

# INSPECTION REPORT

## STALYHILL INFANT SCHOOL

Stalybridge

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106222

Headteacher: Mrs S Nuttall

Reporting inspector: Mr Ian Hocking  
1272

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 196655

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stalyhill Drive Stalybridge Tameside
Postcode:	SK15 2TR
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevan Tudor
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1272	Ian Hocking	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? How well are children taught?
9882	Alice Rea	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	Geography History English	The school's results and children's achievements. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
30362	Jacqueline Henshaw	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Religious education	
6642	Peter Hill	Team inspector	Art and design Science Equal opportunities English as an additional language Special education needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stalyhill Infant School is smaller than average, with 180 children on roll and is currently oversubscribed. It is located on a large, well-established housing estate approximately one mile from the centre of Stalybridge. The school draws its catchment mainly from owner-occupied houses in the vicinity.

All children have attended one of many pre-school establishments in the area. Many enter school in reception having acquired basic pre-reading, writing and numeracy skills. Although there is a wide range of ability, the attainment of most children, on entry, is above the average for their age. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. Two children have statements of special educational need and a further eight are on the register of special educational needs. Four children come from homes where English is an additional language; this is also below the national average.

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

Stalyhill Infant is a very good school with some outstanding features within management and teaching. Excellent leadership by the headteacher allied to very good teaching, from a dedicated and hard-working staff, enables children to achieve well and reach educational standards that are well above average. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Children achieve well and reach very good standards.
- Excellent leadership and management are provided by the headteacher with very good support from key staff.
- Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well.
- Strategic and financial planning is excellent and highly effective in improving educational provision.
- Teaching is very good, and in a significant number of lessons it is excellent. Staff are hard-working and highly committed to the children.
- Provision for children's personal development and procedures for ensuring their welfare are very good.
- Children enjoy school, are keen to learn, behave well and develop very good relationships.
- Parents express extremely positive views about the school.

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

The inspection team has identified no major areas of concern, but the following aspects of provision are suggested as areas for improvement that the governors may wish to consider.

- The school's use of worksheets needs to be reviewed, especially in order to improve the quality of children's written work.
- The school's information and communication technology (ICT) provision needs to be more extensively used to support learning across other curriculum subjects.

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

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in July 1997. In particular, the school has improved leadership; teaching and learning; provision for children's personal development; and educational standards. All the key issues identified in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by children at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A*	A	A*	A
Writing	A	A	C	D
mathematics	A	A	A	B

Key	
High	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

As the above table shows, the school's test results, with the exception of writing, (in 2001), are commendable, both compared to all schools nationally and when considered alongside similar schools. Reading results are exceptionally high and place the school's performance amongst the top five per cent nationally. The school's results, when shown numerically, follow an upward trend. All groups of children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Children's work seen during the inspection indicates that attainment in English, mathematics, science, ICT, art, history and geography is well above average. Standards in music are above average. Standards in religious education are above those specified by the locally agreed syllabus. The school has already introduced strategies for improving the quality of writing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: children are interested and very enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: they behave well and those few who find it difficult to do so are well supported by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: children show initiative and independence and develop very good relationships.
Attendance	Very high compared with other schools.

This area represents an important strength of the school. Children show remarkable confidence to express their thoughts and ideas and do so in an articulate manner. Relationships throughout the school are very productive and contribute to the positive and caring ethos that exists. Very high attendance reflects children's enthusiasm and parental commitment.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.*

In each lesson observed the quality of teaching was always at least good and in more than seven out of ten lessons it was very good or excellent. This represents a great strength of the school. Some examples of outstanding teaching and learning were seen in English and mathematics within reception and in dance, art and ICT in Years 1 and 2. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well, enabling children to acquire essential knowledge, skills and understanding. The very good support of nursery nurses and classroom assistants, contributes significantly to the learning of all children, including those for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs. Some very good use is made of ICT but this practice needs extending to maximise this valuable resource. The school also needs to review the extent to which worksheets are currently being used, particularly with regard to improving the quality of children's writing.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: the curriculum provides all children with access to very interesting and relevant activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: children are provided with very good support to meet their individual needs and to enable them to achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good: children's needs are well met enabling them to achieve well and make comparable progress with their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made in each of these areas of personal development. Planned opportunities within the curriculum promote children's cultural development. Social and moral developments are encouraged by the way staff interact with children. Assemblies help develop children's spiritual awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: children are well known by the headteacher and staff. Children are cared for very well indeed.

The school has strengthened its partnership with parents, as reflected by the extremely positive views expressed by parents. Children's academic and personal welfare are given considerable attention by staff and the school's commitment to educational inclusion is evident in all aspects of provision. A broad and balanced curriculum includes all the statutory requirements, within a range of stimulating activities.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent: the headteacher provides an outstanding role model for colleagues. She ensures clear educational direction and is very ably assisted by key staff. She sets the tone of high standards within a secure and happy ethos.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: governors play an important and highly effective role in shaping the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the headteacher and governors have implemented very good systems for checking on and improving the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent: school improvement planning fully involving all the key players together with shrewd financial planning ensures that finances and human resources are targeted in a highly effective manner.

The headteacher's excellent leadership has been pivotal to the school's improvement since the previous inspection. Under her leadership all staff work harmoniously as a team, committed to providing the best for children's academic and personal development. Governors' continued commitment to improving staffing levels, accommodation and resources, with keen regard to achieving best value, is also a crucial factor that has impacted on educational standards. Funds raised by the parents and teachers association also make a significant contribution to children's learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>A high proportion, i.e. at least 92% of parents who responded, support the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school, behaviour is good and school is helping children become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• School works closely with parents, they are kept well informed and feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• Children get the right amount of work to do at home.</li> </ul> <p>At least 98% of parents who responded agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is good and that children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	

The inspection team fully supports the views expressed by parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Over the last few years, the children have reached very high standards in English, mathematics and science, which are well above the national average and also in comparison to similar schools. In the tests in 2001, not as many children reached the higher levels in writing, but the school has worked hard to improve their creative writing skills and the indications are that the majority of children in the present Year 2 classes will achieve very high standards in all three subjects. This is a result of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the significant amount of very good teaching that children of all abilities receive throughout the school, which enables them to achieve well in relation to their prior ability.

2 Most children enter school with standards of attainment above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. They make good progress, due to the very good teaching that they receive in both reception classes. The high standard of support, high expectations and very good overall provision, lead to almost all children successfully achieving the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and a significant minority exceeding them.

3 All teachers make effective use of the introductions and the plenary sessions, in lessons, to develop children's speaking skills, which are very good, and there are many opportunities for them to discuss and explain their ideas. The expertise of the teachers gives the children the confidence to take full part in discussions, which effectively develop their communication skills. Most children are very confident when talking to others, in retelling stories and in reading and speaking in a creative and imaginative manner. Most children listen attentively and this helps them to make relevant answers to the teachers' questions and to gain an effective understanding of the work that they are to do. The teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for children to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other children and, consequently, there is very good development of their listening skills.

4 The school is right to be proud of the very high standards that children achieve in reading. Many children show very good ability to read accurately and confidently from texts appropriate for their age, and are able to use a range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics to identify the initial sound and other blends. The children are effectively taught how to use inference from text and how to use information books to further their knowledge of topics studied. Most children know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and are confident when reading aloud in a large group. The library areas provide very stimulating environments for children to foster an enjoyment of reading and in classrooms there is a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books to enable teachers to develop children's reading skills. Each classroom provides a word-rich setting, with displays in all subjects being used very effectively to challenge and develop the children's reading.

5 The school is currently placing emphasis on the development of children's imaginative writing, to further improve standards. Consequently, the teachers work hard to provide opportunities for the children to develop their skills of writing, at length, in a creative way. Many children are able to write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with simple words spelled correctly. They are able to write in a variety of formats and in a fashion that generally holds the reader's interest. Handwriting shows accurate and consistent letter formation and the standard of presentation of written work, in most subjects, is good. There are times, however, for example, when completing worksheets

in science, that these standards are not maintained and work is untidy. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) by children, to word-process their stories and poems.

