

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILD BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Demesne Drive, Stalybridge

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106194

Headteacher: Mrs H Good

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris  
23696

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 198093

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Demesne Drive Stalybridge Tameside
Postcode:	SK15 2PG
Telephone number:	(0161) 303 7404
Fax number:	(0161) 304 7699
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Peet
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> October 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13981	Mr T Morgan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29504	Mrs A S Herring	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Religious education Equal opportunities	
21876	Mr A Giquel	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wild Bank Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Stalybridge. There is an Early Years Centre on the same site. This is a social services facility, which also houses the school nursery class. Forty-nine children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis and they move on to several primary schools, including Wild Bank. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, particularly in the afternoon group, which predominantly feeds the Reception class. There are 12 children in the Reception Year. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 are in mixed age groups formed on ability. There are 59 boys and 51 girls in Years 1 to 6. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and this is below average. However, there are well above average percentages of pupils with special educational needs (42 per cent), with statements of special educational needs (5.7 per cent) and eligible for free school meals (64 per cent). These figures are higher than in the previous five years in the school and the highest in the local education authority. The school has recently made use of social regeneration funding to set up a breakfast club.

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

This is a good school, which has consistently improved since 1997 and is well placed to continue to do so. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in relation to their needs and abilities. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good, with the very good leadership by the headteacher having a major impact on the work of the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities, particularly those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, particularly in the Foundation Stage, where the children get a good start to their education. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership and direction for the work of the school. Staff with responsibilities make a good contribution to management.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good.
- The good procedures to assess the pupils' knowledge and skills have a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs.

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

- Standards are not consistently high enough across the curriculum but particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 1999, when it was judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education and no longer requiring special measures. Improvement in the past two and a half years has been good and the school is well placed to maintain and build on what has been achieved in that time. There have been steady improvements in standards in English and mathematics and good improvements in ICT, although these have only been very recent. There have been good improvements in assessment procedures and individual target setting. The role of subject co-ordinator has been developed well.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	D	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	C	D	B	
science	B	A	C	A	

Nearly all pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities, particularly the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The performance of 11 year-olds in national tests is good in comparison with that of pupils in similar schools. The performance of 11 year-olds has improved over the past five years at a greater rate than that recorded nationally. These two measures, in particular, demonstrate the school's effectiveness. At the time of the inspection, pupils between seven and 11 years of age, particularly those in Year 6, were achieving satisfactorily and occasionally well in English and well in mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are improving rapidly. However, many pupils are still not achieving as well as they should across all aspects of the subject, because some significant developments, in resources and staff training, have only very recently begun to have a positive impact.

The current Year 2 group is so small that a statistical analysis of their performance is not valid and over half of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs. The school has used available funding to organise separate teaching groups in the mornings for pupils in Years 1 and 2, with the aim of addressing their needs more effectively. This is a good strategy, but at present it is not totally effective in meeting the needs of the more able children in Year 2, who are not achieving enough.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception. However, their attainment remains below expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage, in all of the areas of learning except physical development, because they start school at a very low level.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have good attitudes to school and are, in most cases, interested and involved in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall in lessons and at other times. Some pupils present challenging behaviour, particularly in Year 2 and these are generally managed well by the staff.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility, such as joining the pupil council or helping in the dining hall. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Relationships among pupils are satisfactory overall.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality have improved because the school has very good procedures to promote attendance. However, attendance remains below average because some parents do not understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1 and Year 6. The teaching of English and the key skills of literacy are good. The teaching of mathematics and the key skills of numeracy are good over time and were satisfactory in the lessons seen. There is substantial evidence of good practice in pupils' books, particularly the quality of marking and homework is used well. Recent staff training and improvements in resources have resulted in marked improvements in the teaching of ICT, so that pupils are now learning well.

Pupils generally work hard and sustain interest and concentration in lessons. However, many of them tend not to take enough care over the presentation of their work and make basic mistakes in spelling, even when they are copying words from a book, or in mathematical problems.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of learning experiences and opportunities in the Nursery and Reception and a satisfactory curriculum in Years 1 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school has very good arrangements for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and for planning to help them improve. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and improving, with a current emphasis on citizenship and healthy living.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school. There are good policies and procedures for pupils' health, safety, welfare and personal development. The arrangements to assess what pupils know, understand and can do are good and, across all subjects, are better than in many primary schools. For example, two children in Reception identified as being more able than their peers in mathematics are taught from the Year 1 programmes of study.

The school has effective links with parents, but they do not involve themselves enough in the life of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher has established herself as a very strong leader over the past two years. She is benefiting from the good support of a very new deputy headteacher and the more established subject co-ordinators. There is a good sense of teamwork and common purpose among the staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have been too reliant on guidance from the headteacher and local education authority in the past. However, they have a satisfactory understanding of their role and the nature of the school and are well placed to improve their contribution to the life of the school with some active new members.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carefully analyses available information to compare its performance with that of all schools, similar schools and other schools in the local education authority. There are good arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and good opportunities for staff development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of specific grants and funding. Staff make good use of the accommodation and available resources. The use of new technology is good in administration, assessment and display and it is improving in the classroom.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate overall. However, the open-plan arrangement and the size of rooms in the main building create considerable difficulties for the classroom staff. The children in Reception do not get enough opportunities to use large play equipment outside. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Parents responses were predominantly positive with the following statements scoring extremely highly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and problems.</li> <li>• Their child likes school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their child become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>	<p>A small number of parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. The teachers set and mark homework well, but parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities, particularly the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The performance of 11 year-olds in the national tests in English, mathematics and science is good in comparison with that of pupils in similar schools. The performance of 11 year-olds has improved over the past five years at a greater rate than that recorded nationally. These two measures are particularly significant and demonstrate the school's effectiveness. However, in the results of the national tests of 11 year-olds in 2001, pupils were performing at well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science and they are at similar levels this year. The results obtained by seven year-olds in 2001 were below average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics.
2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress over time. Many pupils make good progress in a good range of subjects. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection in 1999. This is because the overall quality of teaching is good, leadership is very good and the school has paid good attention to the needs of different groups of pupils. This is in part achieved through the grouping of pupils into mixed-age classes based on ability and teachers planning well for the different groups in their class. It also arises from the surveys of adults' and pupils' views carried out using questionnaires from the national Index for Inclusion. The school has used this information to identify 12 successes and ten areas for improvement in its work. These findings have been taken into consideration in drawing up and carrying out the developments contained in the current school improvement plan, particularly those priorities relating to raising standards and improving teaching.
3. At the time of the inspection, pupils between seven and 11 years of age, particularly those in Year 6, were achieving satisfactorily and occasionally well in English and well in mathematics and science. The school sets agreed targets with the local education authority for the pupils' performance in English and mathematics at seven and 11 years of age. These were achieved at both ages in 2000 and for seven year-olds in 2001. Although the results achieved by 11 year-olds in 2001 did not reach the agreed targets they did exceed the teachers' assessments. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed the arrangements for assessing individual progress so that they are now good. This information is used well to set pupils challenging individual targets. It was noted that these targets are pasted into the front of some pupils' books and this is good practice. In particular, pupils with special educational needs have clear targets, particularly for literacy and numeracy, in their individual education plans. Examples were seen of pupils having been involved in the setting of these targets and this is very good practice.
4. In spite of this inspection's positive judgements about pupils' achievements in the core subjects there is still room for improvement. Many of the younger pupils in the school have below average and sometimes well below average abilities in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and mental and written mathematical calculation. Pupils throughout the school do not pay enough attention to these aspects of their work. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were asked to find and copy ten verbs from their reading books. Although most of the pupils did write ten words, mostly verbs, during the allocated time, many of these words were spelt incorrectly. Consequently, shortcomings remain even among the most able pupils who, for example, have very good knowledge and understanding in science but do not lay out their work in a well-ordered way or write as neatly as could be reasonably expected of them.
5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly and pupils are making significant gains in the lessons in the new ICT suite. However, many pupils are still not achieving as well as they should across all aspects of the subject. This is because some significant developments, particularly in resources and staff training, have only very recently begun to have a positive impact and the available computers in the classrooms are not being used frequently enough.
6. The current Year 2 group is so small that a statistical analysis of their performance is not valid and over half of them are on the register of special educational needs. The school has used available funding to organise separate teaching groups in the mornings for pupils in Years 1 and 2, with the aim of addressing their needs more effectively.

This is a good strategy based on sound reasoning and looking to use funding effectively. However, it is not totally effective at present in meeting the needs of the more able children in Year 2, who are not achieving well enough. The two part-time teachers and support staff, who work with this group in the mornings, are largely successful in managing those pupils who present challenging behaviour and enabling them to learn satisfactorily or well in most lessons. However, this is at the expense of the more able pupils, who are not sufficiently challenged in their work. Pupils in Year 1 are achieving well and sometimes very well because of the consistently good teaching they receive and the way they respond.

7. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception. However, their attainment remains below expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage in all of the areas of learning except physical development, where it is broadly in line with expectations. Achievement in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development are appropriately given a high priority and all of the children make good progress. However, they are not achieving as well in creative development as they are in the other areas of learning.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their personal development are good. This is further evidence of the improvement reported in the last inspection.
9. Throughout all classes, most pupils have a positive approach to learning and enjoy being in school. Almost all parents say that their children like coming to school. Levels of concentration are variable, with some pupils finding it difficult to listen to their teacher for more than a few minutes unless their interest is really aroused. When fully involved, pupils show enthusiasm, are eager to answer questions and accept that others may have a different point of view. Almost all respond well to challenge and persevere when they find things difficult, learning from their mistakes. Most pupils are keen to show their work and the majority are able to explain what they are doing, although some do not have sufficient vocabulary to do this quickly and clearly.
10. Parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour and inspection judgements support their views. There are a number of pupils with challenging behaviour, but they generally respond well to the staff's emphasis on praising positive aspects and usually do not cause disruption to the progress of lessons. All pupils are well aware of the standards expected of them. They appreciate the rewards for good behaviour and understand the escalating system of sanctions. In most classes, pupils are polite to staff and visitors and usually to each other. When instances of unacceptable behaviour occur in the classrooms, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There is some harassment, such as name-calling and there are some unfriendly actions, such as pushing, but pupils know what to do when they encounter any and the staff respond appropriately. Three boys were excluded for fixed periods last year.
11. Relationships are good throughout the school. The teaching and support staff are good role models and make every effort to form positive, helpful relationships with all pupils. There are some close friendships between pupils in classes and, in the extra-curricular clubs and sports teams, boys and girls and pupils of different ages mix amicably. Some older pupils play games with the younger ones in the playground at lunchtimes. Pupils co-operate well in pairs when working in class, for example in ICT lessons and collaborate effectively when required to engage in group or whole-class activities. They show an interest in what other pupils are achieving and appreciate the efforts of those less able than themselves.
12. The personal development of pupils is good. Almost all parents say that the school is successful in encouraging their children to become mature and responsible. The opportunities for taking responsibility given in all classes, such as taking the register to the administration desk and setting out tables for lessons, are eagerly sought and effectively discharged. Pupils of all ages act as litter monitors for the whole school and there is a pupil council with representatives from each year. The council is consulted regularly by the headteacher and she presents pupils' views to the staff. When asked what they enjoyed about being on the council, pupils' replies included, "You can help people", "We make school a better place" and "We can be relied on." Some Year 6 pupils sit at the school reception desk and control entry at the front door during lunchtime when the administration staff have other duties.

13. Attendance has improved in the current year as a result of sustained efforts by the staff and the Education Welfare Officer to convince all parents that every day missed from school has an adverse effect on their children's education. However, attendance is still below the national average and sickness is the main reason given for keeping a child away. Registration is done efficiently and registers are completed in accordance with legal requirements. There are a few persistent latecomers, but punctuality is generally good enabling lessons to start on time and having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

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

14. Teaching is good overall throughout the school. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage, in Year 1 and in Year 6, and there are no significant variations between key stages, year groups or classes. Fifty-one lessons were observed during the inspection. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory in a quarter of the lessons, good in over half of the lessons and very good in more than a tenth of the lessons. All of the three lessons judged to be unsatisfactory were taken by temporary, part-time or visiting staff.
15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good, with some very good teaching seen in the Nursery. The teachers and qualified support staff are fully conversant with the national guidelines for children in nurseries and reception classes. They plan well, giving appropriate emphasis to communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. In the Nursery, there are very good opportunities for the children to learn through imaginative play and the exploration and experience of a wide range of materials and activities, including daily sessions outdoors using large play equipment. Consequently, although many of the children start school with very low-level language skills, they learn well. The children in the Reception Year also learn well because of the quality of the teaching. However, in Reception, these opportunities are sometimes compromised by the lack of outdoor facilities and the location of the buildings and by the organisation of the timetable around National Curriculum subjects for the Year 1 pupils in the class.
16. The teaching of English and the key skills of literacy are good. The school has fully adopted the National Literacy Strategy and this term has introduced additional short sessions of guided reading. The teaching of mathematics and the key skills of numeracy are judged to be good over time when evidence from pupils' books, particularly the quality of marking and the use of homework, are considered alongside the lessons seen, which were satisfactory overall.
17. Recent staff training and improvements in resources have resulted in marked improvements in the teaching of ICT. As a result pupils are now learning well through good lessons for all classes every week in the well-equipped ICT suite. Pupils are making good gains in basic computer skills, such as using the keyboard and mouse, saving and printing out their work and accessing and closing down different software programmes. However, this good work is not yet being consistently supplemented by effective use of classroom computers. Some good examples were seen, such as the use of light sensors in a Year 6 science lesson and CD-ROM in Year 6 geography, but this is not happening often enough.
18. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects where there is sufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement. This includes personal, social and health education, in which three good lessons were seen where the pupils' skills of turn-taking and personal qualities such as appreciation of others and self-esteem were effectively developed. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen in physical education and one was seen in music. This was mainly because of weaknesses in planning and pupil management. As a result, pupils were not clear about what the teachers wanted them to learn, some pupils became very restless and little learning took place. However, there are no major concerns about the teaching of these subjects overall.
19. There are some aspects of teaching which are consistently good and are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. These are:
  - the quality of planning for individual lessons across all subjects;
  - the quality of marking, which is carried out in accordance with the school policy, even by temporary teachers;
  - the relationships between classroom staff and pupils; and
  - the management of pupils who present challenging behaviour.

20. Pupils generally work hard and sustain interest and concentration in lessons. Most pupils complete a good amount of work in most lessons. However, many of them tend not to take enough care over the presentation of their work and make basic mistakes in spelling, even when they are copying words from a book, or in mathematics problems. Occasionally, some more able pupils are not given work that is sufficiently challenging and less able pupils do not do enough written work. Overall, however, all pupils are given tasks that are well matched to their needs and abilities and they work well. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' needs and gives very careful consideration to the formation of mixed-age classes based on ability and specific provision for particular groups of pupils.
21. Some pupils, notably in Year 2, present challenging behaviour and others, scattered through the school, lack clear motivation and interest in some lessons. In most cases, teachers manage unacceptable and disruptive behaviour well so that it has little or no effect on the learning of others. Teachers are less skilled at noticing pupils who are not fully 'switched on' in lessons. It is reasonable to assume that the attention and concentration of some pupils have improved since the introduction of the Breakfast Club, which provides those pupils with a good start to the day.
22. Classroom support staff make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. They are, in the main, experienced and able members of the staff team. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has introduced the use of books in which teachers plan the work of the support staff. The deputy headteacher acknowledges that this places an additional administrative burden on the teachers but states that it is providing a clearer focus to the work of the support staff. At the time of the inspection, teachers were using these books willingly, diligently and to good effect.
23. The school has taken steps to try to minimise the adverse effects of the open-plan nature of the main building and the housing of the Nursery and Reception classes in separate buildings. For example, a sliding door has been erected to divide the Year 1 and Year 2 teaching area so that these groups can be taught separately. The class for Years 4 and 5 uses a separate room for whole-class discussions. Nevertheless, at times the accommodation does have a negative impact on the pupils' learning. For example, children in Reception do not have sufficient access to large outdoor play equipment. The classroom for Years 5 and 6 is a particularly difficult space for the teacher to manage. During a science lesson, the pupils in this class successfully carried out three different tasks and the teacher used the available spaces and resources to good effect. Nevertheless, the cramped working conditions are far from ideal.
24. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend pupils' learning throughout the school. There is a homework display board outside the Nursery. There is a steady build up of homework from year to year and most teachers set it consistently in their class. All pupils in Year 6 have separate homework folders, which contain several pieces of English and mathematics work set weekly and a range of occasional work in other subjects, notably science. There is considerable evidence, particularly from the examination of pupils' home-school reading record books, that many parents do not provide sufficient support for their children's learning at home.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception Year are good. These opportunities, together with good teaching, give children a strong start to their education and result in them making good progress in their learning. The schemes of work in both the Nursery and Reception are used to good effect, which ensures that all areas of learning are covered well, except for creative development, which is satisfactory but is not as fully developed as it should be. In the mixed reception and Year 1 class, the timetable is based on the National Curriculum subjects. The whole class doing the same subject at the same time is not always appropriate to the needs and stages of development of the young children in the Reception Year. This especially restricts their access to water play, painting and other creative activities.
26. A satisfactory range of learning opportunities is provided for pupils in Years 1 to 6. An appropriate emphasis is given to English and literacy in particular, with mathematics and science also given a high priority. The time allocation for other subjects is reasonable and is used satisfactorily by alternating some subjects, such as art and design with design and technology. There have been considerable recent improvements in the provision for ICT. Regular lessons in the new computer suite allow pupils to develop basic skills in the use of computers much more quickly.

These improvements mean that pupils in Years 1 to 6 are now making rapid progress. The additional computers around the school now mean that there is an increasing use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum, although this does not happen often enough. Most classes have a single physical education lesson lasting an hour, including time for getting changed. Pupils, particularly the younger ones, would benefit from having two shorter physical education lessons each week rather than one long one.

27. There are appropriate schemes of work for all subjects, which are based on national guidance and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. These schemes and the teachers' assessments of the pupils are used to plan the pupils' work in each subject. Subject co-ordinators check that these plans are translated into appropriate activities by looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. There is an ongoing programme of monitoring class lessons to evaluate teaching and learning.
28. The school's strategy for literacy is based on the National Literacy Strategy and is good overall. There are, however, indications from pupils' reading record books that not all of them are getting sufficient practice in reading. This is having an adverse effect on their progress and not all are achieving as well as they should. Classes are organised for Year 6 pupils on Saturday mornings in order to boost their literacy skills. This year's booster classes had only been running for two weeks at the time of the inspection and attendance had dropped from 19 to 11 pupils. When attendance is good, this provision has a positive effect on pupils' achievements, particularly those whose attainment is only just below where it should be.
29. The school's use of the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics is having a good effect and is improving pupils' attainment and progress. Numeracy lessons are an hour long and, in addition to these, numeracy skills are developed in some other subjects of the National Curriculum such as science and ICT.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils are given the same curricular opportunities as others. Very good use is made of support staff to ensure that pupils are able to participate in all activities. One pupil in a literacy lesson, for example, was reluctant to join the other pupils and was being very difficult. The teaching assistant sensitively dealt with the pupil and successfully encouraged him to sit down and listen. Very clear procedures are in place for identifying pupils' needs and good individual educational plans are drawn up. These contain well-defined targets identifying what the pupil needs to improve and good strategies for staff to follow. The school's procedures have been modified to take full account of the new national code of practice.
31. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include French, book making, art activities and a range of sports clubs organised by a specialist coach in six-week blocks. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit various sporting events, including local football and ice hockey matches. Homework is set each week in Years 3 to 6 for English, mathematics and other subjects, notably science. There is an after-school club aimed specifically at helping those pupils who have a poor record of completing these tasks at home. All examples of homework viewed during the inspection had been marked well by their teachers and most had been completed by the pupils.
32. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. This is a rapidly improving area of the curriculum, with an emphasis this year on developing work on citizenship and includes appropriate arrangements for sex and drugs education. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of situations. They are able to develop an understanding of citizenship through discussions about rules and the taking on of responsibilities. They were encouraged during the week of the inspection to feel proud of themselves and others within the school community. The pupil council works well and provides pupils with further opportunities to develop an understanding of citizenship.
33. The majority of pupils transfer to Copley High School for their secondary education. Links with the secondary school to ensure continuity of provision are satisfactory. Pupils' records are passed on and a visit is made to the school by secondary staff to enable teachers to discuss the pupils that are about to transfer. A day visit to the secondary school is arranged for all pupils about to leave. There are very good links with the staff in the science department, who visit the school in the summer term to teach a couple of lessons. The work done in these lessons, together with further follow up work, goes with the pupils to the secondary school and is completed there.

34. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. This is mainly through whole-school and class assemblies and acts of collective worship. These are at least satisfactory and sometimes they are good. When pupils enter the hall, well-chosen music and burning candles help to set a reflective tone and create an appropriate atmosphere. Pupils sit quietly and generally participate well by answering questions and singing when they are required to do so. It was particularly impressive, during the inspection, when pupils joined in the singing of a hymn. Pupils are given opportunities for reflection and meditation, but the time allowed is not always sufficient. There are increasing opportunities for spiritual development outside these assemblies, particularly in religious education and 'Circle Time' (where pupils sit in a circle and discuss matters of concern or interest), but also in other lessons. A good contribution to pupils' spiritual development was seen during the inspection in an ICT lesson, when pupils reacted to all the computers playing music simultaneously with a spontaneous, "Wow!"
35. Provision for moral development is good, with staff consistently providing good role models. The principles that distinguish right from wrong are promoted well. Pupils are clear about class and school rules. There are constant positive reminders from teachers and other adults. Notices around the school not only remind pupils of the 'Golden Rules' but also emphasise good behaviour and the care of others. The 'Golden Goal' display in the hall includes, for example, "to say sorry if you hurt or upset someone." Behaviour in lessons is almost always at least satisfactory and is often good. Good behaviour is recognised by the teachers in a very positive way. They praise pupils when they have behaved well and reward that good behaviour with stickers and merit awards. This is followed up in assemblies, including the awarding of a 'Kindness Cup'. Those pupils who do present difficult or challenging behaviour are managed well.
36. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop socially and to increase their understanding of living in a community. All pupils are encouraged to work well together and help each other. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, helped each other to fasten their aprons in a design and technology lesson. Pupils have many opportunities to be helpful around the school and are keen to offer their assistance. Opportunities include taking registers to the office, operating the music centre and projector in the hall and clearing plates at lunchtime. The use of the 'special day' for selected pupils is a particularly successful aspect of the moral and social provision. The writing of a card, putting together all of the positive things that the class says about a pupil, is not only a very good contribution to that pupil's self esteem, but also very good social awareness raising for the rest of the pupils. Contributions to one pupil's card ("You are special because...") included, "he's a best friend to be with", "if you need something doing you can always turn to him" and, "he's kind".
37. There is satisfactory provision for pupils to appreciate their own and other cultural traditions. Opportunities for cultural development have been provided through assemblies and activities in religious education, geography and history. Tours around the local estate to distribute harvest festival produce to elderly people, with a school banner at the front, have been very successful. This encourages an awareness of the needs of others in the local community. Visitors to the school and visits away from the school linked to sports and other events have also contributed to the awareness of the wider community. Opportunities for pupils to develop an appropriate multicultural understanding are growing and include displays around the school celebrating different religions, books that show a pluralist society and art work, such as the African masks on display in the hall. There have been exciting visitors since the appointment of the new headteacher, including musicians who wore costumes and played instruments from the Tudor period and an African dance group. However, opportunities are being missed to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of the world at large, particularly in ICT and art and design.

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

38. The safe, supportive and caring environment provided for the pupils is a strength of the school. The staff know them well and there is evident concern for their welfare and development. During lunchtime and other breaks, as well as in the classrooms, pupils are supervised sensitively and effectively. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' feeling of security and their enjoyment of school life, which has a substantial effect on their attainment and progress.

39. There are good procedures for the introduction of children into the Nursery and Reception class, with parents being involved appropriately. Teachers and classroom assistants know the pupils in their own class very well and strive constantly to create an environment in which each child feels valued. Particularly noteworthy is the care provided by the Breakfast Club, where, for a small payment, a number of pupils are given cereals and toast every morning. Good procedures for the monitoring of personal development are based on class teachers' detailed knowledge of their own pupils and formal records that are completed at the end of each term. Much appreciated by the pupils are the various ways in which their personal development is recognised, such as the 'Kindness Cup' awarded each week and the selection of one pupil from each class who is treated as a VIP for a 'special day'.
40. Procedures for child protection are good and are regularly brought to the attention of classroom staff. The health and safety policy is satisfactory, as are the procedures for first aid and emergency evacuation and the routine servicing of fire, portable electrical and physical education equipment. The site supervisor is very conscientious in checking and reporting any health and safety hazards and a recent staff training day included a session on risk assessment. There are good links with a range of education, welfare and health professionals.
41. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The office staff check registers immediately they are returned from classes and telephone calls are made to chase up any unexplained absences. A detailed analysis of attendance is carried out weekly. Parents are regularly reminded that every day away from school has an adverse effect on their children's learning and taking holidays in term time is strongly discouraged. The promise of a ride in a limousine to Stamford Park and lunch at McDonald's for any pupil who has no late marks or unavoidable absence in the year is inspired and is proving a great motivator. The Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school every Friday, makes an important contribution to the promotion of good attendance and is full of praise for the efforts the school is making to improve attendance.
42. There are good procedures for the monitoring of discipline and encouraging positive behaviour. The behaviour policy is backed up by school and class rules that are clearly displayed and consistently applied. In personal, social and health education lessons and in assemblies, pupils are frequently encouraged to think about their actions and the effect of unacceptable behaviour on others. Good behaviour is acknowledged by a cumulative scheme of rewards and there is an appropriate, escalating system of sanctions. There are effective procedures for dealing with any harassment or bullying and staff have been given clear guidelines on the use of restraint. The headteacher keeps detailed records of any incidents or concerns about an individual pupil's conduct and consults with parents to determine a way forward.
43. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Results of statutory tests are analysed rigorously and used well to set whole-school targets and to make adjustments to the curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when assessment procedures were said to be, "at an early stage of development and lacking rigour". There are good procedures in the Foundation Stage. Careful observation of children working, with adults making written notes of significant achievements and difficulties, is common practice in the Nursery. In specific assessment activities, the teacher carefully annotates the children's work to track their progress along the nationally recommended 'Stepping Stones'. Information arising from baseline assessment is used well in Reception to set children tasks according to their level of understanding. Two children identified as having particular ability in mathematics are set work from the Year 1 programme of study.
44. In Years 1 to 6, there are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics, including additional tests in reading as well as the statutory and optional tests from Year 2 on. Clear and accessible records are used to check the progress of groups and individuals. The results are also used to determine teaching groups for literacy and numeracy and to allocate pupils to the mixed-age classes. Following the drop in the Year 6 results last year, the school has targeted mathematics as an area for development this year and teachers' performance management targets have been related to specific work in this core subject. Analysis showed that pupils did not readily understand the language used in the mental mathematics test and so there has been an increased focus on this aspect.
45. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in science and the non-core subjects are better than in many other primary schools. Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic and the work is graded according to National Curriculum levels. The information is collated by the subject co-ordinators so that progress can be monitored and is also used to inform the reports to parents. There are portfolios of pupils' work in most subjects, with examples of work at each level to help teachers to record progress and plan what the pupils will learn next.

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

46. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents have very positive views of the school. The quality of information provided for them is satisfactory. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contributions to their children's learning at school and at home are unsatisfactory.
47. Seven parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 31 per cent of the questionnaires were returned. Almost all parents expressed views that support what the school is doing. Parents spoken to during the inspection affirmed these positive statements, with a very large majority of parents saying that:
- their children like school;
  - their children make good progress both academically and in personal development;
  - behaviour is good;
  - teaching is good with high expectations;
  - the school is well led and managed; and
  - they are kept well informed by staff, who work closely with them and deal with their questions and problems appropriately.

Inspection evidence endorses these positive views.

48. A small number of parents are concerned about homework. The inspection judgement is that teachers use homework well to reinforce pupils' learning, but that many parents do not ensure that their children complete the work set, or respond to teachers' requests in the home-school partnership books for the return of homework.
49. Staff make considerable efforts to involve parents in the work of the school. Teachers are available to be seen by parents at the beginning and end of the day and the headteacher goes to great lengths to try to be available whenever parents want to speak to her. Parents are quickly contacted if there are concerns about their children. Despite repeated requests in newsletters, very few parents come in regularly to help alongside teachers in classrooms. Reading with their children in the evening is not a strong feature and comments in the home-school partnership books are sparse. The numbers attending the parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms are increasing but are still well below what could reasonably be hoped for. The annual governors' meeting for parents, held this year during an 'open afternoon', attracted no parents other than those serving on the governing body. However, the family assemblies and Christmas and harvest festivities are very well supported. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved with the work of the school, but the response is disappointing.
50. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters and other correspondence from the staff are sent out frequently and are written in a clear, friendly style. Parents are told the topics to be studied and any projects for each class at the start of the term. The school prospectus is very detailed but is not easy reading. Some good booklets have been produced for parents, including one on how to use routine tasks at home, such as cooking, to engage their children in numeracy activities. Annual pupil reports are unsatisfactory in that ticks in a grid of subjects against general progress descriptors do not fulfil the requirement for a separate comment on each subject and do not give parents sufficient information. However, the statements made about pupils' progress in the core subjects and under the heading 'general comments' are individualised and do indicate what the pupil needs to do next.

