. The needs of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are not met well enough,

however, in science and history Years 1 and 2.

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

36. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the nursery and better than when the school was last inspected. They are satisfactory from the reception year to Year 6. Although they are judged to be satisfactory overall in these year groups, there are some areas in need of improvement, especially in Years 1 and 2. The school meets all statutory requirements for the delivery of the National Curriculum.
37. A good and stimulating range of learning opportunities is provided for children in the nursery. These include very effective use of both the indoor and outdoor environments and cover all the required areas of learning for children of this age. Learning opportunities are designed to capitalise on children's natural curiosity. As well as the planned opportunities, the adults in the nursery are very effective in making spontaneous use of opportunities as they arise. The good learning opportunities in the nursery give children a very effective start to their education when combined with the often inspirational teaching provided.
38. The school has recognised the need to improve the learning opportunities in the reception year so that they more effectively build on those provided in the nursery. The element of learning through play activities and the extent to which children can make choices about activities are areas in which improvements have already been made. There continues to be a much more structured approach to the learning opportunities in the reception year, for example with an emphasis on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is not sufficiently extended through other activities to meet children's needs well enough. Hence, children in the reception year are not sufficiently developing knowledge and understanding of practical mathematics or increasing their skills in language and communication as well as they should be. Activities to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world are not adequately linked to what it is that the teacher wants the children to learn.
39. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 appropriately includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The weaknesses found in design and technology at the last inspection have been rectified. There are also better opportunities for pupils to undertake independent work, such as through a history research project in the Year 5 and 6 class. Better attention is given to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Currently, the significant amount of time allocated to English, mathematics and science means that less time is available for other subjects. In particular, the time provided for music in Years 1 and 2 and for geography throughout the school is barely sufficient to cover requirements. There are missed opportunities to use music for the development of speaking and listening skills in Years 1 and 2. In art and design and religious education, standards are not as high now as when the school was last inspected because the time allocated to them, although adequate, has been reduced. The use of computers and other new technology is not used enough across the subjects, although there is some appropriate use of computers to support learning, for example in history. On occasions, teachers make appropriate links between subjects to enhance the learning opportunities. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, made musical instruments in design and technology. This benefited their learning in science and music, as well as in design and technology.
40. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 have Italian lessons provided by a specialist teacher from the Italian Consulate. This adds to the breadth of the curriculum and is a distinctive feature of the provision in the school. It makes a particularly good contribution to the development of speaking and listening skills for pupils in Years 1 to 3. However, the learning opportunities for pupils in Years 4 to 6 are in need of some improvement. Pupils in Year 6 in particular, especially those with potential for higher attainment, are not given opportunities to use spoken Italian at a higher level, as they are capable of doing. There is also scope for greater attention to be given to activities to develop reading and writing within Italian lessons.

41. The school has only fully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies over the last year, and the last two terms in particular. Although the strategies were being used in the school prior to this, they were not implemented well enough in all classes. The National Literacy Strategy is now supporting the provision of a good range of learning opportunities in Years 4 to 6. In Years 1 to 3 there are some weaknesses in the provision for writing. In particular, pupils do not have adequate opportunities to write at length or to develop their awareness of story structure. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well in Years 4 to 6 and satisfactorily in Year 3. There continue to be weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 where there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their mental skills.
42. Not enough use is made of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Some use is made of mathematics in design and technology and geography, for example, but opportunities are missed in science in particular. In literacy, suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills in Years 4 to 6, but there are fewer opportunities in other classes. In Years 1 and 2 especially, the overuse of worksheets means that pupils have limited chances to write at length.
43. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The schemes ensure that suitable topics are taught throughout Years 1 to 6. Teachers produce an extensive range of good quality curriculum planning that helps to ensure the steady development of pupils' knowledge and skills in Years 4 to 6 especially. There are weaknesses, however, in the matching of work to the range of pupils' needs in Years 1 and 2 in science and history. All pupils have the same work. The work for Year 2 is not sufficiently more difficult than that given to Year 1 pupils. Hence, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not adequately built up in these two subjects.
44. A good feature of the planning is that members of staff take great care to ensure that there is appropriate coverage of content and that work is not missed or repeated. This is especially important as the nature of the year group mix in classes changes from one year to the next. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Planning also makes suitable allowance for the requirements of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in English and mathematics. Less attention is given, however, to the needs of the most able pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2. The result is that the work provided for them often lacks challenge. This weakness was identified at the last inspection and it has not been rectified. This weakness in planning is a significant factor in the low standards being achieved in Year 2.
45. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum. Staff usually make sure that pupils are involved, as far as possible, in a full range of activities. In Years 1 and 2, however, higher attaining pupils are not always provided with activities that are fully relevant to their needs. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with aspects of sex education sufficiently covered. Appropriate attention is given to making pupils aware of the misuse of drugs. Other aspects of healthy living, such as the contents of a healthy diet, are carefully considered in science.
46. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures are in place and they closely follow the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils' needs. Individual education plans are provided for pupils who are at stage 2 and beyond on the school's special needs register. These are of good quality and are reviewed each term. Pupils with statements of special educational need are provided with most suitable support. Where appropriate, they have their own curriculum that is delivered on a one-to-one basis if this is the most effective means of meeting their needs. Sensitive attention is given to the needs of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Effective use is made of the local education authority's language support service. All pupils are involved in the full range of school activities.
47. The provision for extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, is unsatisfactory and is by no means as good as when the school was last inspected. Only netball, football, rounders and multi-sports are on offer, and these almost entirely for older pupils. The school does, however, have sports teams. These are well organised by the physical education co-ordinator. The good range of musical activities available at the last inspection is no longer on offer. There are no other clubs or activities.

The school welcomes many visitors, including the police, nursing staff, a writer, members of the local faith communities and local clergy, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as the Leeds Armoury, Blackpool Zoo, Macclesfield and Manchester Museums and Bramhall Hall. The older pupils undertake a residential visit to Waddow Hall. These activities make a suitable contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.

48. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. In particular it makes use of the area around the school, in subjects such as history and geography. Professional footballers from Stockport County are regular visitors to the school. Links have been forged with the local church. Local residents visit the school, for example, to talk about religious festivals and traditions. Satisfactory links have been established with other schools. The school has close sporting ties with the local primary schools. Links with the neighbouring comprehensive schools are well developed. These close ties particularly help pupils when they move on to the next stage of their education at the age of eleven.
49. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, and satisfactory provision for their spiritual development. Assemblies are well planned and thoughtfully delivered, so making an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are helped to gain knowledge and insight into their own and other people's values and beliefs. In particular, they are encouraged to respect and value the opinions and traditions of others. Moments of quietness are provided for pupils to reflect on what they have heard and to consider how they should respond themselves. There are few planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development in subjects. On occasions, pupils are provided with interesting and thought provoking experiences, for example in response to poetry in Years 5 and 6. There are many opportunities for children in the nursery to experience a sense of amazement about the world in which we live.
50. The good provision for pupils' moral development is an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and staff, as well as providing good role models themselves, regularly remind pupils of the correct forms of behaviour. Discussions often take place in lessons about behaviour towards others and rules of conduct are clearly displayed around the school. Expectations of pupils are high and pupils are regularly praised and rewarded for maintaining the good standards. They are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and to treat others with courtesy, respect and tolerance.
51. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to form good relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults. As they progress through the school pupils are expected to work collaboratively, to take turns and to share resources, such as when taking part in experimental work in science or when working on computers. There are good opportunities for older pupils to care for younger ones, for example, when they hear them read. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities within their classrooms. There is scope, however, for other responsibilities to become more demanding as pupils move up through the school. The social development of all pupils is further enhanced by their involvement in fund-raising.
52. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The provision for making pupils aware of the multicultural nature of society is very good. Pupils are taught about aspects of British culture in subjects such as English and history. An appropriate emphasis is laid on their knowledge and understanding of other cultures during assemblies and during lessons in subjects such as Italian, geography and art and design. Considerable provision for making pupils aware of the multicultural society in which they live is made by regularly considering the different forms of worship, ritual and life-style of the major world faiths. There are many opportunities for pupils to visit different places of worship, and to receive visits from members of the various faith communities. Many displays of artefacts are provided, and the festivals of the different religions are celebrated. The school also makes most effective use of its own pupils to provide information and demonstration for others, such as when Muslim pupils in Years 4 and 5 showed others how they pray.

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

53. Many aspects of the care for pupils' personal well being are good. All the strengths found in this area at the last inspection have been maintained. The school gives good priority to the pastoral care of pupils. Through the very good relationships established, pupils feel confident about approaching adults in the school if they are at all concerned or worried. They feel safe, nurtured and secure when at school. Staff know pupils very well. There are good procedures for supporting children as they start their education in the nursery or in the reception year.
54. The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare have been improved since the last inspection and are now good. The child protection policy is good. The designated child protection officer is trained and known to staff. Good links are established with the requisite agencies. Arrangements covering accidents, illnesses and medicines are satisfactory. Enough staff have in-date first aid qualifications.
55. Health and safety measures are good. Risk monitoring is carried out, emergency service officers talk to pupils about safety issues, and school security is regularly reviewed. The health and safety code of practice is presently being developed to clarify responsibilities and procedures. The code is supported by a good road safety policy. Staff awareness of health and safety matters is good and cleanliness and hygiene within the school are very good. The raised doorsill between classrooms and the cloakroom area, however, is a serious hazard. All appliance and equipment inspections are in-date and hazardous substances are very well managed. Emergency evacuations are regularly practised.
56. Procedures for checking and promoting positive behaviour are good. The behaviour policy sets clear standards and expectations. It includes a balanced range of rewards and sanctions, which are implemented by staff with consistency and common sense. After any incident, the pupils involved have to write an explanation on why it occurred as well as what happened. The policy is supplemented by school and class rules, which are prominently displayed. The school has a 'no shouting' rule which is effective in promoting very good relationships as well as good behaviour. Playtimes are well supervised and wet weather arrangements are good. The school's procedures for checking and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The anti-bullying policy and procedures are very clear and pupils are aware that any signs of abuse, harassment or aggression will be dealt with firmly.
57. The school's procedures for checking and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. The written attendance policy is good, but it is not rigorously followed. The system for determining authorised and unauthorised absence is unclear and the school does not comply with local education authority guidelines on dealing with and recording extended holidays in term time. Absence procedures have not been issued in ethnic minority languages. The school does not contact parents on the first day of their children's absence.
58. Procedures for checking and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. 'Circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss issues of importance to them, is used to develop pupils' confidence and self-image. Discussions on topics such as racism and bullying broaden their worldly understanding. Staff are mindful of the needs of pupils who lack confidence socially. They are given additional support and their progress is checked, with records kept. To help younger pupils become more responsible and mature, they undertake classroom duties such as tidying books and taking registers to the school office. The duties are not progressively more challenging as pupils move through the school, and until Years 5 and 6 pupils have few opportunities to demonstrate personal or collective responsibility.
59. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment are now satisfactory. A new policy has been introduced this term, which outlines the range of assessment procedures to be used in the school. New procedures are being implemented across subjects other than English and mathematics. These procedures involve the assessment of pupils at the end of units of work. They are so new, however, that they have not yet been put into practice for all subjects across all year groups. Consequently, it is not possible to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the

procedures in supporting pupils' progress and raising the standards they achieve.

