

INSPECTION REPORT

BANKS LANE INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Offerton, Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106027

Headteacher: Mrs E Cook

Reporting inspector: Mr P Baxter
25217

Dates of inspection: 20-23 May 2002

Inspection number: 244983

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hulme Street Hempshaw Lane Offerton Stockport
Postcode:	SK1 4PR
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Armstrong
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25217	Paul Baxter	Registered inspector	Physical education Religious education	The school's results and achievements How well the school is led and managed
11077	Janet Harrison	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18146	Michael Onyon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
31838	Martyn Williams	Team inspector	English Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
7994	Pamela Weston	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Music	
22046	Jo Jolliffe	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Geography History	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Banks Lane is a twelve-class infant school, with 308 full-time pupils on roll, so it is larger than average. The school also accommodates 40 part-time children in a nursery. There is very little difference between the number of boys and that of girls attending the school. The school is situated near the centre of Stockport and serves an area containing similar proportions of council, rented and privately owned property. It is a mixed community reflecting an overall below average economic and educational background. Twenty-four pupils come from ethnic minorities and ten pupils have English as an additional language. Not far off ten per cent of the pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals and this is below average. Twenty-six per cent have special educational needs and this is slightly above average. Of these, four pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and whilst this is below the national average it represents a fourfold increase since the last inspection. Children begin full-time school in the reception classes with below average levels of attainment. The school is over subscribed and has a good reputation for its work as part of a national scheme for the training of new teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Banks Lane Infant and Nursery School is an excellent school. It has been most successful in recent years in building upon the high standards of pupils' attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy and in promoting very good teaching. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and with first class support from staff and governors, provision is either excellent or very good in most areas. As a result, standards continue to rise, pupils are on course to meet their targets and their achievement is excellent by the time they leave the school. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership by the headteacher strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, colleagues and governors ensure that all pupils are encouraged and have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average and achievement is excellent by the time they leave the school.
- The pupils' excellent relationships and personal development are strongly promoted by the staff of the school and they make a powerful contribution to the quality of their work and their levels of attainment.
- Excellent leadership and management is underpinned by an equally strong shared commitment for improvement and capacity to succeed that constantly evaluates and enriches pupils' learning.
- The excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development promotes the pupils' self esteem and enjoyment of school and is a key factor in their outstanding achievement.
- Very good teaching is a consistent strength across the school and this helps the pupils to learn very well.

What could be improved

- The school's strength lies in the consistent high quality of its provision, consequently, no areas of improvement are identified for specific inclusion in a governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in 1995 found Banks Lane to be a good school. Since then the school has moved forwards from strength to strength in all areas and is an outstandingly effective school now. In particular, under the excellent and empowering direction of the headteacher, who has moulded the governors and staff of the school into an extremely successful team, it has improved the effectiveness of the leadership and management and has created an ethos of high quality teaching and learning. As a consequence, the results achieved by the pupils in the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 in English and mathematics, have continued to rise at a rate that is above that found nationally. Inspection now shows that standards are much higher than the average standards identified at the time of the last inspection

and pupils' achievement has been lifted from good to excellent. The school has made very good improvement and has the capacity and determination to continue this success into the future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	B	C	B	A
writing	A	C	B	B
mathematics	B	D	C	C

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

The children in the nursery and in the reception classes achieve very well in all areas of learning. By Year 1, their range of attainment is broadly average in all areas of the curriculum. The standards in the current Year 2 are much improved compared to the results in the table above being well above average overall and will compare even more favourably with those found in similar schools. Standards are well above average in English and are above average in mathematics and science. Overall standards are never less than above average in all other subjects. The pupils build consistently on their previous learning as they move from class to class, consequently, their achievement is excellent by the time they leave the school. The pupils' achievement is excellent in all aspects of English, enhancing their learning in other subjects. The pupils achieve well in physical education and achievement is very good in all other subjects, reflecting the consistently high quality of the teaching and provision in the school.

The teachers ensure that their teaching and the planned curriculum are fully inclusive and meet the needs of all pupils equally and effectively. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls and pupils from a range of differing backgrounds and with differing learning needs perform equally successfully in relation to their prior attainment. Those with special educational needs build an excellent degree of achievement, many reaching standards that are average for their age by the time they leave. High attainers and gifted and talented pupils are well challenged in most of their work. As a result, these pupils reach very high standards in several subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have English as an additional language also benefit from close support and attain the standards reached by their peers. Teaching and learning goes from strength to strength, consequently, standards continue to rise at a trend that is above that found nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to succeed. They appreciate each other's efforts and are proud of what they achieve as individuals and together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils follow the school rules and the teachers' expectations carefully and these support their work and progress.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils develop a strong sense of personal responsibility and show initiative confidently. They enjoy very good relationships with each other and with all the adults who work in the school and this enriches their learning.
Attendance	Good attendance, above the national average. Very good punctuality, lessons start promptly and no time is wasted.

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are strongly supported by the first-class day-to-day example and expectations of staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is a considerable strength of the school and teaching was at least very good in over eight out of every ten lessons observed. A spirit of teamwork and a corporate approach enables a consistency of very high quality teaching to be maintained throughout the school. The teachers' ability to manage the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and to promote warm relationships is excellent overall. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding, the quality of their planning and the methods they employ are all very good. All classes, in each year group, experience a similar quality of teaching and learning promoting the pupils' excellent achievement over time. Almost all teaching is at least of good quality and on only a very few occasions is the pupils' exuberance not channelled to best effect in supporting learning. The quality of teaching of English and literacy and of mathematics and numeracy is very good throughout the school. The teachers and learning support staff are diligent in meeting the needs of all pupils, from a range of backgrounds and with differing levels of prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils and pupils who have English as an additional language all benefit from an appropriate degree of challenge. As a result, these and all other pupils build well on previous experience and understanding and learn very well. All adults working with the pupils promote a love of learning and of learning together and all pupils enjoy an outstanding spiritual dimension to their daily life in school. This gives them self-confidence and strengthens their determination and ability to achieve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The consistent emphasis on numeracy and literacy supports work in all subjects. These are enriched by cross-curricular links; for example, through music and art and design. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, in the nursery and reception classes, is equally strong.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good teaching and excellent provision that meet the pupils' needs successfully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All pupils are valued and are equally well supported. They receive full access to all areas of learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision overall and for the pupils' spiritual and moral development, and very good provision for the pupils' social and cultural development. As a consequence the pupils develop confidence and self-worth and enjoy their learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for pupils with special educational needs and for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. Staff monitor and support the pupils' welfare, academic performance and personal development very well.

The school promotes and enjoys a very good partnership with parents and this has a beneficial effect on the pupils' opportunities for learning and on their achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent overall. The headteacher provides exemplary leadership and is supported fully by a talented deputy headteacher and skilled senior staff. They ensure an excellent educational direction and sustain an outstandingly successful shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. The staff's first class teamwork enriches their skills and strongly promotes the pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Guided by very experienced and astute chair and vice-chairs, the governors are successful in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are very well organised, are fully informed and involved and give very good support to the headteacher in the leadership of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent; the school's ability to evaluate and improve its performance is a key factor in ensuring that provision, such as teaching, promotes the pupils' achievement to the full.
The strategic use of resources	The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is very good overall and they are used most successfully to develop the pupils' learning. The school development plan is costed very effectively and decisions are accurately based on the principles of best value to meet the pupils' needs.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher is the inspirational force that encourages staff, governors and parents to work together for the benefit of the pupils. This is an outstandingly successful self-evaluating, self-improving school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good; children behave well, make good progress and like coming to school. The school helps children to become mature and responsible and expects them to work hard and achieve their best. The school is well led and managed and parents feel comfortable about approaching the staff with questions or a problem. The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees fully with all the parents' positive views about the school. Specific activities such as clubs are limited, but the school more than compensates by providing rich learning opportunities in all lessons and by enriching the curriculum offered to pupils greatly through regular visitors and a comprehensive range of visits.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. *'Standards', is a judgement of how much pupils have attained compared to others of the same age. 'Achievement', is a term used to describe how much pupils have learned in relation to their earlier starting points and shows whether, over time, enough progress is being made.*
2. Children enter the nursery with a range of attainment that is generally well below average compared to the national picture. Standards in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy tend to be those that are least developed. The children settle quickly, enjoy their learning and respond enthusiastically to very good teaching and an interesting curriculum containing a very good range of well-planned activities. Most children achieve very well while a good number of children attain the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development in particular. Achievement in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics is equally successful, but as many children start from a low base, few attain the learning goals in these areas of learning by the time they commence full-time schooling. At the end of their time in the nursery not all the children transfer to the reception classes, with some moving to other schools. About three-quarters of the children entering the reception classes will not have attended the nursery. Transition from the nursery to the reception classes is a positive experience due to the teachers' careful preparations and a smooth continuity in learning is secured for these children.
3. Attainment on entry to full-time schooling in the reception classes varies, but overall, is below average when measured by the Stockport 'baseline' assessment tests, which are completed in the first few weeks of children commencing school. The children in the reception classes achieve very well across the curriculum. Achievement is particularly strong in literacy, numeracy and the arts, laying strong foundations for increased use and development of these skills as they move through the school. Attainment by the end of reception year can fluctuate from year to year. This year the overall attainment is likely to be average with most children achieving the Early Learning Goals in most areas of the curriculum and a good number achieving above average standards.
4. Given their successful and sustained rate of achievement since they first started school, many pupils currently in the Year 1 classes are already working at an advanced stage within Level 1 of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The pupils' attainments and achievement are enriched by strong teaching and consistent routines and strategies that build progressively on the pupils' prior learning so that pupils develop their skills systematically as they move through the school.
5. As there are a large number of pupils in each year group at this school, the results of National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for Year 2 are sufficiently reliable as indicators of the pupils' performance. The results of National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils have generally ranged between average and well above average in reading and writing and have been mostly average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science are above average in relation to those found nationally. In recent years, test results show that the school has gone from strength to strength, not only sustaining above average standards, but promoting a trend of rising standards that is above the trend found nationally. This has been accomplished as a result of the continual refinement and improvement of the planned and taught curriculum.
6. An analysis of results in terms of how many pupils reach what is expected for their age show above average performance in reading and writing, and average and above average performance in mathematics and science respectively. Comparisons with the pupils' performance in similar schools last year are even more positive, being well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Overall these comparisons show that pupils have been

achieving particularly well in relation to their prior attainment and backgrounds. In the main this analysis reflects the inspection findings that identify even more emphatically that achievement is excellent and is the same for all pupils across the range of prior attainments. This year's National Curriculum teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 2 also show standards that represent high levels of achievement.

7. Inspection now shows that the standards in the current Year 2 are well above average overall, especially in all aspects of English and in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music. Attainment is above average in all remaining subjects, including mathematics and science. This represents a significant improvement over the average standards identified in the majority of subjects at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in the vast majority of subjects, in response to consistently very good teaching that raises pupils' self-esteem and promotes a love of learning. Achievement in English is excellent in relation to the low level of skill possessed by many pupils when they first enter the school. The pupils' increasing literacy skills enrich learning across the breadth of the curriculum. Cumulatively, this systematic process whereby pupils build on their previous learning in response to strong teaching, results in excellent overall achievement in relation to earlier levels of attainment by the time the pupils leave the school. Consequently, standards and achievement are even better in almost every subject compared to those found at the time of the last inspection.
8. Inspection also shows that achievement is the same for pupils of all attainment levels. The whole ethos of the school demonstrates commitment to the achievement of each individual thus, pupils with special educational needs flourish in a positive atmosphere for learning. Their achievement over time is very good in relation to the targets in their individual education plans and in some cases, it is excellent. Following periods of extra support, one third of the pupils were taken off the register for special educational needs during the course of last year.
9. Although they are not statutorily required for pupils of this age, the school sets challenging yet appropriate targets in reading, writing and mathematics, for pupils to attain by the end of Year 2. Teachers have a clear view of what pupils are capable of attaining. As a result, expectations are realistically high and target setting is used successfully to raise standards. The school also does very well with the higher attaining pupils and pupils who have English as an additional language. Many are given individual and group support. They achieve as successfully as their peers because the school has very good procedures in place, which clearly identify what pupils need to do next in order to improve. Teachers are also successful because they offer the right level of challenge and enthuse the pupils to give of their best. The school's approach to equal opportunity is very effective. There is little evidence of differing attainment between boys and girls for the school is an inclusive community where all pupils are included fully and equally in their learning. Overall there can be no doubt that the school's participation as an exemplary school in the training of new teachers has brought teaching to a high standard and this is a key factor in promoting successful learning for all pupils across the school.
10. The teachers' implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is exemplary. It is underpinned by a strongly shared commitment to agreed procedures, systematically and consistently promoted throughout the entire school. High expectations, clear learning objectives, established methods based on the national strategy are presented in all classes. As a result, the pupils know what is expected of them, understand why they learn in the way they do and feel full ownership of the learning process. Throughout the school teachers place a strong emphasis on discussion and the pupils' ability to offer ideas, to discuss them in a group and then to reflect in writing about them; this increases steadily as they progress through the school. The pupils' reading skills are equally well developed and the sharing of opinions about a variety of large book texts, increasingly including references from other subjects, is a regular and beneficial feature of most English lessons. As a consequence, overall attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing and spelling are all well above average by the end of Year 2. Opportunities to enrich the pupils' literacy skills are fully developed across the curriculum; for example, when labelling observations of 'Root View Farm' whilst sorting fruits and vegetables

during a science lesson in Year 1. Literacy is emphasised in all subjects and the pupils' skills are enriched. Achievement in all aspects literacy is excellent.

11. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2 reflecting very good achievement over time and consistently strong teaching. Very good subject leadership and agreed curriculum planning and teaching and learning strategies reflect the school's very effective strategies for teaching numeracy skills. This is promoting improved, very good learning in most lessons now. In Year 2, for example, pupils confidently add and subtract two digit numbers and have a very clear understanding of place value up to one hundred. They recall multiplication facts, accurately solve problems involving money, for example, in practical situations, and have a good knowledge of shapes. Pupils' numeracy skills are increasing, enabling them to use and develop them further in support of learning in other subjects. This was seen to good effect in history lessons where the pupils' increased their understanding of the passage of time by using timelines. Numeracy skills are also promoted successfully in geography lessons; for example, as in an excellent lesson in Year 2 where the teacher taught the pupils how to use coordinates to locate where roses could grow in 'The Giant's Garden'. Science too is a subject where numeracy is promoted successfully; for example, when pupils tally, predict and record numerical results in their diaries of the size of the sunflowers they have planted.
12. The pupils' science skills are developed progressively as they move through the school. Teaching and learning is based on themes such as 'Gardens and Growth' and are based on the pupils' acquiring close observational skills. Such experiences commence from a very early age, as in the nursery when children watch butterflies open their wings for the first time. These observations enrich their understanding and introduce a spiritual dimension to their work that supports their appreciation and enjoyment of learning, as they grow older. Standards are above average in all areas by the time the pupils reach the end of Year 2.
13. The pupils' learning is supported well through information and communication technology (ICT). In particular literacy, numeracy and art and design skills are developed by the pupils' regular sessions in the ICT suite and the pupils' recorded work is enhanced by using ICT, for example, to present their reflections in religious education in class booklets. The use of such new technology helps to sustain the pupils' successful achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. As at the time of the last inspection pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and these make a significant contribution to their academic and personal progress. In lessons they take care with their work and want to please their teacher. They are very eager to answer their teacher's questions, yet invariably sufficiently self-disciplined to wait their turn. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and are keen to share with visitors their class books, which contain their best project work and accounts of visits they have made.
15. Pupils enjoy coming to school. There are many smiling faces in the classrooms and school corridors. Attendance levels are consistently good and there is no unauthorised absence. Attendance in the current year to date is above the national average of 95 per cent
16. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes towards learning. They clearly enjoy learning and behave extremely well. They treat each other and are treated with respect. Their contributions are valued by teachers and the whole class and this encourages their full participation and promotes self-esteem.
17. The very good standards of behaviour evident at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and become pervasive throughout the school. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the children's behaviour. The school has had no occasion to exclude any pupil for poor behaviour. In a significant number of the lessons seen, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, many pupils behaved in an exemplary way. They listened

attentively, settled down to work promptly without fuss and co-operatively worked in their groups with a high degree of independence for their age.

18. Behaviour in the nursery and reception classes is also very good. The children are naturally inquisitive and their attitudes to work and school are equally positive. These qualities support the children's learning successfully. They come happily into school, settle quickly to work and demonstrate a very positive attitude to learning. The children concentrate and try hard when applying skills and experiencing new learning, for example, when observing butterflies as they open their wings for the first time. Relationships between children and between children and adults are very warm and are a major contributory factor in promoting the children's achievements.
19. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils value the school's friendliness. Around the school pupils behave very well. In the playground pupils play harmoniously and no children are left out in any way. Although there may be an occasional falling out in friendship, this is infrequent. Pupils feel safe in the school and confident in the abilities of their teachers to sort out any problems.
20. Pupils have a strong sense of ownership in their school. They willingly help their teachers with small tasks. They recognise and identify with the qualities expected of 'A Banks Lane Infant'. Pupils make excellent contributions to the school assemblies playing music, or taking parts in the speaking or acting. In the special 'good work' assembly they enjoy celebrating others' successes. Pupils join in their school song enthusiastically and harmoniously. The excellent quality of their singing and their strong identification with the values the school promotes contributes to their outstanding spiritual development at the school. This is a key factor in the excellent personal achievement and the gains in maturity pupils make at the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The very high quality of teaching is a considerable strength of the school. Good, very good and excellent teaching is having a very positive impact upon standards, pupils' achievements and learning. There are many strengths in the teaching and, during the inspection, almost all the teaching was judged to be good or better. This is outstanding. Seventy-three per cent was very good and nine per cent excellent. This exceptional quality of teaching is consistent throughout the school and promoted and maintained by the schools involvement, as a provider, in a national scheme of initial teacher training in outstanding primary schools (SCITT). Almost all teaching is at least of good quality and on only rare occasions is the pupils' exuberance not channelled to best effect in supporting learning. Teachers are continuously seeking to improve and a culture of openness and constructive dialogue is maintained. There has been good improvement in teaching since the last inspection, with a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching. From a strong position, at the time of the last inspection, the school has continued to improve.
22. A spirit of teamwork and a corporate approach enables consistent very high quality teaching to be maintained throughout the school. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are very good overall. All classes, in each year group, experience a similar quality and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are delivered to a high standard. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the concepts and skills required, enabling them to teach confidently. They have a detailed knowledge of the National Curriculum and religious education and understand the programme, across all the subjects and the progression through it. Teachers communicate enthusiasm, stimulate intellectual curiosity and promote a high level of pupil motivation. In several classes there were lively sessions in both literacy and numeracy lessons, involving teachers in enthusiastic presentations that motivated the pupils moving their learning on at a swift pace. For example, in Year 1 numeracy lessons where teachers presented number 'games', moving to the rhythms of number patterns, and quizzes about 'this week's number' and 'this week's shape', involving the pupils in a great deal of thought to find the correct solution. As a result, pupils quickly acquired new skills, knowledge and understanding.

23. Teachers' planning is detailed and, in literacy and numeracy, of very high quality. The school has a distinctive approach to planning across the foundation subjects, very effectively linking all subjects through planned themes. All teachers complete long, medium and short-term planning based upon nationally recognised guidance. Teachers adapt the work to the particular needs of children and pupils in their class very successfully, relating planned work to the previous learning and attainment of pupils. For example, in Year 2, where a visit to the nursery provided the focus, effectively using the language of time to sequence events and to construct a letter, very effectively incorporating punctuation. In Year 1 writing is currently linked to the theme of 'fruit', where pupils very effectively examined consonant blends and long vowel phonemes to describe their observations of fruit. The written observations stimulated very good quality observational drawings and watercolour painting. In a Year 1 religious education lesson about the 'prodigal son' the teacher very carefully matched the work to pupils' own experiences.
24. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed and have a very good understanding of individual children's learning needs, which they meet very effectively. Teaching assistants are becoming specialists, which will add further value to their support. Great care is taken by all staff to ensure that work is well matched to individual needs and leads to incremental learning. Teachers and other staff provide rich opportunities for speaking and listening and this is particularly successful in promoting learning for pupils with special education needs. Very valuable support and advice is provided by a teacher from the local authority's 'Learning Support Service' and her support makes a positive difference to individual pupils.
25. Individual educational plans include clear targets. These are implemented and regularly monitored by teachers to sustain the pupils' achievement. Small groups of pupils receive intensive support in literacy and numeracy and this is very effective. All staff are careful to ensure that these pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. They carefully follow individual education plans and any subjects missed are later revisited to ensure equal provision. Teachers have good partnerships with parents who appreciate the quality of support given by the staff.
26. In lessons throughout the school there is very clear presentation of content and learning objectives. Very young children and older pupils know what is expected from them. Teachers use, and reinforce, appropriate subject-specific vocabulary with well-chosen illustrations and examples. As in a music lesson in a reception class, where children's responses were developed in an imaginative way, using puppets to illustrate particular words the children needed to know and understand. Teachers' expectations are high and they understand the expected demands of pupils in relation to each relevant National Curriculum Level description. For example, in art, the National Curriculum Level descriptors of what pupils should attain at each stage are effectively used by teachers to measure the progress being made by pupils. In ICT, the skills learned by children are carefully recorded as pupils become competent. Particular consideration is given to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and they achieve very well. Very careful consideration is also given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and teachers have a very clear understanding of how their learning is affected by their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development; for example, in the supportive challenge offered to a pupil with significant learning needs, in a carefully constructed numeracy session. There is also suitable challenge for higher attaining pupils; for example, in literacy where the standards of written work, for different purposes, are very high. Teachers maintain the correct level of challenge for pupils very effectively and this enables pupils to build on their previous learning and increase their understanding.
27. Teachers vary their approaches and use different methods to hold pupils' interest. Throughout the school, from the nursery to Year 2, pupils are consistently encouraged to develop independence and make sensible decisions about their own learning. They are keen to be involved, very interested and concentrate very well as a result of the variety of activities and the effective use of time. In a Year 2 class, pupils were engaged in art and ICT activities, working at a very good pace, whilst the teacher effectively led a group in guided reading. Similarly, in Year 2, groups of children completed paintings in the style of the artist, Monet, reflecting upon the

qualities of his work, whilst the teacher focused upon a group developing a written story. Teaching assistants very effectively support this process, being involved in the planning of activities, successfully working with groups and effectively challenging through the careful use of subject specific language. Teaching assistants also play a very effective part in supporting teachers, paying careful attention to pupils' errors and misconceptions, using them constructively to take pupils' learning forwards.

