

INSPECTION REPORT

Bowness County Primary School

Little Lever, Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105197

Headteacher: Mrs D Cooney

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 246455

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Little Lever Bolton
Postcode:	BL3 1BT
Telephone number:	01204 333140
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Jones
Date of previous inspection:	12 th – 15 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy	Registered inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education and provision for children in the foundation stage.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9981	Mr S Hussain	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?
16198	Mrs C Etherington	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, and English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32136	Mrs L Brookes	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, religious education, educational inclusion and special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This community primary school has 147 pupils on roll aged between four and 11. The number on roll has fallen since the time of the last inspection and the school is smaller than other primary schools nationally. It is situated in an area of mixed housing in Little Lever, a suburb of Bolton. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 21 per cent which is slightly higher than the national average. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage, with a small number of pupils of Asian and mixed Caribbean heritage. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are Travellers. Six per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language though none is at an early stage. Forty-two pupils are on the school's register of pupils who have special educational needs; this includes three pupils with statements of special educational need. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties and a small proportion have physical or behavioural difficulties. This proportion is above average for primary schools nationally. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time of transfer is very high. The attainment of the children on entry to school is below average. This is a change since the last inspection when it was average as is the increased number of pupils who have special educational needs. The school is an Investor in People.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is well led and soundly managed and provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is an inclusive society based on very good relationships and very good care and welfare. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and from Traveller families is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes is good.
- The effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development brings about pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
- The leadership by the headteacher sets a clear educational direction for the school.
- The school works well with other local schools.
- Partnership with parents is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The role, responsibilities and accountability of the senior managers and subject leaders.
- The rate of pupils' attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the school was last inspected in January 1998. Of the key issues to be addressed the provision for the reception class, information and communication technology and pupils' spiritual and cultural development and the appraisal of teachers have all improved due to the leadership of the headteacher. The use of assessment has not improved sufficiently well. Improvements have additionally been made in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching, the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development, the welfare offered by the school and its links with parents. Standards have improved in information and communication technology and science. They have declined in English, mathematics and music by the end of Year 6.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	D	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	D	C	
Science	C	E	E	D	

Over time the school's results rise broadly in line with the national trend. In this inspection standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In 2002 the school set exceedingly challenging targets in English and mathematics but these were not met. Those for 2003 are realistic and the school is on course to meet them. In other subjects standards are at the level typically expected of 11-year-olds other than in music where they are below the expected level. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

By the end of Year 2 standards are average in reading and writing and below average in science and speaking. In other subjects standards are at the expected level. Pupils' achievement is good.

In the reception class standards are on course to be below the typically expected level in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. In other aspects the children are on course to meet the expected standards. Pupils' achievement is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils' enthusiasm, interest, effort and concentration are strong. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils' understand well the impact of their own actions because the school's code of conduct is clear and much discussion takes place. The school is a happy, orderly and harmonious community which supports pupils' learning soundly overall.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils' personal development is good and pupils grow in maturity. Relationships between adults and pupils are very warm and very friendly and so pupils learn tolerance and cooperation.
Attendance	Poor: the rate of pupils' attendance is poor and punctuality is

	unsatisfactory.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is sound overall though good for pupils in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. The teaching of English and mathematics including literacy and numeracy is good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 as is the teaching of design and technology and art and design. A good range of methods is used. For pupils in Years 3 to Year 6 it is satisfactory in these subjects. The quality of pupils' learning matches the quality of teaching.

Overall strengths in the teaching are in the relationships across the school and the way in which pupils are managed. As a result pupils' behave well and work with a good degree of independence. Pupils who have special educational needs are taught well and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to give extra help. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language get a good degree of help with extending language. Travellers get much help in settling into school and the teaching caters well for their individual needs. The school meets the needs of all pupils appropriately though the challenge for the higher attainers is not well enough planned. Teachers use questioning soundly but the depth of questioning and the lack of insistence on extended answers is a relative weakness.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: statutory requirements are met. Strengths are in the curriculum for the reception children though provision for their physical development is a relative weakness. The curricular planning for other pupils has yet to focus on the higher attaining pupils. The school has good links with partner schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: and as a result pupils make good progress. No pupils are currently identified as gifted or talented.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: staff makes sure that pupils have plenty of help. Pupils are confident to ask questions.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: the school has a warm family atmosphere underpinned by very good relationships, very good procedures for child protection and good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance and behaviour. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory.
How well the school works in	The school has good links with parents and is proactive in developing

partnership with parents	these. It enjoys very good relationships with parents who think very well of it. The parent and teacher association and other volunteers make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and to fundraising to improve the school.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the quality of leadership by the headteacher is good. Sound support is provided by senior managers though they are over-reliant on direction from the headteacher. Subject leaders are at an early stage in leading change to bring about improvement in standards. The outcome is that management is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily: the governing body has until recently been over-reliant on the headteacher. However, there is a determination to bring about change and already the governors have a good understanding of the strengths and aspects for development in the school. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: the school makes sensible use of a range of data to evaluate its performance; the headteacher has evaluated teaching well. The governors and staff together audit the school improvement plan, set appropriate targets for improvement and check to make sure that action is taken.
The strategic use of resources	Good: extra funds are used effectively. The new suite of computers is used well to raise standards in information and communication technology. The school uses its funds wisely, takes on views of the pupils and parents satisfactorily and compares its performance with that of other primary schools.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources	Satisfactory: the accommodation and resources for teaching and learning are sound. The school is adequately staffed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations of the school and how it helps their children become mature and responsible. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school sets the right amount of homework. • Children make good progress. • Children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of dinner supervisory staff.

The inspection team agrees with parents when they state that children enjoy school, get the right amount of homework and that it helps pupils grow in maturity. The inspection judgement on the other aspects that please parents most is that these aspects are sound

overall with strengths in the reception to Year 2 classes. The number of dinner supervisory staff is sufficient for the size of the school and they are deployed well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. In particular the low standards over the last couple of years have brought about intervention from the local education authority that is now working alongside the school to raise standards. The poor rate of pupils' attendance adversely affects their learning. This was one of the aspects that triggered the extra help from the local education authority. Staff changes have also meant that older pupils have been taught by more than one class teacher each year and this has not helped the continuity of their learning. In science the well below average standards which followed the last inspection have only very recently risen to below average. A focus on practical science led by the headteacher has helped to bring this about. Pupils are not yet reaching the higher levels in science because their skills of applying their knowledge are underdeveloped. In music pupils have gaps in their knowledge across the subject and are working at a level more typical for pupils a year younger. A newly appointed subject leader has taken the curriculum in hand and provides good support to staff, so the school is in a good position to improve.

2. By the end of Year 2 standards took a dip following the last inspection but have gradually improved since then to the present satisfactory position. This is in part because of the good quality of teaching and learning and in part because of the firm foundation being laid for pupils in the reception class. Nonetheless writing standards have remained stubbornly low but the way that writing is taught in the reception class is good and this year standards have risen to an expected level by the end of Year 2 but as with other aspects and subjects across the school too few pupils are attaining the higher levels. This is also the case in science by the end of Year 2.

3. Although comparisons with the national average are unfavourable, pupils do well when their results are compared with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. By the end of Year 6 for example pupils attained an average level in mathematics and an above average level in English. In science it was below average. Using the same comparator for the Year 2 pupils, they attained an average level in reading and were well above average in mathematics. In writing, however, the level was well below average.

4. The school population is ever changing as pupils move in and out of the area. For example, as many as a quarter of a year group can change between Year 2 and Year 6 which makes the setting of long term targets quite difficult. The school welcomes a significant intake of Travellers which brings advantages to the school but means that because of the nature of the families work, a large proportion are likely to leave or join the school throughout each year. This school deals well with this changing population and has systems in place to assess pupils on entry whatever part of the year they arrive. Because the school's provision for those who have special educational needs is good it is flexible enough to provide extra help as and when it is needed. What also helps is that the school has developed a system for tracking pupils' attainment and is beginning to use the information to check on the progress that pupils are making and to provide more accurate targets for overall standards achieved by particular year groups. The next step is to make more use of the targets to form teaching groups.

5. Pupils from the reception class to Year 2 achieve well. The class sizes are comparatively small and the quality of teaching good which means that the pupils get a good

deal of individual help. The ratio in Year 3 to Year 6 is not so advantageous and pupils' rate of progress moves from good to satisfactory. The teaching though sound does not use such a wide range of methods to engage pupils in their learning as is the case in the reception to Year 2 classes where a good range of methods means that pupils' learning is accelerated. However, pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing speaking skills and standards remain below average across the school. This is because strategies to promote the use of language such as role play and drama are under-used, the use of questioning is not promoted well and as a result pupils are not confident in speaking to an audience or explaining their work in technical terms.

6. The attainment of boys and girls shows marked contrast year on year depending on the particular group of pupils. Over the last two years boys in Year 2 have performed less well than the girls in all nationally tested subjects. At Year 6 over the same period the performance of boys and girls has been similar in English but has shown marked difference in mathematics and science where boys have out performed the girls. The school has begun to tackle this issue with the help of the local education authority.