60. The present use of assessment information is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Work in these years' groups is not well enough matched to the range of pupils' needs in the mixed age and ability class in English, mathematics, science and history. The use of the currently available assessment information to plan suitable work to meet the needs of all pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. However, not enough account is taken of such information in matching work in English, especially in writing, to the needs of Year 3 pupils. In particular, this adversely affects the progress of pupils with potential for higher attainment.
61. Pupils in Year 6 have targets set for them individually in English, mathematics and science. Together with other aspects of good support for pupils in this class, these targets are contributing well to pupils' progress. Other teachers are presently developing this procedure in Years 3 to 5. Teachers undertake weekly evaluations to track high, middle and lower attaining pupils in each class and to assess pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science. This process is better used in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.
62. A suitable series of annual tests is in place from which it is possible to check attainment and track pupils' progress. Substantial analysis of test data has been done, with action taken to improve attainment in the Year 6 class. However, this is less effective in Years 1 and 2 where, for example, writing was identified as needing improvement. Too little progress is evident owing to other weaknesses in provision in this class. In addition, the school is in the process of selecting an individual reading test to be used so that additional support can be provided to those identified as under performing. The use of individual progress tracking sheets has been started by the headteacher to record pupils' attainment as a basis for driving up standards across the school.
63. The school has good assessment procedures in place for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are targeted for support on the basis of the assessment results and their progress is regularly checked. The procedures for assessing the language needs of new arrivals are good and help to meet their needs well. Clear procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and there has been considerable improvement in the identification of pupils' needs over the last four terms. The procedures for checking the progress of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are better now than when the school was last inspected.

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

64. Parents have very positive views about the school. Opinions expressed at the parents' meeting, through the parents' questionnaire and during the inspection indicate that parents strongly support the school's provision for their children. They are pleased with almost all that the school does. Support for the nursery is especially strong. Parents confirm that their children like school. They like the quality of the teaching and feel that the school is approachable. They consider that the relationships among pupils are very good. Parents are also happy with the home/school links and the information they receive about their children's progress. Parents support the amount of homework their children are given. Evidence gained during the inspection upheld most of parents' positive views. However, inspectors found that teaching varies in different classes.
65. A minority of parents are concerned about the range of activities the school offers outside lessons. Inspectors agree that this is an area in which there is little provision. The activities are limited to sports for older pupils. This is a decline since the last inspection when the school offered a good range of clubs and other activities for pupils in addition to their lessons.
66. Since the last inspection, the school has enhanced its partnership with parents. The links with parents are now good. The quality of information provided for parents, including that on pupils' progress, is also good. However, ethnic minority languages are not used. Regular notices and newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school activities and curriculum details are sent to them each term. Annual reports to parents about their children's progress are good. They give a short commentary on pupils' efforts and achievements over the year, include general remarks and provide

space for pupils' and parents' comments. They do not, however, identify clear targets for improvement to help parents in assisting their children's learning at home. There are termly parents' evenings and staff are always available before and after school to speak to parents. The prospectus is clear, attractively structured, and it imparts useful information. It meets statutory requirements. The governors' annual report is a rather formal document that gives all the main information that it should. The school's complaints procedures are good.

67. The involvement of parents in the work of the school is satisfactory. The school values the part families play in pupils' education and welcomes their interest in all aspects of school life. A few parents help in classes and with activities in school. More accompany pupils when they go on visits out of school. Some attend cultural assemblies such as for the celebration of Eid. The parent/teacher association is active. It arranges fund raising and social events to meet parents' different backgrounds and expectations. Many parents help their children with homework. Pupils have home/school reading diaries, but not all parents use them. Parents of pupils with special educational needs work very closely with staff in drawing up and implementing their individual education plans. The home/school agreement properly emphasises mutual commitment. However, some parents do not comply with their undertaking about attendance. Most parents understand the importance of the home/school partnership and the part they play in their children's education. However, a minority do not contribute fully to their children's learning or to the life of the school.

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

68. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, although there is variation in the quality of the different aspects. The present headteacher has been in post for four terms and is providing a very good educational direction for the school. She is well supported by the deputy whose role has developed considerably over the last four terms. The whole staff support the headteacher. Given this shared commitment, the capacity for improvement within the school is good, even though there are presently some considerable weaknesses to be rectified. The governing body, however, is not adequately involved in shaping the direction of the school. It has, nevertheless, recognised its shortcomings and is keen to improve its effectiveness. The governing body is committed to working closely with the senior management and staff in the improvement of the school.
69. On arrival in the school, the headteacher undertook a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She took the last inspection report and statistical data as a starting point. Having arrived at hypotheses about how the school was performing, she then sought to develop a clear awareness of the practice within the school. She successfully identified the factors contributing to pupils either doing well or not well enough in different year groups and in various aspects of their learning. Four terms on, the school is being very effectively led by a headteacher who has a clear understanding of its main strengths and weaknesses, and those of individual members of staff. She is successfully using the strengths of individual teachers, and has in some cases redeployed staff in terms of their specific responsibilities to ensure that this happens. The headteacher is also ensuring that appropriate support is given to those individuals whose practice is in need of improvement. This is greatly appreciated by the staff involved. At the centre of this action is a clear recognition that the needs of the pupils are paramount.
70. The last inspection identified that the role of the deputy was somewhat underdeveloped in terms of active involvement in the leadership and management of the school. Although the school was considered at that time to be looking at ways of augmenting the role, this development has really taken place over the last four terms. The headteacher and deputy are a strong team with a shared vision for the school. The deputy is now well involved in checking the work of the school and has made a significant contribution over the last year to the efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics. This has included action taken to improve the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. While further work remains to be done, improvements are already evident, such as in a new approach to the teaching of letter sounds in Years 1 and 2. The deputy is also playing an effective role in the implementation of new procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress across all subjects.

71. In recognition of the very effective practice in the nursery, the headteacher allocated the leadership of the provision for children in both the nursery and reception year to the teacher in charge of the nursery. This is bringing about improvements in the reception year, although it is acknowledged that there is still some way to go. In particular, the closer liaison between the two teachers and the emphasis on implementing the new national recommendations for the provision for children of this age is seen in clear changes being made. These developments include a greater emphasis on learning through play in the reception year.
72. At the time of the last inspection, the leadership of subjects by co-ordinators was seen as being very effective. At that time, teachers with responsibility for subjects, especially English, mathematics and science, were given some time to check the quality of provision in their areas. This practice has not, however, been sustained over the last four years. The present leadership and management of English and mathematics are good. The deputy has had responsibility as the co-ordinator for mathematics for the last four terms. Even though considerable weaknesses exist in these two key subjects in Years 1 and 2, with further weaknesses in English in Year 3, the leadership and management provided by the head and deputy are setting a clear agenda for improvement. The headteacher is the special education needs co-ordinator and she is providing good leadership and management for this area. The identification of pupils' special educational needs has improved considerably over the last four terms.
73. The governing body has little involvement in determining the direction of the school or in checking the quality of what it does. Governors report that they have not over the years played any significant role in the leadership and management of the school. They welcome the expectations of the new headteacher that they should rectify this, although they are presently heavily dependent on her to lead the way. Over the last four terms they have started to recognise what is required of them and are beginning to understand how extensive the responsibilities of governors are. They are starting to work out strategies that will make them more effective. There are a few governors who are particularly keen to play a full role, such as the chair of finance and the new literacy, numeracy and special educational needs governors.
74. Financial planning is satisfactory and funds are wisely targeted on priorities for improving the education pupils receive. The school development plan clearly identifies action to be taken to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' education for the coming year. It includes costings, resources and success criteria. A contingency fund is being accumulated to meet uncertainties in cohort sizes and staffing as the school roll is falling, but educational priorities are not formally determined more than one year ahead. Time-scales in the development plan are not precise enough with some priorities simply deemed to be 'ongoing'. The school does not have a fully delegated budget and the local authority retains control of specific grant and other funding. The governing body has very little involvement in the process of development planning and decisions made about spending. In this, as in other areas, governors rely strongly on the headteacher.
75. The procedures for financial control and day-to-day management of finance are unsatisfactory. There is no financial policy; up-to-date details of expenditure are not readily available; and the governing body plays little part in managing and checking financial expenditure. The many wide ranging and important recommendations contained in the school audit report of a year ago have only just begun to be actioned by the newly appointed administrative officer. This particular audit report highlighted a significant lack of action on the previous one. During the last school year, the local education authority finance officer checked regularly to see that the budget was on track. The local education authority has also been providing support for the headteacher in planning ahead financially. Appropriate action is taken to ensure value for money in purchasing by obtaining several quotations.
76. Funds other than the elements of budget delegated to the school, for instance the school fund and dinner money, are managed satisfactorily. The school has risk insurance and is registered under the data protection act. There is a register of pecuniary interests. Aspects of school administration other than finance are satisfactory. Procedures are organised and effective, allowing teachers and support staff to focus on their teaching and pastoral duties.