28. ICT is used effectively, both by teachers and teaching assistants. A computer suite is permanently staffed by a teaching assistant. She has expertise and provides good guidance for the groups of pupils visiting the suite. Class teachers very effectively record planned work in a class book, used by the teaching assistant to guide and support the work of groups of pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils accessed a database of information to answer questions they had prepared using a word-processing program. Year 1 pupils used a painting program to construct picture patterns relating to their work. Teachers and the teaching assistant effectively teach the skills required and also successfully use computers to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
29. The teaching of English and mathematics is of high quality. The school has developed the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies to meet the specific needs of its pupils. Innovative and imaginative methods are used to make whole-class sessions in both literacy and numeracy interesting and exciting for pupils. Resources and materials are very well organised; for example, the use of puppets, to question pupils and guide their responses. 'Number hats' in numeracy encourage the involvement of all pupils in calculating the solution of number problems. In literacy, high quality materials are used to extend pupils' vocabulary and their use and understanding of language. Lessons are delivered at a good pace and as a result, pupils' achievements are of a high level. There are carefully planned opportunities for numeracy and literacy skills and knowledge to be taught across the subjects of the curriculum.
30. The excellent management of pupils ensures a very high standard of behaviour providing a learning atmosphere that is settled. Pupils progress smoothly without interruptions or disruption. Teachers motivate children and pupils by praising good work and attitudes rather than dwelling on weaker aspects or criticising pupils. As a result, pupils want to learn and enjoy showing the teacher and teaching assistant how well they are doing. When it is necessary to correct a pupil, teachers do this sensitively. This avoids confrontation and pupils work harmoniously in an atmosphere that values their contribution. The very good example set by teachers, for example, in the celebration assembly, where they presented a song in close harmony, has a significant impact upon the way pupils behave towards each other. Teachers listen carefully to pupils, analysing their responses and responding constructively. Pupils are courteous and kind, learning to appreciate each other's efforts and helping when asked. All this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning, creating a very productive learning atmosphere.
31. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good and consistent throughout the school. Often there are references to oral feedback given to pupils. Written and verbal comments are positive and related to individual pupil and group targets. Pupils' progress in lessons is carefully assessed, particularly in literacy and numeracy and a representative sample of pupils' work is tracked through the school, to determine whether achievement is as high as it needs to be. Teachers effectively recognise the level at which pupils are attaining, and assess pupils consistently against attainment targets. Good guidance is offered by subject co-ordinators in order to set termly targets for pupils' attainment across the range of subjects. Children and pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning and the things they need to do to improve. For example, specific areas of work were recorded in a pupil's 'tasks for home' booklet. As a result, homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers understand comparative local and national data and this is one of the reasons that national test results are good.
32. The quality of learning is very good overall and most pupils achieve very well. The purposeful atmosphere enables pupils to enjoy learning and to want to do well. The parents' questionnaire showed that all but one per cent of pupils enjoy coming to school and all who responded felt that the teaching was good. These views are well supported by inspection findings. Most pupils

sense that they are learning well, their views are valued and they contribute to lessons with confidence. In all lessons observed pupils listen very well, settle sensibly to work and learn very well. Their independence is encouraged and they make the most of opportunities provided to exercise discretion about their own learning. There is a sense of purpose in all that they do and teachers understand and use the individual circumstances of pupils very effectively. All this has a very beneficial impact on their learning.

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

33. The school offers a very broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and a very good range of learning opportunities that meet the needs and broaden the horizons of all its pupils. It fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with a very good curriculum based on the nationally recommended areas of learning. What was already a good curriculum at the time of the last inspection has been made even better. Particularly strong progression now continues throughout the school and into the junior school, supporting learning successfully. There is an improved distribution of time. The amount of lesson time each week for all subjects is now broadly average. There are policies and appropriate schemes of work in place for all subjects, providing appropriate guidance to teachers. The very good curricular planning, based on these, ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop very well. The very good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the excellent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy contribute to the very high standards pupils attain in mathematics and English. The development of pupils' language skills is very well supported through all subjects. The strengths previously identified in cross-curricular links through common themes throughout the school have been sustained.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is exemplary. The school has excellent systems in place to ensure that all these pupils are fully supported in all aspects of their learning and that they all have total access to a very broad and balanced curriculum. All staff ensure, through very good planning, that these pupils are fully included in lessons through carefully matched work. Learning support assistants relate very well to the pupils, supporting them very well in their learning. Their close liaison with class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinators means that the pupils' needs, whether learning, behavioural or emotional are met fully.
35. As in many infants' schools there are few extra-curricular clubs. There is, however, a good and varied programme of regular activities including a good range of visitors and visits both in the locality and further afield to enhance learning and broaden pupils' experiences. For example, the mobile Keyboard Academy arrives weekly to provide individual music tuition. The 'Bug Man' makes visits to broaden the science curriculum by sharing his knowledge of insects. Regular contact with the RSPCA and police dog handlers supports personal and social development. Each year, every class undertakes at least one visit to a place of educational or historical importance, such as to a local farm, plant nursery, church, and this year for Year 2, a visit to the Tudor museum at Bramall Hall.
36. There is very good equality of access and opportunity for both girls and boys and for pupils with special educational needs. The very good planning and use of appropriate teaching methods and materials and the very good monitoring and support of pupils' academic and personal progress provide this. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. All adults within the school provide appropriate role models. Gifted and talented pupils receive appropriately challenging tasks to develop their skills to the full, for example, by planning and designing their own puppets and toys in design and technology.
37. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social, and health education. There is a very well co-ordinated programme of discrete lessons in place, which also encompasses European Awareness and World Studies. In each class special times, called 'circle time', are set aside every week to discuss issues and reflect on feelings and views. These activities make a very

good contribution to pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of being a member of the community. The governing body has decided that both sex and drugs education should be part of the curriculum. An appropriate policy decided by staff and governors is in place, delivered in the context of the school's aims and values framework and in part through the science curriculum. The school takes part in the 'Healthy Schools Project', which has given pupils insight, both into physical health and fitness and also into those factors that promote mental and emotional well-being. A prominent outcome of this has been the construction of an effective perimeter fence that makes pupils feel secure and content in an environment now safe from vandals and intruders.

38. Parents, grandparents and visitors from the community regularly attend the school to work with the pupils, bringing with them a wide range of expertise. They also regularly give up their time to accompany school trips, thereby offering improved levels of supervision. Several parents work as volunteer classroom assistants where their expertise in ICT, for example, is used very effectively. A local felt-maker has visited to explain her craft and introduce pupils to the skills and techniques involved. Local clergy are frequent visitors and regularly welcome school pupils to the places of worship in the community. Local businesses contribute strongly, for example, in a generous supply of paper and card that has greatly enhanced school resources.
39. There is very good liaison between the school, local playgroups and the nursery to ensure that younger pupils' learning develops smoothly so that they are well placed to begin their compulsory education. There are very strong links with the receiving junior school. Head teachers and teachers of both schools meet frequently to plan and train together so that pupils' transition between the schools is seamless. Both schools join each other for concerts and productions. Older junior 'buddies' introduce Year 2 to their new environment then stay on hand to help them to settle in during Year 3 and beyond. All these factors contribute to a strong sense of shared identity and very effective progression in both academic and personal development.
40. Overall, the school makes excellent provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In its prospectus the school stresses its commitment to the development of the 'whole child'. There are appropriate policies in place for all aspects of provision. The school's strength lies in its inclusive culture where each individual, of whatever background, is valued and respected.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Opportunities are systematically identified in planning and occur frequently in various subjects. During 'circle times', pupils are encouraged to consider values and beliefs. Through the religious education syllabus and linked assembly themes, pupils gain knowledge and insight into issues affecting values and beliefs that enable them to reflect on their own experiences and feelings. Assemblies especially offer moments for profound and deeply moving reflection where pupils regularly compose and offer prayers.
42. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted consistently by all school staff, who offer excellent role models. For example, several of the lunch-time supervision staff have undertaken training in the promotion of moral development in order to make a better contribution to this area. Pupils draw up their own class and playground rules, showing that they can both understand and apply the principles they are taught. All pupils are well aware of the high expectations of the school's aims and behaviour code. Pupils take on roles as monitors for various tasks in classes and in the school as a whole, which helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the idea of responsibility, and also fosters their social skills as they help and relate to others.
43. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils often work collaboratively in pairs or larger groups in lessons. They are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for their work and for helping others. In consequence, pupils work very well together. Pupils are regularly given monitor roles for day-to-day classroom routines. This helps them to see how

each one can play a valued and useful part in the running of the school. Adults and children relate very well to each other.

44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Through art and music, for example, pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about Western European traditions and also to develop an understanding of aspects of other cultures. They visit museums and places of interest, such as 'hands on' experience at the Gladstone pottery and its exhibition of the work of Clarice Cliff. Multicultural development is promoted effectively through the study of other religions in religious education. The celebration of the diversity of cultures is particularly promoted in this predominantly white area by the generosity, for example, of Indian and later Thai parents accompanied by a Malay translator who demonstrated traditional clothing and cooking, much to the delight of all. A visit by the black male ex-'Stomp' dancer earned the admiration and respect of everyone and provided a very effective model of both race and gender equality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils are cared for and taught in an well-ordered environment with warm and very caring relationships.
46. Procedures to ensure the welfare, child protection and health and safety of the children are very effective. Child protection procedures, which fulfil legal requirements, are in place. Pupils and parents say that the school is a friendly place, the teachers are very helpful and that they feel confident in the school. Appropriate health and safety procedures are thoroughly documented and there are effective procedures in place for risk assessment. Some minor improvements were discussed with the school during the inspection. There are good levels of supervision at breaks and lunch times and all staff are trained in first aid procedures.
47. Children in the nursery and reception receive high levels of care. Induction procedures into the school are very good and enable pupils to ease gradually into well-established school routines.
48. Procedures to support and monitor personal development are very good. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are strong and supportive. There is a calm, but happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils' personal development is assessed competently with a baseline profile in the infants. This profile is informally updated with regular staff discussions and teacher assessments. The school is particularly successful at promoting pupils' spiritual development and making them feel valued by recognising their individual talents. This promotes a feeling of well-being. For example, at times children are encouraged to glance into the mirrors in the corridors so that they can smile to acknowledge their own self-worth and see what difference a smile makes to help others around to be happy.
49. The school provides very good personal guidance for pupils. Each class has a regular time for personal and social development using stories to illustrate moral points or providing a time for quiet and confidential sharing of personal experiences. There is a strong emphasis on healthy eating; at breaks pupils are provided with fruit juice and a plain biscuit and this has a calming influence. Several teachers encourage pupils to use brain-developing routines, such as finger exercises to refresh their minds before starting on a new activity. This is good practice and increases their concentration.
50. There are excellent procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Pupils are involved in drawing up their classroom rules, which contributes to their sense of ownership. Teachers set very good role models and positive examples. Strong effective leadership and teamwork ensures that teachers consistently expect and receive high standards of behaviour in the classroom. Many of the teachers are highly proficient in quietly and calmly establishing very successful classroom routines, which enable pupils to learn very effectively. Pupils behave very well and there was no evidence of bullying.

51. Procedures to improve and maintain attendance are very good. Teachers keep the attendance registers neatly and the records meet statutory requirements. The school secretary transfers the information from the manual registers to a computerised system to produce summaries. This combination enables the classroom teacher, headteacher and educational welfare officer to monitor attendance closely.
52. Procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge, understanding and achievements are very good. All children who enter the nursery are assessed. All children entering the reception year are assessed using nationally recognised systems. This provides a clear picture of individual strengths and weaknesses and allows the school to compare itself with other local schools and with schools nationally. The school has recently begun to effectively analyse this information enabling predictions to be made about likely pupil achievement. The aim is to track pupils' progress from Reception through to Year 2. Currently a representative sample of pupils' progress is tracked through the school, measuring progress against the expectations of the National Curriculum and allowing adjustments to be made to planning and provision. There is a very good understanding of how the schools' performance compares with national standards and with schools in similar social circumstances.
53. Detailed individual pupils' assessments are undertaken each term in literacy and numeracy. In most foundation subjects the assessment of pupils' performance is measured against National Curriculum benchmarks, as units of work are completed. Individual pupils' achievement is recorded against the National Curriculum Level descriptors, indicating those pupils who have achieved at a higher level and those who have not reached the level. In ICT skills achieved by pupils are recorded and in music and religious education progress is recorded against stated learning objectives. In this way individual pupil achievements are very effectively recorded and teachers are made aware of the results. The assessment co-ordinator and headteacher have a good overview of procedures and how the outcomes of assessment are used to inform teachers' planning. They offer very good guidance to all staff and subject co-ordinators have a clear view of standards in their subjects. There is a very good, shared understanding of the use of assessment and its use by year group teams.
54. The use of assessment to predict pupils' future performance and to make adjustments to the curriculum and teaching is very effective. The outcomes of assessment inform the detail of teachers' planning over the long, medium and short term. There is a clear influence upon learning objectives for pupils of all levels of prior attainment. English and mathematics co-ordinators are beginning to effectively use the outcomes of baseline assessments to accurately predict outcomes at the end of Year 2 and to ensure that the teaching programme is constantly adjusted so that all pupils achieve the highest standards possible. Individual and group learning targets are very effectively established and shared with pupils and parents. Such a practice is having a considerable impact on raising standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents are very pleased with the school, which is a popular choice in the local area. They find that the school is welcoming and promotes good attitudes. They believe that the school is well led and managed and that their children are well taught. Parents expressed no significant concerns, although a few felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was limited. The inspectors agree with all the parents positive views. They also agree with some parents' views that there are not many out-of-lesson activities, but consider that this is more than compensated for by the good and relevant visits that pupils make as part of their learning experiences.
56. Parents feel that the school has improved from the last inspection and from year to year. They mention increases in resources and better teaching thanks to the stability of staffing, all of which have contributed to rising results. The inspectors agree with these views and also consider that the school has further developed the good partnership between school and home so that it is now very effective.