6 There are many opportunities for children to practise and improve their literacy skills in an effective manner in other subjects. In mathematics lessons, they are able to develop these skills when reading questions and then discussing and explaining their strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. In history and geography, children record their ideas in a variety of written forms and make accurate labelled drawings in science.

7 By the age of seven, children have made good progress in learning about basic number facts and operations, such as addition and subtraction, and the concept of place value, in terms of tens and units. The vast majority of children have acquired above average skills in numeracy, though a few lower attaining children still rely on fingers for calculating. Almost all children can count on in 2's, 5s and 10s and most can readily state the doubles of numbers up to 10. High attainers can competently count back in 2s from 100 to zero, and can mentally halve numbers up to 20. Most can apply effective strategies for adding or subtracting 9 or 11 from two-digit numbers and recognise odds and evens. When solving problems involving addition and subtraction, children are aware that inverse operations can be applied to check calculations. Most Year 2 children can name the solid shapes 'cube', 'cuboid', 'cone', 'sphere', and 'pyramid', and identify their properties in terms of faces, edges and corners. Children can apply their numeracy skills in the context of other subjects, for example, when producing artwork following the styles of Picasso and Mondrian and when measuring in design and technology and science.

8 Since the last inspection, the development of investigational science has been a priority and has resulted in improved standards, especially for higher attaining children, and consequently standards are now well above average, with children of all abilities achieving well. They are encouraged to work co-operatively and, by the time that they are seven, most children can confidently carry out a fair test and record their findings in a variety of ways. There has also been much improved provision for ICT, with the creation of a computer suite that allows whole class teaching of basic skills, leading to a significant improvement in standards, which are now well above average, for all children. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, with the children gaining a good understanding of the traditions and beliefs of Christianity and other major world faiths.

9 In most other subjects, the children attain very high standards and achieve well as they progress through the school, as a result of the high quality teaching that they receive. The standards attained in geography remains a particular strength, owing much to the very good links with Bradford College, which enable children to develop a good understanding of life in other countries, through their contact with visiting overseas students.

10 There are very good systems in place to support those children who have special educational needs, which enables them to make effective progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Children with English as an additional language reach standards that are above those expected in most areas of the curriculum. Those who are at an early stage of English acquisition make very good progress, due to the very good teaching and provision for their needs, which enable them to quickly access the curriculum in their additional language. There is also effective support for those who are gifted and talented, so that they also make very good progress, especially in reading and mathematics.

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

11 Children are very enthusiastic about school. They are happy, secure and confident, approaching their lessons with interest and excitement. Parents rightly value the attitudes and values promoted in the school and feel very confident that the school is helping their children become more mature and responsible within a happy and stimulating environment.

12 Children generally behave very well around school. Most are clear about what is expected of them and are able to work and play well together without constant direct supervision. A few children, who find it particularly difficult to behave well, are well supported by the school and outside agencies. An equally small number of children sometimes assume that it is acceptable to talk when the teacher is talking and, when not checked, this assumption grows. Overall, children's behaviour has shown an improvement since the last inspection and is now very good.

13 Relationships throughout the school are very good and parents justifiably feel that teachers set their children a very good example of how to treat people with respect. They rightly feel that the good role models help their children to develop respect for others.

14 Children listen well, are keen to give their views, and are articulate in doing so. They also concentrate well; for example, Year 2 children, playing number games, were absorbed in and enthusiastic about the activity.

15 They are independent in the classrooms and around school and work well together, such as in a Year 2 science lesson, when groups co-operated and worked as a team. Children take responsibility by making choices about how to do things and about what materials to use. They are able to return registers to the office and take messages and older children act as 'playground helpers', getting games started and looking out for children who might be lonely.

16 Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools and unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. This reflects both the commitment of parents and enthusiasm of children.

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

17 Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. In 24 per cent of lessons teaching is good, in 60 percent it is very good and in 16 per cent it is excellent. This represents an impressive amount of very good and excellent teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

18 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. Teaching is planned very well and has clear intended outcomes. Regular assessment of children's learning enables staff to gain a clear knowledge of children's developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Both the reception classrooms provide a secure, very well resourced, stimulating and caring environment that engages children's curiosity, promotes their independence and motivates them to learn. Some excellent teaching and learning was seen in areas of communication, language and learning and in mathematics. For example, in learning the letter 't' children are provided with very well organised resources from which to select items beginning with 't'. At the same time, others used the listening centre independently, whilst another played with the Noah's Ark, during which skilful use of open questioning helped her to develop language and thinking skills. In another session, children were encouraged to express and explain their feelings in the context of religious education. Mathematical language is also developed at every opportunity; for example when children are taught the name and some properties of three dimensional shapes such as cylinder and cone. Again teachers and support staff challenge children to exercise thinking skills so that conceptual development is promoted alongside the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Overall, teaching of mathematical development, within Reception, is excellent,

the most notable features being high expectations and challenge that really motivate the children. Very good relationships between the staff and children contribute to quiet but highly effective class control. A strong sense of teamwork between teachers and very good support staff contributes significantly to the very good provision that exists in the Foundation Stage.

19 In Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics, science, art, history, geography and ICT. Teaching and learning are good in music and religious education and excellent in physical education. Insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection period to enable secure judgements to be made about the quality of teaching in design and technology.

20 In all lessons, children's behaviour is managed very effectively. A key feature of teaching is the efficient use of material and human resources in order to maximise learning opportunities for children. Teachers and support staff work in close partnership to present a consistent and supportive ethos in classrooms. Children respond very co-operatively as a result of the high levels of mutual respect between staff and children.

21 The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught particularly well. In such lessons the teacher's thorough preparation of tasks that are matched well to children's needs, allied to brisk pace and challenging questioning, keeps children highly interested and motivated. The teachers' very good delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is enabling all children to achieve well in English and mathematics.

22 Excellent teaching in two Year 1 dance lessons resulted in all children making very good gains in learning. The teacher's high level of personal expertise served to inspire the children. Her excellent personal example and perceptive teaching points, allied to appropriate use of children's demonstrations, produced very good learning outcomes. Throughout both lessons, children were constantly challenged to perform to their highest possible standard. In response, they sustained high levels of involvement and enthusiasm, behaving in exemplary fashion. In both lessons, the teacher's very good management of children, including some whose behaviour was potentially challenging, enabled the brisk pace of learning to continue unhindered. The context of the lessons provided very good contributions to children's social and cultural development.

23 An excellent ICT lesson for Year 2 children was characterised by: excellent relationships; a clear introduction that recapped on prior learning; skilful open-ended questioning of the whole class whilst the teacher demonstrated on the interactive whiteboard; excellent pace and challenge; and teaching that capitalised on children's own knowledge by asking them to explain to the rest of the class. The combined effect of these attributes was that children made very good gains in learning to use a graphics package. In response to these opportunities, children's behaviour, interest and concentration were of an exemplary standard.

24 Very good systems of assessing, recording and checking individual children's progress in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science and ICT, are used effectively to plan future work. This means that teachers are able to present work at levels that are appropriately matched to children's prior attainment and therefore enables them to build on what they already can do, know and understand.

25 Teaching is very good for children with special educational needs. Lesson planning reflects the fact that teachers and support staff have a good level of awareness of the needs of individual children. Teachers and very good support staff respond sensitively and appropriately to the needs of all children including high attainers and especially for those who have statements of special educational need.

26 Teaching of children for whom English is an additional language is also very good. Children learn to interact within groups in purposeful activities. Very good language models are used by staff and are reflected in very good learning. The children are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Very good relationships ensure that children quickly gain confidence and can securely practise their language development.