77. However, the school's use of new technology is unsatisfactory. The office computer is using outdated programs and the finance package is incompatible with that used by the local education authority. The school recognises that this is not efficient and is presently updating the programs and systems used on the office computer.
78. The school has sufficient staffing, accommodation and resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum, as was the case at the last inspection. There are sufficient full-time teachers, all of whom are suitably qualified and experienced. All teaching staff are well established in the school and it is several years since a new teacher was appointed. There are, however, satisfactory procedures in place for the induction of teachers new to the school. The match of support staff to the needs of the National Curriculum is also satisfactory, and all have qualifications and experience suitable to their appointments. There are dedicated nursery nurses and support assistants who are allocated to infant classes and to pupils with special educational needs. Their roles and responsibilities properly complement those of the teachers with whom they work closely.
79. The school has all the necessary indoor and outdoor accommodation to support pupils' learning. The nursery play area is very well marked for play activities, but has no overhead cover. The interior of the school building is airy, bright and cheerful and has many good features. The classrooms are of good size and the hall is spacious. There are also a few resource rooms and activity areas. Most classrooms, however, provide a means of access to others, there being no separate corridors. This can cause distraction to pupils when other pupils or adults are passing through. Classrooms are interesting and colourful, and there is a wide range of imaginative and exciting displays. Many have a multicultural theme. The balance between teaching aids, topic materials and the celebration of pupils' work is good. Vandalism of school property is prevalent and the damage at times is severe. Resources for learning are satisfactory for all subjects, except science for which there are insufficient available. Nursery resources are especially good. The school uses resources effectively to support the curriculum.
80. While the headteacher and deputy carefully consider whether the school gives the best value in the education it provides, the governing body does not think critically about this. This is unsatisfactory. It places too great an onus on the headteacher and is not helping the school to improve its provision or the use of its resources. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory largely because of the good progress made by pupils in Years 4 to 6. The progress in Years 1 and 2 is not good enough. The standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships are very good. The provision for pupils' personal development is good and pupils are well cared for pastorally. The nursery gives children a very good start to their education. Overall, because of these benefits and the action being taken for improvement, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

To rectify the weaknesses while maintaining the strengths of the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- a) Improve the teaching of English, mathematics, science and history in Years 1 and 2 so that all groups of pupils' needs are met and standards are raised in Year 2 by:
- raising teachers' expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining, especially the most able;
  - giving full attention to the range of pupils' needs in the mixed age and ability classes in setting work;
  - ensuring that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place to support the learning of pupils of this age; and
  - increasing opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects.

(Paragraphs 4, 5, 9-11, 16, 25, 26, 33, 35, 41-45, 60, 62, 99, 100, 102-104, 108, 110, 111, 113, 116, 117, 120, 122, 143, 144, 146)

b) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- developing pupils' independence, confidence and competence in using computers to carry out tasks at the level expected for their age;
- ensuring that the new computer room is brought into full use; and
- increasing the use of computers in other subjects to give pupils more opportunities to improve their skills.

(Paragraphs 15, 39, 108, 117, 126, 130, 138, 150, 151, 153, 154, 177)

c) Improve attendance by:

- working more closely with parents to ensure that they all understand the implications for their children's progress of being absent from school;
- improving procedures for checking on the reasons for absence as early as possible; and
- ensuring that absences are properly recorded as either authorised or unauthorised.

(Paragraphs 23, 57, 67)

d) Increase the involvement of the governing body in shaping the direction of the school and checking how well it is performing so that governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities. This should involve training for the governors.

(Paragraphs 68, 73, 74, 80)

e) Develop and fully implement procedures for financial control and day-to-day financial administration. All the recommendations of the last financial audit should be carried out.

(Paragraph 75)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Pupils in Year 6 are not independent enough in devising and carrying out scientific investigations.

(Paragraphs 14, 32, 121, 124)

- Marking is inconsistent throughout the school.

(Paragraphs 34, 106, 115, 147, 176)

- The older most able pupils are not well enough challenged in the language levels they are expected to work at in Italian.

(Paragraphs 40, 155)

- There is scope for pupils' responsibilities, as part of their personal development, to become progressively more demanding as they move up through the school.

(Paragraphs 51, 58)

- The provision for activities outside lessons, such as clubs, is unsatisfactory.  
(Paragraphs 47, 65, 165)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	12	13	5	0	0
Percentage	5	16	32	34	13	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.*

## Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	149
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	33

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	36

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	79

<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	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	12
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	24	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (81)	74 (88)	84 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	12	10	14
	Total	23	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (81)	68 (81)	81 (81)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	8	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls	7	6	5
	Total	15	14	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (79)	78 (88)	67 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	15	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (79)	78 (88)	78 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	33
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	3
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	36

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.8

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	350757
Total expenditure	337762
Expenditure per pupil	1769
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1673
Balance carried forward to next year	11322

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	104

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	32	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	40	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	38	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	29	6	0	2
The teaching is good.	62	38	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	37	5	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	25	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	56	37	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	27	1	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	36	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	37	14	4	13

## **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**

81. Children normally enter the nursery in the September of the school year in which they will be four. Children attend for either morning or afternoon sessions. As the nursery serves other schools as well as Mersey Vale Primary School, many leave and do not continue in the reception year. Approximately a third of the children stay at Mersey Vale Primary School for the reception year and attend full-time. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the nursery at the start of this school year is average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, however, and it was well below average last school year.
82. Children have a very strong start to their education in the nursery, making very good long-term progress in all areas of learning. In language and communication, and in creative development, children's progress is excellent. This very effective start results from inspiring teaching in many lessons and the provision of a good range of stimulating learning opportunities. The present group of children in the nursery are well on course to achieve the standards normally expected at the end of the reception year, by the time they leave the nursery. Children with special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported to make progress at a similar rate to other children in the nursery. The overall quality of provision, including the teaching, is significantly better now in the nursery than when the school was last inspected.
83. By tracking children who have attended the nursery and gone on to the school's reception year, it is evident that most of the average and higher attaining children leave the school. Other children also enter the reception year who have not been in the nursery, some of whom have had no pre-school experience and have low attainment. As in the nursery, attainment on entry varies from year to year. The overall attainment on entry to the reception year of the present group of children was below average in all areas except creative and physical development. Children's long-term progress in the reception year is good in personal, social and emotional development and in some aspects of literacy. In all other areas, except in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world, children make satisfactory long-term progress. In the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, children's long-term progress is unsatisfactory. Few children are on course to reach the nationally expected standards at the end of the reception year, except in specific aspects of literacy, and in their personal, social, emotional and creative development. Children with special educational needs or English as an additional language progress at a similar rate to other pupils in the reception year. At the time of the inspection, two children in the nursery and one in the reception year were identified as having special educational needs. A few children in both classes were at an early stage of learning English. The overall satisfactory quality of provision in the reception year is much the same as when the school was last inspected.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

84. Children in the reception year are making good progress and most are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards at the end of the year. Children share toys and resources well. This is seen when, for example, they play in the construction area or with the role-play clothes. Children have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know the class rules well and try hard to abide by them. Children in the reception year are more easily distracted than those in the nursery, however, and sometimes require help to concentrate. Children are largely independent in their personal hygiene, but often have to be reminded to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. They put on their own coats for outdoor play. Children are keen to take responsibility, helping with jobs such as sweeping up the sand and tidying up the classroom at the end of sessions.
85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. In the nursery, children achieve very well because they are constantly encouraged to grow in

confidence, take control of their own learning and to develop their independence. Their ideas are respected and developed to the fullest extent. They are encouraged to think of others' feelings through stories, such as about bullying. All adults provide very effective role models, and there are very good relationships between adults and children. Children are treated with courtesy and respect and, in turn, learn to do this with each other. In the reception year, staff encourage children to make choices and to take charge of some of their own learning. There is a tendency, however, for staff to be too directive, so children are less confident that what they do will be accepted. All children in both the nursery and reception class are provided with a secure, caring environment.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

86. Children in the reception year are making satisfactory progress overall. They are developing skills in early reading and writing well, especially linked to their knowledge of letter sounds. In these specific aspects of literacy, children are on course to achieve the expected standards at the end of the year. A particular area of weakness, however, is in children's skills in speaking and communication. They are much less confident in speaking and communicating, and only a few will reach the expected standards in this aspect. Consequently, few children meet the full standards expected at the end of the reception year.
87. Most reception year children speak in front of the class, but they are not always clear or easily understood. Children have the expected listening skills for their age. They enjoy listening to stories from the large books, which their teacher reads, and like answering questions about them. This is seen, for example, when children repeat recurring parts of stories. One or two higher attaining children are beginning to be fairly fluent on simple texts. Others handle books correctly, use pictures to tell a story and recognise familiar words in a text. They have the expected knowledge of letter sounds, which they use to help them with their reading. While children talk about the characters in stories in simple terms, for example observing "I like Biff and Chip. They make Dad cross", skills in reading comprehension are underdeveloped. Many children write simple sentences, and those who are higher attaining include capital letters and full stops.
88. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception year. In the specific aspect of speaking and communication, teaching is excellent in the nursery, but this is the weakest area in the reception year. In the reception year, teachers make good use of elements of the literacy hour to develop children's knowledge of letter sounds. Purposeful opportunities are provided for writing, such as when children write about their favourite animal. The word level aspects of the literacy hour are also used appropriately to develop children's writing skills and their spelling of simple three letter words. In the nursery, staff continually engage children in talk about what they are doing. This supports children, including those with special educational needs, in making rapid progress in their speaking skills. The needs of children with English as an additional language are met very well through the use of gesture and facial expression. This was seen, for example, when the nursery nurse worked with a child in the water tray explaining the idea of 'full' and 'empty'. Children at an early stage of learning English quickly progress from using isolated words and phrases of English to expressing themselves much more clearly.
89. In the reception class the staff are also aware of the needs of children for whom English is a new language, and those with special educational needs, and support them adequately. They do not, however, take advantage of opportunities to develop language through conversation with children as they work and play. The teachers' questions in the reception class tend to seek a correct answer rather than encourage children to explore ideas or feelings. In the nursery, early writing skills are developed very effectively through the very good variety of opportunities provided for 'play' writing. Book time is a very special time of day in the nursery. All children select books confidently and share ideas about them with adults.

