

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Horwich

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105250

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Massingham

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Gosling
22453

Date of inspection: 13–17 November 2000

Inspection number: 224405

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: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Victoria Road Horwich Bolton Greater Manchester |
| Postcode: | BL6 6EP |
| Telephone number: | 01204 697144 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Father H Jones |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1996 |

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| Team members | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--|--|---|
| Brian Gosling Registered inspector (22453) | Information and communication technology Geography Equal opportunities | What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? |
| Terry Heppenstall Lay inspector (11392) | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Pat English Team inspector (20815) | English Music Foundation Stage English as an additional language | |
| Don Kimber Team inspector (20614) | Science Design and technology History | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| Keith Sanderson Team inspector (3942) | Mathematics Art and design Physical education Special educational needs | How well is the school led and managed? |

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's RC Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. There are 253 pupils; 135 boys and 118 girls. Pupils come predominantly from the areas around the two former schools that are one mile apart and amalgamated in 1991. The former headteacher and former deputy headteacher were based at the Chorley New Road site. The newly appointed headteacher and the deputy headteacher are now based at Victoria Road, where all the younger children in the reception and Year 1 classes are now taught, prior to new building works and the closure of the Chorley New Road site. 181 pupils are currently taught at Victoria Road and 72 pupils are taught at Chorley New Road. This has caused concerns for some parents who do not wish to see the closure of the Chorley New Road site.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and Statements of Special Educational Need is about average. The percentage of pupils at the school who are eligible for free school meals is below the average but in the Year 6 group that took the national tests last summer it was more than a quarter, which is above the average. Only one pupil comes from a minority ethnic group and one other pupil has English as an additional language. There has been an increase in the number of pupils admitted to the school this year and there has been an improvement in their attainment on entry to the school at age four. However, the school's records and evidence from the local education authority show that the attainment of most pupils at the school is well below the county average when they start school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's RC Primary School is a very effective school. Attainment of the majority of pupils was well below the county average when they started school and close to the national average when they leave the school. The overall quality of teaching is good and the leadership and management are very good. Significant improvement in the school's provision has been achieved since the appointment of the new headteacher last year. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in information and communications technology have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and relationships throughout the school are also very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development.
- The school cares for its pupils well.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.
- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly identified strengths and weaknesses in the school and has taken effective action to improve the school's performance.
- There is a clear commitment by all members of staff to school improvement.

What could be improved

- The accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment could be better.
- The quality and use of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not fully effective in all lessons.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and the current siting of the library is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although almost all of the important initiatives were introduced in the last year.

The school has belatedly begun to address the areas for improvement identified in the last report with the arrival of a new headteacher. The two deputy headteacher posts have been reduced to one with a redefinition of the role. The deputy headteacher is now non-class based and provides good management support to the headteacher. He has a large teaching commitment that releases curriculum co-ordinators to carry out their improved roles. Co-ordinators have revised job descriptions that give them increased involvement in whole-school issues and the development of plans for school development. They have reviewed and rewritten the policies for their subjects and they are given release time from the classroom each term to monitor pupils' work to establish standards and identify areas for improvement. Co-ordinators ensure continuity by producing half-termly plans for all classes. This has encouraged the establishment of a single, whole school unit.

A new co-ordinator for special educational needs has been appointed and teachers have received training in producing individual education plans for the pupils in their class. However, teachers need greater support in writing and using these plans effectively. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and the information is used to track the progress of each pupil through the school. Standards in information and communications technology have improved through the effective leadership of the co-ordinator, and statutory requirements for reporting to parents are now fully met. Teaching is now effectively monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and co-ordinators are being trained in order to monitor teaching in their subjects. An effective behaviour policy has been introduced.

In preparation for the school to be based entirely on the main site following building works in 2001, some teachers have been moved between the two sites and all pupils in the reception and Year 1 classes are now taught at the main school. Unfortunately, this has not met with the approval of all the parents of children whose classrooms are at the annexe in Chorley New Road. Curriculum planning is now developed and implemented on both sites in common and all teachers attend a single staff meeting.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | C | C | C | B |
| mathematics | C | C | C | A |
| science | E | E | C | B |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Standards are close to the national average with a significant improvement in science this year. Considering the pupils' overall attainment when they started school, this represents good progress in both key stages. When attainment is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, it is above the average in English and science and well above the average in mathematics. Standards are rising broadly in line with the national trend and recently introduced improvements in the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching indicate that standards are set to rise further. The school has set suitable targets that are based on pupils' previous attainment. Standards are satisfactory in all areas of the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are enthusiastic in lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The recent introduction of an effective behaviour policy and the establishment of agreed class rules has improved pupils' behaviour significantly since the last inspection. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Relationships are very good and mutual respect is evident in all aspects of school life. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Satisfactory | 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.

The quality of the teaching in one in ten lessons observed was very good and in two out of

three it was good or very good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen; no lessons were unsatisfactory. There was no significant difference in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and teaching in the Foundation Stage was satisfactory overall, although many of the lessons with these children were good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and is the result of initiatives introduced by the new headteacher. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy were introduced last year, co-ordinators provide teaching plans for all classes each half term and teaching in all classes is monitored each term with areas for improvement identified.

Teaching in English and mathematics is good and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The school meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily with improvements to the provision for both pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. However, these improvements have only been introduced in the last year and it will take a little time before they raise standards significantly. Teachers' planning is good and establishes clear objectives for the lesson that is shared with pupils so that they understand what they are learning and why. Teachers organise a variety of practical activities that stimulate pupils and promote their interest and involvement in lessons. Consequently, pupils concentrate well and work well together in pursuit of a common aim.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is being developed well with increasing opportunities for all pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Satisfactory. The provision for these pupils has improved since the last inspection. However, greater support is needed for teachers in writing and using individual education plans. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The one pupil with English as an additional language receives good support and has made very good progress since arriving at the school last year. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to reflect on the needs of others that greatly enhance their personal development. The behaviour policy has a moral basis and the ideas of fairness and sharing are promoted well. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good. The school has good procedures to enable it to care for its pupils well. |

The school is committed to developing its partnership role with parents and most parents are strongly supportive of the school. However, there are significant concerns by some parents who do not wish to see the closure of the Chorley New Road site.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other | Very good. The newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership in leading the school. They provide good opportunities for co-ordinators to fulfil |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| key staff | their developing roles in monitoring standards in their subjects. |
|-----------|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are fully met and governors are developing their roles and involvement in the daily life of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. The school has effectively assessed the strengths and weaknesses of its provision in the last year and taken effective action to improve its performance. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school plans imaginatively to maximise the benefits to pupils and applies the principles of best value well. |

The levels of staffing and learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is inadequate in many respects, most significantly the limitations of the school library and lack of a secure play area for the children under five. However, current building works are designed to remedy these problems.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress their children make. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The good quality of the teaching. • The school is approachable. • The high achievement of the pupils. • Their children become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework provided. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The links with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons. |

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. After careful consideration of all the evidence during the inspection, they do not find grounds to support the reservations of a significant minority of parents. However, they do understand how these concerns have arisen during the nine year period between the amalgamation of two schools and establishing the new school on a single site.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the inspection, there were 40 children attending the two reception classes full-time. The school assesses the ability of pupils shortly after they start school. These records, together with statements from the local education authority, show that the attainment of most pupils in the school was well below the county average when they started school. However, the attainment of the most recent group of children to be assessed has improved and is much closer to the county average. This is due to a number of factors. The two schools, which are a mile apart and amalgamated nine years ago, are to be based on a single site at the main school this year following building works, and the annexe at Chorley New Road is to be closed. This has resulted in a greater proportion of applications for admission to the school now coming from the area closer to the main school. Furthermore, following the appointment of the new headteacher, the school is more popular with parents and is now over-subscribed. This is having a significant effect on the background and attainment of pupils when they start school. The children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress towards attaining the Early Learning Goals¹.
2. Pupils' attainment² at the end of Key Stage 1 in the national tests in 2000 was below the national average and the average of similar schools in reading and mathematics and well below these averages in writing. The percentage of pupils who attained the nationally expected Level 2³ in the tests in 2000 was well above the national average and the average of similar schools in reading and close to these averages in writing and mathematics. However, no pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading and writing, and the percentage of pupils that attained Level 3 in mathematics was below the national average.
3. Since the arrival of the new headteacher last year, an assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses showed a clear need to eliminate the unsatisfactory

¹ On Early Learning Goals: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage continues until pupils enter Year 1 when they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

² On pupils' attainment: For reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, the average test/task score achieved by a school is calculated by dividing the sum of the scores achieved for that test/task across all eligible pupils by the total number of eligible pupils minus those pupils who were absent or disapplied. Absent pupils and disapplied pupils are not included in the calculations as it is not possible to say what contribution these pupils make to the overall performance of the school. These comparisons are the ones used in the figures printed in the summary of the report. When the percentage of pupils attaining a particular level is compared to other schools, this is stated clearly in the text.