27 Homework is set appropriately in line with the school policy and supplements work done in school.

28 There has been a substantial improvement in teaching since the last inspection when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching i.e. 6 per cent of lessons. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and the amount of very good and excellent teaching has increased from 45 per cent to 76 per cent. This improvement is attributable to the combined effect of staff training, monitoring of teaching throughout the school, and improved planning.

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

29 The curricular and other opportunities offered are very good, which shows improvement since the last inspection, enabling all children access to a wide range of exciting and stimulating learning experiences. The curriculum very successfully fulfils one of the school's aims, in which it seeks 'To create a happy and stimulating environment in which every child will develop as a complete person and reach his/her full potential, achieving high educational standards'. Children are encouraged to learn through first hand practical experiences within a broad, well-balanced and very relevant curriculum.

30 In the Foundation Stage of learning, the teachers and other adults working in the reception classes provide a very stimulating learning environment for the children in their care, leading to them making good academic progress and being well prepared for the programmes of study of the National Curriculum, as they enter Year 1.

31 Children aged five to seven are provided with a curriculum that meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been very successfully implemented, which has been a notable factor in the consistently very high standards that children attain in reading and mathematics. Opportunities are effectively planned for skills learned in literacy and numeracy lessons to be used in other curriculum areas and this helps children to achieve high standards in most other subjects.

32 Since the last inspection, the development of investigational science has been a priority and has resulted in improved standards, especially for higher attaining children. There has also been much improved provision for ICT, with the creation of a computer suite that allows whole class teaching of basic skills, which has led to a significant improvement in standards for all children. The provision for geography remains a particular strength, offering opportunities, through very good links with Bradford College, to develop a good understanding of life in other countries, through the visits of overseas students. The school is currently targeting the development of creativity within the curriculum and is giving a specific focus to the improvement of writing skills in imaginative contexts. The school makes full use of involvement in national and local initiatives, to further enhance the curriculum.

33 The provision for personal, social and health education is very good, with the school having successfully created a caring environment in which children feel secure and are able to develop confidently and independently. They have numerous opportunities to relate to others, in a variety of

situations, so that they learn to respect the values and beliefs of other children and adults and treat each other with courtesy. There are opportunities for children to take part in a variety of visits and to work with visitors in school, which effectively develops their social skills. There are also many opportunities, in and out of classrooms, for them to show initiative and take responsibility, which effectively supports their personal development. They deliver messages between classes and get out and put away resources and equipment in lessons, while older children look after younger ones at various times of the day. The school Code of Conduct successfully promotes positive attitudes, which are also supported by the ethos of positive praise to be found throughout the school. Children are also encouraged to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, as well as taking turns to share equipment fairly. In Year 2, the 'Pride Project' is integrated into the science curriculum, so that a home/school partnership is able to develop awareness for children of the use and misuse of substances. Children are also encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle, through such activities as discussing which foods are good for you and then planning a healthy meal.

34 The school is very successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum, with equality of opportunity being implicit in all its work. There are effective systems in place to support children with special educational needs, which enable them to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There is also effective support for children who have English as an additional language, and for those who are gifted and talented, so that they also make very good progress. Planning procedures have been improved since the last inspection, so that all subjects now have schemes of work. These effectively incorporate the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's curricular guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught, so that they are able to give work that effectively builds on children's prior learning.

35 Whilst the school does not offer extra-curricular activities, there is a successful before and after school club, that offers a variety of play and practical activities. All children have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. There is also very effective use of Stalybridge town centre, and the immediate surroundings of the school, to develop children's learning in science, history and geography. The school arranges for many visitors to come to school, including storytellers, musicians and drama groups, to work with children, developing their skills across a range of areas.

36 There are strong links with the community that make an effective contribution to children's learning. Various clergy work with the children, in the church and school, to deepen their knowledge and understanding in religious education. Parent helpers, governors and volunteers from the community work in classrooms to effectively support children's learning across a range of aspects. There are regular visits from representatives of the police and fire services, and from the school nurse, doctors and dentists, to further support children's knowledge and understanding of a variety of issues. There are very close links with the partner junior school, with close liaison between the Year 2 and Year 3 teachers, and an effective induction programme ensures a smooth transition to the junior school. The links with Bradford College enable students and overseas visitors to come and work in school, to give children further learning experiences.

37 There has been a significant improvement in the school's provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. This provision is now very good, with assemblies making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

38 The last inspection judged that there were insufficient opportunities for children to reflect. This is no longer the case and there are now planned opportunities for reflection, especially in assemblies but also in lessons. For example, in one assembly, prayers were focused on a famous painting of hands

and in another pupils were prepared to reflect on how it would feel to be poorly and then to be comforted. The youngest children begin to reflect on feeling happy or feeling sad in religious education lessons and opportunities are made to look at wonderful things in the world, such as ice through a magnifying glass or bubbles in the wind. The school delivers very high quality assemblies following planned themes, which make a major contribution to the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

39 Children are encouraged to think about what is right and wrong through the straightforward school rules, the reasons for which are explained to the children, and the regular reinforcement of these rules. The children are shown respect by all the staff and learn by example to show respect for all. There are opportunities for children to raise money for a variety of local and national charities, including The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Dr. Barnados, which helps them to gain a good understanding of the needs of others.

40 Children enter the school with generally high levels of social skills. These are built on by the school to encourage confidence, co-operation and independence. In particular, the planning of lessons, to allow many opportunities for collaborative working, and the expectations for children to make their own choices about how to do things, promote very good social development of the children.

41 Many opportunities are provided for children's cultural development. Music and art are used well in assemblies and a range of artists' work is used in displays and referred to in lessons such as mathematics. The children become more aware of their own culture through visits to a local church, for example, whilst learning about Christian baptism in religious education lessons. The school ensures that the children develop awareness of other cultures by welcoming visitors from Holland and Norway, through established links, and the children have worked with an Indian storyteller and a visitor from the Beijing Opera.

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

42 Children are very well cared for by the school. They are well known by the staff and the headteacher, and respected and valued as individuals.

43 There are very good procedures in place for child protection and staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are well informed about what to do if they have any concerns. There are already good procedures in place for health and safety risk assessment but the governors are reviewing the procedures and their responsibilities to ensure they adopt the best possible practice. The headteacher regularly reminds parents of the established procedures for bringing children to school by car, and the need for vigilance, to ensure children's safety.

44 Children's behaviour is well monitored through implementation of the policy and through the very good relationships between all those in school. Where children have real difficulties in behaving in an acceptable way, the school works closely with other agencies and with the parents to support those children. Exclusions have been a 'last resort' to ensure the safety of other children and have been followed by good support arrangements to help the children concerned cope better.

45 The school has been involved in the Healthy Schools Award scheme for some time now. The school very successfully supports children's personal development through this scheme, through personal and social education, including 'circle time', and through the different opportunities planned into the whole range of lessons. The very good relationships with parents are an important element in monitoring and supporting the personal development of these young children.

46 Attendance is well monitored and effective procedures are in place but there are rarely any issues about children's attendance or punctuality.

47 The previous report indicated weaknesses in the procedures for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and monitoring the progress that they make. These procedures have been significantly improved, and there is now very good monitoring of the children's academic performance and the use of assessment information to plan future work. There is a very effective whole school system of assessment and record keeping, that can be used by teachers to decide children's levels of attainment and set targets for improvement, especially in English, mathematics and science. There are very effective procedures in place to analyse the optional and statutory test results to identify areas of weakness, and then set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individual children. This has resulted in the school targeting an improvement in children's creative writing skills.

48 Teachers use assessment information effectively to evaluate children's performance, so that they can plan future work accordingly. Good use is also made of assessment information for children with special educational needs, to plan future work. Information from the initial assessments, when children start school, is used very effectively to plan learning experiences in the Foundation Stage. There are good systems in place to monitor the achievements of different groups of pupils, which means that the school is effective in meeting the needs of children of different levels of prior attainment.