57. The school actively seeks parents' opinions with a survey each year and takes account of their views when deciding on school developments. Written communications are of good quality. There are regular newsletters. Parents are given good information at the September meeting with the teachers about their children's forthcoming work, to invite support at home. The annual written reports on children's progress are generally good, they are suitably individual and present a clear picture of progress. There are individual targets set in the reports. This is a good feature, which helps parents to work with their children at home. There are two formal meetings with the teachers. At these parents are given more detailed information about their child's attainment and standards; this effectively supplements the written reports. The governors' annual report gives a good insight into school life and successes. It is well written in an accessible and friendly way, although could usefully be more expansive about the school's successful provision for pupils with special educational needs.
58. Parents of children with identified special educational needs play a full and active part in the plans for their child's education and progress.
59. Parents give very good support to the school and their children's work at home. They concur fully with the 'Home-School Agreement' and demonstrate this by their high levels of attendance at the confidential meetings with teachers and their support for reading and work at home. The parents' group gives very good support with social events and fund-raising, recently helping with the computer suite. A significant number of parents, carers and grandparents volunteer welcome support with practical and classroom activities. The pupils like having the visitors and their help is very effective in raising attainment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The strengths of caring leadership and clear educational direction by the headteacher, high expectations of a well-ordered and efficient school community and effective curriculum co-ordination identified by the previous inspection in 1995, continue to provide a successful foundation for the success of the school. Since that inspection seven years ago, the school has developed excellent strategies to evaluate its own performance and has gone from strength to strength. Improvement has been targeted, planned and achieved. This is a most successful self-evaluating and self-improving school.
61. The headteacher's personal leadership and the management structures and philosophy that she has established are excellent. As a consequence, all who work and support the school feel empowered and inspired to join and offer support as a member of a highly effective team. She is very sensitive to the capabilities of her staff and their development. She is equally sensitive and inspirational with governors and parents who seek to support the school. At the same time she involves them all fully and rigorously in identifying and meeting the needs of the school. As a result, senior colleagues and subject co-ordinators work with clarity, establish accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness and take the school forwards most successfully.
62. This strong team approach enables the school to keep abreast of the increasing bureaucratic demands placed on schools, indeed it enables them to utilise them for maximum benefit. For example, the school sets challenging targets for pupils to attain by the end of Year 2; even these are not statutorily required and the teachers use them effectively to promote improvement. The talented deputy headteacher supports the headteacher closely and all staff share their commitment to improvement. They work very hard and with great success to reach their targets, and they ensure that the aims and values of the school are embedded in its work.
63. Central in these aims is the concern for the individual and an extremely strong and effective promotion of the pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development. All pupils are fully and equally included, as a consequence, they feel valued and develop self-esteem and confidence and these underpin their achievement highly successfully. The school has shown very good improvement since the last inspection and all development points raised from that inspection

have been addressed fully. There is a very highly shared commitment to improvement and a great capacity to improve further.

64. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Under the astute guidance of a very experienced chair, equally supported by a dedicated vice-chair who herself possesses much educational expertise, the governing body is particularly well equipped to meet the full range of their accountabilities. In particular, governors now undertake a strong and successful role in shaping the future direction of the school. Governors support staff fully and together they sustain a highly beneficial educational direction.
65. The staff are fully involved by the head in planning for development. The school improvement plan reflects the continued refinement of strategies to promote increased effectiveness and represents a more accurate way of identifying priorities for improvement than that described at the time of the last inspection. It is clearly presented and easy to follow, with costs and success criteria indicated for each development point with each being supported by a clear statement of intent and underpinned by departmental plans. Individuals have responsibilities for leading on specific targets, as appropriate to their roles. Development actions are followed through. Specific grants such as the 'standards fund' are appropriately used. For example, particularly good use has been made over the last two years of funds received to improve teachers' competence with ICT and to establish consistent and successful strategies to teach literacy and numeracy and promote the pupils' personal development throughout the school.
66. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are now excellent overall. The headteacher, senior managers, including the vice chair of governors and subject co-ordinators and representatives from the local authority visit classrooms and monitor the quality of teaching effectively. Results of developments are thoroughly evaluated by the staff together, and the headteacher has an excellent understanding of the pace of change achieved and the reasons for any delays. In addition the school's place as an established trainer of new teachers also involves period visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors. These too have had a beneficial effect in promoting constant improvement. The sharing of good practice and expertise has had a strong influence in establishing an extremely impressive consistency in the quality of the teaching and learning.
67. Financial planning is very good. The school targets its funds very closely and efficiently and retains a prudent contingency fund that is well within recommended limits. There is a very integral link between the budget available and the school improvement plan and this ensures that all funds are focused on provision that impacts positively on pupils' attainment. The school puts the principles of best value into practice very effectively. It ensures purchases are made through competitive suppliers and it is constantly evaluating its performance against statistical data provided from analysis of assessments, both locally and nationally. The headteacher and governors consult the parents and local authority and Her Majesty's Inspectors regularly to evaluate what it is doing. As a result, the school is very efficient. Financial control is equally effective and the headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of the governors' finance committee work well with the two administrative staff to ensure that the funds made available to the school are managed very well.
68. The management of the school ensures that additional funds and specific grants such as those for pupils with special educational needs, literacy and staff development, to raise standards and improve resources, are used very well. Funds to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and raise standards in mathematics have been targeted productively and are having a beneficial effect on the pupils' attainment. The professional support of staff through performance management targets is highly developed and existing and new staff have their skills reviewed and enriched enabling them to sustain a high level of effectiveness, which is the key to the pupils' successful learning. Daily acts of collective worship are extremely moving and warm occasions where the whole school shares its very strong ethos of personal, spiritual and moral development and full inclusion for all. Governors and staff ensure very good provision for the pupils' health and welfare and are strong in their promotion of racial harmony. In all areas the governors meet their statutory obligations.

69. The school has an agreed set of aims and values, which promote a close partnership with parents. They are fully shared by the whole-school community and are reflected to the highest degree in the work of the school. The school is determined in providing equal opportunity. It is equally committed to providing first class support and in fulfilling its statutory obligations in respect of pupils with special educational needs. The two co-ordinators (one for children in the nursery and reception classes and one for pupils in Years 1 and 2) give very good leadership. They work well together to ensure that provision is very effective overall. With valuable help from the designated governor for special educational needs and from outside agencies and learning support assistants, they ensure consistent and successful support for pupils and their parents. Procedures are very rigorous and records of pupils' achievement are monitored appropriately. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher together play a key role in ensuring that teaching and the whole curriculum is the best it can be for each individual child. As a consequence, many pupils overcome their difficulties and even those with considerable needs improve their skills and learn well as equal members of the school community. Teachers are skilled in meeting the needs of all pupils, including gifted and talented pupils and pupils who have English as an additional language, and, as a result, all benefit from excellent achievement in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave the school
70. The school is very well staffed and teaching and support staff work extremely well together to meet the pupils' needs. All teachers are well qualified and there are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils in the school. The quality of staff is enhanced by the very good support and challenge offered by the school's involvement in a national programme of initial teacher training, that provides a clear structure for the development of good quality teaching. The size of classes is below the national average with approximately twenty-five pupils in each class. The school spends an above average proportion of its budget on education support staff, which helps to give very good support, in particular to pupils with special educational needs.
71. The accommodation and resources for learning are very good overall. Classrooms are spacious and are enriched by attractive displays, which celebrate and promote pupils' work most effectively. Teachers make very good use of attractive high quality displays to promote the pupils' work and to enrich their learning. The facilities for children under five in the Foundation Stage are of an equal standard. The school grounds are now made secure by a perimeter fence and locked gates and doors. Shady areas with benches have been created and a 'nature walk' is being developed to enhance provision for both learning and relaxation and to create an area where the pupils' imaginative ideas and their experiences of the natural world can be extended beneficially.
72. Subject, library and other resources in the school are well cared for. They are regularly reviewed for quality and appropriateness including any race or gender bias. This systematic audit ensures that books and other resources are in good condition, well ordered and relevant to the curriculum and children's own backgrounds and cultures. The library is small, but books are of a good quality and well organised so that they are very accessible to the pupils who regularly use them for reading and information finding purposes. Resources are used very well to support the pupils' learning and the school's well-equipped ICT suite is put to very good use in developing pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills.
73. Taking into account the pupils' excellent achievement and the extremely high quality of the education now provided in relation to the funds available, the school provides excellent value for money; another significant improvement since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. Banks Lane is a highly successful self-evaluating, self-improving school. Excellent leadership and management ensure that school improvement is very effective and is based on accurate up-to-date information and identifies appropriate priorities. The school's strength lies in the consistent high quality of its provision, consequently, no areas of improvement are identified for specific inclusion in a governors' action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	46	11	1	0	0	0
Percentage	9	73	17	1	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	307
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	80

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	53	46	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	50	49	51
	Girls	45	45	45
	Total	95	94	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (86)	95 (91)	97 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	51	51	53
	Girls	45	45	45
	Total	96	96	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (90)	97 (96)	99 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	293
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	605,829
Total expenditure	590,820
Expenditure per pupil	181,223
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,052
Balance carried forward to next year	25,111

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	110

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	25	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	30	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	39	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	51	1	3	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	29	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	20	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	35	2	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	33	7	1	22

Other issues raised by parents

As well as valuing the school, many parents expressed great pleasure at the way they were invited and welcomed into the day-to-day activity of the school to support their children's learning.

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

75. The previous inspection found that the Foundation Stage for children in the nursery and reception classes was a particular strength of the school and so it remains. All children receive a very good start to their education. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced very successfully.
76. At the time of the inspection, there were 40 children attending the nursery part-time and 100 children in the full-time reception classes. There are a few children with special educational needs, and a few from ethnic minority backgrounds, but none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. All receive a fully inclusive start to school, where their needs are very well provided for.
77. Provision and teaching for children in the nursery and reception are very good overall. Teaching is very good in the nursery, which is well staffed with a full-time nursery nurse who works closely with the nursery teacher. The nursery nurse is very experienced and assists the nursery teacher very well and as a result, all areas of learning are taught very well. Teaching opportunities are never missed and children are constantly challenged. There is a very happy atmosphere and this encourages all the children to participate fully. During the week of the inspection there was a fourth year student who made a valuable contribution to the children's learning, in particular their development of computer skills. In the reception classes there are two teaching assistants who work between the four classes. These very experienced teaching assistants support all reception classes very well. Teachers and teaching assistants plan as a team and work very hard to ensure that children receive the full Foundation Stage curriculum and teaching overall is usually very good and on occasions excellent.
78. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies, but overall is well below average when measured by the Stockport 'baseline' assessment. All children achieve very well while in the nursery with a good number attaining the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development; creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development in particular. At the end of their time in the nursery not all children transfer to the reception classes, some move to other schools. About three-quarters of the children entering the reception classes will not have attended the nursery.
79. Attainment on entry to the reception classes varies, but, overall, is below average when measured by the Stockport 'baseline' assessment. A detailed record of progress in all the Early Learning Goals has been introduced and this is used to monitor closely the progress of the children through reception. Attainment by the end of the reception year can fluctuate from year to year. This year the overall attainment is likely to be average with most children achieving the Early Learning Goals in most areas of the curriculum and a good number achieving above average.
80. Pupils with special educational need, those for whom English is a second language, ethnic minority children and those children identified as gifted and talented are very well provided for. Their needs are identified early in both the nursery and reception. They are offered every support to ensure that they are fully included in all activities and, if required, there is very good support from the various outside agencies.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception is very good and children achieve very well. The majority attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Staff encourage the children to become independent and to play sociably together and there are very good opportunities for both. The routines are designed to promote self-sufficiency and there are well-equipped activity and role play areas; a very good example of this was when children in the

nursery re-enacted the story of 'The Three Pigs'. Here they played co-operatively as part of a group to act out the story. They use equipment and resources very well, quickly getting to know the routines of the class and becoming independent, 'clocking in' on the nursery chart and sitting happily in a circle on the carpet waiting for the start of the nursery day. When they transfer to the reception classes these children are very good role models for the children who have not attended the school's nursery. The very good established routines are continued in the reception classes with, for example, most children listening very well when sitting on the carpet. In the one class not sited within the main school some can become restless, but generally they have settled into the routines very well. They are helpful and share sensibly, which was evident in activities such as using constructional materials or when using sand for investigational work. Children are generally expected to work on their own while the teacher works with the focus group, and they do this very well. Most are confident to speak up in class and during role play. All staff provide very good role models, and promote positive attitudes and values. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and very good knowledge of those in their care. The teachers create a secure and caring environment, which promotes personal and social development very well and children are very happy.