### **Mathematical development**

90. Many children in the reception year are on course to achieve some of the expected standards in

this area at the end of the reception year, especially in counting. In other areas, especially in the practical and problem solving aspects, children are doing less well. As a result, few are likely to achieve the overall standards in this area. Most reception year children count to 10 in a range of situations. They identify two-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining children use mathematical language confidently, such as 'corners' and 'edges', when talking about shapes. They know, for example, that a triangle has three sides and three corners. Higher attaining children successfully carry out simple addition and subtraction sums within practical situations, but other children are less competent in this. Almost all children recognise and use mathematical terms such as 'tall' and 'short'. Children sort toys and bricks according to criteria such as colour and shape. They successfully make patterns and investigate capacity in water play.

91. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. All staff use praise effectively to encourage children in their learning. In the nursery, adult support during a very wide range of stimulating activities ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make very good progress in their basic skills. For example, black play dough formed a strong background for children to put on pairs of wings and legs as they made creatures. There was much discussion between the adults and children about how many legs and wings these creatures should have. The outdoor environment is also used very effectively to promote learning in mathematics. For instance, when playing outside, children are asked to see how many bounces against the wall they can make with their ball. In an enjoyable activity where the teacher pretended she had muddled her husband's socks and needed to count them, children enthusiastically helped the teacher sort out the problem and put the related numbers into the correct sequence afterwards. In the reception class, children use a simple mathematics workbook to record their work. While this develops skills appropriately, such as in counting, it is not enough to ensure that all aspects of mathematical understanding are promoted successfully. A weakness is that practical problem solving and the use of mathematics in play activities are not given enough attention.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

92. Few children in the reception year are on course to achieve the standards expected nationally by the end of the year. They have some awareness of their surroundings. They notice the frost on a cold morning, and talk about Jack Frost. Their vocabulary and general knowledge are less well developed than is normally found at this age. When investigating ice in their water play, for instance, they describe it as just 'cold'. A few children are competent in their use of the computer, handling the mouse and keyboard effectively. In the nursery, confidence is much higher. The work using a paint program carried out in both classes showed more skill and detail in the younger class. Children in both classes confidently use construction kits, and in the reception year they plan their designs well on paper. Some understand the concept of 'floating' and 'sinking' as a result of experimenting with pretend boats and icebergs. Through learning about festivals, such as Hanukah, children are made aware of different cultures. Children select and use tools and resources safely to construct and build.
93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery but unsatisfactory in the reception year. Adults in the nursery support children exceptionally well in investigating their surroundings and encouraging them to solve problems. They provide activities that generate a sense of amazement about the world in which we live. This was seen, for example, when children played with spinners and the black and white stripes on them became grey as they twirled. In the outside environment, the bright windsocks and windmills delighted the children as they blew in the wind. Adults observe children very carefully and ask very good questions to challenge their thinking and move them on in their discovery of the way the world works. In an unsatisfactory lesson seen in the reception class, the activities were not clearly enough linked to what the teacher had identified as the lesson's purpose. While the teacher plans a suitable range of activities for the reception year, children are not given enough opportunities to express their own ideas and views. As a result, children do not develop their knowledge and understanding at the rate at which they are capable of doing.

## **Physical development**

94. Most children in the reception year are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards in this area by the end of the year. Children run, climb, throw and kick balls, and ride tricycles, with the expected control and confidence. During a dance lesson, children showed that they could follow a sequence of actions and assume various shapes. They used space well. Most children have the expected dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination in cutting, sticking and gluing activities. A few, however, struggle a little to control tools such as scissors. They use malleable materials with skill to create their own items
95. Overall, teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception year. The staff in the nursery make very effective use of the outdoor play area, which has been much improved since the last inspection, to develop children's physical skills. Very good opportunities are provided for children to ride tricycles and learn to kick and throw balls with increasing accuracy and a good awareness of others and the space around them. Teachers in the reception classes give children access to the same outdoor area once a week. A suitable range of items is provided to enable children in the reception year to make a creative response during their physical activities. During the inspection, children recreated parents taking babies to the park, pushing the dolls along in the pram. In the reception year dance lesson seen, however, the teacher did not give the children enough time to develop the creative aspect of their work. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes both provide a range of appropriate activities to help children improve their finer movements.

## **Creative development**

96. Most children in the reception year are on course to meet the expected standards by the end of the year. In the specific area of music, some children exceed them. Reception children demonstrate their creative skills in make believe role-play related to their 'shop'. They sustain and enjoy 'pretend' activities such when they select a celebration costume. Most children use play dough well to create simple items. In music, children have developed understanding of 'high' and 'low', and 'loud' and 'soft' through a variety of musical activities. This is demonstrated as children sing songs accompanied by their playing of various musical instruments. They listen to their names being clapped and are able to identify how many sounds make up their name. Children have the expected skills in painting in the reception year. In the nursery, standards are very high in this aspect. Nursery children carefully observed the houses in a painting by Lowry and made printed pictures in a similar style. They have also made three-dimensional models of skyscrapers with reflective windows. Children successfully experiment with a very wide variety of techniques such as blowing paint through a straw.
97. The overall quality of teaching and learning is excellent in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class, with good teaching of musical activities. Children in the reception year are given some imaginative opportunities to develop their creative skills during role-play and 'small world' activities, such as playing with a mini ski slope and experimenting with ski goggles. In the nursery, role-play activities allow children to explore some detailed make-believe situations together as they pretend, for example, to be in at home. Children are given opportunities in the nursery and reception year to experiment with materials and to make their own creative responses. In the nursery, the materials are changed daily and are fresh and stimulating. In the reception class the play dough lasts all week and becomes crumbly and less easy to work with. Both rooms have free access art areas. In the reception year, however, adults often closely direct work. Musical activities are presented with enthusiasm and capture children's interest, especially in the reception year.

## **ENGLISH**

98. Pupils' results in the end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2001, based on average point scores, were below the national average. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was broadly average. The test results in 2001 were lower in relation to the national picture than when the school was last inspected in 1997. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows standards in the present Year 6 as

average. Pupils now in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are making good progress overall. There is, however, variation in the rate of progress of pupils in the different year groups directly linked to variations in the quality of teaching. There is some unsatisfactory progress in Year 3 where higher attaining pupils in particular are not challenged well enough. This is particularly evident in writing. Pupils' rate of progress improves considerably when they reach Year 4. There is some very good progress in Year 6 especially by the average pupils. The better standards in Year 6 this year are in part due to efforts made over the last school year to ensure that the National Literacy Strategy is properly in place within the school. With the small year groups of pupils, there is also some natural fluctuation from one year to the next in the standards achieved. There is no significant variation in the attainment and progress of boys and girls.

99. The National Curriculum test results of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001, based on average point scores, were below the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing. These results are a little better than those of 1997 in reading, but they are much the same in writing. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in 2001 was average in reading but below average in writing. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows the same picture of standards in the present Year 2. These standards are not as high as they could be because not all groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making enough progress. For the last three years, girls have done better than boys in writing although there has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in reading. There is no variation in the rate of progress of boys and girls in their school work.
100. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 with special educational needs or English as an additional language are given adequate help and are making satisfactory progress overall. In reading and writing, pupils with potential for higher attainment are not well enough challenged and are underachieving as a result, especially in writing. While average pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress overall, those in Year 1 are not having their needs met well enough in writing and their long-term progress is unsatisfactory.
101. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Years 2 and 6. Higher attaining pupils in both year groups are confident and articulate speakers for their age. They speak with a clear awareness of the listener, for example as they discuss their choice of reading material. Those in Year 6 vary their speech according to the occasion. They give extended answers and explanations during one-to-one conversations. Year 6 pupils listen attentively for quite long amounts of time, such as when a text is discussed in class or when their teacher is explaining the work that they are to do.
102. Reading standards are below average in Year 2 and are average in Year 6. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read confidently and fluently, successfully capturing the rhythm of a previously unseen poem. They have a good understanding of the narrative and characters of the stories in the reading scheme books. Average pupils read with reasonable accuracy, using the pictures and letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. One pupil, for example, persevered to read the word 'invitation'. A few lower attaining pupils read simple texts fairly accurately and with reasonable understanding, although some struggle and need a good deal of adult support. Overall reading standards in Year 2 are below average because of the number who are reading at a lower level than expected for their age. Most Year 6 pupils have a clear understanding of the novels and non-fiction books they read. Many refer to the text to explain the themes of the novels or their views about key events and characters. They express preferences for particular authors and subjects such as books about wildlife or sport, poetry or adventure stories. Most pupils read with accuracy and expression. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 have the expected skills for their age in the use of non-fiction books, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
103. Writing standards are well below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Many Year 2 pupils successfully use simple punctuation and have the expected skills in spelling simple words and more complex ones as they sound. While they write for a satisfactory range of purposes, those with potential for higher attainment are not developing ideas well enough or writing at sufficient length. Pupils do not have the expected awareness of story structure. Only a very few adapt their writing with awareness of the reader. Many Year 6 pupils have a clear awareness of how to alter

their style according to the purpose of their writing. They successfully produce poetry, write diary entries in role and analyse how characters are presented in video and live theatre productions of 'A Winter's Tale'. Many pupils draft and redraft their writing and plan their work appropriately. Higher attaining pupils achieve a good standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar, although those who are lower attaining are inconsistent in the use of simple punctuation. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 have neat, evenly formed handwriting. Even the higher attaining pupils in Year 2, however, are only just starting to join letters. Most Year 6 pupils have a fluent joined style. The overall quality of handwriting is better now than when the school was last inspected.

104. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is good overall, although there are significant variations in the different Year groups. In Year 3, there are some unsatisfactory elements especially in the teaching of writing. In Year 6, there are very good aspects. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is not sufficiently meeting the needs of all groups of pupils in the mixed age and ability classes. Those pupils who are capable of achieving at a higher level are not challenged to do so. There are occasions when they mark time because they finish work quickly, even just colouring in pictures because they are not expected to develop their writing further. Many Year 2 pupils are reading books from the reading scheme all at the same level. Occasionally these books are too difficult, but more often they are too easy and are holding pupils back from developing their reading skills further. The last inspection also found that there was too little challenge for pupils with potential for higher attainment. Not enough has been done over the four years since then to eradicate this problem. Some of these weaknesses are also apparent in Year 3, especially in the teaching of writing. The outcome of this can be seen in the slow progress pupils in this year group make in writing, especially in writing at length for a range of purposes.
105. In contrast, teaching in Years 4 to 6 is successful in meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. In the Year 5 and 6 class in particular, the teacher has high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining. Pupils in this class are presented with appropriately demanding tasks that require a mature and thoughtful response. The teacher is also sensitive to the needs of those who need extra help to make effective progress, including those with special educational needs or at an early stage in learning English. The individual needs of pupils are being continually reviewed. A significant number of pupils in Year 6 have made rapid improvements in their reading and writing since the start of this school year. This is particularly evident in the writing of the average Year 6 pupils. In Years 4 to 6, teachers ensure that they clearly communicate to pupils what it is that they want them to learn. As a result, pupils understand what they are aiming to achieve.
106. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in most cases provide supportive comments. Some indicators are given as to how pupils might improve. This is done particularly well in the Year 5 and 6 class where marking takes the form of a dialogue between the teacher and individual pupils. The higher attaining Year 2 pupils are not, however, provided with an adequate indication of what they need to do to improve. Usually, their work is simply ticked and a comment such as 'well done' is made. In all year groups, even when teaching is not sufficiently challenging, pupils are well managed. They respond by behaving well and showing good attitudes to learning. Only when the younger pupils are required to sit through a long whole class introduction to a lesson do they become restless.
107. Even though there are some considerable weaknesses in the teaching of younger pupils, the overall leadership and management of English are now good. The headteacher, with the support of the deputy, has undertaken an analysis of provision. This was initially based on a review of attainment data and was followed up by looking to see what elements in the provision were preventing pupils from doing better. It was found, for example, that there were weaknesses in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Action has been taken to bring about a more consistent approach. Improvements have started in the teaching of basic reading skills through a new approach to the teaching of letter sounds. A full review of resources for reading is scheduled for next term. The headteacher is very clear about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in each class. Where weaknesses have been identified, support is being provided to help teachers to become more effective.

108. Assessment procedures are adequate, but there is no regular assessment of pupils in each of the key elements of English. While some teachers are very effective in continually assessing pupils' needs and ensuring that they receive suitable work, this is not done well enough in Years 1 to 3. The school recognises that this is also an area in which improvement is needed. Not enough use is made of computers to support pupils' work in English, especially for older pupils to draft and redraft their work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

109. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, based on average point scores, were well below the national average. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was below average. These results were lower than when the school was last inspected and also much lower than in 2000. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work is that, at this point, standards in the present Year 6 are average. The improved standards this year are in part a result of variations in the attainment of small year groups of pupils. They are also a result of the school's efforts to raise standards and to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy is in place throughout the school. The teacher in the Year 5 and 6 class is the co-ordinator and she is strongly involved in the drive to raise standards. Pupils now in Years 4 to 6, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are making good progress. In Year 3, progress is satisfactory. At the last inspection, it was also the older pupils in the school who made the most effective progress.
110. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001, pupils' results were well below the national average based on the average point scores. They were below average compared with those achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The results of Year 2 pupils have not improved in relation to the national picture since the school was last inspected in 1997, when they were also well below the national average. Many pupils now in Years 1 and 2 are making unsatisfactory progress overall because their needs are not met well enough. There are also weaknesses in this part of the school in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, pupils with potential for higher attainment are being held back from doing better. Teachers are, however, responsive to the needs of pupils with English and an additional language and those who need support because of their special educational needs. These two groups of pupils, in contrast to others, are making satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in either Year 2 or Year 6.
111. Pupils in Year 2 undertake a range of practical and problem solving activities, although a significant number have difficulty in finding the correct language to explain their work clearly. When doing written exercises, many pupils find it difficult to identify the appropriate operation needed to find an answer. Most pupils count to 100 and many confidently identify odd and even numbers. Most pupils write numbers and order digits correctly. A small number, however, occasionally reverse digits. Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction, but a significant number are less certain in tackling exercises involving multiplication. Many have a secure understanding of halves, money such as in the context of simple shopping bills, and time on the hour. They are less certain of quarters and time on the half-hour. Most pupils correctly name a range of two and three-dimensional shapes, and identify various properties such as the number of sides. In measuring activities, most pupils are able to use various non-standard units of measurement, but a number are uncertain about units such as centimetres.
112. In Year 6, pupils undertake an appropriate variety of practical and problem solving work. In particular, they show much increased confidence in identifying the correct form of computation required to answer a problem. Most develop their own strategies, collect appropriate information and present it in an organised way. A very small number of pupils, though, have some difficulties in clearly explaining their work. Most pupils are confident in undertaking work in addition and subtraction, and they have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures. While a small number of pupils lack confidence in saying the times-tables, most readily and successfully undertake tasks in multiplication and division. Pupils have been introduced to decimals to two places, and in some cases three places, and most use them accurately in the context, for example, of measurement and money. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions and identify

equivalent fractions. Pupils successfully tell the time, using both digital and analogue displays. Most calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes, identify a range of angles such as right angles, and measure angles to the nearest degree. Pupils collect data on a variety of issues, for example on their favourite holidays and food, and successfully produce a range of graphs to illustrate their findings, sometimes using a computer.

113. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory and is not as good as it was found to be at the last inspection. In Year 3 it is satisfactory, and it is good in Years 4 to 6, which is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. Examples of very good teaching were observed during the inspection in Years 4 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Although there are signs of improvement taking place, the numeracy sessions in the Year 1 and 2 class are not yet carried out effectively. The mental activities at the start of lessons are rather short, and do not adequately involve all pupils. The teacher asks suitable questions. While a number of pupils provide answers, others are less involved and tend to pay limited attention. Not enough action is taken to involve these pupils. Opportunities are also missed to develop pupils' understanding of mathematical terminology, which is an area of particular weakness in their work. The written activities provided for pupils are largely the same for all, with little challenge being provided for those who could be achieving more highly. The teacher has a pleasant manner with pupils, to which they respond well. During the activity session pupils are readily supported and satisfactory use is made of the time at the end of the lesson. As a result of the limited demands made of them, however, a significant number of pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are given the support they need in lessons to make satisfactory progress.
114. In Years 3 to 6, lessons are more carefully based on the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, teachers make proper allowance for the provision of problem solving activities, recognising this as an area for development in pupils' work. Teachers also plan work to suit pupils' particular needs within the mixed ability classes. Most teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons. They are also very aware of the need to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary, being careful to address this issue during lessons. This has contributed well to the progress they are making. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instructions and give much well directed support. As a result, pupils usually make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
115. In the very good lessons seen in Years 4 to 6, the teachers demonstrated particularly secure subject knowledge. The lessons were brisk in pace and expectations of all pupils were high. Pupils made very good progress in their mathematical knowledge during these particular lessons. Most pupils enjoy their work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are usually very well behaved and this helps them to concentrate well and contributes towards their progress. Teachers in Years 4 to 6 use the time at the end of lessons well to check pupils' understanding and to celebrate some of the work done. Teachers throughout the school mark pupils' work promptly, but appropriate comments of advice and praise are not always added.
116. On arrival in the school four terms ago, the headteacher started a review of provision and looked to see what factors affected pupils' attainment and progress. It was found that the National Numeracy Strategy was not adequately in place throughout the school. While the strategy is now being used successfully in Years 3 to 6, there continue to be weaknesses in its use in Years 1 and 2. While there are signs of some improvement in the way lessons are carried out in Years 1 and 2, the procedures, for example the mental session, are not yet sharp enough. As a result, pupils with potential for higher attainment are not adequately challenged to raise the standard of their work. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and a skilful practitioner, and is continuing to address the weaknesses in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. She carefully checks pupils' books, and observes work being undertaken in the classrooms.
117. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and they are being used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment. The information gained is used successfully to provide suitable work for pupils in Years 3 to 6, but not in Years 1 and 2. Some use is made of computers to help develop pupils'

mathematical understanding and skills, in particular to illustrate their work in data handling. There is, however, scope for improvement of this. Mathematics is not used enough in other subjects of the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

118. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 in 2001 were well below the national average, based on the average point scores. They were also well below average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. These standards were lower than in 1997 when the school was last inspected. They were also lower than in 2000. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows standards at this point in the present Year 6 as average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 now are making satisfactory progress overall, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class are making some very good progress because teaching is challenging them very well.
119. At the end of Year 2 in 2001, teachers assessed pupils' performance as well below the national average. Pupils' school work shows standards as below average, at this point, in the present Year 2. The difference in standards in Year 2 now compared with last year is largely a result of variations within the small year groups of pupils. However, pupils now in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are making unsatisfactory progress. In particular, pupils with potential for higher attainment are not doing well enough. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls in either Year 2 or Year 6.
120. Year 2 pupils ask simple scientific questions. A few successfully make predictions about what might happen in an investigation, such as about what will happen to circuits wired in different ways. They carefully record their predictions on worksheets. Higher attaining pupils do so in simple sentences if the space allows. Lower attaining pupils make simple drawings and some write one or two words. Pupils have the expected skills of observation, for example noticing the positive and negative ends of the battery. Overall, however, skills in scientific investigation are not as well developed as they should be by this age. This is evident in the simplicity of the predictions made and in pupils' restricted awareness of the basic features of fair testing. Pupils have some of the expected body of knowledge of other areas of science. Many pupils understand the life cycle of a frog and most identify the main external parts of the human body. Pupils have little awareness, however, of habitats or how living things might be classified according to their characteristics. Overall understanding of life processes and living things is not as good as it should be. Pupils have some appropriate understanding of materials and their properties and of physical phenomena. They recognise that materials when twisted, squashed or stretched change shape. They know that a complete electrical circuit is required to light a bulb and they identify light sources.
121. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the main principles of a fair test. They demonstrate the expected scientific understanding for their age in making predictions. They do not, however, have the expected independence in carrying out scientific investigations. Neither do they often devise their own tests or select their own equipment. This is because the teacher generally controls investigations and all the class follow the teacher's instructions. Pupils understand what a food chain is and have a satisfactory awareness of the links between some living creatures in this context. While they know that there are different animals to be found in various habitats, a few are less sure of the importance of habitat to the creatures. They develop a good understanding of microorganisms. Pupils know that materials can be classified into liquids, solids and gases and most know that water can take any of these forms. They understand that some processes are irreversible. Pupils' understanding of physical phenomena is satisfactory. Few pupils, however, have the breadth of scientific vocabulary expected.
122. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. While satisfactory teaching was seen in a Year 1 and 2 lesson that introduced work on electrical circuits, the subsequent work carried out on the same day showed that too many pupils did not develop their knowledge and understanding well enough. The higher attaining pupils were restricted in their response by the worksheet format. This limited the amount they could write and the depth of thinking required as a result. The wider evidence of pupils' work shows that unsatisfactory teaching is the main factor in pupils making insufficient progress through Years 1

and 2. Expectations of pupils are not high enough. The teacher tends to match work more to the needs of Year 1 pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class, rather than taking account of the full range of pupils' needs. The matching of work to pupils' needs was a weakness in some classes at the last inspection. Not enough action has been taken since then to eradicate this problem.