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

49 The partnership with parents was judged a strength of the school in the last inspection report. This is still the case, with an even stronger partnership than before. Forty per cent of parental questionnaires were returned and those parents have an extremely positive view of the school, as do the parents who attended the parents' meeting. They value the education their children are receiving and are highly confident that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.

50 The school has very good links with the parents. These links are forged before the children start school and often continue after children have moved on to the junior school, through the strong, joint Parent Teacher Association.

51 Parents are very involved with the school. Levels of attendance at assemblies, productions, open days and parents' evenings are high. The fundraising activities of the Parent Teacher Association make a significant contribution to the school's resources and hence children's learning, and social events add to the life of the school community.

52 The written information provided for parents is of a very high quality. There are letters and newsletters, giving information about all aspects of school life. There is also a parents' notice board and a supply of leaflets, giving information about school, local activities, local services and entitlements. Policy documents are also available for parents to borrow. Written reports about children's progress are of a very high quality. They are detailed, written to the child, include targets for future progress, and include children's and parents' comments. A further enhancement would be the inclusion of each child's actual attendance in addition to the possible attendances and the late and unauthorised attendance.

53 Parents contribute to their children's learning by listening to them read and by helping them with any other work that is sent home. The high level of parental interest in what their children are doing at school enhances the educational and personal development provision made by the school. Some parents help in school and that help is highly valued. A lot of parents who are out at work value the before and after school club that is available in school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54 Leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and promotes high educational standards within a caring and supportive ethos. She has a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and justifiably has the respect and confidence of children, colleagues, governors and parents. As a result of this outstanding leadership the school is very successful in meeting its stated aims.

55 The very good support provided by the deputy headteacher and other key staff contributes successfully both to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and to its long-term development. The leadership and management of the school has been significantly improved since the last inspection, resulting, especially, in raising the quality of accommodation, teaching and educational standards. All of the key issues identified in the last inspection have been fully addressed. Very good leadership by subject co-ordinators has been instrumental to the successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. In all subjects, teachers fulfil their subject leadership responsibilities very enthusiastically and effectively.

56 The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its duties and statutory responsibilities and benefits from high levels of expertise amongst its membership. Governors have an appropriate structure of committees that meet regularly, and, through highly detailed minutes of meetings, keep each other fully informed of their work. They are also kept well informed by the headteacher and through formal links established with co-ordinators on the teaching staff. In addition, many governors give generously of their time in contributing to school improvement projects, such as the building of the ICT suite, and by assisting teachers, for example in accompanying field trips, in lessons, and in providing input to the 'healthy teeth' project. As a result, governors gain a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

57 The school has very good procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching and for improving standards. In particular, the teaching of literacy and numeracy has been suitably monitored by the subject co-ordinators and this has led to the school substantially improving its teaching in these subjects. Similarly, the school makes good use of its analysis of assessment data to target specific areas of teaching to bring about improved standards, for example, in identifying creative writing as an area for improvement. The school remains fully committed to improvement, as evidenced by high quality detailed action plans that cover all aspects of the school's work. Furthermore, governors are involved in a formal process of school evaluation in their continued quest to improve the effectiveness of their role and the work of the school.

58 Systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The headteacher sets the tone in providing an excellent example of care and support for children. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants also present very good role models for children and foster the very good relationships that are apparent in the school.

59 The school makes excellent strategic use of its available resources. Governors target money towards those areas identified for improvement within the school improvement plan, which is of outstanding quality. It makes clear the priority areas for improvement, personnel responsible and the resource implications of time and costs. Parents' and governors' views are sought alongside those of staff when deciding the school's priorities for improvement. This practice is a clear example of the headteacher's participative style of management that has been so successful in leading the school staff and governors towards a common goal. Excellent financial planning ensures that decisions taken in setting the budget are appropriately taken in relation to the school's priorities, for example, in providing

an ICT suite, in improving the premises, and in providing additional staffing to support children with special educational needs. The school budget is closely monitored and the quality of the school's accountancy procedures was judged to be of a high standard in the most recent audit report.

60 Very good leadership of the support for children with special educational needs ensures that additional resources are well deployed in order to make a significant impact on their achievement. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to the learning and progress made by all children and especially for those with statements of special educational needs. Children for whom English is an additional language are quickly integrated into the school community and, where necessary, very good quality individual support ensures that they are helped in acquiring the essential skills in English to progress in all subjects of the curriculum. Careful monitoring of individual pupil progress ensures that all children, regardless of prior attainment, are appropriately provided for. This reflects the high emphasis the school places on education inclusion.

61 Staffing levels are good and all staff are very well deployed to promote children's learning. Well- experienced teachers, together with a teacher new to the profession, work harmoniously as a highly effective team that shares its ideas and resources. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of staff, as evidenced by its successfully implemented Performance Management Policy. This is reflected in the close links between training of staff and school improvement. The very good quality staff handbook ensures that all those who are new to the school have ready access to details of school policies and procedures. The school secretary carries out her duties most efficiently and effectively and presents a welcoming image of the school.

62 Resources are at least adequate in all areas of provision. Resources for ICT are very good. resources are good in English, religious education, music and for children in Reception. Resources are bought by applying the principles of best value and staff makes effective and efficient use of the human and material resources. Some very good use is being made of the ICT suite enabling children to develop and use ICT skills; this use needs to be extended in order to maximise this valuable resource.

63 Governors, assisted by generous contributions from the PTA, have committed additional funds to improve accommodation, especially for the ICT suite, roofing repairs, toilets and the playground, all of which have improved the environment for children's learning. Teachers create stimulating learning areas and celebrate children's work through very attractive and relevant displays that promote and reinforce learning. The building is kept exceptionally clean by the hard-working caretaker and is treated carefully by the children.

64 Even when taking into account the school's above average income, when this is weighed against the very good teaching provided, and the very good attainment of children, the school gives very good value for money.

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

65 The inspection team has identified no major areas of concern, but the following aspects of provision are suggested as areas for improvement that the governors may wish to consider.

- The school's use of worksheets needs to be reviewed, especially in order to improve the quality of children's written work;
- The school's information and communication technology (ICT) provision needs to be more extensively used to support learning across other curriculum subjects.

## 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	11

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	23	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	16	61	24	0	0	0	0

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

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	180
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	10

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
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)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	33	32	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	32
	Girls	32	30	32
	Total	63	62	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	95 (95)	98 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	32
	Girls	32	32	32
	Total	63	63	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (98)	97 (97)	98 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

*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	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	115
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3
Average class size	32

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
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	2	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
	£
Total income	403661
Total expenditure	398656
Expenditure per pupil	2076
Balance brought forward from previous year	38164
Balance carried forward to next year	43169

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	73

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	26	0	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	3	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	38	1	1	0
The teaching is good.	77	22	0	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	36	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	1	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	19	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	27	3	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	75	23	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	22	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	29	15	1	21

## **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**

66 Most children enter school, into one of the two reception classes, with standards of attainment above expectations in all areas of learning. Almost all the children have attended one of many pre-school establishments in the area and, as a result, they settle quickly into routines and learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all the children have attained the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and a significant minority have exceeded them.

67 Overall, teaching within the Foundation Stage is very good. There is a well-established, hard-working staff that ensures confident, hard-working and happy children. All the children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, learn very well in a supportive and secure atmosphere that promotes early independence. Support staff are highly valued members of the teaching team and add significantly to the high standards reached. Provision is fully inclusive enabling all children to enjoy equality of opportunity.

68 Teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is excellent. A balance between practice, consolidation and appropriately challenging activities quickly develops skills within all groups. The children are very articulate and skilled staff build on what is already known to develop understanding and appropriate language.

69 Teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children are offered a variety of activities within different groupings in which they learn personal and social skills. Staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour and independence. Of particular note is the consistent reinforcement of the importance of thinking skills. Children are taught to stop before embarking on activities and to think and plan what they are to do and how they are to do it.

70 The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is also very good. Activities are very well planned in order to build on previous knowledge and to develop creative thinking and skilled use of media.