³ On Levels: By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who reach Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

teaching noted in the last inspection report and ensure that most pupils attain the level expected of them nationally. This has been achieved, although there is a need to provide greater challenge for more pupils in Key Stage 1 who are capable of higher levels of attainment. The school has plans to address this need.

4. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in the national tests in 2000 was close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. This shows a clear improvement in attainment in science, which was well below the national average in the previous year. More than a quarter of this year group in 2000 was eligible for free school meals and, when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' attainment was above the average in English and science, and well above the average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 4 was above the national average in mathematics and close to the national average in English and science. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 was close to the national average in all three subjects, and well above the average of similar schools in mathematics and above this average in English and science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
5. The trend of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is rising broadly in line with the national trend. The trend in pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 has been erratic over the last few years. The new headteacher has arranged for all test papers to be moderated by the local education authority as part of its analysis of the school's provision. This has established a clear and reliable picture for future development that includes the need to ensure that teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment.
6. Inspection judgements are that pupils' attainment is, currently, below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science, and close to the national average in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. The one pupil with English as an additional language receives good support and has made very good progress since arriving at the school last year. The school has set suitable targets for improvement based on pupils' prior attainment.
7. Standards in literacy are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but standards are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils leave the school. This demonstrates good progress because the school's detailed records show that pupils' attainment was well below average when they started school. In reading, this is mainly due to good teaching that provides opportunities to develop reading skills and strategies daily. In Key Stage 1, pupils recognise an increasing number of words and letter sounds, improving their skills in tackling unfamiliar words. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their reading skills well. They name their favourite authors and happily discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction, that they have read. The oldest pupils discuss the features of autobiographical writing and understand the difference between fact and opinion. However, the unsatisfactory library provision limits pupils' ability to develop effective research skills.
8. In writing, pupils in Key Stage 1 begin by writing their personal news and instructions for making such things as sandwiches. They also re-tell stories that are familiar to them, such as 'Goldilocks'. Pupils use simple punctuation correctly, although many pupils need reminding when writing independently. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell words with more than one syllable. In Key Stage 2, pupils improve their ability to use grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly, and write in an increasing range of both formal and informal writing. For example, as well as writing

increasingly imaginative stories, such as 'Spooky House', they also write for a class newspaper.

9. Standards in numeracy are also below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but satisfactory by the time pupils leave the school. Progress is good because attainment was well below average when they started school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 confidently work at simple addition and subtraction problems using numbers up to 100 and begin to understand multiplication as repeated addition. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers and are becoming familiar with fractions and percentages.
10. In science, the pupils in Key Stage 1 build their scientific vocabulary and develop their investigative skills. They link objects with the source of the raw materials, such as wood from a tree and wool from sheep. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop an understanding of opaque and transparent in their work on light. They increase their appreciation of a fair test in an experiment to find the best material for muffling the sound of a buzzer. They study micro-organisms and learn that some bacteria can benefit us by helping us to digest food.
11. In all other subjects, standards are satisfactory. This represents good improvement in information and communications technology, as standards were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and were an issue for improvement. The co-ordinator has secured an improvement in the quality of resources for the subject and prepares the content of lessons for all classes. She has also improved teachers' skills, and pupils' learning is systematically improved through a clear focus on teaching the skills required progressively through the school.
12. Pupils achieve well in terms of the progress they have made since starting school. They capture the essentials of movement in colourful, vivid montages in art and they design and make various shelters. Pupils consider the effect of people on the local environment in studying the waste they create in a single classroom in geography and they develop a sound understanding of chronology through studying historical periods, such as the Romans, Aztecs, Victorians and World War II. Pupils enjoy a range of music and identify the rhythmic patterns in particular examples. In physical education, they create and perform a linked sequence of movements on the floor and when using apparatus.
13. During the inspection, pupils' progress in lessons was often better than the progress they have shown over the key stage. This is undoubtedly due to the improvements in teaching and the school's provision introduced by the new headteacher in the last year. It is a matter of time before these improvements have their full effect on raising standards throughout the school but the school is well set to improve standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good. They like school and their parents report that they are eager to attend. They are keen to contribute to discussions and listen politely to the contributions of others. Pupils listen carefully to instructions from their teachers and work hard at their tasks, maintaining concentration well. They work well on shared tasks and willingly help each other to achieve a common goal.
15. Behaviour in and out of lessons is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has recently introduced an effective behaviour management policy. Each pupil begins the week with ten merits that can be lost for breaking the

agreed class rules and restored for good behaviour. At the end of the week, extra play is given to all pupils with eight or more merits. All parents are informed of their children's behaviour weekly by a merit slip that is signed and returned to school. Pupils are polite and treat all the staff with appropriate courtesy. They are trustworthy, responsible for handling money and there are no concerns about the security of personal possessions. In addition, pupils respect property and use shared resources sensibly. Behaviour has been a problem and, in the last year, a few pupils have been excluded for serious breaches of discipline, usually for a day or two.

16. The personal development of pupils and relationships in the school are very good. The pupils act in a manner consistent with the school's Catholic ethos that gives emphasis to the ideas of caring, fairness and sharing. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and develop a respect for feelings and values. For example, older pupils were observed having sensitive discussion about loneliness in a religious education lesson and in an assembly for younger pupils there was a good discussion about giving. More practical examples include a good response to the many and varied charities supported by the school and direct help for old people in a garden project.
17. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative and parents believe that the school helps their children to mature. For example, older pupils cheerfully and competently 'manage' tables at lunchtime, serving meals and caring for younger pupils. This arrangement works very well and requires all parties to act responsibly. Year 6 pupils provide effective help with children in the reception classes during wet breaks. In general, pupils of all ages deal confidently with adults and they are happy to engage in discussion.
18. Attendance is satisfactory. It has been in line with the national average since the previous inspection and there are no unauthorised absences. Registration is carried out efficiently and promptly and late arrivals are rare.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Almost two thirds of the teaching observed was good or better and one tenth was very good. There was little difference between the teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and teaching in the Foundation Stage was satisfactory overall.
20. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is undoubtedly due to the measures introduced by the new headteacher. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy were introduced last year and co-ordinators provide plans in their subjects each half term for all classes. Teaching in all classes is monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher each half term in line with an agreed procedure. The findings are shared with the teacher both verbally and in writing, and areas for improvement are clearly identified.
21. Teachers' planning for lessons is good. There is a clear identification of what teachers want pupils to learn in the lesson and this is prominently displayed on the board throughout the lesson. This means that pupils are aware of what they are doing and why they are doing it and, as a result, they show high degrees of motivation and work hard at their tasks. Teachers also plan for a variety of practical tasks that involve pupils actively. Introductions are clear and frequently harness the attention and

interest of pupils, and teachers use the end of the lesson to remind pupils what they have been learning and assess that their objectives for the lessons have been achieved. This information is used to plan activities at an appropriate level for the next lesson.