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

51. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has played a major role in the considerable improvements in the school's provision since the last inspection. She is benefiting from the good support of a very new deputy headteacher and the more established subject co-ordinators, who make a significant contribution to the management of teaching, curriculum and resources. The provision for pupils with special educational need is particularly well managed and organised. There is a good sense of teamwork and common purpose among the staff. Many staff, including temporary and part-time teachers, demonstrated a strong commitment to school improvement during the inspection week. Having the nursery teacher responsible for the Foundation Stage and as mathematics co-ordinator is not a fully effective example of staff deployment, especially as she is based in a separate building.

52. The school has clear aims and an ambitious 'vision' statement. These are evident in the daily life of the school, which is clearly about developing all aspects of each child, not just raising academic standards. The school improvement plan is an effective tool for the management of change and identifies appropriate priorities, which often coincide with those aspects of the school's work that this inspection judges to be most in need of improvement.
53. The contribution of the governing body is satisfactory. The governors have been too reliant on guidance from the headteacher and local education authority in the past. However, they have a satisfactory understanding of their role and the nature of the school and are well placed to improve their contribution to the life of the school. There are several governors who have only been involved in the school for a short period of time and who show a determination to become actively involved.
54. The school has good procedures for self-evaluation and is developing these with considerable enthusiasm. The school carefully analyses available information to compare its performance with that of all schools, similar schools and other schools in the local education authority. There are good arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and good opportunities for staff development. All subject co-ordinators have good opportunities to carry out their role through an ongoing programme of release from the classroom, including observing colleagues teach. In these ways and in the careful use of available finance, the school applies the principles of best value well.
55. A particular feature of the school is the consideration that has been given to social and educational inclusion. Surveys have been carried out to elicit the views of all the adults in the school (staff and governors) and pupils. Key aspects of what the school does well and what could be improved have been identified using questionnaires based on the nationally recognised 'Index for Inclusion'. The school has received awards from the Basic Skills Agency and is working towards recognition as an Eco-School.
56. The school makes good use of specific grants and funding. Standards funds are used effectively in accordance with the stated purposes. The school has recently used social regeneration funding to set up a Breakfast Club. The use of new technology is good in administration, assessment and display and improving in the classroom.
57. Staffing is adequate overall, taking into consideration the numbers, qualifications and experience of both teachers and support staff. The school has had some difficulties with the recruitment and retention of teachers, but this has not been as great as in some other primary schools. The headteacher had been in post for two years and the deputy headteacher for only half a term at the time of the inspection. The administration officer and assistant and site manager are efficient and effective in their respective roles and contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school. The school has achieved Investors in People status.
58. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the full range of the curriculum to be taught. However, the open-plan design of the main building presents many challenges to effective teaching. These are largely overcome by the imaginative use of small rooms and alcoves and by careful tailoring of teaching activities. The central open area that accommodates two classes, with no substantial separation and a general passageway along two sides, can cause many distractions to pupils' learning. A considerable amount of space in the hall is taken up by the storage of physical education equipment and dining tables. The recent refurbishment of the ICT suite has made this a great asset. The ventilation (by extractor fans) of the four toilet areas, located in the middle of the main building, is only adequate at the start of the day. The whole site is accessible for wheelchair users and there is a toilet for the disabled. A lot of money has been spent on the completion of the perimeter fence and the fitting of security shutters to external doors and windows. As a result vandalism has been greatly reduced.
59. Resources for learning are adequate overall and for most subjects. They are generally used well. They are good in the Foundation Stage, although the children in the Reception Year do not have enough access to the large play equipment. Resources for religious education are good, including a good range of artefacts. Resources for ICT have recently much improved in quantity, quality and use and are now adequate overall. There are some good quality musical instruments, particularly African drums. Resources are generally well organised and accessible, although the school could usefully carry out an audit and reorganisation of the central science store.
60. Taking into account the nature of the school's intake, the pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and leadership and improvement since the previous inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The headteacher and governors should now:

(1) raise standards in English by:

- ensuring that all pupils have good opportunities to read regularly at school and at home;
- ensuring that more able pupils throughout the school, but particularly in Year 2, are given written tasks that are more challenging, more frequently; and
- impressing on pupils the importance of taking great care in listening to questions, thinking before speaking, their handwriting, their spelling and the general appearance of their work.

*(Paragraphs 1, 4, 6, 20, 28 and 80 - 88)*

(2) raise standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring that more able pupils throughout the school, but particularly in Year 2, are given mental calculations and written tasks that are more challenging, more frequently;
- providing more problem solving tasks so that pupils have to use and apply their knowledge and skills more widely; and
- impressing on pupils the importance of taking great care in listening to questions, thinking before speaking, accuracy in mental and written calculations and the general appearance of their work.

*(Paragraphs 1, 4, 6, 20, 44 and 89 - 98)*

(3) raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:

- making full and effective use of the classroom computers to both develop the pupils' ICT skills and use them to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects;
- introducing the use of the Internet and extending the use of CD-ROMs as research tools and to develop the pupils' wider understanding of ICT, both in the ICT suite and the classroom;
- providing more staff training to consolidate and develop their skills; and
- ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in adequate depth.

*(Paragraphs 5, 17, 26 and 120 - 124)*

Please note, there are targets related to English, mathematics and ICT in the current school development, although they do not include all the specific points raised above.

62. In addition, the headteacher and governors should now consider the following minor areas for development:

(1) investigate ways of involving parents more in their children's learning and the community more in the life of the school;

*(Paragraphs 46, 48 and 49)*

(2) investigate ways of reducing the difficulties arising from the layout and open-plan structure of the building, as time and finances permit;

*(Paragraphs 23 and 58)*

(3) redeploy staff with responsibilities so that the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science are all based in the main building, as circumstances permit.

*(Paragraphs 51 and 98)*

Please note, there are targets related to parental involvement, accommodation improvements and the role of the co-ordinator in the current school development, although they do not include all the specific points raised in these issues.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	28	13	3	0	0
Percentage	0	14	55	25	6	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	49	122
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	7	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	9
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	13	13	15
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	65 (82)	65 (94)	75 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	14	16	17
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	70 (88)	80 (88)	85 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	9	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	13
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	15	13	22
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	65 (70)	57 (75)	96 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	10
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	15	19
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	65 (70)	65 (75)	83 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	111
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **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	3	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.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24.4

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	49
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	36
Number of pupils per FTE adult	25

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	378,427
Total expenditure	350,495
Expenditure per pupil	2,111
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,330
Balance carried forward to next year	62,262

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	173
Number of questionnaires returned	53

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	23	0	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	28	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	62	26	6	4	2
The teaching is good.	70	28	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	25	0	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	13	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	74	21	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	77	21	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	28	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	68	21	2	2	8

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

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

63. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when children were said to “make a sound start in the Nursery”. It is due to the well-planned introduction of the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals and improvement in assessment procedures.
64. Forty-nine children attend the Nursery part-time, either in the morning or afternoon. Children are gradually admitted to the Nursery after their third birthday, enabling them to receive a good level of support and encouragement to settle quickly into nursery routines. The Nursery feeds several primary schools and four children recommended by social services attend in the afternoon, supported by a designated nursery nurse. The majority of those attending in the morning move to schools other than Wild Bank, whilst the majority of children attending in the afternoon join the Wild Bank mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Currently there are 12 children of reception age and seven pupils in Year 1 in that class. The Nursery and Reception classes are each staffed by a teacher and a teaching assistant or nursery nurse. The nursery is housed in a separate building, which is also occupied by social-services staff and there is direct access to a secure and attractive outdoor play area. The Reception class is housed in a different detached building, which is at the opposite end of the site and much closer to the main building. This creates some difficulty in planning the Foundation Stage as a unit, particularly in giving children in Reception regular access to the wheeled toys in the outdoor play area.
65. The quality of teaching is good overall, with several examples of very good teaching seen in the Nursery. Throughout the Foundation Stage relationships are strong and supportive. The very good teamwork between teachers and nursery nurses and the good leadership of the co-ordinator result in the effective use of everyone’s skills. All staff plan together well to cover all of the areas of learning. Where teaching is very good the teacher uses her knowledge of how young children learn to provide a range of interesting, first-hand experiences, which are clearly focused and inspire children to learn. All staff assess the progress of children very well by observing them closely through the range of activities on offer and the teachers make good use of this information to give children additional support or challenge. The firm but caring approach of all staff contributes to the good working atmosphere in both the Nursery and the Reception class. Consequently, the children develop good attitudes to school from an early age. The high priority rightly placed on children’s personal development and on the teaching of the basic skills, particularly speaking and listening, enables them to achieve well.
66. The majority of children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below the average for their age. A scrutiny of teacher records and classroom observation show that the skills of the children who attend in the morning are slightly more advanced than those of the children who attend in the afternoon. Through good teaching in the short sessions in the Nursery and careful monitoring of their progress, children achieve well. Nevertheless assessments at the start of the Reception class show that attainment is still well below the expected level. Children continue to make good progress in Reception, but their attainment is still below the expected level in all of the areas of learning other than physical development by the time they start in Year 1. Children generally achieve the Early Learning Goals in physical development.
67. Children with special educational needs are identified early and make good progress alongside their peers. They are fully included in all learning activities and are supported well in small groups. Two children in Reception, identified by the school as having particular potential in mathematics, are taught alongside the older group in the mixed class, which helps them to make good progress.