7. The school has a clear commitment to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met and that they are all fully included in learning. For the most part it is successful in this, making a good contribution to pupils' achievements. The school has a number of pupils identified as needing extra help. They make good progress because their needs are identified early and their learning is suitably planned. Individual education plans have clear measurable targets, which are used well to guide learning. Support assistants are effective in involving pupils, including those with physical and behavioural difficulties, throughout lessons, resulting in them learning as well as all other pupils. Pupils learning English as an additional language also receive good support even though they are not at an early stage in language acquisition.

8. The school has identified a number of pupils who are more able, but as yet they are not specifically identified as being gifted and talented. Four pupils from years 5 and 6 were recently selected to attend a design technology course at a local school, to develop and promote their skills in this area, but overall the challenge for higher attaining pupils in most subjects is not as high as it should be often because lesson planning does not make clear what the challenges will be.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a significant contribution to their achievements.

10. As at the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Pupils have high levels of interest and involvement in lessons and other school activities. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson about making estimates and predictions, pupils were keen to place objects in a straight line to see if the combined length was near to their estimation. In a Year 6 literacy lesson a group of pupils concentrated well as they read their parts for Macbeth'. Pupils also have much interest and enthusiasm in extra-curricular clubs such as sports clubs and the computer club. They enjoy activities such as singing and dancing at the Kids' Club.

11. The pupils are well mannered and polite. Their behaviour is generally good and this marks an improvement since the last inspection where behaviour was judged as good in the classroom and satisfactory elsewhere. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies, at break-times and as they move around the school. However, a small number of older boys need to be managed firmly as they can get a little silly at times, distracting others. The school has a clear code of conduct. Members of the school council have

designed and displayed many very good posters around school about bullying. These factors result in pupils' good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils' good moral development is evident in their views about bullying and discrimination of any kind. There were no exclusions at this school in the last academic year.

12. Relationships between adults and pupils, and also between pupils, are very good. This is an improvement on the good relationships found at the last inspection. A strong feature of the school is the level of harmony among different groups of pupils including Travellers, ethnic minorities and those who have special educational needs. Pupils have very high levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They work very well together. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 physical education lesson in the hall, they developed movement sequences well in pairs. Older pupils are very caring towards younger ones. This reflects pupils' good social development.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is reflected in their learning and their feelings about trust, justice and fair play. They feel strongly about equality and respecting others. They have a sound awareness of other cultures in our society, a factor in their satisfactory cultural development.

14. Personal development is good on the whole. Pupils develop well in their confidence and maturity year on year. They respond well to many opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others and use their initiative. The school council is well established. Through this, pupils debate issues important to them and make good suggestions to improve the school. Monitors carry out their duties sensibly. Tasks such as ringing the school bell include 'understudies' who take over when necessary.

15. Pupils' attendance and punctuality have declined since the last inspection. The poor attendance record is explained in part by the number of pupils who move between this school and others and the mobility of many of the Travellers who are often absent because their parents are working away. The school works very closely with this community to reduce any disruptions to pupils' learning. The school works very hard to improve attendance. Nevertheless the poor rate of attendance overall remains a significant factor in the comparatively low standards achieved in some subjects. Punctuality is also an issue with much lateness in the morning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when seven per cent was unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated through a programme of monitoring and improvement. In particular the teaching in the reception class has improved well. Almost two thirds of the teaching is good or better and though this is spread across each class it is weighted to the teaching in the reception class, Year 1 and Year 2.

17. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. The school has a number of pupils identified as needing extra help and their needs are identified early. Their learning is suitably planned to meet those needs and enable them to progress well. They are helped effectively in the classroom to enable them to participate alongside others in most lessons. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in learning to understand, speak, read and write English. In some lessons, teachers or classroom assistants give the pupils additional support in small groups. In many others, teachers take particular care to ensure that they have understood the task and this ensures that they are fully included in all aspects of the lesson, learning alongside others and making similar progress in those subjects. Boys and girls are treated equally in lessons and so make similar progress. This is true even in classes with substantially different numbers of boys

and girls. However, over time results show differences in attainment by boys and girls. The school is at an early stage in addressing this, for example, through extra resources for teaching and learning and through help from the local education authority.

18. Children are well prepared in the reception class for their future learning. Teachers use exciting and stimulating methods and resources. These capture pupils' interest; enable them to be creative and to think for themselves. For example, pupils explored how paper could be curled and twisted into interesting three-dimensional collages when they made calendars. The teaching made sure there was a clear purpose to the task, developed skills such as snipping with scissors through the provision of a good range of resources and encouraged pupils to think for themselves and with guidance solve simple problems and develop their own ideas. The lesson planning though detailed does not always include learning objectives. When it does the teaching is at its best because there is a clarity to the lesson that is shared with the children.

19. Where the teaching is good the pupils are managed well, good use is made of time and pupils work at a brisk pace. The teacher shares the learning objectives with the pupils so it is clear what is to be learnt in the lesson. Pupils settle down quietly and quickly and are alert and keen to learn. This was the case for example in a Year 3 lesson in information and communication technology. At the start pupils reviewed their work to date and were encouraged to appraise each other's efforts. The lesson was organised well and there was no fuss as pupils quickly settled to their computer work. One part of the lesson ran smoothly into the next and because adult help was deployed efficiently pupils were encouraged to work independently at their own rate.

20. The quality of questioning varies. In a good lesson in Year 1 good quality questioning helped pupils to understand the sequence of the Christmas Story and improved pupils' intonation as they read together drawing attention to full stops and capital letters. Pupils were so involved in the special story that one pupil commented "I was angry when the angels came – all the singing kept me awake." Quite often the calibre of the questions places insufficient demand on the pupils. The questions are too narrow in scope and the teaching has low expectations in terms of what is acceptable from pupils. As a result pupils' speaking skills are insufficiently well developed. Teachers use subject terminology and explain its meaning but this is not well enough reinforced so the pupils do not easily extend their vocabulary and use appropriate technical terms.

21. In one very good lesson led by a visiting teacher of French, the teacher established a lively, positive and brisk atmosphere from the outset. A very good range of teaching strategies and clear explanations helped pupils acquire a new language at a very good rate. The tasks were fun and captured the pupils' interest. As a result they were keen to volunteer and to use French.

22. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is sound for pupils in Year 3 –Year 6 and good for other pupils. The difference lies in the way in which basic skills are taught and the challenge provided to pupils of all attainments. In Year 1 and Year 2 better use is made of the concluding plenaries to reinforce pupils' learning. In Year 3 to Year 6 time is not always managed well enough towards the end of lessons. In addition pupils have too little opportunity to contribute to discussion at these times.

23. An inconsistency is found in the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work. Some work is just ticked, with no constructive advice on how pupils can improve. Other marking concentrates on presentation of the work and does not address subject specific issues.

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

24. The satisfactory curriculum comprises religious education, all subjects of the National Curriculum, and good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which was not fully in place at the time of the last inspection. Strengths in the curricular provision are in the good breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum for pupils under the age of five which gives pupils a good start to their education. A comparative weakness in this is the provision for the children's physical development.

25. There is good equality of access for all pupils. For example, pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support that helps them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and also to take an active part in all subjects. Similarly, pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to learn the language and still benefit from access to a balanced curriculum. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to ensure that Traveller children and others joining the school mid-year and part way through their education are welcomed into the school, their level of achievement quickly assessed and that they are fully included in lessons in all subjects.

26. The school has established good relationships with other schools in the area. For example, a project to provide extended learning opportunities for pupils with talents in particular subjects has just begun providing pupils with opportunities to work with pupils from other schools on joint projects. Specialist subject teachers of French and information and communications technology from the adjacent secondary school work with older pupils, giving a high quality input to each subject, and helping pupils to prepare for the transition to secondary education, which some pupils might otherwise find difficult.

27. Rather than working together as a staff to undertake the recent review of subject policies, examples were downloaded from the Internet and minor adjustments made by subject co-ordinators. Although the resulting policies are satisfactory in quality, they do not always fully reflect current and planned practice within the school or represent a shared vision for improvement. As a result of this, adjustments to curricular planning to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes has resulted in effective arrangements for ensuring that the required units of study are taught, but has not yet ensured that pupils' subject-specific skills will be developed sequentially no matter in what order pupils study the units. Combined with a lack of assessment of subject skills, this results in many lessons being insufficiently well planned to ensure that all pupils, especially the higher attainers, are working at the appropriate level of challenge.

28. The satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' learning opportunities include teams for a variety of sports that are open to girls and boys, residential visits that provide outdoor and adventurous activities and fieldwork, music clubs, and the Kids Club that meets before and after school and offers a range of activities. Although pupils can receive help with their homework on request, the school has not yet provided regular study support as part of its extra-curricular programme. The school makes satisfactory use of the community to support pupils' learning but insufficient use is made of trips wider a field and of visitors to the school.