123. While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, instances of good teaching were seen in Year 3 and in the Year 5 and 6 class. These good lessons had a clear focus, and included clear explanation and questioning. Written and practical activities were well matched to what the teachers wanted pupils to learn. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson on evaporation, pupils were required to think carefully about what had happened in their previous week's experiments. They thoughtfully reviewed and evaluated their predictions. The teacher asked some very searching questions. As a result of these features of the lesson, pupils increased their knowledge of evaporation and developed their understanding of scientific investigations well. Pupils also used and developed their literacy skills well as they thought of adjectives to describe the residue that was left behind. In the Year 3 lesson, pupils co-operated well to investigate the absorption of various types of paper. They tallied and recorded the results and discussed the need to try to make it a fair test by making the drops the same size. In a satisfactory Year 4 and 5 lesson, the activities were also well focused but the structure of the tasks restricted pupils' investigations to materials selected by the teacher. Nevertheless, pupils developed a clear understanding of which materials are most effective in insulating against sound.
124. Overall in Years 3 to 6, teaching is adequately supporting pupils in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills in science. Sessions are generally well timed, but on one occasion the input by the teacher was too lengthy. While all pupils have opportunities to participate in scientific investigations, teachers do not allow them sufficient opportunities to make decisions for themselves about how an investigation might be carried out. Neither do they give enough attention to developing pupils' capacity to pose scientific questions themselves. This is a factor in standards not being higher by Year 6.
125. All teachers manage pupils and activities satisfactorily, so that pupils are involved and well behaved even when they are not learning enough. When additional adults are available in lessons, they are used appropriately to support pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is generally satisfactory, although in a Year 4 and 5 lesson on materials the vocabulary was not sufficiently emphasised.
126. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy are clear about the areas in which improvement is required. Support is being given to teachers where needed to improve their practice. The co-ordinator has overseen the planning of an up-to-date and balanced curriculum and she audits the assessments at the end of units as well as test results. This system was introduced only this term. It has been in place for too short a time to have had any significant effect on standards. Resources are adequate but not enough use is made of computers.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

127. The standard of pupils' work in art and design is as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are making satisfactory progress as they move up from Year 1 to Year 6. Standards are not as high as when the school was last inspected. This is a consequence of the school having reduced the amount of time allocated to art and design and increased the amount of time allocated to the key subjects of English, mathematics and science.
128. Pupils in Year 2 have the expected skills for their age in using materials such as paint, different fabrics for weaving, and items such as dried pulses for collage. They achieve some attractive results in their weaving with papers and fabrics and have a satisfactory awareness of how colours complement each other. There is also a clear awareness of the visual impact of their designs created with glue, paint and dried pulses. Some work of a good standard is achieved in the use of an art program on the computer to produce designs incorporating geometric patterns.

129. By Year 6, pupils successfully create vibrantly coloured pictures in pastel chalks to show the movement of animals. Almost all pupils show a good awareness of how to set the animals in a background. Pupils make satisfactory use of their sketchbooks to experiment and prepare for their main pieces of art work, for example exploring shading techniques and the light use of pencils. Some average and higher attaining pupils include a good amount of detail in their drawings. Pupils in Year 3 are developing their understanding of pattern at the standard expected at this age. They have studied and identified the features of a range of patterns. They have successfully produced overlapping patterns using two brightly coloured pieces of paper on a light background. This has been developed effectively through printing with coloured inks.
130. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6, as it was at the last inspection. Teachers' planning shows that pupils are provided with a suitable range of experiences to develop their basic skills and visual awareness. Teachers appropriately introduce pupils to the work of some famous artists and give them opportunities to experiment with the styles and techniques of some of these artists in their own work. The attractive displays of pupils' art and design work in classrooms and corridors show that pupils are satisfactorily supported to develop basic skills in activities such as painting and drawing. While there are some instances of pupils using computers to support their work in art and design, this is not well enough developed.
131. In a Year 3 lesson seen, pupils and resources were well managed. Instructions and explanations were clear, with activities building appropriately on pupils' earlier work. Where necessary, the teacher demonstrated techniques for individuals while they worked. These features of teaching helped pupils to develop their understanding of pattern at a satisfactory rate and to gain new skills in printing. Some time was lost in the early part of the lesson, however, because the introduction took longer than it needed to. This reduced the amount of time available for practical exploration. Pupils responded well to this well organised lesson by working with quiet concentration. Boys and girls willingly helped each other to get ready by doing up each other's shirts and aprons to cover their school clothing.
132. The overall leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is well established in her role. She maintains an appropriate overview of what is happening in the school through scrutinising teachers' planning, which she is able to match against the school plan of work. There are newly introduced assessment procedures, which involve teachers in evaluating pupils' performance at the end of units of work. These procedures have been introduced recently and it is not yet possible to judge their effectiveness. They have not been in place long enough to be influencing the planning of new units of work. Nevertheless, they are a step in the right direction to provide teachers with better information for matching work to pupils' differing needs.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

133. The standard of pupils' work in design and technology is as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below those expected for pupils of this age. Good improvement has been made since then. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are now making satisfactory progress as they move up from Year 1 to Year 6.
134. Year 2 pupils successfully clarify their ideas for making a product through class and group discussion. They produce suitable pictures of the items they intend to make. Pupils are confident in identifying the materials they need to make their products. They choose from a range of suitable materials such as paper, card, felt and food items. They sensibly select tools, such as scissors and knives, to help them make their products. Pupils cut their components accurately, and join them together carefully, using items such as sticky tape, thread and wooden sticks. Pupils successfully make, for instance, wheeled-vehicles, glove puppets, monsters and fruit salads.
135. By Year 6, pupils draw up appropriate plans for making a product, often generating their own ideas. Having produced their plans, pupils choose from a range of materials including wood, plastic, fabric and clay, and tools, including saws. They successfully measure, cut and shape the materials, and competently join them with items such as glue and string. Pupils provide appropriate finishing

techniques, such as painting, where required. They confidently evaluate their work, both as they proceed and especially when they have finished. Younger pupils have, for example, produced money containers, diva lamps and Hindu garlands. Older pupils have made musical instruments, biscuits and a variety of model structures, such as bus shelters and birdhouses.

136. Overall, teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, and are now satisfactory. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson seen, teaching and learning were good. Teachers' planning is better now and is good. Pupils are provided with opportunities to carry out all relevant activities and develop appropriate skills, with good allowance now being made for planning and evaluation. Teachers are keen to link the work in design and technology with that in other subjects. In Year 3, for example, some of the work produced is closely related to that in religious education. In Years 4 and 5, the production of musical instruments also benefits pupils' learning in both music and science.
137. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and they readily discuss the work they have produced, how successful it has been and how it could have been improved. The range of activities provided, the instruction received and the enthusiasm displayed clearly help pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to make satisfactory gains in a range of skills. Where teaching is good in Years 4 and 5, pupils are given extended opportunities to discuss their work and identify the particular strengths and weaknesses of their finished items. Pupils' behaviour is very good, and their attention is particularly well caught.
138. The overall leadership and management of design and technology are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a clear understanding of the work that is being done in the school. Since the last inspection a suitable scheme of work has been put in place, based on national guidance. All aspects of work are now suitably covered, with opportunities allowed for designing and evaluating as well as making. A much improved range of resources has also been provided. New and appropriate assessment procedures are being introduced this term. These are intended to provide information to identify pupils' attainment and their skill levels. The writing activities undertaken in planning and evaluating products give some support to the school's initiative in literacy. Measuring activities, such as cutting card and fabric accurately, support the work in numeracy. Little use is presently made of computers to enhance work in design and technology. The production of items such as diva lamps contributes towards pupils' cultural awareness.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

139. Little geography work was available for scrutiny during the inspection, as most classes have been doing history this term. This is a consequence of how the curriculum is organised. It is therefore not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning in this subject, except in the Year 5 and 6 class. A judgement on standards can be made for Year 6 only. Overall standards in Year 6 are as expected nationally. The long-term curriculum plan shows that all classes have some experience of geography each year.
140. In the lesson seen in Year 6, teaching and learning were good. Pupils extended their map skills well and made good progress in their knowledge of how to describe different places and where they are positioned in relation to each other. Basic information, such as compass points, was reviewed effectively. Then refinements such as establishing north north east (NNE) were successfully introduced. Pupils worked on tasks of varying levels of complexity in the follow up work. Some used local maps and addressed simple routes. Higher attaining pupils applied their skills to a large map of Pakistan. Teaching fully utilised all opportunities to develop spoken language both for giving directions as well as getting pupils to negotiate effectively in groups.
141. Pupils spoken to in the Year 5 and 6 class were knowledgeable about the wider world, speaking confidently about time zones and physical features on maps. They reported enjoying their current unit on geography and numbers. Pupils' wider knowledge of countries and their own locality suggest that they are working at the level expected nationally. Pupils throughout the school have a good knowledge of Italy, gained through their Italian lessons. Younger pupils satisfactorily develop their knowledge of the local area. Year 1 pupils in the combined reception and Year 1 class have been following the travels of a teddy bear to local places of interest.