71 Teaching of physical development is good. Children are given opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor skills through practical activities using a variety of tools or apparatus.

72 Attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage are very good. Children are well behaved, listen carefully and share resources. They have a well-developed sense of responsibility for their own actions and are mostly independent.

73 Parents support the school very well by helping children with their basic skills at home.

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

74 Almost all the children reach standards of attainment that are above expectations in this area of learning. Children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are well supported and make very good progress alongside their peers. As a result of the importance placed on very good relationships between staff and pupils, teaching within this area is always very good. Children are encouraged to be respectful and are given respect. They are taught manners by good example.

75 Children are mostly confident, independent and aware of their own learning. They are able to predict, give explanations and express opinions. Children play collaboratively in the shop, taking turns and sharing resources. They tidy up independently when they want to change activity.

76 Other groups work safely and sensibly without direct adult supervision. They make decisions about what to do and how to do it and are confident enough to ask for help when required. Most children are persistent and sustain activities very well.

77 Children are encouraged to make choices and are presented with challenges to develop their play. For example, children playing in the shop or hospital, or with an activity tray linked to a theme, are given ideas to start them off or to develop their play.

78 There are high expectations of behaviour and independence and the children are able to sensibly use computers and listening centres and to interact sociably with adults and peers.

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

79 Standards of attainment in this area are almost always above expectation and in some instances they are well above. Children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make equally rapid progress.

80 Children are able to read clearly, with expression, using phonic and contextual clues. They can predict and ask questions. Children listen well for sustained periods and make their own suggestions for alternative story lines. Appropriate books are enjoyed and children talk about the stories they like. Children talk articulately about activities and use language to solve problems. They write very well and form letters clearly and independently. There is clear understanding of phonics and key words that are well used for writing and reading.

81 Teaching overall is excellent and it is always at least good. There is a print rich classroom environment and activities are thoroughly planned for all groups to develop language skills. All staff are excellent role models and seek to challenge and extend skills. Children are expected to give full and mature answers to questions.

82 As appropriate, children with special educational needs are given the opportunity to communicate through sign and pictures as a support to their developing communication skills. Open questioning and appropriate intervention in play ensure that language and imagination are developed side by side. Children learn to use language in a variety of settings and for different purposes. Role-play is always purposeful, and communication, language and literacy are very well planned and taught within other areas such as mathematical development and ICT.

83 The school is keen to improve creative writing and children in the Foundation Stage have made an excellent start to their poetry writing. In one such lesson, children were encouraged to think of adjectives to describe snow and to write them on the board themselves. They then wrote their own poems using ideas from the class discussion. Children are always encouraged to use their own ideas and to take pride in their work.

84 Writing areas are provided for activities such as making get well cards in the hospital area, independent writing books, shaped papers of an ark near to Noah's Ark or book making, following the children's use of the listening centre.

85 Parents strongly support the school's efforts in the teaching of communication, language and literacy skills and the children bring many valuable experiences from home to share with the class. Staff skilfully manage enthusiasm and balance flexibility and spontaneity with planned activities.

### **Mathematical Development**

86 Standards of attainment in mathematical development are almost always above expectation and in some instances they are well above. Children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make equally good progress.

87 Children have a clear understanding of number. In some cases they understand numbers to 100 and can rapidly find two-digit numbers before or after given numbers. Number recall is very good. Work on shape demonstrates children's very good understanding of simple flat and solid shapes. Children are aware of the properties of the shapes and can sort and name shapes of different sizes.

88 Teaching is excellent. The open layout of the Foundation Stage has been organised into mathematical and language areas and children move from one specialised area to another for their lessons. This organisation works well, as displays and resources are concentrated within the areas where children are working. There are many opportunities for children to investigate weight, number, shape and volume, as well as space and measurements at other times. In one excellent lesson on shape, previous and ongoing work on the classroom computer was linked to the day's work. Quiet discipline ensured full attention. The children consolidated previous learning, practised skills and embraced new challenges. Excellent relationships promote confident children who are eager to accept new learning.

89 In another excellent lesson, children were able to clearly explain the properties of shapes. They were encouraged to think for themselves and any misunderstandings were used as an opportunity for developmental learning. All groups were encouraged to be successful and their recording was detailed and neat. A very good pace to this lesson enabled all children to be fully involved. Group work is relevant and linked strongly to whole class teaching. Each group is fully supported and understanding is continuously assessed. Enough time is spent with children who need help and consequently make very good progress. The plenary of lessons give children the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, and for teachers to reinforce previous teaching points and to assess understanding. These and other successful features of the lessons result in the high standards seen in the Foundation Stage.

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

90 Most children enter the Foundation Stage with standards of attainment above expectations. Home support, pre-school education and a wide range of experiences outside school enable children to take full advantage of the experiences and teaching offered in this area of learning.

91 Children are eager to learn and have well-developed skills of observation and investigation. Teaching is very good and challenges are offered which closely link to the use of senses and to other areas of the curriculum. Activities are very well planned and promote interest. Following an exciting lesson investigating ice, children wrote sentences, using the computers, applying their knowledge of capital letters to begin sentences and their phonic skills to spell words.

92 Children were encouraged to express what they could see and feel in the large blocks of ice and magnifying glasses were provided. As the ice began to melt the children were able to give clear, detailed explanations of why this had happened and suggested how the process could be halted. They

are encouraged to record findings. The theme of 'weather' has provided opportunities for investigations outside and the use of the environment. Children look for clues in their outdoor mobiles, leaves, sky and puddles to determine weather and changes throughout the day.

93 In a very good religious education lesson children discussed feelings of sadness and made masks of happy and sad faces. Practical activities were appropriate and, with support, children with special educational needs were also able to make the masks. The children have an obvious sense of achievement and pride in the work.

94 The children are aware of other peoples feelings and cultures and have a sense of the past. All elements of this area of learning are strongly developed across the year.

95 ICT skills are very well developed. Children make use of the new computer suite and classroom computers. They are able to use the computers independently. They can control the mouse well and, with cards to help them, many are able to transfer knowledge of lower case letters to the upper case letters of the keyboard. Children know how to use space bars, and caps locks and to shut down the computer correctly. Lessons are well organised and children behave very well.

### **Creative development**

96 Almost all children enter school with standards of attainment above expectations. They are offered many different experiences to develop creativity.

97 Teaching in this area is very good. Children are encouraged to be creative in their play and language activities. Staff present scenarios or problems to be solved. The emphasis on thinking skills not only guides the children logically through processes and practical activities but also encourages their use of imagination.

98 Artwork includes painting, model making, printing or collage. In one lesson, children made ice pictures linked to their observations of ice. Warm and cold colours were discussed and children made their own choices. They were able to independently cut a variety of blue, silver and white papers and collage materials to make their ice picture shapes. Children discussed the spiky shapes they had seen and attempted to recreate these.

99 Music sessions are greatly enjoyed. Very good relationships, a brisk pace and very good organisation mean that all children are involved. Teaching points reinforce musical vocabulary and children are taught to play the instruments correctly. Children sing well and all join in the actions. They can clap in time and make a very good attempt at maintaining a pulse. Most children listen very well and absorb teaching points, making obvious improvement in performance.

100 Opportunities are given for music, literature, art and dance to link together within theme work during the year.

### **Physical development**

101 Children start school with standards of attainment above expectations and make good progress in this area of development.

102 Teaching overall is good. Children are given opportunities to develop and practise fine motor skills such as the use of writing implements, computer keyboard and scissors. Almost all have well-developed skills and can, for example, cut precisely.

103 There is a large construction apparatus in the newly developed, safe outside play space. This equipment and physical education lessons in the hall help to develop gross motor skills. There are, however, no wheeled toys or other large equipment outside to develop skills in balance, control and co-ordination and awareness of space. Although the outside space is used regularly and activities are taken outside, the school needs to also consider the provision of further equipment. The school has recognised the need to consider the use of time and staff to provide more access to the outside environment.