22. All teachers maintain good relationships in their classrooms and they manage pupils well. Consequently, no instances of unacceptable behaviour were observed during the inspection. This is particularly pleasing as the school has a concern about behaviour and has introduced measures to improve it. The practical, stimulating and purposeful activities planned by teachers promote pupils' interest and they concentrate well on these tasks. For example, in a well-organised geography lesson, a study of the environment and the need for conservation required pupils to weigh and sort the rubbish they had collected in their classroom. A series of activities required pupils to analyse their findings and seek ways to improve the situation. There was a brisk pace to the lesson and there was no time wasted before conclusions had to be shared with the whole class. Pupils responded positively with enthusiasm, commitment and a willingness to work together towards a shared objective. Although this was one of the best lessons observed, the elements that made it so successful are present in most lessons.
23. There are elements in many lessons that, although satisfactory, can be improved. For example, the assessment of pupils' learning is not always used effectively enough to ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level of difficulty, particularly in English. This is because not all teachers are sufficiently familiar with the levels of attainment of the National Curriculum and this limits their ability to assess the standard of pupils' attainment correctly. There are also difficulties encountered in siting one classroom in an area between two classrooms, the hall and the only access to the rest of the school. The teacher manages the frequent interruptions well but the situation is unsatisfactory. However, this area will no longer be used as a classroom once the new buildings are complete.
24. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective, although the school did not implement the National Strategy for Literacy until last year. Nevertheless, the national strategies for both literacy and numeracy are having a positive effect on both teaching and learning and teachers are confident in teaching the basic skills. Good opportunities are taken to teach literacy and numeracy in other lessons. For example, literacy is developed in history and geography, and numeracy is required for many activities in design and technology as well as geography. Information and communications technology develops and improves literacy skills through using a word processor, and numeracy is required for creating databases that are used in other subjects, such as science and mathematics.
25. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and the one pupil with English as an additional language. They write the individual education plans for pupils in their class, although some teachers require greater support than they receive at present. The school has begun to identify gifted and talented pupils and works with a group of nine local schools to provide activities in a variety of areas with a teacher who has particular expertise in that area. For example, talented pupils in physical education will attend a session at a local primary school next term. Last term, pupils from these nine schools who show a particular talent for music visited St Mary's and were led in musical activities by the deputy headteacher.
26. It has not been possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching in the non-core subjects. This is because only a few lessons were seen in these areas

of the curriculum and inspectors cannot be certain that the same quality is evident in all lessons. Furthermore, there is frequently a dichotomy between the progress pupils make in most lessons and the progress they have made throughout each key stage. The evidence of the inspection is that this is due to the recent improvements in teaching and learning and it will take a little time before these improvements have the intended effect on standards. Pupils are now making greater progress than has previously been the case, as is shown in the standards of attainment at the end of each key stage. Pupils learn well with these improvements in teaching at the school. They are totally involved in lessons, work hard with good concentration and have a clear understanding of what they are learning and why. The school is well placed to improve standards as a result of the quality of teaching and learning now evident in the school.

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

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for children in the reception classes and in both key stages are satisfactory. The school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There are policies for personal, health and social education, and for sex education. The curriculum for the under-fives is planned in line with the Early Learning Goals.
28. All pupils have equal access to a curriculum, which is broadly based, and suitably balanced. There is an appropriate allocation of time for each area of the curriculum with a strong emphasis upon the delivery of literacy and numeracy. The school now meets the recommended amount of teaching time in Key Stage 2, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection.
29. The school complies with the special educational needs Code of Practice⁴. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and pupils make sound progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when such provision was ineffective and was identified as an area for improvement. However, the school recognises the need to further improve the quality and the use of individual education plans.
30. There have been rapid and enriching developments in curriculum provision since the beginning of the last school year in September 1999. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been enthusiastically and successfully introduced. No opportunities for prior training in these new schemes had been provided for staff. However, they worked together to respond well to these initiatives, and made good use of the in-service training in literacy and numeracy provided by curriculum advisers from the local education authority and school staff. Teachers identify pupils who, for literacy and numeracy, will gain from the provision of 'booster' classes and the homework club to enhance their learning experiences and enable them to raise their standards of attainment.
31. Recent developments in the curriculum have been based on the revision of the National Curriculum introduced at the beginning of this term. To assist in developing the planning for subjects other than English and mathematics, the school is using the

⁴ On SEN Code Of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

national guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school is currently working on the development of improved guidelines for art, music and physical education. The policy and guidelines for information and communications technology have been reviewed and provision for this subject is now good and this represents an improvement since the time of the last report. There is more joint planning of lessons by staff and this has helped to ensure that pupils on both sites have common learning experiences.

32. Some parents expressed a degree of concern about the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence indicates that the curriculum is significantly enriched by the good provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are able to engage in sporting activities such as football, netball, skittleball, short tennis and athletics. In addition to choir and the school's involvement in the Bolton and Horwich music festivals, activities that extend subject knowledge and skills include the recorder group, after-school computer classes and the homework club. Some parents regret that these activities take place on the main school site, although members of staff drive the St Joseph's school minibuses to provide transport for pupils between the two sites. Year 6 pupils have a residential visit to Patterdale Hall in the Lake District, and Year 4 pupils have also had a residential visit to Eureka, the science museum in Halifax. These activities also make a good contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils' learning is further enriched by the visits to sites such as Chester, Wigan Pier, Styal Mill, and the Second World War exhibition in Preston, as well as a Victorian centre at a local school and investigations of the local environment.
33. All pupils enjoy equal access to the range of the school's curricular and extra-curricular activities. As they pass through the school, pupils' personal and social development and health education are provided in lessons such as religious education and in the personal, social and health education programme in Year 6. Personal development is intrinsically woven into the general ethos and Catholic beliefs of the school. Parents receive a weekly record of pupils' behaviour and achievement through the merit award system.
34. The school enjoys strong links with the church, and there are good links with partner institutions that develop pupils' understanding of living in a community. There are close links with the nursery school, and with St Joseph's secondary school. There are good cluster arrangements with eight other primary schools for sports, games competitions, and a half-termly programme for a number of talented pupils. Pupils, especially in the upper part of the school, participate in activities based in two local secondary schools that have achieved sports college and technology college status.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and this is entirely consistent with the aims and ethos of the school. At the previous inspection, spiritual development was noted as a particular strength and this is still the case. Pupils are given good opportunities for reflection in both religious education and assemblies, and a sense of spirituality permeates the school. For example, displays of poetry by pupils include many good examples concerned with feelings, and pupils' artwork includes representations of emotion.
36. Moral development is also inherent in the life of the school. The behaviour policy, for example, has a clear moral basis since it is underpinned by the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation. The ideas of fairness and sharing are promoted in lessons and in the range of charities that are supported by the school. A range of good opportunities helps pupils to develop socially. For example, there are residential visits for two year groups, the lunchtime arrangements encourage social interaction in a 'family'

atmosphere and there is a wide range of sports activities that involve contact with other schools.