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

68. Teaching is very good in both the Nursery and the mixed Reception and Year 1 class and reflects the considerable emphasis rightly placed on this area, which is promoted through all aspects of school life. Good social skills are developed at snack time in the Nursery when tables are laid attractively and conversation is encouraged. Children are required to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ for their food and to sit still, whilst the designated helper from the group takes responsibility for clearing away for the whole table. Nursery routines are well established and children respond well to the high expectations of tidying up and putting away equipment when they have finished.

Adults co-operate well and treat the children with respect and this provides a good example for children to follow. Children work well together, for example, when using the computer or playing outside with the wheeled toys.

69. In Reception, the children's social skills continue to develop well. They put their hands up to answer questions and listen politely when others answer. In a good class assembly, the strong relationship between the teacher and the children promoted good discussion about their feelings. Children considered the people whom they trust and who never let them down. They showed a good understanding of the rules as they described the qualities of a person but did not mention their name. The imaginative choice of the story, "The Boy Who Cried Wolf", demonstrated the meaning of trust well. In their careful retelling of the story, children showed disapproval of telling lies. They develop a respect for their own and other cultures as they, for example, celebrate Christmas and dress up to celebrate Eid. Staff have a very caring attitude to the children, who follow this good example. This was seen as they showed real concern for a girl who was suffering from earache.

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

70. Teaching is good overall and leads to good achievement by all children across the Foundation Stage. Teaching in Reception incorporates appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy. The good range of specific activities and the high priority given to language development in all aspects enable children to make considerable progress in their speaking and listening skills. In the Nursery, all adults interact well with the children and make every attempt to encourage them to speak. For example, when making Mothers' Day baskets, children were asked why they thought they were making the baskets and they explained what mummy does to look after them. In story time, the teacher modulates her voice well to create interest and to encourage children to listen carefully. Good questioning gives children the opportunity to express their ideas, although the speech of many children is indistinct. These good opportunities for speaking and listening continue in Reception. When tasting fruit, one more able child said that a lychee looked "like the golden snitch in Harry Potter", but others did not know the name for a grapefruit. Good questioning by the teacher encourages children to explain their thinking. For example, in a hidden shape game children explained that, "It could be a square, because the shape has four sides".
71. Children are encouraged to make a connection between the spoken and written word from the earliest age, with attention drawn to their names when finding their place at snack time or in following the text during story time. Children are encouraged to look at the books, which are attractively displayed in the nursery 'book corner'. They enjoy sharing a book with a puppet, turning the pages correctly. They also follow a story using a listening centre. All children take a book home regularly to share with their parents. This continues in Reception, where all children take a reading book home each day, and in school they read to their teacher or nursery nurse regularly. From a low starting point, this regular practice throughout the Foundation Stage enables most children to do very well, although very few reach the expected level. Whilst there is a good range of books available in the reading area, the boxes are a little overcrowded and are not so inviting for the children. Phonics is taught on a planned and regular basis; nursery children have a letter of the week and reception children colour the pictures that match the initial sounds. There is a well-structured programme of teaching key words, which helps to develop reading skills well.
72. Handwriting patterns are practised in the Nursery, through following the dots to make letters and also moving the mouse to trace letters on the computer. The majority of children make a good attempt at writing their name and learn that marks have meaning. For example, they record their findings after a bug hunt and complete the order forms in the (pretend) Wild Bank Garden Centre. In Reception, children have lots of writing practice as they follow handwriting sheets and through activities such as tracing letters in the sand. The majority make legible marks, such as when writing their own letters to Santa and the more able children use a writing frame to good effect. With help, children write a sentence about their special moment, although there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their skills through free writing.

### **Mathematical development**

73. Teaching is good overall, enabling children to achieve well. However, only a small proportion of children reach the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. In the Nursery, every opportunity is taken to count objects during activities. The children know a good range of number rhymes and, in the daily counting session, good use is made of the ladybird puppets and the washing line to focus attention on number sequences.

In a good matching activity, children learn to match the numeral with the number of spots on the ladybird. Good use is made of stories, such as 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and games, such as playing hopscotch in the outdoor area, to develop counting skills. The majority of children count to ten and most find the ladybird with five spots, although, when talking about a story, no child could say which number came after ten. The majority of children also name the common two-dimensional shapes and understand how to make a taller tower.

74. In Reception, appropriate elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into the daily mathematics lesson. The teacher provides a good range of challenging activities to promote arithmetic skills. Children clap their hands in time when counting out loud and look at the 100-square as they count in tens, helping to establish the value of bigger numbers. The majority count forwards and backwards to 20 and clap their hands 15 times when asked. The higher-attaining children recognise coins to 20p and add to ten using counters. They are developing an understanding of simple measures through, for example, comparing heavier and lighter objects. Good emphasis is placed on developing the language of mathematics, particularly when adults work with children in small groups. In a good lesson all activities were suitably practical to help children understand the properties of shapes. Most children name simple two-dimensional shapes and higher attaining children name an octagon and some three-dimensional shapes. Children have the chance to describe what they have done, but there are insufficient opportunities for developing their thinking skills through solving practical problems.

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

75. Teaching is good overall. The variety of interesting activities enables children to achieve well although few teach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. In the mini-beasts topic, children in the Nursery closely examined the wormery and learnt about habitats in the bug hunt in the outdoor area. They tested materials to find which ones are waterproof and know which clothes are suitable for very cold weather. Children in Reception investigated different fruits, including some which were clearly new to them and several children knew that the coconut has 'juice' in it. They used their senses well when they felt the texture of an avocado and tasted fresh orange juice, one child remarking that, "it tastes different to the juice in cartons". Children learn about the past as they compare telephones with dials and modern digital telephones. They also learn about different celebrations including Christmas, birthdays and Eid. They learn about the local area by, for example, taking a bus trip to the park, walking through Stalybridge and watching a barge negotiate the locks on the canal. There is a good range of ongoing activities in the Nursery to enable children to have first-hand experiences of sand and water, although restrictions of time mean that these are less readily available to children in Reception. Children have daily opportunities to use a good range of construction toys and they use tools such as scissors with increasing skill. This was seen as reception children cut carefully round the net template of a cube to make their Mothers' Day containers.
76. There are increasing opportunities for developing an understanding of modern technology. The computer in the Nursery is used constantly, enabling children to use the mouse with increasing accuracy. The children learn how to give simple instructions by using an electronic programmable ladybird toy. Children in Reception now have regular lessons in the ICT suite. Most know how to 'log-on' and that you often have to click the mouse button twice, very quickly. This regular practice in the ICT suite is helping children to develop their skills well. However, there are insufficient opportunities to use the computers in the classroom to help learning in other areas of the curriculum.

### **Physical development**

77. Teaching is good overall and this helps children to achieve well. Most of the children reach the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of their development. Children in the Nursery move safely around the room without bumping into things and they enjoy using the large outdoor play area to run about in and use the large wheeled toys. It was noted that children who attend in the mornings moved with more control. They were more successful in steering their bikes around the road painted on the surface and in obeying the lollipop man's instruction to stop. It is a shortcoming in the school's provision, arising from the site layout, that children in Reception only have occasional access to the large equipment in the secure play area. Nevertheless, good use is made of the space in the large playground at playtimes. Both the nursery and the reception children develop their skills well in their physical education lessons in the school hall. Through the good structure of the lessons they understand the need to warm up before exercise and know that exercise makes them feel warm. The teachers and nursery nurses work well together to demonstrate different movements and to support any child who is having difficulty.

78. There are good links with the other areas of learning in these physical education activities for example, when the nursery children move slowly round the floor like a caterpillar or flit about the room like a butterfly, or when the reception children find ways of moving that begin with "s" such as shaking and stamping. The children learn to hold pencils and brushes correctly from the earliest age and have daily opportunities to develop their manipulative skills through doing jigsaws and using small construction toys.

### **Creative development**

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The majority of the children do not reach the expected level. Children use a variety of materials to make pictures. For example, they create patterns when bubble painting and, through close observation, they paint a good likeness of themselves. A comparative weakness is the limited opportunities for children to develop their creative skills through free painting. In the Nursery and Reception, children develop their imaginations by playing in special areas, such as the garden centre, by using puppets and by listening to a wide range of stories. In the Nursery there are good opportunities for children to listen to music during snack time. Children sing a good range of nursery rhymes and the youngest children react well to the beat of the tambourine. In Reception, children learn to follow simple notation as they follow the dots to sing their name using high or low notes.

### **ENGLISH**

80. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily and occasionally well in relation to their needs and abilities. The results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 was particularly low. The pupils' performance was, however, close to the average achieved by those attending similar schools. Inspection evidence, from the examination of pupils' work and lesson observations, shows that standards in the present Year 6 remain below the national average in all aspects of English. There are, however, a significant number of pupils whose attainment is only just below Level 4 (the expected level for their age). There is also a group of pupils within the class whose level of attainment sometimes exceeds Level 4. A small improvement in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the pupils in both of these groups would make a significant difference to their performance in the tests and the test results for the school.
81. Similarly, the test results of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were below the national average. The school's performance was below that in reading for schools in a similar context, but it was in line with similar schools in writing. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' work and the standards attained in lessons shows that standards remain below average in both reading and writing. The present Year 2 cohort, however, is extremely small, with only nine pupils and there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress, but the more able pupils are not always progressing as well as they should. However, because of the small size and characteristics of the cohort, statistical analysis of performance will not provide a valid comparison this year.
82. Standards of speaking and listening are below average in Year 6 and in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 listen attentively in a variety of situations such as whole-school assemblies and when listening to explanations from their teacher. They are generally able to express themselves clearly but do not always do so when answering questions in class and in conversation. They are able to discuss and plan together in whole class and small group situations. Most pupils give reasonable explanations when asked in class, but some of them either lack sufficient vocabulary or do not think well before speaking. Pupils in Year 2 generally listen well, but they have not always got the ability to express themselves clearly.
83. Reading standards are below average in Year 6 and in Year 2. Year 6 pupils mostly read accurately and when reading play scripts, for example, do so with good expression and a sense of drama. More able pupils use their reading skills to obtain ideas and information, for example, when independently researching facts about the Victorians. In Year 2 pupils' ability to read is very variable. The more skilled readers in the class read fluently with some expression and are able to use pictures, context and phonetic clues to work out new words without help. Less able readers in the class read hesitantly and only use the initial letters to try to work out words when they are stuck.