29. The effectiveness of the school's strategies for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The school has soundly implemented the national strategies, and there are resulting improvements in the quality of learning in both English and mathematics lessons. However, curricular planning does not consistently identify opportunities to develop pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills or their application of number skills effectively in all parts of the curriculum.

30. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils' cultural and spiritual development was unsatisfactory. One of the school's key issues was to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to develop a sense of spirituality and an awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures. This has been satisfactorily addressed and there have also been improvements in the moral and social aspects, which are now good. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' personal development is good.

31. The school has a sound range of structures to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Daily acts of collective worship contribute to this by giving pupils opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. Subjects such as religious education, personal, social and health education, and English contribute by providing the chance for pupils to discuss questions of faith, human feelings, truth and the mystery of life. Teachers value their pupils and give them opportunities to reflect on and celebrate their own achievements and those of others. The school sets a good example to pupils by having sensitive arrangements for those pupils whose parents opt not to have their children attend assemblies. These pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs during assembly times. A weakness in the provision for pupils' spiritual development is that some of the opportunities given for pupils to reflect on issues, for example during assemblies and in concluding plenaries, are too short or are hurried, resulting in some opportunities being missed.

32. The school promotes pupils' moral development in a good range of ways and celebrates good behaviour in a weekly assembly. The code of conduct is observed by pupils of all ages. Rather than negative rules, it consists of a series of positive guidelines such as "Be polite and well-mannered to everyone". Most classes have in addition their own set of class rules devised by the pupils and the school council plays an active part in deciding rules for break and lunch times. Pupils who do not follow the code of conduct are given 'community service'. For example, tasks that improve the school environment or contribute to pupils' learning are set. Staff set strong examples to pupils and pupils know the difference between right and wrong.

33. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively. This starts as pupils join the school in the reception class, where there are simple guidelines for working and playing together and taking turns to use equipment. Older pupils work together in pairs or small groups, for example in numeracy lessons and when using computers for research. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to take responsibility and to help the school community as monitors, and many take part in the playtime 'buddy' system of mentoring other children. Extra-curricular activities also give pupils valuable opportunities to develop socially, for example playing in sports teams, making music together and living together during residential trips. The school council is a strong mechanism for social development. It gives a model of how citizens can take an active part in the democratic process of society by making suggestions for improving the school and taking responsibility for the community as a whole.

34. Teachers use the local area effectively to study and celebrate pupils' own cultural heritage through visits in history and geography. The customs and traditions of a sound range of cultures and world faiths are studied satisfactorily in subjects such as art, music and religious education. However, modern popular culture is not strongly enough represented in subject planning, for example popular music, film, television and other media. Those cultures represented in the school's population are celebrated through many displays around school including the cultures of those pupils who are learning English as an additional language and Travellers. For example, when studying houses and homes in history, geography and design technology, pupils have opportunities to study trailers and benders as part of the range of

homes. All pupils are encouraged to respect others' beliefs and values, celebrating both similarities and differences.

35. A weakness common to all aspects of the school's provision for pupils' personal development is that teachers do not always plan consistently for such opportunities to be incorporated in lessons, and some are ad-hoc. They are not recorded and cannot be monitored. An example of this is that the school does not record the themes of assemblies. Because of this, it is difficult to ensure that they have provided a balanced programme that properly represents all of the cultures present in the school's population.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. This is a very caring school, with a warm family atmosphere underpinned by very good relationships at all levels. Parents are rightly pleased at the strong family and caring ethos. The educational and personal support and advice given to pupils is good. These factors are effective in supporting pupils in their learning.

37. Arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. This represents an improvement in the good procedures found at the last inspection. The designated officer for child protection is appropriately trained and deals with any issues effectively. All teachers and teaching assistants have received substantial training regarding the school's policy and procedures. They show high levels of vigilance at all times. A broad range of health and safety assessments are carried out regularly. These are effective in identifying potential hazards which can then be quickly rectified. Accident and emergency procedures are effective in dealing with problems. A member of staff is fully trained in first aid and a worker at the Kids' Club has received basic training. The school pays much attention to health and safety issues through the curriculum and takes part in the 'healthy schools award' series of activities.

38. A strong feature of the school is how closely and effectively it works with external agencies in raising awareness of health and safety matters. For example, visitors attend the school to talk to pupils about road safety, bullying, drugs and sex education. Every two years, pupils in Year 6 are able to take part in project where they learn about safety through many activities and role-plays. They are also able to undertake safe cycling training. The school provides good support for Travellers. As at the last inspection, there is effective liaison with the traveller education service to ensure that pupils receive equal access to the curriculum. A very good weekly induction programme helps parents and children get used to the expectations of the school and its work.

39. Though procedures to monitor and promote better attendance are good they do not necessarily quickly raise the overall rate of attendance. This is because the school's significant population of Travellers are often away from the area for varying lengths of time. The school produces a range of monitoring information that identifies patterns and problems in school. This information is well used by the school and educational welfare service. Two educational social workers support the school, one on general matters and one to support Travellers. The school works very well with Travellers and is doing much to work in partnership with them. The rewards system for good attendance is good and newsletters regularly give reminders to parents about the importance of good attendance and punctuality in their children's learning. A significant number of pupils arrive after the start of school and the procedures that are used by the school to log the lateness is insufficiently pro-active in encouraging improvement.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. Staff keep detailed records of any problems. There is a good system to monitor the behaviour of

individuals where there are concerns to ensure that improvements take place. Much work is done in assemblies and through times set aside for discussion regarding bullying and pupils know what to do if they experience problems. Good use is made of rewards and pupils gaining 'star of the week' are praised at special assemblies.

41. Though overall, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory the use of the information to guide curricular planning remains unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has made improvements in the arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics, and in procedures for monitoring their personal development, which are now satisfactory. Some assessment of achievement in the foundation subjects has been introduced through assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of units of study and at the end of each year. However, there is no systematic assessment of pupils' subject skills to guide teachers to identify the next step in learning for individual pupils, or to inform their planning of work for groups of pupils of different levels of attainment. This often leads to more able pupils not being sufficiently challenged or sometimes to the lowest attainers working on inappropriate tasks. This is especially important for the classes of mixed-age pupils, where having two year groups in the same class leads to these classes catering for a very wide range of attainment. It also means that there is no appropriate system to identify pupils who have particular talents in certain subjects. Because of this, the school has not fully addressed its key issue on assessment from the last inspection.

42. The strengths in assessment include the assessment of pupils as they start school. This is relevant to the needs of the pupils and concentrates particularly on communications, language and literacy; mathematical development and personal development. The school has helpful data from end-of year tests for all pupils giving useful information on how they have achieved. Information from these tests is recorded on a form common to all schools in the authority and accompanies pupils transferring between local schools. Where portfolios of work in a particular subject are being developed, or in pupils' personal records of achievement, the full explanation of the context in which the piece of work was done, and the level attained in the National Curriculum are not always fully included. This applies also to the use of the 'comments' section of the recording system used. Many of these are not completed, giving little background information to the next class teacher in this school, or for teachers in a receiving school when pupils transfer.

43. For pupils joining the school at non-standard times, for example Travellers who may join or rejoin the school mid-year, the school has decided that it is not always appropriate to bombard them with a battery of tests. Staff have become skilled at making quick teacher assessments of these pupils so that they can start to work with the class immediately. If it is suspected that the pupils have special educational needs, then more detailed assessments will be carried out so that pupils can receive appropriate support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school enjoys very good relationships with parents. Parents have a very high opinion of the school. These factors represent improvements since the last inspection. Parents have much confidence in the school and the quality of education provided. All parents replying to the questionnaire said: their children like school, teaching is good, their children make good progress, behaviour is good, the right amount of homework is given, the school has high expectations and it helps their children become mature and responsible. Virtually all parents are pleased about the leadership and management and also how approachable the school is. A small number of parents have concerns about the staffing level at lunchtime. The lunch-times are supervised well.

45. The quality of information to parents, especially about pupils' progress, is satisfactory overall. Good features in pupils' annual reports include target setting and a section on personal, social and health education and citizenship. However, too much jargon is used and details about what pupils know, can do and understand are rarely put in plain English. For example, one report in mathematics said that the pupil was "just beginning to use decimal notation in contexts such as money". In addition to an annual report, there is an interim report available for pupils in the reception class. Other strong aspects of information to parents include an attractive newsletter, information about forthcoming work in the curriculum for each class and many information sessions held from time to time.

46. Links with parents are effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is good. These factors represent improvements since the last inspection. A strong feature of the school is how hard it works to develop the partnership with parents. For example, a family literacy project is currently running where parents have the opportunity to find out about how they can better support their children's learning.