142. The geography co-ordinator ensures that there are sufficient resources available and that an adequate curriculum is in place. A new system of end of unit assessments is being introduced, but the co-ordinator has not yet had any to evaluate. Consequently, it is not possible to judge the effectiveness of the new procedures. The co-ordinator is aware that computers and other new technology are not used sufficiently in geography. The school recognises the need to develop this area of provision. There is presently little checking of the quality of the school's work in geography, as priority is being given to English and mathematics at present.

## **HISTORY**

143. The standard of pupils' work in history is as expected nationally in Year 6. In Year 2, it is below the nationally expected standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. In Years 1 and 2 progress is unsatisfactory overall for all groups of pupils, owing to too little development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in Year 2. Pupils' rate of progress from Year 3 to Year 6, and the standards they achieve by Year 6, are much the same as at the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, progress is not as good as it was then and standards are lower.

144. Year 2 pupils have some knowledge of famous people such as Grace Darling. They know, for example, that she rescued people from a wreck. Higher attaining pupils are able to identify the kind of clothes she would have worn, although others are unable to do so. Most pupils are confident in using historical terminology such as 'past' and 'present' and identify changes that have taken place over time, for example in lighthouses. Even the most able pupils, however, have little idea about sources of historical information. Standards are restricted by all pupils in the mixed age and ability Year 1 and 2 class all being given the same work. There is little challenge for pupils with potential for higher attainment either in the methods of enquiry used or in the way in which they are expected to record information. In the work on Grace Darling, for example, almost all pupils wrote the same two brief facts.

145. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils have a reasonably good knowledge of a range of historical periods, such as the Tudors and Vikings. Most others have the knowledge and understanding of different periods expected at this age. Lower attaining pupils, however, are unable to make sufficient connections between the different periods studied. Those who are higher attaining are independent in researching historical topics, for example using the Internet to find information on the Vikings. Their drawings, such as of Viking helmets, are very accurate. Most pupils successfully compare changes over different periods in areas such as transport. They are able to set these changes in a clear historical context. Higher and many average attaining pupils make appropriate use of a range of sources of historical evidence. Lower attaining pupils, however, do not properly understand them. They were confused about the difference between rich and poor people in Tudor times, for example, after studying pictures of the period.

146. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. This is a decline since the last inspection. Teachers do not present work in a lively and imaginative way that involves pupils sufficiently. Hence, they do not make sure that pupils' learning about past events and important figures from history is really effective. There is a heavy reliance on pupils completing worksheets and on learning just the basic facts. Not enough is done to help pupils to ask questions or to think things through from looking at evidence. This was also a weakness at the last inspection. Too little has been done since then to rectify this. There is no additional challenge for pupils with potential for higher attainment. Neither is there attention to developing pupils' literacy skills, such as by giving the most able pupils opportunities to write other than very briefly.

147. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, as it was when the school was last inspected. The Vikings project undertaken in Year 6 is very good. The teacher has captivated the pupils' interest and moved their learning on at a very good pace in this work. Pupils are encouraged to access and edit information from the Internet and CD-ROM to develop their own research projects. This use of research is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have responded by trying hard with this work, many of them achieving an exemplary

standard in the presentation of their work. Pupils at an early stage of learning English have their needs sensitively met, and they have made a very creditable effort in this work. Suitable attention is given to providing the necessary support for pupils with special educational needs. Current work in Year 3 is generating a lot of interest among pupils in the Tudor period. They enjoyed a visit to a Tudor House and vividly recounted their learning about such things as the use of nosegays to mask smells and the methods of cooking used at that time. Work in Year 4 on the Victorians has also been well consolidated by an educational visit. Pupils in Year 3 are not, however, sufficiently supported in making deductions from sources of evidence. Those who make errors, such as when looking at pictures of life in the Tudor period, do not always have their errors pointed out to them. Marking is inconsistent and does not always contribute to pupils' learning.

148. The co-ordinator is satisfactorily involved in the introduction of school-wide initiatives in history. This includes, for example, the new assessment procedures being put in place this term. Teachers assess pupils' learning at the end of topics and the co-ordinator reviews this. This system is too new, however, for a judgement to be made on its effectiveness. At present assessment is not used adequately in Years 1 and 2 to match work to pupils' differing needs. The co-ordinator has devised a satisfactory scheme of work, which incorporates good use of visits to stimulate pupils' interest in the topics. The checking of teaching and learning to identify and rectify weaknesses is unsatisfactory. While the headteacher is taking action generally to improve teaching in classes where there are weaknesses, there is no focused review and development of history teaching. Adequate use is made of new technology, such as CD-ROMs for gathering information.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

149. Although all groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress as they move up through the school, standards in Years 2 and 6 are below national expectations. The standards now are similar to those described in the last inspection report, as is pupils' rate of progress.
150. Year 2 pupils confidently name items of computer equipment, such as the mouse, keyboard and screen. Most successfully use a keyboard to type simple texts, producing appropriate titles, phrases and short sentences. Many readily place gaps between words using the space bar, and higher attaining pupils introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. Quite a few pupils, however, need more support than normally expected at this age in identifying the correct keys to use in producing their work. Using an appropriate paint program, pupils produce an interesting range of pictures, for example of geometrical shapes, people and houses. They confidently change the background colours. Some pupils show the expected control for their age in using a mouse, although many continue to find this difficult. Many successfully undertake simple modelling activities. Many also explain clearly how to use a floor turtle, providing instructions to make it travel over various distances. Pupils access the menu to save their finished work, although many need much more help than they should do at this age.
151. By Year 6, many pupils have satisfactory skills in word processing. They are confident in changing the font, colour and size of their work. Many, however, lack confidence and independence in carrying out changes to the presentation of text, especially in relation to 'cutting and pasting'. Most pupils use the mouse accurately to produce various forms of art work. Those who are higher attaining merge their pictures into different forms of text, but others have difficulty in doing so. Pupils continue to have relevant experience in using both a floor and a screen turtle, either to follow a set course or to produce their own patterns, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils successfully use simulations, such as those presented in adventure games, but they do not have the competence expected at this age in producing spreadsheets. Pupils readily access the Internet, as well as a range of computer programs, to provide a variety of information on, for example, the Vikings. Pupils also collect and record a range of data, such as on favourite foods and television programmes, producing suitable graphs and charts to display their findings. As with other aspects of the subject, however, many pupils need considerable help from adults to carry out the required routines.
152. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Teachers are keen, and enthusiastic. Although a number of teachers readily admit to some previous lack of

confidence in teaching the subject, through careful preparation of lessons they are providing pupils with appropriate learning experiences. Teachers usually provide clear and careful instruction and demonstration on the use of various items of hardware, as well as on various word processing and art programs. As a result of these aspects of teaching, all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are able to satisfactorily develop their computer skills. Pupils respond by showing good attitudes and behaving well. They listen carefully and, even though many lack confidence, settle well to all tasks and concentrate very well. Teachers and support assistants provide appropriate help and advice throughout. There is more direct teaching of skills than at the last inspection.

153. The new computer room was opened only very recently. At the time of the inspection, an electrical fault was restricting its use. The school is waiting for an e-mail link and some final items of equipment, such as sensors, to complete the provision for older pupils. Resources have, however, improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has introduced national guidance as its scheme of work, with additional plans having been added about its implementation in the school. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic. With the opening of the computer room, she is keen to raise the standards. She is fully aware of what needs to be done to raise standards, such as increasing pupils' confidence and independence in using equipment. She supports her colleagues informally, although she has no opportunity to work alongside them in class. Assessment procedures are currently being introduced to help staff to identify pupils' attainment and to plan for their future needs. These are too new, however, for a judgement to be made on their effectiveness. Assessment has not previously been used to adapt the curriculum in this subject.
154. Through the work in word-processing, a limited contribution is made to the development of pupils' literacy skills. The collection of data and its presentation, for example in the form of graphs in Years 5 and 6, is having some effect on the development of their numeracy skills. Overall, however, as at the time of the last inspection, the use of computers does not contribute significantly to pupils' work in other subjects. Many pupils find the use of computers exciting and the amazement generated, such as when producing images on the screen, helps enhance their spiritual development.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **Italian**

155. Italian is taught to all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and is a new development since the last inspection. The course is co-ordinated and mainly taught by a visiting specialist teacher from the Education Department of the Italian Consulate. The standard of pupils' work in Italian is sound in Year 6. In Year 2, standards are good. In Years 1 to 3, pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. In writing, their progress is satisfactory. Overall progress from Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils by Year 6 are not developing their language to the higher levels that many, especially the most able pupils, are capable of.
156. By the end of Year 2, most pupils recall and use basic language associated with topics such as numbers, personal descriptions and classroom activities. This is further developed during Year 3. This was seen in a very good Year 1 and 2 lesson in which pupils remembered numbers well and learned the vocabulary for parts of the face quickly. In writing, pupils copy basic conversations and personal statements accurately.
157. All Year 6 pupils write sentences accurately on everyday topics. In doing so, they use familiar language very well. Many pupils, however, do not frequently use their knowledge to express themselves personally in Italian. In speaking, most pupils do not extend their language into making a personal response. Lower attaining pupils, especially those with special educational needs, make very good progress in listening, speaking, and writing.
158. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The visiting specialist teacher uses her native language and cultural knowledge very well to motivate pupils and develop excellent speaking habits. In a good Year 4 and 5 lesson, for example, the teacher's excellent presentation of new

language items resulted in groups of pupils proudly calling out together the new words with excellent accents. The teacher's good use of resources, including gesture, supports pupils well in learning and in practising new language forms. In the same Year 4 and 5 lesson, the teacher's use of colourful cards held pupils' attention and guided them well in making sentences. In a very good Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils rapidly understood the meaning of words because the teacher successfully used gesture to teach vocabulary for the face. Songs are used well to give enjoyment to learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enthusiastically sang an Italian song to demonstrate and consolidate their knowledge of numbers.