104 Children are aware of the importance of keeping healthy and in a good physical education lesson in the hall the purpose of the warm up is explained. Support staff give very good support to pupils with special educational need during the lesson. The lesson was well planned with a progression of tasks which placed increasing intellectual and physical demands on the children. Staff need to reconsider their own positioning during lessons to ensure that all children are in view and to ensure that all children listen carefully in the hall.

105 The children did not put the apparatus out themselves and in light of their maturity and capability they would be capable of stepped training to do this task well. Apparatus is adequate but does not lend itself to sufficient challenge.

106 Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is very good. Assessment procedures, a very strong staff team and a well-organised curriculum have provided an environment in which children learn very well.

107 There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and teaching is outstanding in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The organisation of the whole Foundation Stage and the very pleasant outside area have enhanced the provision. Future development should include toys, equipment and apparatus for the development of gross motor skills with a view to providing greater challenge.

## **ENGLISH**

108 Over the last few years, most children have reached very high standards in the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in reading and writing, which are well above the national average and also in comparison to similar schools. In the tests in 2001, not as many children reached the higher levels in writing but the school has worked hard to improve children's creative writing skills and the indications are that the majority of children in the present Year 2 classes will achieve very high standards in all aspects of the subject. This is a result of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the significant amount of very good teaching that children of all levels of prior attainment receive throughout the school, which enables them to achieve well.

109 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good, with a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in reading and writing. The teachers prepare and resource their lessons in an effective way and use questioning skilfully to find out what children know and can do, before they start the activities. There is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, so that all children receive a high percentage of direct teaching, which ensures that they have a good work rate. A good example of this was in a lesson for children in Year 2, in which this teamwork led to them making very good progress in learning how to create an interesting opening paragraph for a story. All teachers make effective use of the introductions and the plenary sessions to develop children's speaking skills, which are very good, and there are many opportunities for them to discuss and explain their ideas. The expertise of the teachers gives the children the confidence to take

full part in discussions, which effectively develop their communication skills. Most children are very confident when talking to others, in retelling stories and in reading and speaking in a creative and imaginative manner. As part of the work to improve the imaginative aspect of the subject, the teachers make good use of role-play and drama activities to develop children's creative skills. Most children listen attentively and this helps them to make relevant answers to the teachers' questions as well as gaining an effective understanding of the work that they are to do. The teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for them to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other children and, consequently, there is very good development of their listening skills.

110 The school is rightly proud of the very high standards that children achieve in reading, which are a result of the structured approach to the teaching of the basic skills in this aspect of English. A new reading scheme has recently been purchased to further strengthen this approach and to ensure standards are maintained. Many children show very good ability to read accurately and confidently from texts appropriate for their age and are able to use a range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics to identify the initial sound and other blends. This was evident in a guided reading session, in which Year 2 children were developing their understanding of the difference between fact and fiction books, when reading the text of 'Clothes for Every Season'. In this lesson, as in others, the teachers set tasks that were interesting and captured the children's imagination and, as a result, learning is made fun. This was also evident in a lesson for children in Year 1, when they were using the role-play area, set up as an igloo, to develop their creative skills. The children are effectively taught how to use inference from text and how to use information books to further their knowledge of topics studied. Most children know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and are confident when reading aloud in a large group. Library areas provide very stimulating environments for children to foster an enjoyment of reading, and in classrooms, there is a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books, to enable teachers to develop children's reading skills. Each classroom provides a word-rich setting, with displays in all subjects being used very effectively to challenge and develop the children's reading.

111 The school is currently placing emphasis on the development of children's imaginative writing, to further improve standards. Consequently, teachers work hard to provide opportunities for children to develop their skills of writing, at length, in a creative way. This was evident in a lesson for children in Year 2, on developing their skills in using interesting and exciting words in their stories. The success of this lesson was evident in the response of children who came up with sentences such as, 'The bats came swooping out of the darkness' as part of their opening paragraph. Many children are able to write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with simple words spelled correctly. They are able to write in a variety of formats and in a fashion that generally holds the reader's interest. Handwriting shows accurate and consistent letter formation, with the standard of presentation of written work in most subjects being good. There are times, however, when completing worksheets in science, that these standards are not maintained and work is untidy. Good use is made, by children, of ICT to word-process their stories and poems. The quality of the marking of children's work is good and effectively informs them of the next steps needed to improve their work.

112 The children's attitudes to learning and their response in lessons are very good. They are very well behaved and have good powers of concentration, which enables them to have a high work rate and produce a good amount of work. All the children show much enjoyment in the lessons, and the relationships between themselves and the teachers are very good. The children with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, make very good progress and achieve well, as a result of the effective extra support that they receive from teachers and good quality nursery nurses and classroom support assistants. There are many opportunities for children to practise and improve their literacy skills in an effective manner in other subjects. In mathematics lessons, they are able to develop these skills when reading questions, followed by discussions and explanations of their

strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. In history and geography, children record their ideas in a variety of written forms and they make accurate labelled drawings in science.

113 There is very good leadership by the co-ordinator, who has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, having devised an effective action plan to further improve provision. Planning follows the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and is very thorough, in addition to being used effectively by teachers to ensure progression and continuity of children's learning through the school. Procedures for assessing and monitoring individual children's attainment in English, and the progress that they make as they progress through the school, have been improved since the last inspection and are now very good. There are effective procedures in place to analyse the test results, to identify areas of weakness and then to set manageable targets for improvement for groups of children. The school is also effective in setting targets for improvement for individual children, to let them know what they need to do next to improve. It is obvious that the National Literacy Strategy is being carried out in a very successful way throughout the school, and is having a positive effect on the progress made and standards achieved by children. The accommodation, in terms of the library provision, is very good, and contributes significantly to children's learning. There is a wide range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books in classrooms and shared areas, for children to foster an enjoyment of reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

114 The school's 2001 national test results for seven year olds are well above average when compared to all schools nationally and above average when compared to similar schools. Evidence from the scrutiny of work from the present Year 2 children and lesson observations paint a similar picture of well above average standards. This represents good achievement when taking into account that when they began school in Reception, the majority of these children were above the standard anticipated for their age.

115 By the age of 7, children have made good progress in learning about basic number facts and operations, such as addition and subtraction, and the concept of place value, in terms of tens and units. The vast majority of children have acquired above average skills in numeracy, though a few lower attaining children still rely on fingers for calculating. Almost all children can count on in 2s, 5s and 10s and most can readily state the doubles of numbers up to 10. High attainers can competently count back in 2s from 100 to zero, and can mentally halve numbers up to 20. Most can apply effective strategies for adding or subtracting 9 or 11 from two-digit numbers and recognise odds and evens. When solving problems involving addition and subtraction, children are aware that inverse operations can be applied to check calculations. Most Year 2 children can name the solid shapes, 'cube', 'cuboid', 'cone', 'sphere', and 'pyramid', and identify their properties in terms of faces, edges and corners. Children can apply their numeracy skills in the context of other subjects, for example, when producing artwork following the styles of Picasso and Mondrian and when measuring in design and technology and science.

116 The school has been very successful in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, teaching is planned very carefully and lessons are organised in line with the recommended structure. This has contributed to the significant improvement, since the last inspection, in the quality of teaching and standards attained by the children. Teaching is now very good and results in very good learning for children. Teaching is always at least good and predominantly very good. A distinctive feature of lessons is the brisk pace of the mental starters and skilful questioning. This evokes confident responses from children and questioning is sufficiently probing to extend children's thinking and deepen their understanding.

117 Across all lessons, support staff are well informed and deployed, therefore enabling them to contribute significantly to children's learning. Lesson plenaries often reinforce children's learning, for example, when they are required to explain the strategies they have used. Teachers justifiably place high emphasis on children's acquisition of mathematical vocabulary, which, in the best practice, is reinforced through high quality displays and through frequent use of talk. Teachers also ensure that the reading of text is within the ability of children. Thus, mathematics lessons provide an appropriate context for developing and applying literacy skills.