37. A range of visits, for example to museums and Jodrell Bank, enhances both the social and cultural provisions. The provision for pupils' cultural development, although satisfactory overall, has other good features. For example, the school has an active choir, there is involvement with music festivals and poetry readings, and artists have visited the school. However, the study of other cultures is less well developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Arrangements for the welfare of pupils are good. Child protection arrangements are very good and all members of staff have had training in this area. The governing body pays conscientious attention to health and safety issues and all statutory requirements are met. Lunchtime supervision arrangements are well organised and supervisors, who have received training in health and safety, child protection and behaviour management, are confident in their roles. The school also makes toast and fruit available to replace sweets as part of the 'healthy school' campaign.
39. The behaviour management arrangements are very good. Class rules are agreed with the pupils and teachers maintain good relationships in all classrooms, which has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. The merit system provides all pupils with ten merits at the beginning of each week and pupils who have eight or more at the end of the week receive extra play. Merits are lost for breaches of the class rules but can be regained with good behaviour, and parents are informed of their pupils' behaviour each week. Pupils acknowledge the improvement in behaviour due to the current arrangements that they understand well. Parents like the weekly reports about their children's behaviour that they sign and return to the school.
40. There are good monitoring and recording arrangements for pupils' attendance. Teachers complete registers appropriately and parents co-operate with the clear procedures for them to inform the school of their children's absence. There are well-organised arrangements for liaison with parents when their children are absent. There is no formal procedure to monitor personal development. However, the caring ethos of the school, small class sizes and good relationships ensure satisfactory levels of educational and personal support.
41. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In addition to the assessment of children when they start school and the National Curriculum statutory tests at the end of each key stage, the school now uses the non-statutory tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to help provide a picture of pupils' progress. Tracking sheets for mathematics and English record how well pupils are attaining in relation to National Curriculum levels of attainment. This illustrates how well the school has improved since the time of the last report in 1996, when the procedures for assessment were inadequate. As part of the evaluation of the recently adopted teaching schemes based on guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the school plans to extend similar approaches towards termly assessment and recording in other subjects.
42. The analysis of assessment information is used effectively. Analysis of national assessment results shows that there is not much difference in the performance of girls and boys. The results from other tests are used to identify pupils who have special educational needs or who will benefit from particular support in 'booster' classes and the homework club. The analysis of test results has also informed the organisation of single year group lessons for older pupils, particularly in science.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Information for parents and, particularly, information about their children's progress has improved significantly over the last year and it is now very good. This improvement is acknowledged by many parents. Information on progress is very comprehensive and includes a well-presented annual progress report, weekly reports on behaviour and the results of assessment tests annually with explanatory notes. There are two formal parents' consultation evenings each year and an open-door policy operates with good opportunities for parents to discuss concerns with teachers. Other information about school life is also very good. For example, each half term parents are provided with details about the content of lessons in all subjects, there are frequent and informative newsletters, meetings about national assessment tests and an open evening for parents new to the school.
44. Most parents have very positive views about the school, particularly regarding features associated directly with the education of their children. For example, parents consider that their children like school and they make good progress with high achievement. Respondents to the parents' survey think that teaching is good, and that their children behave well and they become mature and responsible. They feel comfortable in approaching the school. However, a number of parents are less happy with homework, extra-curricular activities, information about their children's progress and the links with parents.
45. Most of the concerns are associated with objections to the establishment of the school on a single site and to previous difficulties that are no longer relevant. Inspectors have considered the evidence carefully and find that these concerns are not justified. The amount of homework provided is similar to most schools, parents receive very good information about their children's progress, the range of extra-curricular activities is good and the management of the school is now very good.
46. Furthermore, the school has worked hard to address these issues. For example, the biggest concern for parents is the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors judge that the range of these activities is good but they are all provided on the main school site while some parents want these activities to take place at the Chorley New Road site which is closer to their homes. The school has arranged for the headteacher and the caretaker to drive the minibuses at St Joseph's School to take the pupils to the main school site and to take them back to the annexe at Chorley New Road where parents can collect their children. In addition, the school is creating a committee to look at issues arising from establishing the school on a single site once the current building work is complete. This is to include governors, teachers, parents and pupils. These difficulties have arisen during the nine year period between amalgamating the two schools and establishing the school on a single site, which was a key issue for development in the last inspection report.
47. Apart from the problems caused by the disaffected group of parents, the contribution of most parents to the life of the school benefits their children. A small but growing group of dedicated parents help in school and the parent teacher association is very supportive. Good support is given to school events, such as class assemblies and the home/school agreement encourages parents to help their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school is well led

by the enthusiastic and very able headteacher, who has a clear idea of the sort of school that St Mary's should be. Although she has only been in school a little over a year, she has quickly identified key areas for development, and has been a significant driving force behind many improvements that have taken place in that time. She provides a determination and a will to succeed that is already having a positive effect on standards and she has demonstrated the capacity to take difficult decisions in the interests of the whole-school community. For example, the large budget deficit has been remedied, some issues concerning the rationalisation of the school's two sites have been resolved and others are being addressed, and the management structure has been reorganised. A number of staff appointments and changes have taken place which have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, whose role has been significantly developed and who now has a good overview of whole-school issues. The school's aims are met in terms of providing a caring community, and there is an explicit aim to improve standards of attainment. The school has implemented procedures to evaluate and analyse its performance. Assessment data is analysed, and the role of subject co-ordinators has been developed to enable them to analyse and evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their curriculum areas.

49. The very good leadership of the school involves all members of staff in working to raise standards and there is now a clear commitment by all members of staff to work as a team towards school improvement. In the re-structuring of management roles, subject co-ordinators now have more responsibility for their curriculum areas. They have clearly defined roles that include revision of subject policies, schemes and resources. They manage budgets for their subject, monitor planning and pupils' work and contribute to the school development plan. Co-ordinators report to the governing body on developments taking place in their subject and are encouraged to evaluate their subject areas and consider areas for improvement. The co-ordinators for science and information and communications technology, in particular, have been very effective in raising standards in their subjects. The curriculum co-ordinators are proving very effective now in managing their subjects and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have instigated a rigorous programme of monitoring teaching across the school that identifies areas for improvement for individual teachers. The role of subject co-ordinators is developing to monitor teaching in all curriculum areas.
50. The governing body is very supportive of the school and the headteacher. There are a number of new governors and they are very keen to see their roles develop. Appropriate committees are in place and individual governors have a link with each curriculum area. Regular reports and presentations from the headteacher and teaching staff mean that communication is improved and governors have a clearer view of strengths and areas for development. Many governors visit the school regularly during the school day. The school development plan is a comprehensive document that clearly identifies all aspects of school development and provides a clear focus for school improvement. A draft policy for performance management has been established. Targets for the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been set, with the vice chair of governors playing a significant part in developing school performance management.
51. Professional development is co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher and is prioritised in the school development plan as a result of staff interviews. Formal systems of appraisal are in abeyance but the headteacher's practice of holding regular interviews with all teachers on a range of issues, including professional development, is a useful strategy that contributes to the school development plan. The procedures for inducting

staff new to the school are good.

52. Headteacher, staff, governors and many parents are working very hard to establish St Mary's School on one site. Many school policies and practices, formerly applied differently on two separate sites, have been rationalised. The governors are currently studying a proposal for a committee to be set up, comprising teachers, parents, pupils and governors, to consider further issues of amalgamation and to plan a celebration of the 'new' school.
53. The financial management of the school is good. The deficit budget that existed two years ago has now been remedied, mainly through the reorganisation of the staffing structure. The school effectively applies the principles of best value as care is taken to obtain value for all purchases and work done in the school. The finance committee monitors spending effectively and budget statements that are easily accessible inform them about the financial situation in the school. The school develops plans imaginatively to maximise the benefits for pupils and the headteacher uses additional sources of funding and grants to support recent improvements in the teaching of literacy and numeracy as well as other areas of the curriculum. Specific funds, such as those for literacy and special educational needs, are used appropriately.
54. Day to day finances are managed well by the very competent administration officer who also provides a friendly and efficient welcome to parents and visitors alike. She is enthusiastic and makes good use of new technology. The school has responded to a recommendation in the last school audit and replaced manual accounting methods by use of computer technology. It is now participating with the local education authority in a pilot scheme to increase the efficiency in budgeting using new computer technology. The school gives good value for money.
55. There is a suitable number of qualified staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The accommodation is currently unsatisfactory in a number of respects. For example, school meals at the main site must be served in classrooms because the location of the kitchen prohibits the use of the hall, one class is taught in a limited space and the library is a temporary arrangement in the corner of the hall. Outside facilities are limited and the state of external decoration is poor. The current building works that will establish the school on a single site are planned to remove these unsatisfactory features. The level of resources is generally satisfactory except in physical education where provision for indoor and outdoor activities also requires improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards and continue the improvement shown in the last year, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - (1) Improve teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum by compiling portfolios of pupils' work and assigning National Curriculum levels of attainment to each example. (Paragraphs 5, 23.)
 - (2) Continue to develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs by ensuring a consistency in the quality of individual education plans and their use in planning lessons. (Paragraphs 25, 29, 74.)
 - (3) With the creation of the new library, provide opportunities for pupils to develop

independent learning skills. (Paragraphs 7, 55, 70, 71, 76.)