Individual pupils' reading records show that, throughout the school, some pupils have been getting insufficient practice in their reading both at home and at school. This has had an adverse effect on their level of attainment and hindered their progress. The school has introduced additional reading sessions since January 2002, implemented by all teachers following the example set by the new deputy headteacher. It is too early to judge whether this is effectively reducing these variations in pupils' reading skills.

84. Writing standards are just below average in Year 6 and below average in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils' written work shows an ability to create a range of different types of writing for different audiences and in different styles. A lesson on simile showed pupils' increasing ability to choose words to create an effect. For example, one pupil wrote, "The clouds floated gently by like a dream." Presentation, although sometimes good, is rarely to the highest standard that pupils of this age are capable of and often contains simple errors. This is because pupils do not take enough care in their handwriting, spelling and layout of their work. Spellings and grammar are generally accurate, but pupils sometimes make simple mechanical errors, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were finding and copying examples of verbs from their reading books. A number of pupils are able to produce written work above the nationally expected level for their age, but they do not do so consistently. Pupils in Year 2 have very varied levels of attainment in writing. A little over half the pupils can write simple sentences with common words either generally spelt correctly or with most of the correct letters in place. Higher attaining pupils write clearly, with good handwriting and spelling and with mostly correct punctuation. The significant number of pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs are making good progress in the basic skills of writing.
85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Lessons are generally well planned and follow the National Literacy Strategy appropriately. In good lessons, teachers remind pupils of the main points from the previous lesson. They make the objectives of the lesson explicit and carefully explain the tasks. For example, the purpose of a Year 6 lesson was to improve autobiographies by using simile. Teachers in good lessons also ensure that there is a good pace to the activities and pupils are challenged appropriately. There was, for instance, good use of a puppet to capture the children's attention in the Reception and Year 1 class. Pupils were keen to correct the mistakes that the puppet made. In every lesson the work is appropriately matched to the ages and abilities of the different pupils within the class. Teachers review what has been covered at the end of the lesson. This provides appropriate reinforcement for the pupils and good information for the teachers. Teaching assistants, working in close partnership with the teachers and following their guidance well, often provide good support to the pupils' learning. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is developing well and was seen being used to support pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate homework is set throughout the school, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and teachers mark it diligently. Booster classes are held on Saturday mornings for Year 6 pupils. These, at the time of the inspection, had been running for two weeks. Nineteen pupils attended the first week but this dropped to 11 the following week.
86. Pupils throughout the school show good attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour in lessons is good. They generally listen carefully and respond well to their teacher. They are able to work quietly with good concentration and enthusiasm. Pupils respond appropriately to teachers' questions and rarely call out. They are nearly always polite and share resources sensibly when required to do so.
87. Marking is used effectively to aid pupils' progress. Teachers' comments are supportive whilst at the same time directing pupils towards what they should do next. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are assessed well and this information is used well to inform planning. This ensures that activities are matched to pupils' needs and they make good progress as they move up through the school. There is very good use of the "First of the Month" books. These contain detailed comments and an assessment of standards seen in specific examples of written work and are used to set individual targets for the pupils.
88. The co-ordinator had only been at the school for seven weeks at the time of the inspection. She had been the literacy co-ordinator in her previous school and has clearly made a good beginning in the role at Wild Bank. She has a detailed job description and personal targets specific to this role. There is a good written policy, and the National Literacy Strategy is being followed well. The co-ordinator has, during her short time at the school, looked at the teachers' planning to ensure that it is appropriate and relates closely to the national guidelines. She has also looked at the pupils' exercise books to check that the planning was being translated into relevant activities.

The co-ordinator and the head of library services have looked at the library and quotes for planned improvements have been sought. The school is generally well resourced. The headteacher and co-ordinator have identified a need to increase the amount and range of books, particularly non-fiction, targeted at boys' interests but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. Inspection findings are that standards achieved by pupils aged 11 are below average and standards attained by pupils aged seven are well below average. These judgements match the results of the national tests in 2001. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level at the end of Year 6 was slightly above average, though less than average achieved the expected standard. The sharp fall in the number of seven year-olds achieving the expected level reflects the nature of the classes, where there are high proportions of pupils with special educational needs. The current Year 2 has only nine pupils, with over half of them having special educational needs.
90. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. There is a good level of support for the pupils with special educational needs and working with older pupils in the mixed-age classes suitably challenges some higher attaining pupils. Pupils behave well in lessons and generally do what is asked. However, few pupils have the motivation to want to do more, and this is a factor in some older pupils not quite reaching the required standard. Booster classes take place on Saturday mornings and attendance at these is variable. All pupils are invited to attend, though a more targeted approach would be more effective in raising the number who achieve the expected standard.
91. Overall, pupils achieve as well as they can up to the age of seven. However, pupils in Year 1 achieve better than expected because of the lively teaching and good management skills of the teacher. Achievement is good for pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 because of the high level of individual support given. However, despite the best efforts of the teachers, the behaviour of these pupils and the consequent disruptions adversely affect the achievement of more able pupils in this small group.
92. Lessons are planned to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy. Following the fall in results in 2001, the school made mathematics a priority for development this year. A thorough analysis of the results identified the language associated with mental mathematics as a particularly weak area and this aspect became the focus of development for the current year. This emphasis was readily identifiable in most lessons observed. There is a very good practical approach to counting in Years 1 and 2, with pupils growing and stretching as they count forward and sinking as they count backwards, helping to reinforce the mathematical concepts. The good pace to the oral session in Year 6 promoted arithmetic skills well and the pairing of factors on the board helped pupils identify factors they had missed. All lesson plans include specific work for different groups of pupils according to their prior attainment. However, in some lessons more able pupils have to work through basic tasks before reaching the more suitable and challenging questions. The time at the end of the lesson is generally used well to assess what pupils have learned, with teachers noting any areas of difficulty to amend future lessons.
93. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils have a sound understanding of place value using large numbers. They understand the effect of multiplying or dividing by ten, but their explanations are imprecise. They have a good understanding of multiples and factors and higher attaining pupils complete long multiplication problems accurately. Whilst lower attaining pupils have a basic understanding of place value and of number patterns, they do not complete sufficient work to develop their skills securely or in sufficient depth. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their skills in solving problems, but these are limited and pupils have difficulty in interpreting questions. The majority of pupils draw and measure angles with reasonable accuracy. They use measurements in a variety of situations, such as working out amounts for recipes for different numbers of people or for calculating the area and perimeter of shapes. Higher attaining pupils convert and compare metric and imperial measurements and show this on a line graph converting miles to kilometres. Most pupils have experience of a good range of graphs, including pie charts and frequency graphs in both mathematics and ICT lessons. There was no evidence of any work on probability.
94. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils arrange amounts into groups of three, four and five and are developing a sound understanding of tens and units. They identify missing numbers on a 100-square and add two two-digit numbers together. They solve simple shopping problems and can continue a pattern of '+2' and '+5'.

There is no evidence of pupils working with numbers bigger than a 100 or of their recall of multiplication and division facts for tables two to five. Lower attaining pupils receive a high level of support to enable them to sequence numbers to 40 and to use a number line for simple addition and subtraction. Pupils have a sound understanding of symmetry and identify the faces and edges of three-dimensional shapes. They use a good range of measuring equipment and, for example, use their findings to decide whether the beds are too big or too small for the different-sized bears. Scrutiny of work shows a more positive picture for pupils currently in Year 1, who, overall, are working at the level expected for their age.

95. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as drawing a pictogram of their favourite fruits in Year 1, or using a bar chart to show the calorific value of different foods in science in Years 4 and 5. Pupils in Year 6 use ICT to produce spreadsheets, but computers are not yet used sufficiently to support learning in mathematics.
96. Teaching in lessons was satisfactory overall and the scrutiny of work shows that it is good in Year 1 and in Year 6 over time. A number of teachers are temporary or new to the school and it is too soon to measure their impact over time, although all show a real commitment to raising standards. A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills to good effect. This was seen in Year 6 when the teacher gave a clear explanation of the addition and subtraction of decimals, emphasising place value so that pupils learned how to set out the sums correctly. In the best lessons, activities are interesting and so pupils are well motivated. This was seen in Year 1 where pupils had to put numbers of cubes into two towers to decide whether numbers were odd or even. This was reinforced by a graphic display and this practical approach was suitable for young children and helped them to understand. In the less successful lessons, the activities in the middle of the lesson are not always suitably matched to the needs of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well through additional support and working in small groups. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and the skilled management of pupils creates a good atmosphere for pupils to learn. However, there are a high proportion of pupils with behaviour difficulties in Year 2 and their effect on the learning of the whole class is magnified in such a small teaching group.
97. The open-plan nature of part of the building has a negative impact on the learning of some pupils. In an effort to mitigate this, the mixed Year 4 and Year 5 class successfully uses a small base for its oral and mental starter activities and for discussion of the main task. However, some do not retain the information as they move back to the main area to complete their tasks. In addition, teachers are inhibited from stopping the class to give additional information in case they disturb the other group. Assessment is generally good and teachers return to a topic if they feel the pupils are experiencing problems. This was seen in the Year 4 and Year 5 class when pupils needed more experience on short multiplication.
98. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of teaching and learning in mathematics. However, she also co-ordinates the Foundation Stage. As she is based in the detached Nursery she is not readily available to share her good practice.