118 In all lessons, children's behaviour and concentration are very good. Children bring enthusiasm to their learning and clearly enjoy mathematics. They respond well both to the work they are set and to the adults with whom they work. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, allied to very good relationships with children, provides a positive and supportive climate for learning. Individual needs are particularly well met. Children with special educational needs achieve well as a direct result of very good quality support. Those children who have English as an additional language, of whom none in Years 1 and 2 are at an early stage of acquisition of English, also achieve well and similarly to their peers. Those who are potentially very high attainers in Year 1 benefit from additional extension work. A predominant feature of teaching throughout the school is the high level of involvement of children through an interactive style of teaching. As a result, children listen well and co-operate fully with the adults who teach them, showing eagerness and confidence to answer questions. Opportunities are provided for children to work together, for example when collaborating in a Year 2 lesson to generate mathematical sentences, which contributes well to their personal development.

## **SCIENCE**

119 Standards are well above average. The work seen during the inspection is in line with the teachers' assessment for 2001 which judged the number of children attaining level 2 as being above average and those attaining level 3 well above average.

120 Teaching is very good. Planning is very good and lessons are very well organised. As a result, teaching is focused, it challenges the children, and lessons proceed at a very good and purposeful pace. Relationships between all adults and children are very good and very important contributory factors in the confident way that children ask and answer questions and are positive in putting forward hypotheses and predictions. Teachers use a very good range of teaching strategies. For example, in a number of very well taught lessons in Year 2 the teachers first introduced the topic to the whole class, emphasising the development of children's planning and investigation skills, predicting what outcomes are expected, recording and analysing the results etc. The classes then divided up into groups and, each working on different investigation with a classroom assistant or another adult, planned and carried out the investigation. The strategy works very well, encouraging children to engage in a high level of discussion, to put forward very sensible ideas and to plan thoroughly. Teachers and support staff clearly work at developing children's thinking skills and this is a strength. The teamwork between teachers and classroom support staff is excellent and is a very positive factor in the very good progress in children's learning.

121 As a result of very good teaching, all children, including those with special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress and learning is very good. They are fully involved in the lessons and are able to use previous knowledge and understanding in new situations. This is a strength, especially in terms of predicting what the outcome of an investigation might be.

122 Children's attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is very good. They enjoy their work and respond with interest and enthusiasm, especially when involved in experimental and investigative work. They show considerable curiosity and are keen to ask questions to further their learning. Children listen carefully, concentrate well and are appreciative of the contributions of other pupils.

123 The well qualified and experienced co-ordinator provides very good subject leadership and direction. A policy and scheme of work have been well developed. Systems for recording and assessing children's progress are well founded and are very good. Information gained from monitoring and evaluation of the children's performance is fed into future lesson planning. Children's performance in standard attainment tests is one of the main areas that the co-ordinator analyses and leads to areas of lower than expected performance being strengthened.

124 There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The experimental and investigative aspect of science is now very well developed and central to the science curriculum. However, teachers make limited use of ICT in science and this is recognised as an area for further development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

125 By the age of seven children's level of attainment is well above average. They can confidently use a wide range of media, are accurate in the use of pencils, brushes, paint, can print and use collage. One of the very good features of children's work is the systematic development of skills. A further indication of the standard of children's artwork is that the school has been awarded the John Porter prize for two consecutive years. This is a prize awarded to the winner of an art competition open to all Stalybridge primary schools.

126 Learning is very good as a direct result of the very good teaching. Children are quick to pick up and develop skills, knowledge and understanding. They listen intently to their teachers and are eager to answer questions. Many children say that they like art and they enjoy their lessons. Children of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language, are able to apply their skills in new situations.

127 Teaching is very good. The specialist teaching is very well planned with the teacher having a high level of personal skill. This clearly shows in the high level of expectation, the pace of the lesson, the challenge provided and the quality of the final pieces. Art skills are very well taught. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson where children were producing a landscape by very carefully working the foreground into the composition. In a previous lesson they had learned how to produce a painted background, mixing colours after looking at the colours used by Monet, then had made preliminary sketches of foreground features in pencil in their notebooks. This high level of work, and the development of art skills as well as knowledge and understanding, were the direct result of very good teaching over a period of time.

128 In all lessons the content is well planned, and there are very good relationships between adults and children. Teamwork between classroom support assistants and teachers is very good with support staff being fully involved in the lesson. Such teamwork enhances teaching and contributes significantly to the very good progress the children make in art.

129 Co-ordination is very good with the co-ordinator being well qualified in art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

130 Children aged seven attain standards above those expected nationally. This means that standards have been sustained since the last inspection.

131 Children's designs show an appropriate level of detail, including their choice of materials to be used. Finished products, for example, Christmas cards, animal masks and stand-up 'snowmen' have a good quality of finish. Children exercise good skill when cutting and sticking, using card, fabric, crepe paper, tissue, pipe cleaners and elastic, joined together by glue and sellotape. Some good quality animal masks included a range of materials and types of devices for holding them onto the wearer's head. Children make sensible suggestions about improving their products.

132 Due to timetable constraints, it was not possible to observe any design and technology lessons and therefore there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching and learning overall. However, on the basis of children's work on display and teachers' plans, it is evident that the National Curriculum requirements are met. It is also clear that design and technology activities are usually planned as part of work arising in other subjects. For example, the animal masks resulted from geographical work on Kenya: making of 'moving pictures' enabled children to apply scientific concepts of 'push and pull'; and the production of other masks had links with history. Such examples provide children with appropriate contexts for design and technology tasks and bring additional relevance to their work.

133 The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are frequently reinforced and applied within design and technology work. For example, when children evaluate their products they engage in speaking and listening. When making products they apply measuring skills and in the making of boxes they explore and deduce how commercially produced boxes are constructed from nets.

134 Very good and enthusiastic leadership of the subject has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. There is now a secure scheme of work from which lessons are planned that ensures knowledge, skills and understanding are systematically developed. Teachers' plans and samples of children's work are now monitored by the co-ordinator. A whole-school system for record keeping has been implemented.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

135 In both subjects, the children attain standards that are well above those expected for their age by the time that they are seven. They make very good progress in their learning.

136 The quality of teaching is very good in both subjects, with work being well matched to the needs of all children, so that all abilities are effectively challenged. There is clear explanation of the ideas to be taught and emphasis is rightly placed on children using correct historical and geographical vocabulary when answering questions and talking about their work. Good use is made of time and resources, and effective use of questioning to find out what children know and understand. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to organise and manage their classes well. In their history work, the children are helped to develop their understanding of time by listening to stories about the past and of famous people. Their previous learning is consolidated by the use of books, photographs and historical artefacts, and they are effectively taught how to use evidence to find out about the past and how things change over a period of time. This was evident in a lesson for children in Year 1, when they were looking at and discussing various items on a display on the theme of heating over the years. It is also seen in their work when they have brought in photographs of themselves at different ages and placed them in correct position on a timeline. In a lesson for children in Year 2, the teacher used a

video recording effectively to develop their understanding of the work of Florence Nightingale and the differences in conditions in hospitals in her time and now. By the time that they are seven, children have a well-developed historical vocabulary and a good knowledge and understanding of the life and times of historical characters and events, such as Guy Fawkes and the Great Fire of London.

137 The provision for geography remains a particular strength, offering opportunities, through very good links with Bradford College. Children develop a good understanding, through visits by overseas students, of life in other countries. This work with students has also helped develop children's understanding of canal regeneration in Stalybridge and, in a Pennine study, how to carry out a traffic survey of the M62 Motorway. There is very good use of topical issues to develop geographical understanding and also to consolidate the children's literacy skills. This was seen in the work of children in Year 2, when they have discussed and then written arguments for and against a second runway at Manchester Airport. In Year 1, the children make good progress in developing their mapping skills, by walking around the estate and then recording their route on a map. This use of the local area is a notable feature of work in the subject, and was seen to very good effect when children in Year 2 were taken on a walk to trace the source of a stream. In this lesson, the teacher's outstanding preparation and very good subject knowledge resulted in an exciting experience, that very successfully developed children's geographical knowledge and understanding. As in history, there is good use of artefacts to stimulate children's interest and capture their imagination in geography lessons.