57. Minor areas for improvement:

The school might consider the improvement of resources for physical education and the development of opportunities to improve pupils' awareness of other cultures.
(Paragraphs 37, 55, 121.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 52 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 54 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 10 | 55 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 253 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 28 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 46 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 10 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2000 | 15 | 12 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | Girls | 11 | 9 | 10 |
| | Total | 26 | 24 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 96 | 89 | 93 |
| | National | 83 | 84 | 90 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | Girls | 8 | 10 | 9 |
| | Total | 23 | 25 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 85 | 93 | 89 |
| | National | 84 | 88 | 88 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2000 | 25 | 26 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 20 | 23 | 22 |
| | Girls | 19 | 19 | 22 |
| | Total | 39 | 42 | 44 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 76 | 82 | 86 |
| | National | 75 | 72 | 85 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 21 | 23 | 22 |
| | Girls | 19 | 19 | 22 |
| | Total | 40 | 42 | 44 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 78 | 82 | 86 |
| | National | 70 | 72 | 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 | 1 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 212 |
| 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 | 4 | 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) | 12.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.8 |
| Average class size | 25.3 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 80 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 477,081 |
| Total expenditure | 465,374 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,681 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -7,254 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 4,453 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 247 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 90 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 46 | 48 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 33 | 61 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 35 | 54 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 25 | 46 | 19 | 3 | 6 |
| The teaching is good. | 35 | 57 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 23 | 45 | 19 | 7 | 5 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 44 | 45 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 44 | 53 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 22 | 45 | 27 | 4 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 35 | 46 | 11 | 5 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 35 | 59 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 16 | 25 | 25 | 15 | 19 |

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

58. Children enter the reception classes in the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, there were 40 children in the two reception classes. Due to the constraints of accommodation, raised in the previous inspection, and in preparation for the development of the school on one site, children are suitably organised into one of two teaching groups each morning for activities to support language, literacy and mathematical development. In the afternoon one reception group and a mixed reception and Year 1 group are formed to support the development of knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.
59. Evidence from the local education authority assessment of children when they enter the school shows a recent change. For the year groups that entered prior to 1999, their attainment was well below the county average. In 1999 the intake of children rose by approximately one third and, with the school being based on a single site this year, a greater proportion of pupils now come from this area. Consequently, the attainment of pupils when they start school is rising and is closer to the county average. The applications for admission to the school rose again this year. Evidence from lesson observations and by tracking the progress of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 shows that most children make at least satisfactory progress and a small minority make good progress towards attaining the early learning goals as they move through the Foundation Stage. They make a successful transition to the work of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs are promptly identified and given sensitive support, enabling them to participate in all aspects of the work.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Most children demonstrate a good range of personal and social skills and they cope well with the routines of school life. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that children start school with a good measure of confidence. They respond well to opportunities to choose for themselves from a range of tasks and work and play alongside each other when, for example, choosing to play in 'the office' or in co-operating to 'fish' for letter shapes that they know. The development of an appropriate degree of self-reliance was illustrated well by children independently putting on aprons before painting. A child, getting in a muddle with his apron, was able to initiate contact with a nearby adult in order to share the fun of it before confidently asking for help. Most children take pride in being able to name their own work or complete their picture with the right number of buttons on the 'lollipop lady's coat. They enjoy telling each other what they are doing as they work and are able to take turns in a group activity. Because the adults who work with these children consistently respond positively to their needs, value their ideas and are sensitive to expressions of feelings, the children feel valued and have a growing awareness of their own worth and that of others. By the time they enter Year 1 they have a well-established sense of belonging within the school community and a clear understanding of what is considered acceptable or unacceptable behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Most children enjoy whole-class literacy activities. They listen attentively to stories recognising recurring words and phrases and make relevant responses to questions.

When following the story of the 'Enormous Water Melon' children identify the recurring rhyme to guess a missing word. Given sight of the initial letter many children use their increasing phonic knowledge to decide on the correct word. In group activities all children handle books appropriately, turning pages and scanning pictures for content. They understand that print carries the story in words and the layout and pictures can provide clues to help interpretation. The question, "Why have they made the word 'pulled' bigger each time?" prompts the response, "Because they had to pull harder". Children readily talk to adults who work with them about their experiences and ideas. They take notice of words new to them and eventually add them to their personal vocabulary. For example, in a shared reading activity children readily offered a range of words meaning the same as enormous. Most children make appropriate progress in recording their ideas through pictures, letter-like shapes and copied words. For example, children write their name or identifiable mark on the sheet before starting a picture and they use meaningful marks when completing forms in 'the office'.

Mathematical development

62. All children enjoy whole class sessions developing counting skills through songs and games. They recite the sequence of numbers to ten and, within a group, can count to 20. When given a number most are able to count on to ten and in a series of numbers can recognise those that are out of sequence. Most children count objects to five and can record their findings using coloured symbols and identify the appropriate numerals. Higher attaining children do so to ten. In practical activities children investigate patterns, and sort items for like properties such as morning, afternoon and night activities. Through sand and water play children are developing an understanding of comparative measures, such as long and short, heavy and light, more and less. Much of the progress made is related to the provision of a suitable balance of teacher-directed and purposeful activities chosen by the children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children are encouraged to observe closely and identify similarities and differences in what they see and touch. In activities associated with the topic 'Ourselves', children identify the differences within the class in height, hair and eye colour and how they have grown. In sand and water activities, they recognise the change when water is added to sand and the features shared by objects that float or sink. Baking provides valuable opportunities to observe the effects of combining, heating or cooling. Children show an appropriate understanding of their environment and the role adults play in society. After a visit from the 'lollipop lady' and opportunities for role-play, most children clearly understand her function and the importance of following her instructions to ensure both her safety and that of themselves. In working with a parent helper, children showed they can interpret a simple street map, are aware of possible hazards on a busy road, whom to call on in an emergency and how to do it. Most children know that computer keys or a mouse are used to navigate through a program and they quickly manage new programs with confidence when guided by teachers.

Physical development

64. Daily experiences of using tools such as pencils, crayons, glue sticks and scissors support the development of manipulative skills well so that already most children have acquired an appropriate pencil grip and manage construction equipment effectively. This was illustrated well by a group of children making jointed figures. In an activity lesson in the hall, children demonstrated an above average awareness of space and the position of themselves and others in it. They run, jump and balance well and know

that their heart beats faster after these activities. The absence of a designated secure area appropriately equipped to provide frequent opportunities for vigorous, imaginative play limits opportunities for children to make progress in this aspect of their development. However, current building works are planned to remedy this situation.

Creative development

65. Children enjoy singing and do so with enthusiasm. They sing a range of songs; articulating the words clearly and sustaining pitch appropriately. They show confidence using paint and most take great care to apply it. The development of painting from observation is shown in paintings of themselves and familiar objects. A suitable range of opportunities is provided for children to engage in role-play and they enjoy taking on and sustaining an adult role for some time. However in observed sessions there were no instances of children negotiating to create an imaginative group activity.
66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The best teaching is characterised by the clear identification of what the children should know, understand and be able to do by the end of the session. The introduction to the lesson is designed to catch and hold the attention of the children. A good balance of whole-class and purposeful group activities provides opportunities for children to learn through direct teaching and from each other. There is a suitable balance of teacher-directed and self-chosen tasks that are based on an assessment of prior learning and offer children good learning opportunities. Good questioning is used well to encourage the inclusion of all children and apt questions pertinent to individuals such as, "How do you know that the word says home or back?" are used well to help children learn. All teachers manage children well. Children's efforts and achievements are consistently acknowledged and inappropriate behaviour discretely but firmly handled.

ENGLISH

67. Pupils' attainment is below the national average at the end of the Key Stage 1 and close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.
68. In the national tests in 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below both the national average and the average of similar schools in reading, and well below these averages in writing. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 2 was well above the average in reading and close to the average in writing. However, no pupil attained the higher Level 3 and this negatively affects the overall attainment in both reading and writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in the national tests in 2000 was close to the national average and well above the average of schools with pupils from a similar background.
69. Standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 listen attentively to stories and questions and respond appropriately. Year 1 pupils respond promptly to a sequence of instructions when dispersing to working groups, and when talking about their work pupils confidently use the technical vocabulary to which they are systematically introduced. By the end of the key stage pupils explain their ideas in sentences often providing appropriate detail to help the listener understand better. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils maintain good listening habits. They show a developing understanding of the basic conventions of Standard English and are aware of when to use them. By the end of the key stage pupils offer considered opinions in discussion, listen more appreciatively

to the views of others and develop their thinking further as a result. The progress made in speaking skills owes much to the value that teachers place on pupils' oral contributions and the emphasis placed on developing their vocabulary, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. However, the development of skills associated with speaking to different audiences for different purposes is not sufficiently structured.