## **SCIENCE**

99. Pupils achieve well in relation to their needs and abilities. The inspection report in 1999 stated that good progress had been made since 1997. Standards have been maintained, with pupils often achieving better than could reasonably be expected. Pupils do better in national tests and teacher assessments in science than they do in English and mathematics. Judgements are based on the school's results in national tests, an examination of pupils' work throughout the school, four lesson observations, discussions with staff and an examination of the school's documentation and resources.
100. Pupils aged 11 achieved very well in the 2001 national tests. Compared with the situation in similar schools, the percentage achieving the expected National Curriculum Level 4 was well above average and the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was above average. Results at the ages of 11 and seven have shown considerable improvements over time, with a trend that is better than that recorded nationally. There have been some fluctuations due to the nature of the different cohorts of children in the school. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving broadly in line with national averages, as was the case last year. The current Year 2 is a particularly small cohort with over half the pupils having significant special educational needs. Statistical analysis would not provide a valid comparison, but these pupils are achieving well.

101. Examination of pupils' work throughout the school shows that a good range of investigative activities are carried out and there is at least adequate coverage of the different aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study. This clearly provides a sound basis for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, concepts and conventions. However, from the outset pupils have significant difficulties in providing verbal explanations and do not pay enough attention to the neatness and organisation of their written work. Despite the considerable efforts of the teachers these factors are still present in Year 6. Throughout the school, work in science makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy skills through the use of graphs and charts and the use of ICT in science is developing well.
102. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, within the range from satisfactory to very good. The school's approach to teaching involves a strong emphasis on experimental and investigative work from an early age and a higher priority given to knowledge and understanding in Years 5 and 6. This is clearly effective. Pupils have individual targets in the subject. It was noted that these were stuck in their exercise books in Years 1 and 2 and this is good practice. The use of very clear, consistently applied expectations of behaviour and high expectations that the pupils could and would use clear scientific language, were particularly strong features of a lesson in the mixed-age Year 5 and Year 6 class. Good use of ICT was seen when pupils in Years 5 and 6 used light sensors. Marking is good throughout the school, with some very good examples seen in Years 1 and 6. Homework is used well to reinforce learning in lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
103. The co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection. Brief discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and a scrutiny of documentation show that the subject is well led and managed. This contributes significantly to the standards achieved by the pupils. Significant developments in 1998 successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised standards and these have been maintained. Teachers make good use of the national guidelines in their planning of lessons and in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. The school could usefully carry out an audit and reorganisation of the centrally-stored resources.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. The standards of pupils' work are in line with those expected nationally at both 11 and seven years of age. All groups of pupils, including able and talented pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move up through the school.
105. Pupils in Year 6 design, make and decorate very good masks using different materials and techniques. African masks in the school hall, for example, were made using layers of card to give a 3-D effect. These masks had then been decorated and covered in polish to give a good simulation of wood. Other examples, in the Year 6 classroom, included papier-mâché masks, with pupils imaginatively using grasses and twigs to create hair or horns. All of these masks were to a good standard.
106. Pupils in Year 2 are currently doing design and technology rather than art. It was therefore not possible to see any art lessons with this age group. An examination of past work and current displays in the classroom shows that levels of attainment are broadly in line with expectations.
107. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well and teachers give clear explanations of the tasks. They include safety warnings where necessary. In a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher warned pupils of the dangers of getting paint in their eyes when using a stippling technique. In the best lessons, pupils work with concentration and almost no talking. This was clearly seen in a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson on portraiture, when the class was concentrating on applying newly acquired drawing skills. Their attitude and behaviour in lessons are good and contribute significantly to the good learning observed. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is developing and has begun to be used more effectively in art and design.
108. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place. Resources are generally good and are well organised by the co-ordinator, but the lack of good scissors for fabric work, in particular, is a weakness. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. There is currently no portfolio of pupils' work. This is a weakness, although the co-ordinator has plans to develop saved examples of work into a portfolio. The co-ordinator is keen to support the other teachers and has been able to monitor lessons and discuss his findings with them. The open-plan nature of the building also enables him to see what is being taught on a regular basis.

Pupils are taken to the local art gallery to see the works of art and this makes a good contribution to their learning. There is a very useful art club, which the co-ordinator runs once a week.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Timetabling arrangements resulted in only one lesson being observed. This lesson was in the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class. Evidence from that lesson, examples of work around the school, in books and folders and photographic records, indicate that the standard of pupils' work throughout the school is as expected nationally. Standards have, therefore, been maintained since the last inspection. All groups of pupils, including able and talented pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning as they move up through the school.
110. Pupils in Year 6 design and make bridge structures using a variety of techniques and materials. The structures clearly indicate an appreciation of the use of triangles to increase strength and rigidity. They are constructed with care and precision. When asked about these models, pupils spoke with good recall and considerable enthusiasm about what they had done and why. Pupils in Year 2 had puppet-making booklets, which clearly show their ability to design a puppet and then carry out their design to produce a finished product. Pupils have good cutting and gluing skills. They also demonstrate good observational and sewing skills in creating stitched eyebrows.
111. Teaching and learning were good in the lesson observed and a scrutiny of the work from other classes indicates that generally teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. In the single lesson seen, which was a food technology lesson, the teacher appropriately stressed safety with the tools being used and the need for hygiene. There was a good level of learning taking place during the lesson and pupils acquired new skills in the handling of tools. Planning indicates that skills are being developed systematically and that the curriculum being offered to pupils includes all elements and meets statutory requirements. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning, however, is underdeveloped.
112. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. He has been responsible for the subject for the last few years. A satisfactory policy and scheme of work are in place, based upon national guidelines. The co-ordinator has a clear strategy for the development of the subject. There have been opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the work being carried out in other classes. Assessment is satisfactory and the co-ordinator would like to develop this further. Resources for the subject are adequate and they are well organised by the co-ordinator.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 are below the expected level. Achievement is satisfactory overall for pupils in Years 3 to 6. With the introduction of the new scheme of work, based on national guidelines, there is satisfactory coverage of the curriculum. However, there are accumulated gaps in the knowledge of older pupils and the work in their books indicates that topics have not been covered in sufficient depth. Pupils develop their skills from Year 3 to Year 6, for example, by looking at weather forecasts and taking readings to compare them with the actual weather. They learn the symbols used in Ordnance Survey maps and trace the route from Ashton to Stalybridge. They use their numeracy skills well when checking the scale and determining that a measurement of seven centimetres means that the distance is actually three and a half miles. Pupils in Year 6 have a basic understanding of the water cycle and conduct research to discover simple facts about the Rivers Orinoco, Nile and Danube. There is little evidence of any study of the environment in different parts of the world or its effect on the people who live there, or of posing suitable questions to investigate different places independently.
114. Standards are broadly as expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Through a range of interesting activities, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. By the age of seven, pupils are gaining an understanding of life on an island and compare life on the Isle of Struay, with its beach and hotels, with life in Stalybridge, where there are canals and some guest-houses. They draw a colour-coded key for a map of the school and work together in pairs on the computer to describe Barnaby Bear's route around the school. When thinking about the weather, they identify the clothes they would need in a cold climate.
115. Because of the timetabling arrangements, with geography and history being taught half-termly, it was not possible to observe any lessons. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement on teaching and learning.

A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the work in Years 1 and 2 is interesting and relevant to the age of the pupils, though the range of activities for older pupils has not had sufficient breadth and depth. The co-ordinator is developing a good overview of the subject through monitoring teachers' planning and collating a portfolio of pupils' work. There are good assessment procedures in place to check pupils' progress. However, the new curriculum and assessment procedures have not yet had sufficient time to affect standards because of the high priority given to literacy and numeracy and staff absences and changes.

## **HISTORY**

116. The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are below the expected level. Achievement is satisfactory overall for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. Through the good level of support received, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. There is sound coverage of the curriculum, with the school following a scheme of work based on national guidelines. However, discussions with older pupils indicate that the rate of learning has been variable and consequently there are accumulated gaps in their knowledge. By the age of 11, pupils are developing an understanding of the key features of particular periods from the past, such as the contrast between rich and poor people in Tudor times. They recall what they have learnt about the Victorians and child labour well, but their understanding of famous people and great inventions of that time is patchy. Their understanding of more recent history is quite good as the result of making a timeline of family events since 1948 and studying different forms of entertainment in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Pupils learn about civilisations in other parts of the world, for example, through a visit to Jorvic to find out more about the Vikings. They also have some knowledge of ancient civilisations, such as those of the Greeks and the Romans.
117. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 meet expectations. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because the work is interesting and matched well to their needs. By the age of seven, pupils are developing a good sense of chronology, for example, by placing various fire appliances in date order. They compare objects used today, such as electric lamps, with things used in the past, such as lanterns. They learn about the Tudors and how they lived. Good links with literacy were noted when, for example, a higher attaining pupil described how the Great Fire of London spread and then stopped, "The wind blew it out!" Pupils develop their skills of historical enquiry as they use posters to answer questions about the progress of the fire.
118. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in Years 1 and 2. A good lesson was also observed in the mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class. In the best lessons, activities are interesting and suitably practical and involve the pupils actively in their learning. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 handled a good variety of objects to help them decide the differences between past and modern implements. The teacher gave them very good strategies for their observations, suggesting that they consider the shape, size and materials they were made from. In the other lesson mentioned above, the teacher made good use of her drama expertise, in telling the story of Sutton Hoo, to keep pupils interested and to help them learn about the time of the Anglo-Saxons. Scrutiny of work, however, indicates that learning is often excessively based on worksheet activities. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress at the end of topics. The work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is generally well annotated, but marking of work in the books of older pupils is less detailed.
119. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has a good overview of what is happening in the subject through examining planning and collating the progress of pupils through the assessments at the end of topics. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to research information, and the school has identified this as an area for ongoing development.