47. The 'Friends of Bowness School' provide very good support through organising many successful social and fund-raising events. The group raises a considerable amount of money each year and this is used to support the school in many ways. For example, the group has recently provided money for fittings in the computer area and regularly supports 'book week'. A few parents regularly help with school activities. They give their time generously in listening to readers and supporting activities such as gardening all of which improves pupils' knowledge.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The headteacher leads the school well setting clear targets for development and an underlying ethos that places great value on equality of opportunity for all pupils. Other senior managers provide very good pastoral care for the pupils but rely too readily on the headteacher to establish the curriculum and take on board improvements in standards within a given timescale. The headteacher has a clear overview of the curriculum and how it could be improved, but other senior managers have only recently started to be involved in curriculum development. Though the management by key staff is satisfactory it is not making sure that standards are driven up quickly. For example, the school has been working towards the Basic Skills Award for four years and has not yet achieved it.

49. With the support of the local education authority, subject managers in English, mathematics and science, have started to identify main strengths and weaknesses so the staff can improve these subjects. However, in most other subjects, the monitoring is at an early stage with subject assessment not fully in place and no great sense of urgency that improvements are required. Though the staff provide reports on their subjects for governors the overall quality of these is insufficiently rigorous and focused on raising standards. The lack of well-embedded assessment in many subjects is adversely affecting the speed of progress of the higher attainers yet assessment was an issue identified at the last inspection. The deputy headteacher has led good improvements in the reception class and the same clarity is now required so that in the rest of the school developments can be advanced to increase the rate of pupils' achievement.

50. The school's performance is monitored soundly resulting in sensible actions. The school improvement plan is a document that is understood by all. This is because the governors and staff have a say in its contents and in monitoring the school's progress against the action plans. The format of the plan is appropriate though the success criteria are insufficiently linked to quantifiable targets in terms of standards. The time scale is at

times imprecise which mean that the key milestones when checks can take place are unclear. The action plans of a significant proportion of the subjects, however, are at an early stage reflecting the level of leadership and management of the particular subjects. Even though the school improvement plan makes clear the responsibilities for the subject leaders their subject action plans do not generally reflect what needs to be done and some appear to be at an extremely early draft even though they have been submitted for approval.

51. The governing body has also until recently relied on the headteacher to a large extent but are now taking an appropriate lead and fulfilling their role soundly. The newly appointed chair of governors is well supported by colleagues and the governors have built up a good understanding of the strengths, areas in need of development and of the particular challenges the school faces as the number on roll take a planned fall. The governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the part they should play as a critical friend to the school. The governing body works through a committee structure, which serves the school appropriately.

52. Financial management is good and a large under-spend is set to cushion the school against the falling rolls. Day-to-day administrative systems are appropriate though, on occasion, the headteacher will take on administration which would be better delegated to others. As an Investor in People the school places importance on the professional development of its staff. For example, staff have used the expertise of a beacon school in planning for mixed age group classes. Teaching assistants are included in the training which leads to a good level of teamwork and classroom support for the pupils. A key issue from the last inspection was to establish an appraisal system. The school is managing the performance of its staff satisfactorily as the national system becomes embedded in the school's life.

53. The school has clear policies for promoting equality of opportunity and racial harmony. Strenuous efforts are made to include all pupils and their needs are generally well met. There is strong provision for pupils who have special educational needs, or who are learning English as an additional language, and they make good progress. This is because the aspects are well led and managed. Of particular note is the provision for, and integration of, Travellers where over time strong links have emerged - so much so that very good links are established to help the children's transition into school. There is a lower degree of liaison over transfer to the secondary sector.

54. The school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers and teaching assistants for the number of pupils on roll. There are good arrangements to induct new staff to the school and they are given sound written guidance about the school and its policies. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection.

55. As at the last inspection, accommodation and resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Classrooms are generally of adequate size to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school has adequate facilities for disabled pupils including a well used 'therapy room'. The school has a large playing field for football and grass sports and the garden area also supports learning. However, the outdoor play space for the youngest pupils is not used well enough to promote pupils' imaginative and physical development. Improvements in computer facilities are enabling pupils to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. The headteacher, other staff, governors and the local education authority should work together to:

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - using assessment to inform planning;
 - setting more challenge for the high attainers; and
 - using writing across the curriculum.

(paragraphs 78, 80, 85. 90, 104 and 107)

- (2) Develop the role, responsibilities and accountability of the senior managers and subject leaders.

(paragraphs 48 - 49)

- (3) Improve the rate of pupils' attendance.

(paragraph 15)

Other issues:

Raise standards in music for the Year 3 to Year 6 pupils (paragraph 114)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	28	17	0	0	0
Percentage	0	2	61	37	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	147
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	12	12	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	11	11
	Total	19	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (79)	88 (68)	88 (79)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	11
	Total	18	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (74)	79 (79)	88 (79)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	12	14	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	13
	Total	18	18	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (80)	69 (74)	88 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	21	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (77)	77 (74)	85 (66)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

* Numbers omitted where the number of boys and girls is below 10.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	112	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	22	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	171

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Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	436270
Total expenditure	396315
Expenditure per pupil	2524
Balance brought forward from previous year	55696
Balance carried forward to next year	95651

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	142
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	43	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	45	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	30	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	36	4	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	73	25	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	26	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	34	8	0	4

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

57. When the children start in the reception class though their attainment overall is below that typically expected for their age it is well below expectations in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils achieve well in all aspects other than in their physical development which is satisfactory.

58. The reception class is well led and managed and the key issue from last inspection to improve provision has been addressed well. Not only this but the quality of teaching has improved to a good standard. Strengths are in the relationships, the management of the pupils and the very good use of time, support staff and resources. Relative weaknesses are in the lack of learning objectives for each session and in the provision of outdoor play. The very good welfare and care of pupils and the well-planned curriculum means that pupils' individual needs are met well and all pupils are included in the range of opportunities provided.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Children achieve well because the overall provision, especially the quality of teaching, is good. A huge emphasis is placed on the promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development and opportunities are made across the school day to develop children in these aspects. Staff are very sensitive to pupils' individual needs and backgrounds and this especially helps the Travellers settle into the class well. Tasks and opportunities are carefully structured to give children simple choices, a breadth of experiences and increasing responsibilities. As a result children grow in self-esteem and quickly learn to trust staff and begin to respond to other children. They need much clear direction from adults to use the facilities available to them and much of their play is solitary. Staff have much patience and understanding of how young children develop. Children develop a positive attitude to learning and they play and work alongside each other. At the beginning of the year it is only the higher attainers who take initiative and are confident to start conversations. By the time that they leave the reception class, many children have learned how to co-operate with others not only in lessons but also in activities such as tidying away their equipment. Children develop a respect for the needs of others because the staff set such good examples in working together. The good rate of learning comes about because of the carefully thought out provision and the supportive yet challenging environment that adults provide.

Communication, language and literacy

60. The quality of teaching and the resultant learning is good. It is best when learning objectives are clear though planning does not regularly include these. When it does the teaching is far more focused. A range of inviting language activities are available all through the day for children to participate in, for example, areas are set aside for pupils to draw and write and reading areas have books readily available for children to select. Role play areas are well designed to encourage children to play out the roles of people they know. For example, artefacts from trailers are included in the home play. The adults are constantly alert with questions and comments designed to extend children's skills in speaking. This is very necessary because when they start in the reception class many pupils have very little language and a very limited vocabulary to draw upon. The outcome of the good quality provision is that children grow in confidence and gradually speak more clearly though as yet

not in any extended way. Higher attaining children try out new words and listen attentively to corrections so that they can get it right. This is also true of those learning English as an additional language. Even high attainers are not yet able to speak in sentences for any length of time. Lower attainers often use gestures and eye contact but few words. They watch what is happening very carefully and are beginning to join in simple repetitive rhymes but have a long way to go.

61. Children are often seen, relaxed and cosy, curling up with a good book to 'read'. The teacher and nursery nurse are good at making sure that all children join in with the initial plenary of the literacy hour when they read together. Higher attainers make a good attempt at re-telling a story from pictures but have not yet learnt to go from left to right so at times the sequence of stories is mixed though the key parts of well-known stories are remembered. Middle attainers turn over pages one at a time and use single words to describe the pictures. When looking at a book about snowmen the longest phrase a child excitedly used was 'He flied up sky'. Lower attainers listen to an adult read a story and are interested in the pictures but ignore the text. All pupils have already learnt a number of letter sounds but even the higher attaining pupils cannot yet apply them to reading. The teaching is good at linking particular books to the other resources in the classroom and this helps the Travellers and those learning English as an additional language in particular broaden their understanding of everyday items.

62. The use of letter sounds to build words comes into its own in writing. Adults are good at showing children patterns in writing and how to have a go at writing sentences remembering to leave spaces and to use the knowledge they have of letter sounds at the beginning of words. As a result children's writing is emerging almost naturally. Children can read back sentences from their strings of letters in a meaningful way. The patterns in the writing of the higher attainers is recognisable. Lower attainers can trace over each letter in their name. They know where to start because the teacher identifies a mark for them to start with but they are not clear which way to trace a circle for example. Children get much pleasure from writing and they are very keen to do their best and proud of their writing.