70. Pupils make good progress in reading in both key stages. This progress owes much to the practice of teaching the skills and strategies for reading systematically and providing daily opportunities to talk with the teacher about what is read or written. On entry to Year 1, most pupils handle books appropriately, know letter shapes represent sounds within words and that pictures provide clues when attempting to read words. Year 1 pupils recognise an increasing number of frequently occurring words and combinations of letter sounds in order to read simple texts. Year 2 pupils continue to build their knowledge of phonic rules and strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They recognise punctuation conventions and many use these to support both fluency and understanding. They talk about characters and the plot of stories and predict what might happen next. Pupils know the features of fiction and non-fiction books and the uses of the contents and index. However, their experience of using a library is significantly under developed because of restricted accommodation and this has a negative impact on progress.
71. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to systematically build up their knowledge of more complex letter strings and irregular words. The extended range of fiction and non-fiction texts they read and discuss with the teacher improves their understanding. In Year 3 most pupils are able to talk about their personal preferences in books. Older pupils name a range of authors currently writing for children and discuss both fiction and non-fiction books that have interested them. Year 6 pupils discuss the features of biographical writing and the difference between fact and opinion. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read a range of texts for pleasure and information. The development of information retrieval skills is very dependent on classroom exercises and the unsatisfactory library provision restricts the development of independent research skills. The school has identified the need to develop this aspect and the plans for refurbishment indicate that the school is well placed to improve this provision.
72. Pupils' attainment in writing is below average at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 2 this has a significantly negative impact on the overall attainment in English. The school is concerned to improve attainment and has already increased the time provided for developing writing skills, and training opportunities for teachers are improving their assessment techniques. In Year 1, pupils build on their early experiences of writing to record their personal news and appropriately sequence a set of instructions for making sandwiches or retell the story of 'Goldilocks'. By the end of the key stage, some pupils develop stories such as 'At the Beach' and include dialogue that is generally punctuated correctly. They plan and collect ideas to develop a 'shape' poem and demonstrate pleasure and sensitivity in doing so. Most pupils know the punctuation conventions related to sentence structure but a significant number need prompts to remind them of these when writing independently. Sensible use is made of phonic knowledge to spell more complex words but, often, frequently recurring irregular words are not remembered accurately.
73. Throughout Key Stage 2, grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught systematically. The range of formal and informal writing is extended as pupils move through the school. Teachers consistently make connections between pupils' reading experience and their writing activities so that most pupils confidently experiment with the structures and techniques used by established writers. Year 3 pupils, when writing a

story of a 'Spooky House', catch the interest of reader with an opening sentence such as, 'Lightening flashed and the first large drops of rain fell.' Report writing in a Year 4 newspaper follows an appropriate format with the headlines such as, 'School Having Classrooms Added.' Older pupils in the key stage experiment with vocabulary imaginatively when writing a poem on creation or describing Smarties. Higher attaining pupils use varied sentence structure effectively to create excitement or tension as in, 'I was nervous. My heart was pounding. I swallowed hard.' Handwriting skills are unsatisfactory mainly because expectations are inconsistent across the school and the introduction of joined script for those younger pupils with a well-developed print script is unnecessarily protracted.

74. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are supported sensitively by teachers and support staff. However, individual educational plans are not always sufficiently precise in identifying learning targets in small measurable steps so that pupils, teachers and parents can celebrate and check progress frequently. The one pupil with English as an additional language receives good support and has made very good progress since arriving at the school last year.
75. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes towards this subject. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other. They are eager to be involved in whole-class sessions and settle purposefully to learning tasks. The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively and teachers make appropriate adjustments in order to meet the assessed needs of pupils in their class. Purposeful opportunities are planned to use literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
76. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This consistency of teaching makes a major contribution to the effectiveness of learning and the subsequent attainment of all pupils. All class teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively and lessons have a good balance of whole-class, group and individual activities. They use this organisation to maximise opportunities for teaching knowledge and skills and to encourage pupils to express their ideas and learn from each other. When teaching is good, planning clearly demonstrates how pupils will be actively involved in the lesson. The learning intentions for lessons build on pupils' prior learning and identify exactly what pupils should know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. These are shared with pupils so that they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Purposeful activities, which are designed to suitably challenge all pupils, ensure interest and a good pace are maintained. Introductions to the lessons catch pupils' attention and teachers clearly demonstrate their knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the subject. Teachers pose questions that are pertinent to individual pupils so that appropriate learning is made. This was particularly good in lessons with a mixed-age group. Weaknesses occur where pupils' intended learning is not planned on assessment information and expectations are inappropriately challenging. This is particularly so for pupils of both below and above average ability, when learning targets are insufficiently precise. All teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum but there are insufficient opportunities to develop independent research skills. The school has already identified this as a concern.
77. The subject is managed effectively. On appointment the headteacher successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and specific funding has been used well to support its implementation. The recently appointed co-ordinator's audit has informed a clear plan of action to improve standards in each aspect of the National Curriculum with strategies already instituted to improve writing. Suitable assessment procedures

are in place to track progress and the outcome of these is used to inform long-term planning and to set broad targets. The development of individual pupil targets has been identified for future development. The scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and outcome of observation of classroom practice are suitably used to monitor and evaluate provision. Many of these are recent developments and therefore it is difficult to judge the full impact of them at this stage, but clearly the school is well placed to improve. Overall resources are satisfactory and where there are deficiencies, such as the library provision, the school has already identified and planned for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

78. Pupils' attainment is below the national average and the average of similar schools at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2 it is close to the national average and well above the average of similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms these standards. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. This is an improvement on the previous report where progress was said to be generally satisfactory.
79. The National Numeracy Strategy has recently been successfully introduced and it is evident that it has contributed to the positive attitudes that teachers and pupils now have towards mathematics. Improvements in teaching and planning and the improved use of assessments and test results are now enabling the school to be more effective in matching activities to needs of pupils, especially in the use of ability groups in Key Stage 2, and through 'booster' groups. These factors are beginning to have an effect on raising standards.
80. There have been other improvements in mathematics since the previous report. There is now more even coverage of mathematics topics, a more rigorous approach to mental work and effective use of information technology skills to develop mathematical concepts. Good systems of assessment and regular checking of pupils' attainment and progress have been implemented. The information gained is closely analysed and enables the school to track and target individuals and groups of pupils, and to provide more specialised support as appropriate. In both key stages there is sound provision in mathematics for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make sound progress in relation to their prior learning.
81. At the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are confident with numbers up to 100, and most understand place value and can work out sums involving simple addition and subtraction up to 100. Year 2 pupils show their understanding of multiplication as an 'array', such as three sets of ten, and as repeated addition, such as ten add ten add ten. Pupils gather and sort information and present their findings in the form of block graphs. Some pupils accurately interpret and comment upon their findings. Pupils develop an appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
82. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide with decimals and are beginning to convert fractions, decimals and percentages. The more able pupils work with simple ratios. Pupils measure angles accurately and know the properties of a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They understand parallel sides and right angles. Pupils estimate before counting and measure with a good deal of accuracy.
83. Whole-class work in mental mathematics develops pupils' listening skills, and well-targeted questioning encourages pupils to respond verbally. In one lesson where the teacher stated 'I am a square number between 17 and 30, what am I?' at least half the

class were instantly ready with an answer and an explanation. Measuring skills are used in both science and design and technology lessons. Pupils frequently use information technology skills to present data in graphs or charts. Some of the older pupils create graphs to show the rate of the pulse during sitting, walking, jogging and skipping. In geography, map-making uses and develops pupils' understanding of co-ordinates.

84. The quality of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and in over half of lessons seen it was good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and developing, and planning is good. Teachers show confidence in their teaching and management of pupils is varied and appropriate to the circumstances. Good relationships enable teachers and pupils to enjoy humorous situations when they crop up. In one lesson, when the class teacher asked everyone, 'Why might we need to know what a perimeter is?' one pupil immediately replied, 'Because they will ask us at the secondary school'. Everyone enjoyed the irony and his rueful expression! Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. Consequently, pupils' attitudes are good. They listen well, enjoy mathematics lessons and respond positively to questioning. Lessons move at a good pace and pupils work responsively when engaged in practical activities in groups. Resources are used effectively, with good use made of number sticks, fans and whiteboards to ensure the highest levels of participation in mental mathematics sessions.