159. Time given to teacher-led speaking activities is sometimes excessive. As a result, pupils do not have enough time to practise their language in pairs to help them develop confidence in less formal situations. This is a weakness in the use of lesson time. In addition, not enough emphasis is given to reading and writing to give pupils time to absorb quietly what they have learnt. In two lessons seen, many pupils became tired and restless after prolonged speaking and listening activities. Class teachers complement the work of the specialist co-ordinator well. This is mainly unobtrusive support for lower attaining pupils and those with learning or behavioural difficulties. In one lesson seen, the class teacher's excellent language knowledge resulted in the very good team teaching of the Year 5 and 6 class. In all lessons, the teacher ensured that boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language were all equally involved in responding to questions. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, progress at a satisfactory rate.
160. Annual tests provide teachers with good information on the progress of all pupils, who receive official certificates linked to the criteria of the Education Department of the Italian Consulate. Literacy is well taught through careful copying and emphasis on the phrasing of language. Pupils consolidate basic numeracy well through learning numbers and doing simple arithmetic in Italian. Pupils in all year groups respond well to the teaching. This is particularly evident in pupils' neat and accurate presentation of written work in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 to 3, although pupils' written Italian is accurate, standards of presentation are sometimes poor.
161. The leadership and management of Italian are satisfactory overall. The programme is well organised and presented. The specialist co-ordinator has formed very good relationships within the school and her presence encourages considerable empathy for the Italian language and culture. The role of reading and writing in lessons, however, is underdeveloped. There is also scope for the older higher attaining pupils to be challenged more in the language levels they are expected to work at.

## **MUSIC**

162. Not enough information was collected during the inspection to make firm judgements on the standards pupils achieve or on the quality of teaching and learning in music. This is because much of the music teaching, which involves singing lessons taken by a visiting teacher, was not timetabled for the period during which lesson observations were carried out. Only one lesson was seen for which judgements could be made, in the Year 4 and 5 class. A lesson in Year 3, although observed, was too brief for overall judgements to be made. Some additional evidence was gained from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and through discussions with teachers and pupils.
163. In the lesson seen in Years 4 and 5, pupils achieved the standards expected nationally at this age. The lesson was well taught and pupils made good progress during it. Effective use was made of a pre-recorded lesson that is part of a radio series. The teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge as she stopped the tape at appropriate moments to reinforce the themes and ideas and to check pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils successfully increased their knowledge of repeating rhythms, developed their awareness of how the story of 'Cinderella' might be interpreted through song in an African setting and had the opportunity to apply their singing skills. They also made appropriate advances in their understanding of musical notation. Throughout this well organised and structured lesson, pupils showed good attitudes to learning and behaved well. They listened very attentively to the teacher and followed instructions well. Pupils happily shared instruments such as xylophones.

164. In an assembly, the whole school sang to a satisfactory standard without accompaniment. In the brief Year 3 lesson seen, the activities were not sufficiently demanding for pupils of this age. Consequently, pupils' performance was at a lower level than normally found at this age. Nevertheless, they responded by following instructions carefully and all participated well.
165. When the school was last inspected, a visiting part-time teacher took responsibility for the music provision. A scheme of work developed by this teacher was in use throughout the school, and class teachers were given effective support in implementing it. The present arrangement is for music lessons, other than singing, to be taken by class teachers. This is appropriately supported by the use of national guidance for music. However, the time allocation for music is low in Years 1 and 2 and pupils in these year groups do not have music lessons all year round. The result is that the range of learning opportunities for them is too limited and opportunities are missed to develop their speaking and listening skills through music. The good enrichment of the music curriculum provided at the last inspection is no longer offered to pupils. There are no opportunities for pupils to participate in musical activities outside lessons or to learn a musical instrument.
166. The deputy headteacher has had responsibility for co-ordinating music since September 2000. During this period, she has had other more pressing areas to deal with, including the development of her deputy role and a review of provision for mathematics. As a result, there has been no adequate leadership of music during this time. Nevertheless the headteacher and deputy are both aware of the shortcomings in the provision for music and the need to rectify them.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

167. The standard of pupils' work in physical education is as expected nationally in Year 2, although it is not as high as when the school was last inspected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make a judgement on standards overall in Year 6 or on pupils' rate of progress through Years 3 to 6. Swimming standards in Year 6, however, are lower than expected nationally. A significant number of pupils are unable to swim 25 metres unaided. Nevertheless, all pupils make good progress during swimming lessons. Many have no experience of swimming outside the lessons provided by the school and this limits the standards they achieve.
168. Pupils in Year 2 show the expected control and co-ordination for their age as they travel about the hall. They make wide, curled and twisted shapes, and successfully perform a simple sequence of linked movements. They travel, jump and hold a shape with the skill expected at this age. Pupils are less successful in performing such a sequence on apparatus. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 swim confidently and with good control, for example using breaststroke. They also swim on their backs using their legs correctly to propel them through the water. All pupils, even the lowest attaining, show reasonable confidence in the water. Average attaining pupils achieve an adequate standard in the crawl.
169. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory. At the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good. The evidence of teachers' planning suggests that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Only one lesson was seen for pupils of this age, which was a swimming lesson taken by the instructor at Stockport pool. This lesson was well taught. All the adults present were effectively deployed to ensure that the wide range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability class were met. Very effective additional assistance was provided for the least confident and lowest attaining pupils. A good amount of challenge was given to those who were capable of higher standards than most of the class. Clear and precise demonstration ensured that pupils developed and refined their skills at a good pace, such as in arm movements for back crawl. Resources, such as float aids, were well selected and used to good effect. The pool area was managed well by the instructor to ensure that it was put to maximum use in supporting pupils' learning. The pupils' response during the swimming lesson was excellent, and this contributed to the effective progress made.
170. In lessons seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2, floor work in the hall was managed satisfactorily.

Instructions were clear so that pupils knew what was required of them. A lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class was judged as unsatisfactory overall, however, because pupils were not well enough managed when on the apparatus. As a result, pupils did not adequately refine their movements and they did not take turns. Some pushed in to have extra time on the apparatus. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in this class had started to deteriorate while changing for the lesson.

171. The evidence of teachers' planning shows that throughout the school pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, and indicates that teachers have secure subject knowledge. There are good additional opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to participate in team games after school, including playing in leagues or in friendly matches against other schools. Coaching is provided for lacrosse and tag rugby. At the time of the inspection, Year 4 and 5 pupils were receiving lacrosse coaching. Other coaching is provided at various times in the year in sports such as football.
172. The co-ordinator makes a good contribution through coaching pupils for netball and rounders and organising the school's participation in matches. She has a clear awareness of the provision throughout the school and provides satisfactory leadership for physical education. She is clear about the areas in which improvement is needed and has appropriate ideas for what should be done. There are newly introduced assessment procedures, which involve the assessment of pupils' performance twice yearly. However, these procedures are so new that it is not possible to see their contribution to pupil's learning. They are, nevertheless, a good step forward. Although overall provision is not as good as it was reported as being at the last inspection, there is no evidence of a declining situation.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

173. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Year 6 were higher. The reason for standards being lower now is that not as much time is allocated to religious education as when the school was last inspected. This is because the school is presently giving greater attention to English, mathematics and science.
174. Year 2 pupils are familiar with three major world faiths: Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They successfully relate some of the stories of famous figures, such as Jesus or Rama and Sita. Pupils explain clearly that religions have books that are special to them, identifying the Torah and the Bible as those relevant to Jews and Christians. Pupils understand that religions have various ceremonies and special occasions. They explain, for instance, the importance of Hannukah to Jews as well as saying why Christmas is important to Christians. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about Hannukah. They confidently describe, for example, the importance of the menorah. Pupils understand the need to belong to a variety of groups and recognise in particular the importance of their own family and friends. Pupils are aware of the need for caring, both for people and the environment.
175. By Year 6, pupils are aware of a number of world religions, successfully discussing the Christian, Hindu and Islamic faiths. They readily name important figures in these religions, such as Mohammed and Krishna. They confidently identify and discuss similarities and differences between religions, such as in clothing, food and ceremonies. Pupils readily name various religious buildings, such as the church and the mosque. They confidently identify some of the requirements for entering religious buildings, such as removing shoes or covering one's head. Pupils know that all religions have distinctive traditions and life-styles and, for example, understand the importance of the Five Pillars of Wisdom to Muslims. They also carefully compare the Hajj with journeys represented in other religions. Pupils recognise that all religions have distinctive symbols. They are aware of the need for love and care in their dealings with others, and they recognise the importance of sharing. Pupils throughout the school clearly understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, lifestyles and rituals.
176. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout Years 1 to 6. A good lesson

was seen in the Year 4 and 5 class. Lessons are planned appropriately and are sometimes thought provoking, with challenging ideas presented to pupils. Generally, teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Through clear instruction and a careful use of questioning, all groups of pupils are able to satisfactorily develop their knowledge and understanding. In the good lesson seen in Years 4 and 5 the teacher's knowledge was particularly secure. The lesson was well organised and resourced and pupils made good progress. Many of these features were also evident in a lesson taken by a visiting teacher in Years 1 and 2. Teachers often make particularly good use of pupils to demonstrate for others, such as when in the Year 4 and 5 class, Muslim pupils showed their classmates how they used their prayer mats. Teachers provide a variety of suitable tasks for pupils and make appropriate use of resources, to involve pupils and to make them think for themselves. Most pupils find the subject interesting as a result, and many provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations. Just occasionally, a very small number of pupils show less interest in the work. Teachers are careful to introduce pupils to the correct terminology used in different faiths. Pupils usually take care with the presentation of their work, and teachers sometimes provide detailed comments of encouragement and advice when marking.

177. The school closely follows the locally agreed syllabus, together with national guidance, and all areas of work are adequately covered. The school is particularly successful in developing pupils' understanding of different faiths. Visiting speakers and visits to religious buildings play a significant part in this provision. The work undertaken successfully supports all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, it plays an important role in developing pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. Through written activities, religious education also provides some support for the school's initiative in literacy. The school currently makes little use of computers to enhance pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are just being introduced. These procedures should allow for the recording of information to judge both pupils' current understanding and to identify the progress they have made. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable. She is satisfactorily aware of the work being covered in the school, and she supports her colleagues well. She has few opportunities, however, to observe teachers and pupils at work in the classrooms, to see for herself the standards being achieved.