Mathematical development

63. Children make good gains in all aspects of mathematics. The good quality teaching makes mathematics enjoyable through well-structured activities many of a practical nature. These tasks include mathematical content in other activities. For example, children successfully learnt about the properties of cylinders as they investigated ways of building three-dimensional structures using small cylinders to form a sculpture. They had time to play with the cylinders and re-arrange them before sticking them into a pattern. The teacher made sure that the children had time to think about their model and asked near the end 'Are you satisfied with your sculpture?' thus encouraging the children to reflect on their accomplishments. Children learn well in adapted versions of the daily lesson in mathematics used with older pupils. At the beginning of such lessons the children very much enjoy reciting counting rhymes and counting by rote. Higher attainers can count accurately to 10 and lower attainers to five or six matching numbers to objects.

64. Staff are well deployed so that all children receive a good degree of direct teaching. This was the case, for example when the nursery nurse worked adeptly with a group of pupils counting sets of toys and matching colours. The planning was good and the sequence of tasks and questions helped the time to pass quickly and the children to come to a better understanding of the values of numbers below 10. It also helped pupils learning English as an additional language because pronunciation and explanation was clear. At the same time the class teacher worked with higher attainers as they identified a range of cuboids from a selection around the room. Children's under-developed language skills were brought on

because the adult used subject terminology with ease and in simple statements and questions. Nonetheless not all pupils recalled the name 'cuboid' because they need much practice and consolidation in their language acquisition. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and have good attitudes to their work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. The children have a limited general knowledge when they start in the reception class being well below the expected level for their age. The effective teaching provides a good range of interesting materials and activities to ensure that children make substantial gains in widening their knowledge and understanding of the world about them. Children confidently use computers to play simple matching games and to write their names though even the high attainers take a long time to find the correct letters on the keyboard. Pupils use equipment carefully, behave well and get on with the tasks to which they are directed.

66. There is a genuine sense of delight as adults and children work and learn together. Tasks are planned to complement each other and this works well giving children new ideas and time to practise new skills in a variety of settings. For example, one day children made ice cream and came to a simple understanding of how ice is formed. The next day they were encouraged to make their own ice cream factory in the sand and to draw on the commonalities such as the way the ice cream maker spun round and the way the sand wheel turned when dry sand was poured through it.

Physical development

67. The quality of teaching and learning is sound and children are on course to achieve at a level below that usually expected of their age. The occasions for regular outside play with appropriate resources are limited and as a result opportunities are missed to develop the children's skills at catching and throwing a ball for example. Children go out to play daily with the rest of the school but have few resources to brighten their play and make it as productive as it could be. As a result their play lacks purpose and many just stand around. They also miss out on regularly using the outdoors for furthering their knowledge and understanding and firing their imaginative response because it is only once during the week that play is structured outside.

68. The children develop some confidence and control in formal physical development lessons in the school hall as when they move in time to music interpreting how a snowman would feel. The teacher urged the children 'to feel the music' and they followed demonstrations soundly but were not inventive. Higher attainers can skip and indeed three children joined together for a party dance at the snowman's party. They use their arms quite elegantly to glide through the air and even position themselves ready to start with hands held out and pointed. Middle attainers tend to group close together and not use space confidently. They are beginning to skip by hopping on one leg. Lower attainers are very unsure and their balance is not well developed.

69. Opportunities to develop the finer physical skills are provided and include not only a range of resources but teaching that has clarity to help the children master small steps such as holding a pencil correctly or using a spatula to apply glue. Travellers are especially adept at finer control, apply their skills well and are proud of their work.

Creative development

70. From a below average point on entry to the reception class children make good headway and are on course to attain the early learning goal in this aspect. This is an improvement from the last inspection when it was below average because of poor provision. The teaching and learning is of good quality. Adults really work hard to develop ideas in the children. They provide resources to promote a wealth of ideas and teach the skills required carefully at an individual level. For example, learning how to snip paper with scissors. They then take a step back and let the children make their pictures without interference. As a result children's work is individual and considered and they are developing an aesthetic awareness. When making paper collage one higher attainer said 'Watch me, I'm mixing the colours that fit together' as she chose from a range of coloured paper. Pupils are well behaved and take turns calmly and thoughtfully. In music children are given the opportunity to select instruments which they play with great enthusiasm. The teaching uses this time to develop children's listening skills through some questioning of good quality and to improve their understanding of dynamics and beats. The conclusion to the lesson was good because children were given time for quiet contemplation before closing the afternoon with a prayer.

71. Children's spiritual awareness is developed well through creativity as when children paid an autumnal visit to the local countryside park to look at nature's 'decorations'. They were able to listen to creatures practising their songs and made presents using natural colours based on the falling leaves. They recall this adventure with joy and the resulting work was of high quality. In particular the work of higher attaining children has a certain quality of space and design brought about through effective use of colour.

ENGLISH

72. Since the last inspection, standards in English in Year 6 have fallen; results in the national tests being adversely affected by the high mobility of pupils. The inspection judgement that standards are below average reflects the results of the national tests over the last two years. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level has increased over this time though the number of pupils who reach high standards by the end of Year 6 is lower than in other schools nationally. It is unlikely that many pupils will exceed the expected standard by the end of Year 6.

73. In Year 2 standards have improved since the most recent national test results because the quality of teaching is now good for the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and they make good progress reaching standards that are broadly average for their age in reading and writing though few are working at a higher level.

74. Standards have recently improved across the school as a result of the full implementation of the national strategy for literacy and by the introduction of good monitoring and assessment procedures. With the help of the local education authority, specific planning for the mixed age classes has been introduced and is having a positive effect on pupils' progress.

75. On the whole, pupils listen attentively to their teachers, and each other, when working in pairs and groups and make suitable progress in listening in classes where teachers are skilled in explaining things to them. For example, in Year 1 and Year 2, teachers speak clearly and reinforce instructions, ensuring that children understand and participate. However, standards in speaking are unsatisfactory throughout the school. Good use of questioning helps younger children to improve their speech, but many continue to answer in single words or short phrases. By Year 6, while not articulate, most pupils speak clearly and confidently, contributing to discussions and answering questions. In some cases, the skilled

questioning by teachers enables children to put their thoughts into words and make perceptive comments, but even higher attainers lack the ability to speak fluently when voicing their thoughts and opinions. Few pupils are skilled in the ability to sustain discussions and lack the assurance to summarise and put forward their own opinions. Pupils often answer in single words rather than sentences and the teaching does not, on the whole, insist on extended answers. Insufficient use is made of drama and role play to promote pupils' speaking skills and confidence in speaking.

76. Standards in reading are satisfactory, and there are some proficient readers throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, some pupils can use letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words but do not have a range of other strategies to draw upon. Higher-attaining readers read with fluency and expression, conveying the full meaning of the text; for example, a pupil in Year 2 could read fluently, correcting occasional errors without prompting. However, the pupil was less skilled in the comprehension of what he was reading. Some pupils in Year 6 are competent, independent readers and read aloud fluently, with good expression. They have preferences for particular authors and can place fiction and non-fiction books into appropriate categories. Higher-attaining readers are beginning to discuss content and style and make comparisons with other authors. Opportunities to read regularly are a feature of the timetable and most children are enthusiastic readers. They are supported by a good selection of well displayed books in the classrooms, which show pupils the importance of books as a source of enjoyment and information for their current topic work. By Year 6 the pupils use the library independently to find information and for enjoyment.

77. The quality of pupils' writing is improving well by the end of Year 2 because of the way the effective teaching builds on the work in the reception class. Pupils apply their knowledge of letters well to independent spelling and this helps the flow of their writing because they do not break off to wait for adult help. In a successful lesson in Year 1, a group of pupils were using computers to write their own versions of the Christmas story and, despite some problems with the layout, some good original work was the result. Pupils are encouraged to read their work aloud and review each others' work. They are appreciative of the work produced. By the end of Year 6 recent intervention to produce better writing is at an early stage and the results are not yet fully seen in the standards achieved. Standards in Year 3 to Year 6 therefore remain below average. However, higher attaining Year 6 pupils produce work of some depth and there is some individual creative writing of good quality from the more articulate pupils. The pupils are encouraged to attempt different genres of writing such as reporting, and making brochures and books. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can produce some soundly written work that is presented well in a clear handwriting style. Middle attainers generally spell words accurately though make grammatical errors. Their writing is less fluent than that of the higher attainers and their choice of vocabulary somewhat limited. For all pupils there is too little use of writing in subjects other than English and this means that there are too few opportunities for pupils to practice and develop writing other than in English lessons. Information technology supports developing literacy skills well. The general standard of presentation, particularly in Year 3 to Year 6, shows improvement, due to good emphasis on the actual mechanics of handwriting.