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

120. Standards remain below national expectations at both 11 and seven years of age. However, progress has been good since the previous inspection, with rapid improvements in resources and staff competence taking place shortly before and at the time of this inspection. Consequently, pupils are now achieving well in all ICT activities taught throughout the school. However, some variability remains between classes and within different elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, so that pupils' progress remains rather patchy at times. Although the new ICT suite is being used very well, teachers are not taking full advantage of the available computers in the classrooms.

121. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. They word-process pieces of writing and use colour, pictures and different forms of layout for different purposes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a spreadsheet well to carry out simple accounting tasks using two decimal places. During the inspection they learnt how to copy cells and most of them did so extremely well due to the high quality teaching and their interest and involvement. The few pupils who did not learn so well did not disrupt the learning of the majority. There are some examples of work on control and modelling, such as the use of 'Logo' software and light sensors. Similarly there are examples of the use of graphics programs in all year groups and the use of computer-generated music in Years 3 and 4. Good use is being made of the digital camera at this key stage. However, there is considerable variation and gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills remain. Pupils do not yet have access to the Internet and insufficient use is made of CD-ROMs for research.
122. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. They are making significant gains in basic mouse and keyboard skills and are learning how to create and modify text and graphics on the screen. Through activities such as photocopying their hands they are learning that ICT is not only about computers.
123. Teaching and learning are good. Five lessons were observed involving all pupils from Reception to Year 6, except those in Year 2 and these were all in the range from satisfactory to very good. These lessons clearly demonstrated the teachers' growing confidence and competence and this was mirrored by the gains in the pupils' learning. A lesson for Years 5 and 6 featured very good whole-class teaching. The pupils worked in pairs on the computers, following the teacher's precise instructions until he was satisfied that they could do the set tasks independently. In some lessons pupils' learning is impeded by the gaps in their prior learning. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good gains working on a database, but many of them needed more adult support than pupils of this age in many other primary schools do. This was because they were not fully conversant with the procedures to carry out a search of the database and the available options in the menus. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learnt very well when composing music using the computers. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 are making good progress in learning about the basic routines of computer use such as logging on and saving and printing their work. Good use was made of support staff, particularly in these lessons with the younger pupils, to enable the less able pupils to learn at a similar rate to the rest of the class.
124. The school benefits from the input of a competent, enthusiastic co-ordinator. She provides a strong lead to developments in the subject. She participated in an exchange trip in February 2001, when she visited Canada to look at ICT provision and incorporated it into literacy and numeracy lessons. The school ICT suite has very recently been refitted with new computers and the old machines have been distributed around the classes. All of the teachers undertook New Opportunities Funding training in 2001. There are good, well-established arrangements for assessment. The recent introduction of the local education authority's 'ICT Passports' has added a useful mechanism for recording pupils' achievements and involving them in that process. Wild Bank is a pilot school in the local education authority's digital video-editing project. A visit by an HMI in 2001 reported good progress in the subject. Nearly all the teaching areas featured some good use of ICT in displays at the time of the inspection. The school administration officer makes a significant contribution to developments in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

125. Pupils achieve well by the age of 11 and satisfactorily by the age of seven. Judgements are made on four lesson observations, listening to recordings of pupils performing, an examination of resources and discussion with the subject co-ordinator. The previous report did not contain a clear judgement on standards in music but implied that they were satisfactory. In these terms, progress has been good. Standards are broadly in line with expectations at 11 years of age. There is insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement at seven years of age.
126. Most pupils sing well for their age, particularly in Key Stage 2. This judgement is based on an observation of a whole-school singing practice, with the inspector sitting with the Year 6 pupils and listening to recordings of the school choir participating in two concerts. Pupils sing and perform actions to lively songs with real enjoyment and without becoming too excited. They sing other songs that, for example, have quite difficult melodies or require the sensitive expression of feeling very well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 composed short pieces of music in small groups to accompany poems about animals. These compositions expressed the words of the poems and characteristics of the animals well. Some pupils wrote their own notation for the music. Every group eventually performed its piece very well, although in some cases there was some difficulty playing the music and saying the words at the same time. Pupils in Year 1 generally identify notes as high or low and are learning the basics of musical notation, such as the position of a dot signifying the pitch.

127. Teaching is good overall, with two good lessons and one very good lesson being observed. In these lessons, the objectives were clear to the pupils and appropriate activities and good interest and behaviour resulted in good learning. These lessons made a good contribution to the pupils' personal and social development because they took responsibility for electrical equipment and musical instruments and working with others. A lesson in the Years 3 and 4 class featured a very good mix of pupils composing and performing their own music and correctly identifying the different sections of 'Peter and the Wolf' that are associated with the different characters. An ICT lesson in the same class featured a very good musical composition activity using computers. However, a lesson with Year 2 pupils was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not capture their interest or make it clear what she wanted them to learn.
128. The headteacher is an effective co-ordinator. Teachers effectively use both the national exemplar guidelines and commercial materials in planning. The procedures for assessment and learning resources are good. Effective use has been made of visitors to the school, such as musicians who wore Tudor costumes and introduced pupils to musical instruments of that period and involvement in African music and dance activities. The school choir performs in concerts with pupils from several other schools in the local education authority every autumn term.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. Timetabling arrangements resulted in few observations being possible. These were a swimming lesson at the local pool, one lesson taken by a temporary teacher and a session taken by an external coach in school. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. It was not therefore possible to make a reliable judgement on the overall quality of teaching and standards.
130. Almost all pupils in Year 6 are able to swim. In the swimming lesson observed, nine of the 28 pupils in Years 4 and 5 swam reasonably well, including six who swam at least 50 metres. The remaining pupils are making good progress in learning to swim. These achievements are broadly in line with national expectations.
131. Teaching was between good and unsatisfactory but there is insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement overall. In the best lessons, pupils responded well to the teaching because it was positive and moved at a good pace. Teacher interventions were appropriate and demonstrations by the pupils were used well to illustrate the skill or technique being learnt. In unsatisfactory lessons, the teachers had insufficient control of the pupils to ensure that they were listening to the instructions. The pace of the lesson was too slow and insufficient learning took place. Lessons were generally planned satisfactorily, but in unsuccessful lessons the planning was not delivered as intended and the intended outcomes were, therefore, not reached.
132. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place. Teachers that have been in the school for some time have also had training in the 'Tops' schemes for play and dance. Assessment of the pupils is in place, but no monitoring of lessons has yet occurred. This is scheduled to take place as part of the on-going programme. This is very important because teaching is not always satisfactory and there are health and safety implications. Most classes have a single physical education lesson lasting one hour, including time for getting changed. Pupils, particularly the younger ones, would benefit from having two shorter physical education lessons each week rather than one long one. Resources are generally adequate, but the hall edges are extremely cluttered. This considerably reduces the usable space and presents a health and safety risk in some activities.
133. Interest has been generated in the subject by inviting a number of sports visitors to come to the school, including Manchester United and Stockport County football coaches and members of Manchester Storm ice hockey team and Stalybridge Celtic football team. An annual visit to an outdoor centre ensures that the outdoor and adventurous activities within the physical education programme are covered.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, enabling them to make good progress, although a small minority of pupils in Year 2 sometimes find it difficult to concentrate and this affects their progress in some lessons.
135. By the age of 11, pupils have studied various world religions in reasonable detail. They know the names of the prophets of different religions and can discuss the different holy books. In studying Islam they compile a fact file about Mohammed's life and compare this with their own. They look at the Quran and know that the book has to be treated with respect, when they learn about the convention of washing hands before handling it. When looking at Christianity they learn the two great principles of loving God and loving thy neighbour. Pupils retell stories from the Bible, such as those of The Last Supper and Jonah, in considerable detail and sensibly discuss their own thoughts about God as, "Our Father or our Ruler". There are good links with literacy as pupils have good opportunities to describe their feelings and some pupils have had their prayers published in a book called 'Little Verses'. They use CD-ROMs to research information, although the use of ICT is recognised as an area for development.
136. By the age of seven, pupils are developing a good understanding of belonging to a family or community, including a religion and relate this to belonging to a club. They devise their own rules, such as "No shouting – be friendly!", and design their own Christian badges. They learn about different world religions through their celebrations of, for example, the Jewish New Year, Holi and Divali. These young pupils develop an appreciation of the wonder of the natural world as they walk to school and appreciate the animals and the sun and wind. They learn to empathise with others, for example by drawing a picture to describe how Joseph and Mary may have felt when they lost Jesus in the temple.
137. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good use is made of stories to help younger pupils consider difficult concepts and develop an awareness that many people believe in God. For example, the idea of change in life was illustrated through the story of the lifecycle of the dragonfly. However, explanations of the tasks for younger pupils were not sufficiently clear for them to get on with their work and this led to some of them becoming restless. With older pupils, a good recap of previous work established a good basis for the lesson. A clear explanation of the learning objectives, for example, to identify the function of different parts of a church, promoted a good discussion about sources of information. However, the effectiveness of the lesson was somewhat reduced when pupils found the definitions from a photocopied sheet, as the books and dictionaries available did not have sufficient information for pupils to conduct their research directly. Teaching has been enhanced by visits to the local church and a visit to a Jewish Museum is planned.
138. There has been a considerable improvement recently following the introduction of some units of a nationally approved scheme of work alongside the locally agreed syllabus. Some good resources and artefacts of different world religions have been bought and these are well organised and readily available to enhance learning in lessons. The co-ordinator has a sound overview of what is happening in the subject. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress at the end of each topic.