Communication, language and literacy

82. Teaching is very good overall and children achieve very well. The literacy strategy has been suitably adapted to meet the needs of these young children, with particular emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. Higher achieving children achieve most of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the nursery with about one third of the children speaking, listening, reading and writing well for their age. These children do not necessarily transfer to the reception classes. The teacher plans her lessons very well using carpet sessions to firmly target the main focus of the children's learning experiences. Very good additional activities, plus very good supervision by all the adults present enables the teacher to focus on target groups, extending their learning experiences through discussion. She has very good questioning skills and the children are confident to take part because they know that their comment will be well received. At snack time the children join hands and are able to recite their class prayer 'all join hands and quietly say thank you for our food today'.
83. They enjoy reading and show very good understanding of the storyline when handling familiar story books. A very good example of this was a small group, working independently when using the listening centre. Here they turned the pages to correspond with the story with some following the words with their fingers. Children take turns to take 'Kipper', a small cuddly animal, home and they are expected to complete a diary on his behalf about his experiences. During the inspection the children sat enthralled whilst the teacher read aloud a recent visit to one child's home. This had been written by the parent and was a very good example of the very good support from parents. There are many opportunities for the children to make marks on paper, in sand and participate in role play activities such as in the animal hospital. A good number show increasing skills writing letter shapes, names and recognising sounds in words. This area of the children's development is very well promoted through all the activities in the nursery curriculum.
84. In reception all children achieve very well and this is because of the very good and sometimes excellent teaching taking place. Most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals with about one third of the children speaking, listening, reading and writing well for their age by the end of the reception year. Teachers are very positive and encouraging and have very good relationships with the children. In story time they make excellent use of questioning to encourage speaking and listening skills as well as promoting learning. They make very good use of intonation and facial expression to interest and engage the children. Teachers use vocabulary such as phoneme and alliteration and as a result, children develop an understanding of the correct terminology. Following a lesson where the children listen to and identify initial sounds in spoken and written words they make very good attempts to form their own jingles; for example, 'Ten tired tigers'. All show a very good understanding of initial sounds, and most are able to write an alliterative sentence for themselves such as 'clever cat'. Lower achieving children, working with a classroom assistant, recognise the initial sound in their name and are able to match this with the name of a wild animal; for example, 'Alison Alligator'. Here the

children use an animal book to find a rhyming animal name and are developing early dictionary skills. They listen hard for the initial sounds in words and as a result, achieve very well. Higher achieving pupils can write their own name unaided. They choose an adjective to add interest in a written sentence; for example, 'I saw a blue penguin'. Children with special educational needs are able to sequence pictures correctly to tell a story. Average attaining children draw pictures and write simple sentences with mostly correct spellings, or with feasible attempts. Letters are usually clearly formed and they make good efforts to keep them even sized. When reading together, all children join in. A good number read confidently and have very good knowledge of more frequently used words. They have good strategies for tackling unknown words and show a good understanding of full stops and, for example, the use of question and speech marks. Most children take their reading and library books home regularly and this supports their reading well.

Mathematical development

85. Teaching and learning are very good. By the end of reception most will have achieved the Early Learning Goals, with about 25 per cent exceeding them. The numeracy strategy has been adapted well and computer programs are well-integrated into the planning. Teachers provide for the systematic development of skills through a range of very good organised activities. In the nursery using the 'Splosh' program the children draw and colour in their shapes, counting the splashes as they go along. Because they are encouraged to be independent, the children confidently move from activity to activity completing each task before moving on. Higher achieving children count beyond ten and average achieving children select numerals one to nine correctly and are beginning to solve writing problems using objects such as cotton reels to help them. Because there are lots of teaching aids on display; for example, large scale numerals and shapes, the children are able to refer to these if necessary when completing their work. Practical activities like baking are used well to develop mathematical concepts and this is reinforced during snack time when children carefully count how many biscuits they will need if every child in the group is to have one. They are able to say that there are four left over and suggest sharing them between the various adults present, 'one each'. When calculating how many children would like apple juice and how many milk, one child is able to say that one more than six is seven. They enjoy using the correct vocabulary when discussing their work and when looking at their butterflies try very hard to remember the word 'symmetrical'. In reception, these activities are extended so that the children are able to count in twos up to 20, remove a smaller number from a larger one by counting back on the number line, and higher achieving children can count up to 100 and solve simple addition and subtraction sums. Most have a very good understanding of odd and even numbers. Teachers plan interesting activities such as planning Teddy's day when teaching 'time'. Here, for example, the children enjoy the challenge of using sand timers to time what they can complete in one minute. When considering shape and space they use the computer program to design the three bears' bedroom and to dress the bear, and are able to complete simple graphs. All children in both the nursery and reception enjoy singing simple number songs and teachers use these to very good effect.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Overall teaching is very good in both the nursery and reception and children achieve very well. Children enter the nursery with very basic general knowledge. The teacher plans activities to extend their knowledge; for example, building a zoo. Because the teacher skilfully questions the children they consider carefully the needs of the animals and they refer back to previous learning when they visited the zoo. They show very good knowledge of the names of the various animals as they discuss their needs. Using construction materials the children construct their own vehicles with wheels, practising the use of push and pull forces. All work is presented in an interesting manner to the children; for example, when investigating magnetism the children make their own magnetic ladybirds. These they use to investigate what materials are and are not attracted by magnets. One child discovering that paper clips were attracted to the magnet became confused when a second group of paper clips were not attracted. Another child quickly explained that it was probably because they were paper clips covered in plastic 'plastic mustn't be able to be magnetised'. In reception the children build on their previous knowledge, they explore in more detail the place where they live. Adults support children's learning very well in

investigating their environment and encourage them to find out for themselves. A good example of this is the ex-teacher who comes into school to talk about her childhood and how times have changed from when she was a little girl. On display there are very good examples of children's investigative work based around floating and sinking. One child who had completed his boat at home had discovered that when the wind blew the sails made the boat move faster. The children are able to recognise and name a range of different fruits and vegetables and have great fun growing their own plants and seeds. They use simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately. A good example of this was when the children investigated whether long or short legs offer more stability to an animal. They made their animals using clay and sticks for legs and discovered that 'long legs are more wobbly'. They investigate various methods of joining; for example, five paper fish by using split pins, paper clips and folds. The children use the computer with confidence, often without supervision, and use the mouse well for control.

Physical development

87. Teaching overall is very good in both the nursery and reception and children achieve very well. There are very good outdoor play areas although access is somewhat restricted for some of the reception classes. Nevertheless this is not allowed to influence the quality of provision and teaching in this area of development and teachers ensure that all children receive their full entitlement. All children can hop, run jump, balance and climb using a good range of equipment. They very confidently use wheeled toys individually and in pairs. In dance, children in reception practise a sequence of movements, moving with control and confidence when responding to music. In particular this enriches the children's spiritual development as they move rhythmically to African music. Teachers use praise very effectively to challenge and motivate the children and as a result, they think carefully about how they will move and plan very good sequenced movements. Teachers share lesson objectives with the children and use questions really well to develop the children's awareness of the effects of physical activity on health and their awareness of safety. Teachers promote the skills of independence by instructing the children how to access equipment for themselves and they show a good degree of independence. Throughout the nursery and reception the teachers provide many opportunities in lessons to teach skills such as cutting, sewing and threading to help the children to gain self-control of these finer movements.

Creative development

88. Teaching is very good overall and the children achieve very well and in the one excellent lesson observed there was excellent achievement. By the end of reception, most children will attain the Early Learning Goals with a significant number exceeding expectations for children of this age. This is because of the very strong emphasis that teachers put on this area of development. Much of the learning across the curriculum is achieved through music and creative activities. Teachers plan exciting and interesting activities for the children to complete, providing them with a wide variety of materials. They are encouraged to explore and experiment using paint, coloured pens, crayons and collage materials. Singing and music generally, is a particular strength of the school and nursery and reception children make a very good contribution to this success. Nursery children join with reception for joint singing in the hall. This is a very good end to the day for all children. They thoroughly enjoy the activity, concentrate exceptionally well and give of their best. Because teachers demonstrate movement and beat actions the children are able to join in and recognise the tempo and beat. The lesson is very well planned enabling all to experience opportunities for memorising, imitating and experimenting. The children show very good understanding of pitch and tempo, singing tunefully. In the excellent lesson observed the atmosphere was electric. Using percussion instruments the children provided the sound effects to a story read by the class teacher. All were challenged and responded to the very best of their ability. They listened carefully, followed instructions, and concentrated hard as they performed. Excellent teaching promoted excellent achievement where all children were included equally. There was excellent spiritual development as all children experienced the excitement, anticipation and wonder of their performance.

ENGLISH

89. Standards have shown a good improvement since the last inspection. At that time they were above average. They are now well above average by the end of Year 2. These standards are also shown in this year's National Curriculum teachers' assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 and represent excellent achievement because pupils enter the school with literacy skills that are below average. They make rapid strides in learning because the school places a powerful emphasis on the value it recognises in each individual. Pupils of all prior attainments, including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language, receive the challenges best suited to their needs. Teachers value and respect all their pupils, who in turn gain confidence and competence in expressing themselves effectively. As they learn to listen carefully and speak coherently, pupils develop a strong understanding of the use of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure that they then reuse independently in reading and writing. Boys and girls become accomplished communicators, whose success in national tests is regularly at least above the national average and the average for similar schools. Girls tend to do better than boys, but this only follows the trend in England as a whole. Both boys and girls contribute to lessons to much the same extent, and all regularly behave very well, displaying much interest and enthusiasm for their work.
90. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand and respond to a variety of everyday classroom and other familiar instructions, statements and questions. Their ability to respond in clear speech, using standard English, is well above average. Most pupils use a wide vocabulary and frequently speak in properly constructed sentences, not fragments. They confidently converse with adults; for example, discussing a science activity: 'We grew sunflowers in our greenhouse. Do you like sunflowers? Have you ever grown one yourself?'. A higher attaining pupil explained their instructional writing task articulately: 'We're putting things in order so people will know what to do'. At the end of the lesson, an average attainer politely, and equally as articulately, responded to the teacher: 'No, we haven't quite finished off so we'll need a bit more time.' Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and there is an increase in the breadth of their vocabulary as they move through the school. Precision in spoken English is a feature of teaching, giving pupils high quality models to follow. This is partly a result of targeted vocabulary being consciously planned by teachers, an aspect of lessons in all subjects. All teachers regularly use good strategies for promoting speaking and listening, with a strong focus on discussion both in groups and classes as a whole.
91. Pupils' standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 2. All pupils are taught an appropriate variety of reading skills such as letter sounds and using pictures and context to help make sense of words. Higher attaining pupils read a variety of books independently and have developed clear preferences. Most pupils read fluently and offer considered opinions about what they have read. Average attainers readily identify the main points of a text and higher attainers are beginning to identify themes and features of characters, referring to the text to support their points. Pupils' read regularly at home. Their reading records are kept up to date by pupils and teachers although parents rarely do more than initial these, making little or no comment. The range of books read independently includes such authors as Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake. Pupils use their research skills well. Average and higher attaining pupils understand how to locate information in the library using alphabetical knowledge. Given the competence of the pupils, the school should address more positively the improvements to its system of cataloguing books, which staff have already explored, in order to extend pupils' library skills even further.
92. Standards in writing are well above average at the end of Year 2. There is good and regular attention to teaching spelling rules and strategies and to the teaching of handwriting. In consequence, the vast majority of pupils are able to write in a clear, neat, joined script. Samples of work show consistent attention to accuracy. Opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes throughout the school are good. For example, pupils write poems and accounts and they retell stories. They word-process their work effectively selecting appropriate fonts and sizes. Teachers' expectations are high and they consistently model good presentation themselves. Pupils take care to follow the examples given. In consequence, they learn very well.