78. The quality of teaching and the resultant learning are satisfactory overall. It is good in Year 1 and Year 2 where work is well matched to the range of learning needs in the class and as a result pupils achieve well. Elsewhere the quality of teaching is sound and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The difference is in the way in which teachers develop pupils' skills in speaking and writing. This is most successful in Year 1 and Year 2 where teachers use assessment well to match work to pupils' level of attainment. The enthusiasm of these teachers inspires pupils' interest and involvement and commitment to their work. In all classes teachers choose texts well to interest pupils and provide a good balance of activities

to engage pupils' attention. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils gained much enjoyment and stimulation from a study of the beginning of 'Macbeth' and were learning about scene-setting through atmosphere. They enjoyed watching a short excerpt on video and were beginning to develop an appreciation of Shakespeare's language, despite its complexity. Across the school marking is insufficiently thorough and lacks developmental advice, focusing on what *is* there, rather than what is not. Pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils learning English as an additional language, are taught particularly well through individual and group support. Travellers learn at the same rate as others in their class because of the way in which teaching groups are formed and the adult support deployed. Teachers are good at helping those who have missed lessons due to absence catch up with what has been taught previously.

79. Co-ordination of the subject is good and the school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy appropriately. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively and has already had a positive impact on many aspects of the curriculum. For example, presentation of work, handwriting and spelling standards are improving. Test results are carefully analysed and pupils' progress is tracked and recorded. The monitoring of standards is enabling the school to provide an improving standard of teaching and learning for all its pupils though the higher attainers are not always challenged sufficiently well because not enough use is made of assessment information in Year 3 to Year 6. Good use is made of computers to assist literacy throughout the school. A good collection of resources for English includes the introduction of new commercial schemes of work which are providing structure and good ideas for teaching. An attractive refurbished library includes fiction from other cultures and an extensive range of non-fiction reference books; a simpler system of subject coding for younger pupils has yet to be introduced.

MATHEMATICS

80. Since the last inspection, there has been a slight deterioration in standards attained in the subject. Due in the main to increased numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school mid-year and to increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, national test results show that pupils at the end of Year 6 attain standards which are below the national average. However, the senior managers of the school have identified weaknesses in subject provision, and measures put in place to address this issue are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics. These include a move to more practical activities for the older pupils, supported by a new commercial scheme that helps teachers to plan better to develop pupils' basic number skills and the way in which they apply these in everyday situations and to solve mathematical problems. The practical approach particularly appeals to the Travellers many of whom are quick at solving simple mathematical problems.

81. In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils get off to a good start in developing number skills. They learn to order numbers to 20, to add and subtract single digit numbers using a line of numbers or by adding together objects, and start to apply these skills, for example in the context of work with coins. Higher attainers soon come to place less reliance on counting aids using mental strategies to aid their calculations for example when they pair numbers that add up to ten. Resources to support practical work are only just sufficient. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 2 can use a range of mathematical vocabulary to describe their mental and written strategies. They learn how to add double digit numbers up to 20 together, including doubling these numbers. Using a square of 100 numbers, they learn to count on in 10s, fives and twos as part of learning their multiplication tables and begin to apply their numeracy to work out simple problems such as giving change from 10 pence when working with money. Higher attainers extend this to change from £1.00, and know how to tell time to the hour. Middle attainers can display class data on a simple block graph but

overall there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their work in mathematics.

82. In the joined Year 3 and Year 4 class pupils continue to learn at a good rate though older pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, most understand place value to thousands, correctly write and record large numbers in figures and in words and they know how to round numbers up or down to the nearest ten, hundred or thousand. They can convert given times to the 24-hour clock and they understand that numbers can also be written as fractions, decimals and percentages, and can cost out elements of a class-made newsletter. They can display data in a range of ways, including charts, and graphs, and begin to understand the basics of statistics. They measure accurately the angles of a variety of two-dimensional shapes and higher attainers can calculate the volume of some three-dimensional ones. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding of mathematics, for example long multiplication, to solve practical problems, but the higher attaining pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently and collaboratively to undertake mathematical investigations. Lower attainers sometimes struggle with identifying patterns in the number work they undertake, resulting in them starting every sum from scratch instead of building on their prior knowledge.

83. The quality of teaching is good In Year 1 to Year 4, and satisfactory for older pupils. This has a direct bearing on pupils' quality of learning and on the progress they make because pupils achieve well in the younger age groups and progress becomes slower as pupils get older. The best teaching provides tasks that match pupils' level of attainment well and ensures that all pupils are working at an appropriate level and that higher attainers are properly challenged to extend their learning. Lower attainers, those who have special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language are all fully included in every part of the lesson, because teaching assistants are available to give extra help to individuals or groups. Pupils are helped to learn by undertaking practical activities. These elements were all present in a good quality Year 2 lesson on measuring in centimetres. After an effective mental maths session, pupils were divided into groups to do their practical measuring activities. The teacher had planned appropriate activities for each group, and deployed a student teacher to help a group of lower attaining pupils. Another group worked independently following instruction cards well and helping each other when necessary. Because practical objects had been supplied to help pupils, they were enthusiastic to work throughout the session. In the concluding plenary the teacher helped pupils to draw conclusions from their work. One of the lower attainers was amazed to find that some of the coloured plastic worms he had measured were the same length as the sides of two-dimensional shapes such as squares and triangles that he had also measured. Pupils were keen to contribute to all parts of the lesson, and this enthusiasm improved the quality of their learning. Not all teachers allow sufficient time at the end of the lesson for pupils to share and celebrate what they have achieved, and further opportunities to articulate strategies are missed because of this. Less effective teaching also insufficiently matches work to pupils' needs resulting in higher attainers being insufficiently challenged and some of the least able pupils not being fully included in lessons.

84. Improvements in the subject have been managed appropriately and effectively monitored. The good measures put in place to address the dip in pupils' attainment are starting to increase the rate of pupils' learning. However, assessment of individual pupils is not well used to identify the next step in learning or to plan appropriately challenging work for all pupils. The action plan for mathematics does not make clear what is to be done next to raise standards and the success criteria are insufficiently quantifiable. Moreover the action plan does not include a timescale for monitoring or explain how the work will be checked. The local education authority is providing training and support to the school in addressing the differing levels of performance over the last two years of the boys and the girls.

85. The school's overall strategy for teaching numeracy skills is satisfactory. The daily lesson in mathematics has been implemented consistently across the school and a main benefit of this has been the emphasis that teachers place on getting pupils to use an increasing range of mental maths strategies and to be able to explain how they worked things out to the rest of the class. Where teachers use the correct terminology themselves, pupils become confident users of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. However, though numeracy skills support learning in some other subjects, for example in design technology, science and geography, teachers do not plan systematically to build in these links to all subjects.

SCIENCE

86. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been well below average for the last two years and were at the same level in the national tests following the last inspection. The school's focus on the practical aspects of science is bringing about improvement and has already raised standards to a level below average. By the end of Year 2 standards are slowly rising from the well below average level in 2000 to a below average level this year. However, pupils across the school are being held back by a lack of scientific vocabulary to explain their work. Though they are becoming more skilled at practical work, very much enjoy it and have a sound understanding of fair testing they are not yet proficient enough at drawing conclusions from the work and making connections by thinking about how what they have learnt in one lesson can be applied to solve other problems. Pupils learning English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and Travellers make the same progress as others in their year group because the teaching makes sure that extra adult help is available when required. Boys have out performed the girls in the national tests for Year 6 pupils over the last two years. Boys are more proactive than the girls in practical work and often take the lead at times leaving the girls as more passive observers. The local education authority is helping the school to tackle the differences in pupils' attainment by gender.

87. The quality of teaching is sound overall though teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Strengths in the teaching are seen in the way in which practical work is organised. Good attention is paid to the pupils' health and safety at all times. The tasks are made relevant to the pupils' level of understanding as when the school nurse came to speak to Year 2 pupils about the use of medicines. This was informative and pupils came to a better understanding of the need to be supervised when taking medicine. The school nurse was very good at asking questions such as 'Why do you think that?' and 'How do you know?' which brought about some very considered responses.

88. Relationships are good and as a result pupils are keen to do well. For example, in a lesson in Year 1 on plant growth pupils made headway in understanding what happens when plants are grown under different conditions. The pupils enjoyed finding out how cress seeds had grown and were keen to explain their findings with prompts from adults. They were more reluctant to record their findings on paper. Pupils' skills at recording in a range of ways are under-developed. This is in part due to an over reliance on worksheets, not always of good quality and often insufficiently matched to pupils' level of attainment. This impacts most adversely on the higher attainers who often have to complete the same work as the rest of the class. If particular work is set for them they still have to complete the general work first. This was the case in Year 6 for example, when they were finding out about how yeast is a living organism. Though three sets of worksheets were in use the main difference was the number of questions and all had to start from the beginning which wasted the time of the those capable of understanding the more difficult aspects of the investigation. In other recording pupils on occasion copy from a central source and this curtails their use of writing, vocabulary development and self-expression. Underlying this is the fact that the lesson

planning is variable in quality and does not always identify how the higher attainers will be challenged. As a result too few pupils are attaining the higher levels in the national tests and this pulls down the overall results as it did at the time of the last inspection.