SCIENCE

85. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards in science are a little below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the national tests in 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was close to the national average and above the average of similar schools. This demonstrates good improvement since the previous two years when results were well below the national average. Initiatives introduced since the appointment of the new headteacher have had a significant impact on raising the low standards in science. These include the analysis of test results to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning, the use of common planning for the two sites and the introduction of teaching in single year groups for the older pupils and 'booster' classes and a homework club has been introduced. Pupils' learning is now assessed each half term.
86. Pupils make good progress overall in both key stages and those with special educational needs generally make sound progress in relation to their prior learning. Many pupils enter Key Stage 1 with low attainment for their age, but as they pass through the school they develop a satisfactory scientific vocabulary and, in Key Stage 2 especially, develop their investigative skills. Year 1 pupils collect information about favourite types of food, and have some understanding as to how this can then be shown on a graph. In their work on materials, Year 2 pupils draw the source of raw materials such as wood from a tree, or wool from a sheep, and to link this with objects made from them. However insufficient opportunities are provided to introduce ideas of fair testing to younger pupils.
87. In Key Stage 2, pupils show an understanding of words such as opaque and transparent when working on light and shadows. They record observations of animals and habitats on a short walk to Rivington. Some pupils develop their own enquiry questions, and a few complete research into birds that is of a good quality. Older pupils demonstrate an increasing appreciation of a fair test when thinking about how to

test the best material for muffling the sound of a continuous buzzer. They suggest materials such as foil, bubble wrap, cot blanket, and felt to wrap around the buzzer. They know the need to 'keep things equal', or 'keep the same' in tests as they discuss factors such as distance, place, and having just one layer of wrapping. In work on micro-organisms, the oldest pupils learn that some bacteria can be good for you and they explain that some bacteria can help to digest food. They also show a good understanding of the ways in which different types of packaging for food are hygienic and keep food safe to eat. There are, however, not enough opportunities to enable older pupils to engage in independent investigations by setting more of their own questions.

88. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and this helps the pupils to make good progress. Lessons are prepared thoroughly at both key stages, and teachers use effective methods of classroom management to sustain pupils' involvement and concentration. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this is an improvement since the last inspection when some staff lacked sufficient knowledge. This results in pupils' positive attitudes to learning throughout both key stages and their good responses in lessons. They display curiosity and enthusiasm especially when involved in practical activities. They show the ability to work collaboratively and relationships are good throughout the school. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, and all teachers have responded well in working more closely together in planning, and in bringing greater levels of uniformity to the science teaching on the two sites. The increasing use of the recently introduced 'fair testing chart' is having a positive impact on learning as it strengthens the investigation work. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the various visits in science, such as in the local area, Eureka exhibition and Jodrell Bank.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Only one lesson was observed during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on the teachers' planning, samples of previous work, displays around the school, scrutiny of pupils' sketch books and discussions with staff and pupils. Indications from these are that standards of attainment are typical of those expected for pupils at the end of both key stages and learning is satisfactory.
90. In Key Stage 1, pupils build effectively on the skills acquired in the Foundation Stage. They experiment with an increasing range of media including paint, paper, felt and other materials to create an effect in representing 'mini-beasts' and their environment. They also use materials imaginatively, choosing those with which to work, making their selection on the basis of colour and shape. This was well illustrated in the lesson seen. Pupils chose from a range of leaves and twigs to make careful observations of detail, shape, colour and texture, and then create their own repeating patterns using two or three different pastels. The results are, without exception, very individual, striking and skilful. Pupils continue to develop drawing skills through observational drawings of still life, and sketches of friends. Sound progress is made in colour mixing and the use of appropriate materials such as a variety of paints, string, wool, tinsel, card, crayon and charcoal.
91. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on previously learned skills. Pupils bring in their own subjects for a 'still life'. They choose the media by which they are represented and make their own arrangement of the objects. The results show careful colour mixing and a skilful use of light and shade. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of some famous artists and their style of painting. They examine the work of Henri Rousseau

and paint in the style of David Hockney. The oldest pupils, in looking at action pictures, first of all produce a symbolic representation of action using very simple forms to capture some of the essentials of movement. They then gradually develop these through several stages to produce a colourful, vivid montage of well-observed figures. Good use is made of computer software, as an alternative to painting, to develop designing skills. This was illustrated well by pupils creating computer-generated images for wrapping paper using repeating patterns. Detailed observational work develops well, as shown in representations of the school and church buildings by older pupils.

92. It is inappropriate to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed. However, teaching was good in the lesson observed, and pupils were engrossed in their work, thoroughly enjoying it. Pupil sketchbooks are well used throughout the school for pupils to generate ideas and practise skills. These books move through school with the pupils and provide a useful guide to their progress. Art is displayed widely through the school and makes a good contribution to other areas of the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement of the quality of teaching in the subject. However, from the evidence of this lesson, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and pupils about their work, it is evident that standards in design and technology meet expectations at the end of both key stages. The school is currently adapting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for a curriculum framework. This is helping to promote the systematic teaching of skills and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress throughout the school.
94. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn basic skills as they design rooms for homes. They also make playgrounds, which involves assembling, joining and combining skills, as well as using a variety of materials and techniques. In Year 4, pupils make containers for money. Having looked at various examples, they consider design questions such as 'What is the purpose?' 'Who is it for?' and 'How will we fasten it?' Two different types of stitching are tried. Pupils produce annotated sketches and share ideas together. They consider the sequence of stages in their work. They choose suitable techniques, shape and assemble materials and some pupils distinguish between what works well and what could be improved. Year 6 pupils study a range of shelters and work in groups to design and make a shelter with a specific purpose in mind. This includes a cat shelter, a storm shelter and one for a guinea pig. There is evidence of a steady progression in skills in planning and communicating design ideas through the school. In Key Stage 2, there is greater emphasis upon evaluating products and more use made of planning sheets. Although pupils make working models such as moving toys, they do not have enough experience using more technical construction equipment or of controlling models using information technology.
95. The enjoyment that pupils have for design and technology is evident from talking with them and from seeing the care they put into their work. Often there are good cross-curricular links with other subjects. This was illustrated well in a lesson in which a discussion about the design properties of a tent, erected in the classroom, involved pupils in thinking about many important ideas relating to science.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Standards in geography are satisfactory and meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and judgements are made on the evidence of a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and on display, looking at teachers' planning and talking to pupils about their work.
97. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their understanding of maps and the local environment by noting landmarks on their way to school. They create a chart to show the route from home to school with pictures of significant landmarks, such as traffic lights, a pond, swings and trees. They chart the weather everyday for a period and record the temperature. They follow the adventures of 'Bessie Bear', who is taken on trips by various people. In this way, they map the locations of Bridlington, Horwich and Anglesea. They also learn about places further away, such as Kos in Greece and the United States, when teachers take Bessie on their holidays.
98. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their map reading skills and learn compass directions. They increase their knowledge of their local environment through walks where they note different kinds of habitats of various creatures, such as rabbits, ducks and squirrels. They also study the effect of people on the environment, particularly the volume of rubbish that accumulates. In a very informative project, pupils collect all the rubbish in their own classroom during a week. They weigh the rubbish and sort it to see what materials are being thrown away. In this way, they discover that a lot of paper is discarded without being used fully and they consider ways to reduce the amount of rubbish they make. The pupils conclude that if they use both sides of a piece of paper the environment will benefit and they also consider the use they can make in the school of recycling schemes.
99. Pupils consider how water is moved around the school as they tour the school tracking pipes and locating water outlets. They use this information to make plans for moving water from one place to another. Pupils learn about the water cycle and produce very attractive diagrams to show this. They encounter countries, such as India, where rainfall is significantly different than in Britain. Pupils study the effect of the building of dams on the environment and look at the arguments for and against the building of dams.
100. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, and only two classes were seen in Key Stage 2. It is not possible, therefore, to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching in the subject. However, there have been improvements to the quality of teaching recently and the lessons observed were good or better. The teachers planned these lessons well and carefully identified the learning that they hoped to achieve. Interesting practical activities encouraged pupils' interest and they showed enthusiasm for the tasks set. Teachers maintain good relationships and this supports the good behaviour of pupils. The lessons were organised with a succession of brief activities that established a brisk pace and required that the pupils worked quickly and produced a suitable amount of work in a short time. The good quality of the new teaching and learning strategies is having a positive effect on raising standards, but it will take time for this to have its full impact on standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

101. Only one lesson was observed in history during the inspection. However, from this lesson, and from looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and talking with pupils,

it is evident that standards of attainment in history at both key stages meet the expectations for pupils of this age.