Both content and accuracy develop at a brisk pace. Higher attainers in Year 2 produce interesting descriptions with appropriately varied sentence styles. Recounting aspects of a holiday, one pupil wrote: 'First we saw one otter. When he went inside on some gravel he did a sort of dance. One pulled up some grass with big clumps of soil on it'. An average attainer used good vocabulary, spelling accurately: 'My sunflower has germinated'. A lower attainer did not spell as well, but effectively conveyed the good advice to 'be paithent (patient) and wait for a shte (shoot) to apeyar (appear)'.

93. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now very good throughout the school. There are examples of excellent lessons. The key features of the school's approach lie in the development of listening and speaking, which is supported by excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Teachers build pupils' confidence by valuing what they say. They regularly present good models, give clear explanations and focused reinforcement, which lead to plenty of opportunities for pupils to use what they have learned independently. Teachers plan carefully and clearly identify what the learning for each lesson will be. These aims are clearly explained to pupils in simple language at the start of the lesson. This gets the lesson off to a brisk start and helps pupils to pay attention to what they are learning. The teachers ask a good range of questions, often directed at particular pupils to match their attainment or to hold their attention. A wide range of teaching methods is used, which helps to involve all pupils in their learning. Examples include group discussion, asking questions and the use of ICT. Appropriate software supports, for example, spelling and both guided and independent writing. The different language skills are regularly used in combination, which helps them to develop in a balanced way. Teachers' expectations of pupils' efforts and behaviour are high. The management of pupils is consistently very good, enabling lessons to run smoothly without interruption and pupils to learn very well. Learning support assistants work very well alongside teachers, well briefed and adopting many of the same techniques so that pupils, especially those with special needs, have the benefit of more individual attention to further their learning. Assessments are carried out regularly, consistently and positively and include the setting of personal targets for pupils through focused and accessible developmental comments. Lessons finish well. Teachers carefully review with the pupils what they have learned by asking key questions or asking pupils to talk about what they have learned. This helps to reinforce the pupils' new knowledge and further their speaking and listening skills. Consequently, they talk about what they have learned and have good knowledge of their own learning.
94. In all subjects, literacy skills are supported and extended. This is because the school links all its work through common themes. Key vocabulary is emphasised; for example, in science and mathematics. Drama is used in history to support imaginative accounts exploring, for example, what life was like in Tudor times. Discussion features prominently throughout the curriculum, such as that arising from reflections on various issues in religious education lessons. The school's strategy for literacy is fully developed and the school has adapted it very well to meet the particular needs of its pupils.
95. The leadership of the subject is excellent. The subject teacher is a leading literacy co-ordinator who herself helps train new teachers and leads initiatives for the local education authority. She provides clear focus and direction so teachers work as a highly competent team, united and committed to the highest standards. Subject documentation is thorough, well focused and there has been very close monitoring of teaching. In consequence, the right things are taught, in the right way so that all pupils learn very well. Very good assessment systems have been established, which allow the school to track each pupil's progress carefully through the school. The information gained from assessments is used very well and contributes strongly to the high standards achieved.

MATHEMATICS

96. Inspection shows that pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are above average. Standards on entry to the school are below the level expected for their age, with some fluctuation from year to year. By the end of Year 2, results of the last three years' national test scores shows that standards have ranged between broadly average and above average. Results of the national

tests, for 2002, available in the school, show that results are better, and above the national average. This shows that pupils' achievement is very good, since they enter the school below average and leave the school above average. Standards match those found in similar schools and there is little difference between the standards attained by girls or boys. It is seven years since the school was last inspected when standards in mathematics were judged to be average. Consequently, there has been good improvement since that time. The rate of improvement is in line with the national trend.

97. Teacher assessments of pupils' performance accurately indicate that results are consistent across the attainment targets in mathematics, however, when looking at higher attaining pupils the school's teacher assessments would indicate below average performance at Level 3, the level expected of higher attaining pupils. When meeting other local schools to moderate work, teachers are aware that they are very rigorous in awarding the higher Level 3. Local moderation would indicate that pupils are, in fact attaining Level 3. Teachers are aware that they need to more accurately reflect the attainments of pupils when awarding National Curriculum Levels.
98. In lessons seen at the current Year 2 standards of work are above the national average. These pupils' achievements are very good, given a starting point below average. Most pupils are working confidently at the expected Level 2 of the National Curriculum and many at the higher Level 3. In Year 2, for example, pupils confidently add and subtract two-digit numbers and have a very clear understanding of place value up to one hundred. They confidently recall the two, three, four, five and ten times tables. They accurately solve problems involving money; for example, in practical situations in class based 'shops'. Pupils have a good knowledge of shapes; for example, pyramids, 'like the Co-op bank in Stockport.' Higher attainers are suitably challenged; for example, recognising the time in both analogue and digital form, confidently converting each to the other, representing the correct time.
99. In Year 1 pupils accurately develop and recognise patterns in number. For example $3+5=8$, $13+5=18$ etc. They identify patterns in the 100 number square with ease and explain the methods used to solve numerical problems: 'I started with the largest number, 12 and counted on to get the answer.' They readily calculate a given number from a range of clues; for example, 'it is the tenth ten', 'the first three-digit number', 'pennies in a pound', and 'one more than ninety-nine', correctly identifying one hundred. In a similar way pupils identify a pyramid from, 'it is a solid shape', 'it will not roll', 'the bottom is sometimes a square' and 'it has sloping sides'. Given the number, pupils count in tens, forwards and backwards capably, count on in ones from 80 to the number and subtract 10, 20 and 40 from 100.
100. Higher attaining pupils are successfully challenged at a level appropriate to their understanding. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs are also successfully supported. In a Year 2 lesson, including lower attaining pupils, all were equally involved in giving quick-fire answers clapping the rhythm, counting in fives and using 'fast fingers' to calculate two numbers totalling ten.
101. Pupils' mathematical skills are reinforced in other lessons in the curriculum, for instance, in design and technology, for example, when designing and making fruit salad, calculating quantities and size, and in science, where planning 'trains' set out calculations used to determine the outcome of experiments. In art pupils consider the size of brush strokes, in history the timelines are used to illustrate chronology. Numeracy skills are particularly well developed through information and communication technology; for example, through the use of a programmable floor robot to calculate direction and angles and the interrogation of data bases, accurately illustrating answers with graphs and pie charts. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good, with examples of excellent teaching. All lessons observed were judged to be very good and better. Teachers' planning is meticulous and very carefully includes provision for pupils of all levels of prior attainment. It is a feature of the relationships between teachers and pupils that teachers understand the different

needs of all pupils. The school successfully works hard to ensure that opportunities to include the teaching of numeracy are identified in other subjects of the curriculum and that mathematics vocabulary is developed whenever possible. Because teachers are concerned to cater for the full age and attainment range, pupils learn very well, making swift progress.

103. Teachers make particularly good use of ICT, both in preparing planning and materials and in supporting pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, planned opportunities, at a challenging level, were provided for pupils to develop their knowledge of time and to apply their skills in matching analogue and digital times. Teachers have adapted and improved the delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy, due to a corporate whole-school approach and good support and guidance from the subject co-ordinator. Consequently, lessons have a clear structure that helps pupils to learn in a sequential and well-organised way. They make very good use of time and resources to present lively, interesting and stimulating lessons; every minute of every lesson is delivered at a good pace. In a Year 2 lesson, reduced in time as the result of the 'Achievement Assembly' overrunning, the same amount of material was delivered, as planned, with a breathtaking pace and sharpness.
104. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils understand what is expected of them, with good knowledge of their own learning. Learning objectives for every lesson are clearly established. Teachers use questioning techniques extremely well, to probe understanding and promote learning. They understand, very well, the demands of each relevant National Curriculum Level and recognise the levels at which pupils are achieving. Teaching assistants are actively involved in this process, working well with pupils in small groups and using appropriate mathematical vocabulary when interacting with pupils. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on 'time', referring to sequences, ordering, analogue and digital. With high expectations for pupils' behaviour, teachers effectively establish and maintain an excellent standard of discipline through well-focused teaching and positive productive relationships. As a result, pupils learn in a stress free atmosphere, fully focused on their learning tasks, able to fully apply intellectual and creative effort. They are independent learners making decisions about their own learning, keen to get on to the next task. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language learn very well. The use of homework tasks, in relation to individual pupil needs encourages independence and provides good opportunities for parents to understand how pupils learn.
105. The management of the subject is very good and is part of a whole-school culture of improvement. All teachers are aware of developments in the subject, they know what has been achieved, what the current priorities are and in which direction they wish to move. As part of an action plan for the subject, incorporated in the school improvement plan, the co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching and learning, effectively evaluating and planning future changes, with the aim of continuous improvement. There are four classes in each year group and teachers effectively plan, monitor and evaluate together, successfully setting learning targets that inform the lesson objectives. Through the leadership of the co-ordinator, ably supported by a 'shadow' member of staff, there is a clear understanding of standards attained and how they compare, both nationally and locally. Detailed information about the progress of pupils is gathered very effectively through termly assessments and their attainments are carefully recorded. Everything possible is done to ensure that all pupils achieve as highly as possible.

SCIENCE

106. By the end of Year 2 standards are well above average with a significant number of pupils achieving at a higher level than that expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. All pupils including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is a second language and pupils identified as gifted and talented achieve very well in their learning. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. The pupils' factual knowledge is very good and recorded work is very well presented.
107. Throughout the school, pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills very well to support their learning. They read successfully to carry out research and write their findings in clear legible

formats. Teachers are particularly good at developing methods for pupils to record their findings, concentrating on developing thinking skills rather than writing reams of explanations. For example, the pupils use the very good 'planning train' framework to aid their presentation and sequencing of investigations. They use their numeracy skills effectively to tally, predict and record numerical results in their diaries of, for instance, the size of the sunflowers they have planted. They are very competent when using the computer to support their learning and present their findings. A very good example of this was when a Year 1 pupil used the Internet to research for information about Monet's garden, and during the discussion session at the end of the lesson he was able to give a graphic account of what he had discovered.

108. During the inspection the Year 2 theme focus was 'Gardens and Growth' and all areas of the infant curriculum were successfully embedded in this theme. This approach to the teaching and learning of science is extremely successful and presents many opportunities for learning to be enhanced and for spontaneous spiritual development to take place during the very good lessons. During a Year 2 lesson the pupils sketched and painted flowers and showed a very good understanding of the parts of the flower, which they labelled. This group of pupils worked sensibly, unsupervised and sketched boldly as they captured the beauty of their chosen flower; for example, a lily. Their total absorption in the task and obvious appreciation of the beauty of the flowers presented an air of spirituality. When looking at the seeds of the dandelion there were gasps of amazement and great excitement as they looked at them under the microscope.
109. Science makes a significant contribution to teaching personal, social and health education. Pupils study the way that people recycle materials and how environments have changed and part of the life processes and living things unit is devoted to 'healthy eating'. Pupils are encouraged to take part in discussion, to think for themselves and to ask questions when planning, such as, 'What will I need to plant my sunflower?'.
110. All work is set to challenge the pupils at an appropriate level. Higher achieving pupils in Year 1 have a very good idea of how to plan for a fair test. When investigating fruit browning they know that if they cover one piece of apple with cling film and place another in the sun 'that would not be a fair test'. All pupils in the plenary session show a very good understanding of root vegetables. This is because of they have grown vegetables in their classroom 'Root View Farm'. Pupils in Year 2 write instructions on how to plant a window box. Higher attaining pupils' writing is neat and joined as they write; for example, 'First you fill the pot with compost, about 20cm from the top'. They all show very good understanding of the life cycle of a sunflower, they are able to say that the tiny hairs on a root take in water and that sunflower seeds can be made into margarine. Because the teacher uses good questioning techniques the pupils are able to take turns describing the life cycle of, for example, an acorn, tadpole and caterpillar. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and are particularly successful when completing practical activities such as completing a circuit. Here they are often able to take the lead and assist other pupils.
111. Teaching and learning are always very good. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good and teachers provide a wide variety of activities that extend the pupils' learning. In a Year 2 lesson observed the focus group received very high quality teaching that partly reinforced previous learning, extended their learning through further research using very good quality information books, and then widened their investigative work by using the garden area outside the classroom. This very high quality teaching enriched the pupils' learning, enabling them to appreciate the wider world of nature and the continual life cycle of our environment. When outside they showed great respect for the garden, taking care where they stepped and handling seeds and plants with the greatest of care. End of lesson discussions are used purposefully. They very successfully draw together the many activities available to the pupils during the teaching session. The teachers have excellent management skills. There are activities to meet the needs of all pupils and because of this there is an excellent working atmosphere as pupils work independently and this enhances their spiritual and personal development. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this establishes the standard of behaviour for the pupils towards the teacher and each other.