89. Time is not always managed well enough leaving too little time towards the end of lessons to draw the lesson to a proper conclusion and wet pupils' appetites for the next lesson. Moreover, at these times too little time is given for pupils to offer explanations and too much time is taken by the teacher in explanations. Information and communication technology is generally under-used. In Year 6 pupils had the chance to see how a microscope linked to the computer could help them observe what was happening to a substance in a test tube but were not allowed to handle the microscope independently having to rely on the adult to do so. This limited their findings and personal discoveries.

ART AND DESIGN

90. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations, maintaining those found at the last inspection. In general, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the development of their understanding and application of different artistic techniques in their work. Pupils demonstrate a good capacity for learning but, as the subject is taught in blocks alternating with design technology, there is insufficient time for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 to develop their skills at a deeper level.

91. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the work of some famous artists and they enjoy using a variety of techniques through the course of their own work. For example they have studied portraiture by famous artists and drawn their friends. Sewing and weaving techniques are taught well. After studying the work of William Morris, they have made their own designs incorporating repeating patterns. Pupils understand that art can be created using a range of different media. By experimenting with fabrics and spray paints, for example, they learn to create different effects through translating their fabric designs into batik and collage. Higher attainers used colour and shape particularly well to create their desired effect. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. They are developing a good understanding of how secondary colours can be generated from mixing primary colours and were observed creating colour wheels and mixing different shades to paint their still life drawings. However, in Year 3 to Year 6 they have fewer opportunities to experiment with a wide variety of techniques and materials and their work is more static.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Year 1 and Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 3 to Year 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and varied techniques are taught well in Year 1 and Year 2. Here also a wider range of teaching methods is used and this advantages pupils' creativity. In all year groups there are good examples of extending pupils' learning through other subjects. For example, teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' understanding of art and design: in Year 2 pupils have further developed their fabric and collage designs through the use of a simple drawing program. Drawing plants and leaves in science lessons has strengthened their observational techniques and their ability to draw what they see.

93. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, although greater use could be made of the works of artists and craftspeople from a range of ethnic groups to highlight how art from other parts of the world can make a valuable contribution to the pupils' understanding of culture. Teachers sensitively and attractively display pupils' work and this adds to the positive status the subject holds in the school. Assessment is largely informal. It takes place at the end of each topic but this is an

overview and pupils' work is not well assessed. This makes it difficult for teachers to build on what pupils already know, can do and understand in order to move them on further in their learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and pupils attain in line with what is expected of pupils nationally. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning for Year 1 to Year 3 pupils, and they have started to make good progress. Overall, pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 make satisfactory progress.

95. Pupils in Year 1 get a good start to learning the skills of designing and making a range of products, using a range of materials including food. They compare cooked and uncooked fruit and vegetables, saying which they prefer in each case, and evaluate their finished product. For example, they consider an apple pie they have made and say how it looked and tasted. They then decide if there are ways in which the pie could have been improved. By the end of Year 2, pupils can choose appropriate materials and tools for a simple design project using food, paper or wood. They understand the need for rules and procedures that ensure health and safety while they are working. Higher attainers have a good understanding of how to join materials.

96. By the end of Year 6, pupils can choose appropriate materials and suggest relevant processes to meet a design brief. They can use a range of small tools and equipment safely and understand the need to listen carefully, follow instructions thoroughly and behave maturely to ensure the safety of themselves and others. However, because evaluation skills are not developed consistently across the school, they do not always identify how they could have improved their product, and finished products may therefore look similar across the class. Pupils have opportunities to work with electronics when they make torches, with control mechanisms and technology when they design moving monsters, and they learn about structures when they design a shelter for parents waiting to collect their children from school. Higher attainers work quickly and accurately and take into account the user's needs. They build on well from what was learnt on a local walk looking at types of shelters, for example, they use the term 'cantilever' and draw links to history in the shelters they have seen. Middle attainers are unsure of what will really work and the constraints that they have to work to. Their language is limited, for example, they refer to a hacksaw as 'a baby saw'.

97. The teaching of design and technology is good for pupils up to Year 3 and for Year 4 pupils taught alongside those in Year 3. For older pupils, it is satisfactory. More effective teaching promotes the use of technical terms so that pupils develop appropriate subject vocabulary. There is an equal emphasis placed on the skills of designing, making and evaluating products and pupils are encouraged to work independently but safely. For example, in a good quality lesson with Year 1 pupils, a group worked enthusiastically and with care when making a fruit salad with a range of fruits that they had chosen themselves. Another group designed posters to promote safety rules when handling food, and could explain why it is important to follow these rules. A third group recorded how they had made an apple pie and evaluated the outcome, including thinking how they might improve it if making another. Although this was a less able group, good quality support from a classroom assistant who had good subject knowledge and was skilful in supporting pupils' development of literacy skills ensured that these pupils could complete a simple recording sheet successfully.

98. Where teaching is less effective, evaluation of pupils' own and manufactured products is not sufficiently emphasised and teachers do not ensure that pupils of all attainments use technical terms accurately or that their design work is appropriately

recorded; for example drawings may not be properly labelled. Pupils' constructive attitudes have a positive effect on the amount of progress they make in the subject. For example, a Year 6 pupil said "I can't wait for the next lesson so I can put the ideas in my head into my model." Four higher attaining pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were specially chosen to take part in an inter-schools project with other local pupils described how highly motivated they were by the chance to work with teachers and 'professionals' and make new friends from other schools as they worked together on a fairground project. They were looking forward to an exhibition of the project coming to the school so that they could explain what they had done.

99. Monitoring by the new subject co-ordinator has correctly identified the need: to make evaluation a more consistent part of the curriculum; to develop appropriate assessment that will enable teachers to plan better for the effective development of pupils' subject skills and identify opportunities to better match work; and to develop work that challenges the higher attaining pupils, not just the four who had the opportunity to take part in the special project.

GEOGRAPHY

100. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, including in the development of pupils' mapwork skills and in the development of assessment used at the end of each unit studied. However, there is still no assessment of pupils' geographical skills that can be used to plan work that consistently develops these skills for pupils in mixed-age classes who study units on a rolling programme and therefore do not all study them in the same order. Such assessment would also allow teachers to plan work more appropriately for pupils at all levels of attainment, in particular work that would challenge the higher attainers. Consequently, standards of attainment have been maintained, and pupils achieve in line with others across the country. The pupils, including those who have special educational needs achieve soundly.

101. Younger pupils start to learn about geography through relevant study of the school and its locality. They mark the school and their home on a street map and then add their walking route from home to school. In this local study, they start to consider road safety and about human geography by learning about the types of jobs in the area. By the end of Year 2, their map skills have developed to include understanding that Great Britain is divided into different countries and they can label on the map places that they have visited, for example on holiday. They learn to compare Bolton with an island off Scotland, including physical features such as mountains, hills, rivers and streams, and human resources such as shops and post offices. Later, they use their growing skills of comparison to contrast their own lives with those of children living in a village in Mexico.

102. By the end of Year 6, pupils know about a range of aspects of physical geography, including rivers and oceans, mountains and deserts and they can describe the Water Cycle to explain about precipitation. Pupils recall how to use a key when they make a colour-coded plan of the school, and they can mark the main cities on a map of India when they study an Indian village. They learn about the effects of weather and types of climate on the land and on the people who live in different parts of the world. When considering environmental issues, they learn that pollution can damage the environment, and they investigate a local traffic problem. They can give examples of how life in different parts of the world differs from their own and the higher attainers add quite a lot of detail but many pupils have not yet developed more analytical skills to answer geographical questions from independently undertaken investigations.

103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school and on occasion good. A particular strength of the teaching is the good use of information and communication technology to support the learning of older pupils. In a lesson on how weather affects the

living conditions in a locality, pupils used the Internet to research information to supplement that gained from atlases and reference books. Pupils were skilled in scrolling up and down the screens of information, although they needed support to log on. Older pupils used a search engine to help them locate information about life in a particular village in India. In both lessons, pupils were well supported by adults but were particularly motivated by interacting with the information on screen themselves, and reported back enthusiastically what they had learned to the rest of their classmates. When given the opportunity, pupils also worked together collaboratively, sharing information and taking turns to contribute. Teachers place emphasis on the correct use of terminology, and this helps pupils to develop their geographical vocabulary, for example when discussing different types of regional climate in a variety of world destinations that they have chosen. The teaching does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils of all ages to undertake longer pieces of writing to record their learning, to ensure that older pupils and those who are more able do more analysis of their findings. The use of practical fieldwork is underdeveloped.

104. The geography curriculum is organised effectively to take account of mixed-age classes and to ensure that pupils can study a range of geographical topics. There are effective links with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 study the seaside in geography, but this is combined with a historical comparison of seaside holidays in Victorian times with holidays today. The study of life in a range of different cultures contributes to the development of pupils' cultural awareness.