138 The children's attitudes to learning in both subjects are positive and their response in lessons is very good. They are well behaved, polite and courteous and relationships are very good. Children show a great deal of interest and enjoyment in their work and handle historical and geographical artefacts and resources with care.

139 Very good leadership by an enthusiastic co-ordinator has had a very positive impact on the standards that children achieve in both subjects. There is a very good curriculum that ensures that all children have access to a wide range of historical and geographical experiences. Planning procedures have been improved since the last inspection, so that there is better continuity and progression of learning for both subjects. Resources have been also been improved and are adequate, and include a digital camera that the co-ordinator is using adeptly to create a bank of photographs for source material in geography.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

140 Children aged seven attain standards that are well above average. Even at a relatively early stage in Year 2 the vast majority can competently use a computer graphics package to create pictures, as for example, following the style of the artist Mondrian. They are able to select appropriate tools for this purpose. Higher attainers, i.e. about one-third of the children, can not only develop an image but can also modify their work as it progresses. A few higher attainers can confidently and independently retrieve and save their work within a folder, and can open and close a folder as appropriate. All children can competently print out their completed work. Such levels of attainment represent a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations for children aged seven.

141 On the basis of the few lessons seen, and taking into account the exemplars of children's work and teachers' planning, teaching and learning are judged to be very good. The teaching of appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding is securely based on a scheme of work, thus ensuring that lessons successfully build upon prior attainment. Lessons are planned very well and thoroughly organised.

Children are informed about the intended learning outcomes, behave well, and are keen to learn new techniques.

142 One excellent lesson was characterised by: excellent relationships; a clear introduction that recapped prior learning; skilful open-ended questioning of the whole class whilst the teacher demonstrated on the interactive whiteboard; excellent pace and challenge; and teaching that capitalised on children's own knowledge by asking them to explain to the rest of the class. The combined effect of these attributes was that children made very good gains in learning to use a graphics package. In response to these opportunities, children's behaviour, interest and concentration were of an exemplary standard.

143 In all lessons, the classroom assistant worked in tandem with the teacher and made a very good contribution to children's learning. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants have shown great commitment to developing their own level of ICT expertise in order to teach the subject effectively.

144 Very good and enthusiastic leadership has contributed to the outstanding level of improvement that has been made in the subject since the previous inspection. All of the areas for improvement, identified in the previous inspection report, have been fully addressed. The development of the ICT suite is a major factor that has impacted on provision and children's attainment in the subject. Governors' targeted funding and PTA contributions have been used most effectively in providing what is now a very good resource. Further developments are planned to extend this provision within classrooms, which, together with more training for staff, should enable greater use to be made of the ICT suite and classroom based equipment, in supporting learning across other curriculum subjects.

## **MUSIC**

145 As there was a limited amount of first hand observation of music in Key Stage 1, it was not possible to assess attainment of seven year olds. However, observation in reception classes and Year 1 provides evidence that attainment in music is above national expectation and is likely to remain so by the end of Year 2. All groups, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.

146 Teaching is good and is underpinned by very good planning and relationships. In a Year 1 lesson, there was a brisk teaching pace that ensured all children remained on task and were focused on the music they listened to. The teacher discussed her choice of music and how she had arrived at her choice. The children were asked to record the images that they heard within four different pieces chosen to depict different types of weather. Children were given background information about each piece. There was impressive handling of personal development. For example, in asking a child whether he would consider exchanging the cymbals for another child to play, the teacher told the child he had a choice and allowed time without pressure for him to consider that choice. Children handle instruments well; the teacher's piano playing and support from the unqualified teacher help children to retain timing and rhythms. They can follow symbols for clapping and instrumental parts.

147 Music is played in assembly and children know about the composers. Children sing enthusiastically and tunefully and know the words well.

148 Music for movement is carefully chosen and provides a lively stimulus. Children respond enthusiastically. In one dance lesson in Year 1 children readily clapped in rhythm and maintained a beat whilst moving their hands or clicking fingers at various levels.

149 Co-ordination of the subject is very good. Resources are good and several staff play the piano thus providing a valued resource to the school. The co-ordinator and the link governor have monitored standards and there is increased confidence in staff, who are well supported by the scheme and co-ordinator. Future developments are to include stronger cross-curricular links with drama and training for the monitoring of teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

150 During the inspection it was not possible to observe any Year 2 physical education lessons and therefore secure judgements cannot be made about the standards attained by seven year olds. However, on the limited basis of two outstanding dance lessons involving Year 1 children it is clear that these younger children are already performing in dance at a level that is well above that expected of Year 1 children and even above the level expected nationally of Year 2 children.

151 In these two lessons, excellent teaching resulted in all children making very good gains in learning. The teacher's high level of personal expertise served to inspire the children. Her excellent personal example and perceptive teaching points, allied to appropriate use of children's demonstrations, produced very good learning outcomes. Children showed exceptional skill in holding stillness and when skipping and marching in time. They listened well and responded sensitively to the mood created by the teacher's well-chosen musical stimuli. When the teacher invited them to evaluate the performance of their peers they did so with mature comments that belied their age. Such practice provides an appropriate context for children to apply their speaking and listening skills. Throughout both lessons, children were constantly challenged to perform to their highest possible standard. In response, they sustained high levels of involvement and enthusiasm, behaving in exemplary fashion. The lesson concluded with the teacher reading prose related to melting snow, continuing the theme established earlier, thus providing an appropriate link with literacy.

152 In both lessons, the teacher's very good management of children, including some whose behaviour was potentially challenging, enabled the brisk pace of learning to continue unhindered. The context of the lessons provided very good contributions to children's social and cultural development.

153 Very good and highly enthusiastic leadership of the subject has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection, such that the weaknesses identified then have been eradicated. There are now schemes of work for dance, gymnastics and games that provide a secure basis for all teachers to plan for systematic development of skills and for recording children's progress. Staff have also received training to improve their expertise. All these measures have contributed to improved provision in the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

154 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are above expectations. Children in Year 1 remember all the names of the disciples of Jesus, some time after they were taught, and they remember details of the disciples' lives. Children in Year 2 write their own Jewish blessing, considering reasons behind their choices and developing writing to include complex sentences. All groups make good progress.

155 Children have most knowledge of Christianity but also learn about Judaism, Hinduism and Islam in varying depths. They also make use of visitors to learn of other cultures and religions, such as the Chinese New Year. Children visit churches and Year 1 children, using word processing skills, annotate photographs. Family members from other religions such as Judaism happily come into school

to help deliver lessons about aspects of their religions. Most work is appropriate to age groups and understanding. Much of the work is practical and written work is closely linked to basic skills. Creative writing development was seen in Year 2 and in light of good reading standards and maturity of the children, more independent and creative writing could be further extended into Year 1. Learning relates to their own lives and is mostly well presented.

156 In Years 1 and 2, religious education is always taught by the co-ordinator, who therefore has a clear knowledge of the progress of children throughout school.

157 Teaching is good overall. There is good use of resources and relationships are also good. Work is usually well planned but does not always challenge all children in Year 1. Pace of lessons should be quicker to maintain the interest of all the children and challenging activities set for higher attaining children. There are very good links to literacy and basic skills are reinforced. In a Year 2 lesson the children are guided in their writing and they are encouraged to develop creative thinking.

158 Co-ordination is very good and the scheme of work is in the process of being re-written. Assessment is continuous and mostly verbal. Level descriptors are used and there is assessment of Year 2 children part way through the year. The value placed on the subject is reflected in the school's organisation of specialist teaching and the time allocation as a discrete subject.