112. The subject is very well managed. The nationally produced scheme of work has very successfully been adapted to enable the school themes to be taught and to ensure that all areas of the subject are taught. Science is very well planned to encourage pupils' interest, involvement and enjoyment and to enhance other areas of the curriculum. There are many school trips and visitors to school to bring the subject truly alive. Plans are in hand to develop the school's environmental area, which will extend further the already very good use that is made of the school gardens. The previous year's National Curriculum results indicated that there was a weakness in teaching life and living processes and physical processes. The senior management team have analysed these results carefully and have taken positive action to address any shortfalls identified. Inspection evidence confirms that these are no longer areas for concern.

ART AND DESIGN

113. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be above average. They have improved since then and are now well above average by the end of Year 2. There is very good achievement across the age range and amongst different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of well chosen topics that interest them and higher attainers also achieve very well because open-ended themes give room for ingenuity and originality. There is no significant difference between the artwork of girls and boys.
114. All the teaching and learning observed was of very good quality. Because teachers are aware of the importance of prior learning their planning follows particular themes and builds systematically on pupils' skills. The teachers attach much importance to developing the pupils' close observational skills and these are taught from an early age. As a result, pupils produce very detailed work; for example, in their observational drawings and paintings of fruit. In further developing these skills, pupils paint in the style of famous artists; for example, Monet, in Year 2, commenting upon his style of work and use of colours. Pupils are introduced to a range of different art materials; for example, during the inspection, felt making, under the direction of Barbara Jepson, a local artist. Year 1 pupils produced work of high quality effectively using the techniques they had learned.
115. Teachers are very skilful at linking art and design to other subjects. This develops a sense of purpose in what pupils do. For example, in Year 2, pupils extend their speaking and listening skills discussing the effects of Monet's blindness upon his later works, and how he used colours to create a desired effect. Art is often incorporated into subjects like history and geography, as in watercolour pictures on display to illustrate a recent visit to Bramall Hall. Art and design makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The works of different artists are displayed around the school, along with pupils' work 'in the style of'. Particularly effective is a display in the entrance hall related to the work of the artist, Rennie Mackintosh. Pupils often work in small groups and share ideas, whilst at the same time they listen attentively to others' points of view. Excellent relationships enable pupils to express their ideas, knowing that they will be valued.
116. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has a very good overview of standards, teachers' planning and the quality of work in relation to local and national comparisons. She has been able to effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning, through her role as a mentor for initial teacher training. Detailed guidance is provided for teachers and pupils achievements, which are assessed on a termly basis with information passed to the next teacher, effectively supporting continuity and progression in the subject. Resources are of good quality and augmented by the generous contributions of parents. High quality pupils' work is exhibited regularly in the Stockport Art Gallery Exhibition and this also acts as an incentive to further develop the pupils' skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now well above average by the end of Year 2. Achievement is very good. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements only a group

activity in food technology could be seen in Year 1 and no design and technology lessons at all could be seen in Year 2. No judgements, therefore, could be made on the quality of teaching and learning in these classes. Analysis of pupils' work together with their own accounts of what they have done, discussions with teachers, including the examination of planning and records, all indicate that pupils throughout the school build up their skills, knowledge and understanding very well. This is because teachers are very careful to introduce and consolidate new skills in a systematic manner. They regularly assess how well pupils are learning and where necessary alter the focus of teaching to make sure that all tasks are tailored to individual needs. The school now follows a nationally recommended scheme of work that teachers adapt to suit the thematic approach the school uses for all subjects. This ensures that boys and girls of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, acquire skills in a progressive way and that their experiences become more challenging as they move through the school.

118. In Year 1 the pupils' plans and designs for puppets show that they are acquiring an understanding of appropriate materials. Their simple diagrams demonstrate what has worked well and what could be improved. The puppets themselves illustrate that pupils use tools and assemble components with care. After designing a suitable fruit salad to meet particular tastes and visual appeal, pupils clearly explained their preferred blend of colours, flavours and textures, making the evaluations; for example; that 'the mango is sweet, the melon is juicy, the apple is shiny red'. By the end of Year 2 pupils generate ideas at a well above average level; for example, for toys after examining photographs and commercially produced examples. Considering specific needs, for example, to represent plants and farm animals (prompted by a visit to a real farm) they produce designs for toys using pivots and levers. They explain clearly ways of improvement; for example, 'I want to put a pin in the middle of my sunflower so that it can turn around in the wind'. Pupils use ICT appropriately to present their findings neatly in word-processed form. Photographs show them behaving very responsibly and using a wide range of tools with accuracy. Examples of the end product such as a model of a pig, show that pupils succeed in producing very effective movement and very good quality of finish. The care and concern shown in presentation indicates that pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and reach well above average standards.
119. Teachers and support assistants are adept at linking design and technology to other subjects. For example, in the group session to evaluate the fruit salad, the support assistant reinforced very well pupils' use of comparative adjectives such as 'juicier' and 'more juicy' to develop pupils' literacy as well as design skills. Whilst the last inspection found that non-teaching staff lacked the expertise to enhance lessons, the probing questions employed demonstrated that this is far from the case now.
120. The subject is very well managed. Although lessons are not monitored, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work are regularly checked to ensure that all pupils have the most appropriate tasks and challenges. Through such evaluations and discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator identifies the areas for development in both pupils' learning and also staff training, which then form part of comprehensive development plans. The well-developed assessment system includes a collection of examples at each level of attainment to guide teachers in where to pitch their judgements. The time available for the subject is broadly typical, and is used effectively in a block rather than spread thinly over the year. The very good range of resources is well supplemented by generous gifts, for example, of large quantities of paper and card from parents and local businesses. These contributions enrich the opportunities for learning provided for the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Standards have continued to improve since the last inspection and are now well above average by the end of Year 2. Achievement is very good due to the quality of the curriculum, high teacher expectations and pupils' eagerness to learn.
122. A nationally recommended scheme of work has been adopted to suit the school and its pupils. Pupils' work is well marked and there are helpful comments made. Teachers set high standards

for the pupils who are keen to meet the challenge. The achievement of pupils across the range of prior attainments, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good. Higher attaining pupils are given work that extends them and pupils with special educational needs are set tasks that meet their individual needs and ensure that the rate of learning is very good. Teachers cater for individual learning needs, making sure that pupils of all backgrounds and prior attainments are included.

123. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers provide rich opportunities for the pupils to develop their spoken language, particularly during the introduction to lessons and through group and whole-class discussions. For example, during a lesson about fruit that grows in different climates, pupils were encouraged to describe pineapple, which they said was 'spiky' and 'very juicy'. The development of pupils' language skills is helpful to all pupils including those who are speakers of other languages. Pupils are able to identify hot and cold climates and countries where different fruits grow when using a globe. They know that grapes grown in warm countries grow on vines, for example, in France. Year 1 pupils can recognise Stockport and main cities on a map, including London. They know that Stockport is close to Manchester. Reception children know that crocodiles live in hot countries and like water.
124. Geography makes a good contribution to the pupils' written work, which is well presented and of a high standard by the end of Year 2. Pupils' geographical vocabulary is very good as is their geographical knowledge and understanding. They use a floor robot to find and plot direction and can plan and follow a route to the local park. They have located where they live in relation to the school on a local map and have written their own addresses in very neat, legible handwriting. Using their numeracy and geographical skills, Year 2 pupils can use coordinates to find a location in the 'Giant's Garden', for instance, where roses and other plants grow. They also use their language and geographical skills to discuss ways of improving the environment (the School Caterpillar Garden). The work set by teachers ensures that all pupils are learning at a good or very good pace.
125. Pupils are keen to work and learn. Their behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent. There are good relationships in classrooms and everyone is valued as an individual. As a consequence, learning is enjoyable and successful.
126. The subject is managed very effectively. There is an action plan, which is regularly reviewed and there are clear priorities. For instance, liaison with the junior school is a high priority, to ensure smooth transition of pupils. The curriculum and teachers' planning is regularly monitored and the co-ordinator works closely with all the staff to this effect. The scheme of work is linked closely to the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT ensuring that work in the subject is enriched and contributes to the pupils' skills in these areas. The co-ordinator's review of the subject action plan has included an evaluation of all aspects of inclusion so that the learning needs of all groups of pupils and individual pupils are properly met. There is a very good supply of resources and an audit has recently been completed. Resources are well organised and well kept and pupils respond by treating them with care and respect.

HISTORY

127. Standards are even better than at the time of the last inspection and by the end of Year 2 are well above average and achievement is very good. This is due to the effective teaching and the pupils' motivation and interest in the subject. Lessons were well planned, well introduced and build on previous learning. Samples and displays of pupils' work were of a very high standard. The school follows a nationally recommended scheme, which is tailored to the pupils' needs. Consistent, agreed assessment procedures are used by all teachers to inform future teaching and learning. Work is very well marked with very helpful and encouraging comments. This helps teachers to make sure that pupils acquire skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school.
128. Because teachers know the curriculum well, understand the individual needs of their pupils and expect high standards, achievement is very good for pupils with differing prior attainments,

including those with special educational needs, and English as an additional language. The support of teaching assistants is used effectively to cater for the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Speaking and listening skills were encouraged during discussion about the coronation and the Queen's golden jubilee. Pupils place key events on a timeline and use numeracy skills to count on in tens from 1952 to 2002. They have developed a sense of history and know that their school was built in the same year that Elizabeth became queen. Homework is used very effectively; for example, pupils' enquiry skills were demonstrated when they carefully recounted their own families' experiences and memories of the coronation. Enquiry skills are also developed through ICT; for example, by using the Internet to research topics.

129. History makes a very good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. They enjoy a great variety of experiences to develop their historical skills and understanding through visits and visitors. Photo evidence and pupils' writing about a visit to Bramhall Hall illustrated the pupils' experience of life as a servant living at the hall. Pupils experienced working in the kitchen, baking, washing and cleaning using Victorian equipment and utensils. Pupils also wrote about dressing up in 'Mr Neville's hat'. They have visited Gladstone Pottery Museum and have studied child labour as part of their topic work. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils listen attentively and show enjoyment of their work. They are well behaved and eager to answer questions to show that they can use historical vocabulary. They often work in groups, sharing ideas and listening carefully to one another. They are confident because they know that their ideas and suggestions will be valued by the teachers and other pupils.
130. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who has taken over the responsibility relatively recently. Together with the headteacher, she has revised the action plan, which plots the development of the subject, and has established clear priorities. She is developing a collection of pupils' work including photographic evidence to provide examples of the standards to be reached. Resources for learning are very good because they have been wisely selected, kept in good order and organised into 'user friendly' themes. There are sufficient resources to suit the needs of all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special education needs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

131. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above average by the end of Year 2. Achievement is very good. Since the last inspection the school has provided a number of additional computers, in classrooms and in a computer suite, situated alongside the library. As a result, the teaching of ICT has been integrated very effectively with the teaching of other subjects and this is also enabling specific skills to be taught to pupils. The school follows the national guidance for the subject and this helps the teachers to make sure that pupils acquire the necessary skills in a progressive way. With the exception of one computer, they are all connected to the Internet, enabling research to be undertaken in other subjects.
132. All teaching and learning observed was of very good quality. Teachers plan work carefully and include teaching assistants in the process. Carefully planned opportunities are provided in classrooms, to support learning in a number of subjects. For example, telling the time, accessing data and drawing shapes in mathematics, word-processing and word recognition in literacy and using line and colour in art work. In addition there are specific sessions using the computer suite to teach specific keyboard and other skills. Very good lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 giving pupils the opportunity to prepare a mathematics worksheet, calculating prices and using data about their class to solve a number of problems, put together by the pupils. Teachers are confident in using the materials and prepare both hardware and software well to ensure that very good learning takes place.
133. ICT lessons and activities are conducted at a good pace, being particularly effective when supported by a teaching assistant in the computer suite. A system of noting the planned learning objectives in class books is used, enabling the teaching assistant to monitor and evaluate progress made by pupils in each session. Pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks, they work together, often in pairs, extremely well, commenting, in a mature way, about how

their work might be improved. They possess a range of skills above those to be expected; for example, using the navigation bar to move effectively through a program, and the use of the 'scroll' arrows to locate hidden text and data. Work on display illustrated pupils' use of the Internet to collect material about other countries. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, those with special educational needs and pupils' for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in the subject.

134. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator, supported by a shadow' member of staff. They work together to ensure consistency and to provide guidance for other teachers. The pupils' acquisitions of skills are recorded, in accordance with national guidance. Most teachers have now completed training provided by the 'New Opportunities Fund' and are confident in their use of hardware and software. Appropriate priorities have been clearly established for future developments based upon effective monitoring and evaluation of current provision. The school has recently submitted a bid for additional funding to allow the installation of active white boards in every classroom, to further develop the potential for teaching and learning, and is shortly to be connected to a 'broad band' provider, enabling a permanent Internet access.

MUSIC

135. From the moment children start school the very good quality music, plays an essential part in their daily school experience. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and well exceed expectations by the end of Year 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is a second language and gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. Staff ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities.
136. Music makes a major contribution to the excellent spiritual development of all pupils. Well chosen songs are used particularly effectively in assemblies providing a beautiful start to the school day. In the 'celebration' assembly, powerful unaccompanied singing in rounds of 'The Rhythm of Life' promotes exceptional spirituality as children's voices come through sweetly and clearly, keeping to the rhythm of the song. The timing of the precise abrupt end, which every child achieves, the momentary silence, similar to the lights suddenly going out, is a spiritual moment for all. When children leave the hall to return to their classrooms they leave happily singing favourite songs, which promotes their feeling of well-being and sets the scene for the day ahead enabling very good learning to take place.
137. Teachers are very skilful at linking music to other subjects. From the very beginning of their school life children develop their language and mathematical skills through singing songs paying attention to diction, meaning, rhythm and rhyme. Music is used to stimulate writing. When the pupils are performing and composing their music making it is often recorded and they use this to reflect upon and improve their work.
138. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have learnt a very good selection of songs, which they sing very well, on occasions using different languages, and at other times incorporating signing. They sing songs from memory and pitch their voices to follow the contour of the melodies sung by the teachers, forming words clearly. When singing 'Hands Shoulders Knees and Toes' they can control their voices and are developing very good voice moderation as they sing softly and mime as necessary. They can use percussion instruments to demonstrate long and short notes and can follow simple musical scores. They work in rounds using a variety of instruments showing a very good understanding of pace and beat. Teachers have high expectations of what children will achieve and they respond very well to the challenge of these expectations. They enjoy and appreciate music. They become familiar with a range of music from their own and other cultures. A very good example of this is when a very appropriate choice of Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance' leads into discussion about the Queen's jubilee when they listen to recorded music. The music presents a very good opportunity for the children to listen carefully and to reflect on the various moods presented. They are able to identify and name many of the instruments used in this piece of music.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is because music has a high profile and is highly valued as a means through which children can explore their imagination and develop thinking in a non-threatening manner. As teachers know their children very well they are able to challenge each child appropriately, as a result of this no child feels threatened or unable to participate in the learning process. An example of this is when practising response singing, the teacher chose individual children to respond or, if she felt that it was less threatening, a group response.
140. All children participate and enjoy their lessons, showing a very good recall of songs, which they sing clearly and tunefully. The very good relationship with each other and class teachers is quite evident in the co-operation, concentration and generally happy relaxed yet meaningful atmosphere of lessons. In hymn practice they all sing tunefully, carefully taking part in all actions within a friendly family atmosphere which gives a strong secure feeling to the lesson. In assemblies when singing 'He's got the whole world in his hands' they willingly join hands with each other and teachers to form an unbroken friendship chain.
141. Pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to receive keyboard tuition on a weekly basis from a visiting teacher. The children enjoy this opportunity and are achieving well.
142. The subject co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She has a clear view of how she would like music to develop and strong views on the important contribution that the subject makes to all other areas of the curriculum. Since the last inspection a national scheme of work has been introduced and staff have very successfully adapted this to meet the needs of each term's topic. The subject is particularly well supported by very good, easily accessible resources, which are very well used; this is a significant contributory factor to the high standard of achievement and enjoyment that the pupils obtain from the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. In response to the very good quality of the teaching, standards are above average for pupils at the end of Year 2. This represents an improvement over the average standards identified at the time of the last inspection. The key to this improvement has been the development of a supportive curriculum, which offers good guidance to the teachers enabling them to promote the pupils' skills systematically as they move through the school. As a consequence, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, potentially higher attaining pupils and those who have English as an additional language, develop their skills to an above average level and achieve well by the time they leave the school.
144. The teachers are careful to stress the importance of safe practice and encourage the pupils to evaluate the quality of their own and each other's movements, consequently, skills such as using space effectively, throwing and catching bean bags are satisfactorily developed. Dance skills, including completing sequenced movements, are accomplished well, and the pupils are particularly aware and sensitive to each other during country dancing.
145. Pupils in Year 2 made very good progress in the games and dance lessons seen. They explored and demonstrated simple sequences of actions with increasing precision. They balanced on various parts of the body, travelled in movements involving changes of speed and direction, and combined these into a simple repeated routine. As they began to refine their own performances it was the quality of their verbal expression that distinguished different levels of attainment rather than their competence in physical education. Boys and girls across the range of prior attainments worked with interest. Pupils with high levels of special educational needs were very well supported so that they played a full part alongside their peers. Pupils were well aware of health and safety requirements and used available space well, careful to keep a safe distance from each other. Pupils in Year 1 followed the teacher's well-established routines carefully, entered the hall in an orderly yet eager manner and sustained concentration and effort very well during their dance lesson. They also showed a good awareness of space and the effect of exercise on their bodies. As with other pupils their knowledge of the effect of physical exercise

was in advance of their individual skill-evidence that whilst the pupils' understanding is developed to the full a few pupils could acquire even more skill.

146. Pupils enjoy physical education. They are receptive to the good teaching and work energetically. They are sporting, supporting fellow team members and show respect for the efforts of others. Throughout the school, all pupils develop very good attitudes to physical activity and build productively on previous learning. Observations at the time of the last inspection queried whether activity was rigorous enough; inspection now shows that this aspect has been addressed well. Lessons proceed at a very good pace and in preparation the pupils complete rigorous 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' routines before and after exercise. These are often supported by recorded music or by using tambourines and these methods increase the pace even more, stimulating the pupils' efforts and enthusiasm. The pupils learn the importance of physical exercise to health, and experience a full range of activities. They relate warmly and appreciatively towards each other and to their teachers and behave particularly well during a variety of activities. Physical activity generally helps to maintain the strong ethos of consideration for others evident in the school. Sharing ideas and discussion are essential ingredients in most lessons and these help to promote the pupils' literacy skills.
147. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It has improved since the previous inspection and has a beneficial effect on the pupils' acquisition of skills - especially in dance and games activities. All the teachers manage the pupils' behaviour very successfully. Warm relationships, careful preparation and the use of praise and encouragement are key features of all the lessons. These are most successful in promoting the pupils' very good learning. Teachers and learning support assistants often model skills effectively, joining in with the pupils, showing confidence and competence in the subject. Pupil demonstrations are also used well to illustrate teaching points. Mostly teachers either evaluate the pupils' performances themselves or ask for words of praise from the pupils. Very occasionally learning could be even more productive if the teachers encouraged the pupils to evaluate each other's efforts through positive criticism. This reflects the good stage the learning has reached, for teachers have promoted the pupils' personal development and self-confidence particularly successfully. Exploring ways of improving would raise the level of the pupils' performance even more, in all aspects of the subject to help to improve performance. Planning is very good and helps to ensure that resources are prepared and challenge and lesson pace maintained.
148. The teachers enjoy the subject and show very good knowledge and skill; for example, they teach the development of specific skills such as throwing and how to develop sequenced movements in dance very effectively. Teachers set high expectations and use resources well to support teaching and learning. A positive feature is the way in which the teachers involve the pupils in accessing and returning equipment after use and this is in keeping with the school's consistent emphasis on promoting the pupils' independence.
149. The school has introduced a new recommended scheme of work and this is supporting the emphasis on developing the pupils' skills. The curriculum is planned well to ensure appropriate balance and breadth and the pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit to monitor achievement and inform future planning. The very experienced co-ordinator has much interest in the subject and provides very good leadership and guidance. Learning resources are very good and the pupils' pace of learning is significantly enriched through music. The accommodation is very good and teachers use the spacious indoor and outdoor facilities well to challenge and motivate the pupils. Work in the subject makes a notable contribution in promoting the pupils' spiritual and moral development and in supporting their positive attitudes to school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the end of Year 2. Most pupils, including higher attainers, pupils who have English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment throughout the school. This represents an improved picture to that found at the last inspection. The standards attained at that time matched the expectations of the locally

agreed syllabus. They have improved because the co-ordinator has supported colleagues in their planning and has promoted a consistent emphasis on discussion and time for reflection within lessons. This has raised the teachers' expectations enabling them to extend the pupils' understanding.

151. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of human values and know that people get comfort and confidence from their religious beliefs. Pupils from the range of prior attainments see the connection between the cycles of nature and the calendars of differing religious faiths. For example, the autumn harvest festivals of Christianity and Sikhism and the spring time celebrations of Easter to Christians and The Passover to Jews. Pupils in Year 1 make useful connections between their favourite Christmas stories about the bringing of gifts with stories from other faiths and cultures, stories of Babushka and celebrations such as the Jewish Chanukah. Most pupils achieve very well as they move through the school. From having a stronger knowledge of facts than understanding of what they study, they develop an equally strong and above average capacity to express their own thoughts, ideas and beliefs.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject so that they teach pupils to relate and summarise the facts well. Their probing questions, tailored to ability, are very effective in making all pupils reflect on their own experiences so that they understand better the thoughts and beliefs of others. This means that over their time in school pupils grasp the main beliefs of several major faiths, and see how faith influences action. Pupils behave very well and show a willingness to take part in lessons.
153. Lessons are often movingly spiritual in their nature and teachers are skilful and probing with their questioning ensuring that all pupils learn successfully. The teachers make close and effective links with work in personal, social and moral education and utilise methods such as 'circle time' where pupils gather seated in a circle and take turns to express and share their ideas. Often these sessions are accompanied by the lighting of a candle and they are most successful in encouraging the pupils to reflect about their place in the world around them and how some people form their religious belief. This took place in a lesson in Year 2 where the pupils discussed and considered the feelings that Joseph's brothers may have had as they saw him show off his coat of many colours. Teachers ensure that religious education lessons are seen as 'special times' and this is beneficial in promoting the pupils' positive attitudes. The pupils enjoy the work and show great interest and this underpins their very good learning.
154. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and has adapted the curriculum successfully so that teaching and learning can explore the pupils' previous experiences and develop their religious understanding through cross-curricular links. This means that religious education is supported, for example, by art and music and by history and science. This was shown in the displays of Diwali patterns. The curriculum has also been extended to cover main world faiths such as Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism in addition to the established Christian foundation. A good range of resources, including artefact collections related to the major world faiths, helps to give pupils vivid experiences. Increasingly ICT is used to enhance the pupils' class booklets; for example, to record their comments about what makes them worried. These accompany their drawings, which are used productively to record the pupils' ideas and to review their knowledge and understanding. These activities contribute to the pupils' developing literacy skills, but much of the work is oral and only a small part is recorded in this way. This limits the contribution that work in the subject can make to the pupils' literacy skills and there is scope to provide more opportunities for pupils, in Year 2 especially, to record their ideas and reflections more frequently either through writing or other media. Visits to local churches and strong links with assembly and collective worship themes are instrumental in extending the pupils' awareness of religious belief and practice. Studies in religious education make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development, especially in promoting the pupils' well-being and consideration of others.