102. Pupils make sound progress in acquiring appropriate knowledge and understanding of the past. Pupils in Year 1 study homes and they observe homes, both old and new, in the local environment. They visit a Victorian centre at a local school and learn more about features of a home, a street, and a schoolroom, in the past. Year 2 pupils work on famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Samuel Pepys and Louis Braille to expand their historical knowledge and understanding of the concept of change over time. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their understanding of chronology and knowledge of the past as they study the Romans, the Aztecs and children in the Second World War. They demonstrate an increasing degree of historical imagination and empathy. For example, when studying Ancient Greece, they are encouraged to write a tourists' guide to Ancient Greece and to write comparative accounts of what life would be like in Athens and in Sparta. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect upon historical interpretation and to give reasons why the past is represented in different ways.
103. As only one lesson was seen it is not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching. The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership, and effective use is being made of the curriculum guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school aims to use these to develop more structured guidelines which will also provide a platform for more systematic assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in history. Pupils' learning is enriched by the visits to sites such as Chester, Wigan Pier, Styal Mill, and the Second World War exhibition in Preston. Useful links are made with other subjects, including geography and English, and history makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory, with pupils demonstrating some good features of their learning in Key Stage 2.
105. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow a clear programme of work designed to develop their awareness of computers and increase their skills. They are familiar with the parts of the computer and note the functions of different keys on the keyboard. Pupils use a word processor for short pieces of writing and explore the opportunities provided by a drawing program. They consider how computer programs can create models of imaginary worlds and how realistic these are. For example, pupils in Year 1 use the program 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' and discuss the kinds of sounds they would expect to hear in the countryside and compare the sounds heard on the computer to test their authenticity. Pupils explore control technology with a programmable toy skilfully. They record their planning on an instruction sheet before testing it with the programmable toy.
106. In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to combine pictures and text, initially using Clipart in stories about a wizard. They learn how to highlight text to change the colour and size of fonts in an activity linked to work in English on calligrams, such as writing the word 'higher' with letters that steadily increase in height. By Year 6, pupils use their writing and drawing skills to design slides for a multi-media presentation on themes they choose for themselves, such as ice-skating. They use a database to analyse information on their favourite television programmes and pets. They create a variety of graphs and interpret them accurately. Older pupils develop a sophisticated

understanding of the capability of databases. They know how to search and sort data and display a good understanding of field names, considering realistic and unrealistic searches. For example, in using a database on Victorians that lists the causes of death, they realise that searching for 'Why did people die?' is unproductive while the question, 'How many people were murdered?' is effective.

107. Pupils develop a very good understanding of control technology through use of logo. They plan their work carefully, utilising their developing numeracy skills to measure distances and angles of turn. They test their plan at the computer and quickly recognise problems, suggesting and testing possible solutions to move the 'turtle' in the manner they intend.
108. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2. It is, therefore, not possible to make a secure judgement of the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, the quality of the teaching in the lessons seen was good or very good. The co-ordinator plans work carefully for all classes that ensures that tasks are developed continuously with increasing levels of difficulty. The most obvious feature of the teaching that benefits pupils' learning is the clear teaching of skills before pupils embark on activities to practise and improve these skills. Teachers do this confidently, having improved their own understanding through training sessions led by the co-ordinator. The result is that lessons have a clear learning intention that is both realistic and specific and made clear to pupils who understand clearly what they are doing and why. This means that pupils are fully involved in activities and work hard to complete the tasks set for them, behaving well throughout lessons and sharing equipment happily and co-operatively. It also means that pupils have well developed skills that can be easily transferred to using information technology in other subjects that successfully uses their skills of literacy and numeracy.
109. The co-ordinator has been very effective in raising standards in the subject. Training sessions for teachers and strong support in planning lessons has improved teachers' confidence and established a clear developmental programme throughout the school. She has also conducted an analysis of the school's needs and, as a result, ensured that all classes now have modern computers and new software that has been chosen carefully. This means that a minimum number of programmes are used that cover the areas required by the National Curriculum and ensures continuity in pupils' learning throughout the school. For example, one word processor is in use from the reception class to the oldest pupils that perfectly matches their developing needs as they move through the school.
110. The co-ordinator monitors the work of pupils well and has a clear understanding of the standards currently being achieved and how they can be improved. She has compiled a portfolio of pupils' work that examples the highest and lowest standards in each year for each area of work in information and communications technology. This is shared with teachers to show what can be achieved. All pupils maintain their own files of 'computer work' that clearly demonstrates their progress and assists teachers in planning tasks for them at an appropriate level of difficulty.

MUSIC

111. Only one lesson was observed in each key stage. Evidence from these, hymn practices in both key stages, teachers' planning and discussions indicate that pupils' attainment meets expectations at the end of each key stage.

112. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with an appropriate experience of singing rhymes and songs from memory and exploring non-tuned instruments. Most pupils in both key stages enjoy singing activities. They sing with clear articulation and sustain pitch and rhythm well. They readily practise to improve their performance. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise the importance of pulse and can sustain it using clapping to support the quality of their singing. They name and use non-tuned instruments effectively and are able to talk about suitability for purpose and other ways of producing sounds with the same instrument when planning an accompaniment for singing. From a wide selection of styles of music, including Western European and third world cultures, Year 5 pupils recognise basic features of each and share their thinking. They enjoy listening to such a range of music and most readily move to the rhythmical patterns in particular examples. These pupils recognise and name tuned and non-tuned instruments, explaining the specific features of each.
113. It is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching but in the lessons observed it was satisfactory or good. Clear learning intentions are identified and the activities are designed to provide opportunities for all pupils to be involved in purposeful and practical experiences. This ensures that pupils develop good attitudes to music and this makes a major contribution to their learning. All pupils handle instruments sensibly and are eager to be included in music-making activities such as the recorder club and choir. Pupils with special educational needs are suitably supported and this enables them to make appropriate progress.
114. The co-ordinator has, wisely, organised in-service training for staff to improve their expertise in the subject. A suitable policy is in place to ensure the requirements of the revised National Curriculum are met. A suitable framework provides guidance as to when the required aspects are to be the main focus of teaching. The co-ordinator has introduced a new scheme of work for Key Stage 1 to support planning. He has identified the need to introduce a continuation of the same scheme for Key Stage 2. The development of procedures for assessing attainment and extending the monitoring of provision beyond scrutiny of planning has already been identified by the co-ordinator. Good provision is made for talented pupils within the cluster of primary schools. The high level of involvement in parish, local events and major festivals enriches the life and work of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. During the inspection it was only possible to see gymnastics lessons in the school hall. Evidence is drawn from these lessons, from scrutiny of the school's planning and from discussions. Examination of the school's planning shows that an appropriate curriculum is followed. In those aspects seen, attainments are broadly what would be expected of pupils of this age. There is good provision for extra-curricular sports activities.
116. At Key Stage 1 pupils develop increasing confidence and greater physical control and mobility. They perform simple gymnastic skills on the floor. Pupils begin to develop sequences of movement showing appropriate entry and exit.
117. By the end of Key Stage 2, work in group situations reveals greater awareness and good levels of co-operation. Pupils confidently produce a series of planned shapes with their bodies and perform a linked sequence of movements both on the floor and using apparatus. However, where pupils spend time queuing whilst awaiting their turn

on the apparatus, opportunities for practice in order to improve are diminished. When given the opportunity, pupils are increasingly able to evaluate their own performance, and can comment constructively about others' performance. The majority of pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

118. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well. They dress appropriately, show consideration and support for others and are well aware of safety issues. They co-operate well and are able to collaborate in their work.
119. The quality of teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and on one occasion was good. In this lesson, the learning intentions were clearly shared with the pupils at the outset, there was good interaction with the pupils and appropriate pauses were made for evaluation. Pupils listened and observed carefully, knew exactly what they had to do and all worked energetically.
120. An outdoor pursuits programme for the oldest pupils is held at Bolton School Centre, Patterdale, and this enhances physical education provision. Team activities such as netball, 'tag' rugby, football, short tennis, kwik' cricket and athletics are developed through inter-school competitions and are enjoyed by Key Stage 2 pupils, with much support from staff and parents. Bolton Wanderers Football Club provide skills coaching sessions.
121. Facilities at both sites, especially those outdoors, are unsatisfactory. The hall at the main site, whilst well used and reasonably spacious, suffers from having to accommodate the library because of the general lack of space. Outdoor, hard play areas at both sites are restrictive and there are no suitable grassed areas for outdoor games. There are insufficient, suitable resources for physical education.