HISTORY

105. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement in aspects of the subject, including in resources and in monitoring by the subject co-ordinator. The school has maintained standards in history, and pupils attain in line with others of their age nationally. They make satisfactory progress across the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils can compare the past with how we live today and can identify differences between old and new toys and contrast houses and homes of the present with those built in the past. They know about the lives of some famous people, for example Guy Fawkes, Florence Nightingale and Neil Armstrong. Pupils also understand why we celebrate a range of events and festivals, including Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day, Christmas, Divali, Easter and Mothers' Day. By Year 6 pupils have gained knowledge of how people lived in Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, in Anglo-Saxon and Tudor times and in Victorian Britain. They learn about peoples who invaded Britain, for example the Romans and the Vikings, and more able pupils start to understand and discuss what effects these events had on Britain and the legacy they left.

106. The teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, good use was made of primary source materials and pupils were fascinated to find out about living conditions in Victorian Times through examining extracts from the local area Census of 1881. They were surprised by how many people shared the small houses that they had seen on their visit to a local village, and by how many related families lived in one street. The teacher used skilled questioning to ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment, including pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, participated fully in all parts of the lesson. However, opportunities were missed to give higher attaining pupils a chance to work more independently to answer questions using the source materials. Other strengths in teaching include the use of drama and role-play to support learning. For example, in a good lesson with younger pupils learning about the Great Fire of London, pupils acted out what they had learned, with individuals playing King Charles, Samuel Pepys and the Mayor of London. Through role-playing groups of townspeople and firefighters, pupils were helped to remember the story better, and the more able started to understand what it was like for people who lost their homes in the fire. Weaker areas of teaching include an over-reliance on the completion of worksheets in some

classes, thereby missing out on opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. Younger pupils also record too little in writing.

107. The curriculum is well planned and has appropriate arrangements to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not repeat or miss out a unit of work. Good use is made of visits to see features of the local area, such as houses, shops and industry, and to nearby museums. This makes a good contribution to developing pupils' knowledge of their own cultural heritage. However, little use is made of visits to places of historical interest, and of visitors to the school, to extend the range of learning opportunities available to pupils and improve their quality of learning. Assessment is satisfactory but does not yet identify where pupils are up to in developing historical skills, such as the use of artefacts and original documents, and this has led to insufficient match of work for pupils of different attainments. In particular, there is a lack of challenge for higher attainers. The action plan for the subject is unsatisfactory and provides insufficient guidance to raising standards or to improving assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection because the key issue to develop the provision of resources and improve staff expertise has been addressed: pupils' achievement is good. Pupils have regular access to computers and the teaching they receive is of good quality. As a result gaps in pupils' learning have been quickly addressed and standards are now at a typically expected level across the school.

109. The good quality of teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 has strengths in the way in which teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology as a tool to pupils' learning across a number of subjects. Thus for example, pupils in Year 3 were combining text and graphics as they wrote instructions to make a sandwich. The teacher managed the pupils well because half were using computers while others were employed to other tasks. A student teacher worked well with the group on the computers under the teacher's direction. The lesson was well organised and flowed smoothly giving the pupils optimum time on the computers. Pupils worked very well together sharing ideas naturally and sharing keyboards. They took up ideas from the teacher and other children because they had listened carefully and valued the opinions of others. Good links to literacy and design and technology brought pupil's conceptual development on well. Good gains were made in thinking logically and in solving problems as the adult reminded pupils 'Do you remember ..using bullet points?' Higher attainers quickly organised their work and were able to access the Internet for particular art work. Lower attainers needed adult help in making changes on the screen. They were more likely to delete work and start again rather than to correct it. The clear short instructions at the beginning of the lesson really helped the boys in particular as they responded well to this style of direction. The teaching had high expectations and the pupils responded by getting on with their task, behaving very well and taking good care of the expensive equipment they were using.

110. The main bank of computers is positioned well for ease of access by the older pupils though on occasion messy activities such as painting were far too near the computers and made it difficult for the adults to easily move around the group using the computers. Computer access is more difficult for Year 1 and Year 2 children but because they are very sensible and behave so well they can be relied upon to work without direct supervision when they consolidate their learning. Pupils in Year 2 spread out over a large area to complete their computer work and their behaviour was very good. They were trustworthy and very sensible in their approach to their work. The teacher had clear expectations of their good behaviour and independence and the pupils lived up to it. Higher attainers adapted their Christmas designs using an art program to change the colour, size and details of their

pictures with great concentration and effort. They were adept in dragging shapes across the screen and were able to obtain a good amount of detail and draw fine lines. Lower attainers were unable to save their own work but listened attentively as they were taught how to do so. The quality of teaching is sound in Year 1 and Year 2. Strengths are in the relationships and expectations of independence. Relative weaknesses are in the challenge for the higher attainers who often receive less direct teaching than other pupils. The planning does not generally identify particular challenge for them. Pupils are confident and self-reliant workers able to leave off their own task to help a neighbour and then resume their own work. This is because skills are taught soundly and pupils have sufficient opportunity to practice and explore the use of new programs. Importantly tasks are set in worthwhile contexts.

111. Pupils in Year 6 are quickly catching up with any gaps in their knowledge and skills through being taught by a specialist in the adjacent secondary school. This works well and during the week they practice their newly acquired skills in their own classroom. Pupils say that this is their favourite subject because they feel good when they master new skills. Their skills at word processing are about average though the higher attainers are more accurate and also quicker at rectifying any mistakes. Pupils' understanding of monitoring and control are slightly lower than one would expect but this is because they have yet to study this aspect this year.

112. Assessment is at a very early stage and a portfolio of pupils' work is not sufficiently well annotated to be helpful to teachers in guiding their assessment.

MUSIC

113. Pupils achievement is satisfactory, and standards for pupils in Year 2 are at the level expected for their age. The standards for most pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are below the expected level and the pupils are working at a level typically expected of pupils one year younger. To accelerate pupils' progress in Year 3 to Year 6 suitable commercial resources, such as schemes of work, have been purchased to support teachers' subject knowledge and progress is being made. Pupils enjoy music and state that singing is their favourite aspect.

114. Pupils in Year 1 used simple percussion instruments, together with body percussion, (stamping, clapping and clicking fingers) to make suitable sounds to accompany work on sounds in a city. They followed the teacher's direction well and made satisfactory gains in their music making. The lesson was well planned though somewhat rushed at the end as time was not managed well enough. In a Year 4 and Year 5 lesson the pupils used similar body percussion techniques and movement to represent animal sounds for Noah's Ark. The pupils satisfactorily used sheets of rhythm patterns. These were well prepared by the teacher and gave appropriate support to the pupils' work. As a result pupils developed a satisfactory understanding of note values.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. In Year 1 and Year 2 the staff encourage pupils' response to music well. Pupils learn to write music, using symbols, and as they progress through the school they learn about scales, harmony and chords. In Year 6 this term, pupils have analysed a variety of music lyrics, such as a 'Christmas Calypso' though overall there is little opportunity to study composition.

116. The music curriculum is based on national guidance and published materials are used to make sure the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught as well as to provide guidance for staff. The co-ordinator has been in post for a short period of time but is currently revising the school's scheme of work to enable non-specialist staff to develop greater confidence in teaching music. This is a sensible move forwards. Assessment of progress is informal with class teachers making their own observations. The co-ordinator, a

music specialist, offers good support to staff but has so far had limited opportunity to lead staff training or to monitor teaching and learning. Music has been receiving greater priority, due to perceived shortcomings, and early evidence demonstrates that standards are improving. Resources are good and the range of instruments includes those from other cultures. This enables pupils to gain a better understanding of a wide range of instruments and music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Pupils attain standards typical for their ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good for Year 2 pupils and sound for older pupils. As a result pupils make good gains in improving the quality of their movement and standards of performance in Year 2 and sound gains by Year 6. Extra-curricular clubs provide additional opportunities for pupils to practise their sporting skills and to build on their good levels of cooperation and competition.

118. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and really enjoy the physical challenge. They work well individually and also with partners because they are well behaved and attentive to their teachers. For example, in Year 3 and Year 4 pupils worked in pairs developing a theme on opposites using the song 'Hello-goodbye' to create a dance sequence. In this lesson the teaching was of good quality and a series of structured movements allowed pupils to work imaginatively in their response to the music. As a result they made good gains in planning and performing. The teaching built in time for one group to assess the work of another and this improved the finished sequences. Pupils showed respect and trust in each other, they were not inhibited and the resultant dances were vibrant and flowing. A mark of the good teaching is that pupils are challenged not just physically but mentally as well.

119. Where the teaching is sound the mental alertness found in the better lessons is not evident because the teachers do not set such high expectations. Another difference that marks the better teaching is the use of demonstration by pupils from which stems self-assessment. In teaching that is satisfactory overall the attention given to warming up muscles before exercise and cooling them down afterwards is often minimal and too little time is paid to polishing the work.

120. In Year 4 and Year 5 the pupils did not listen as well as they might and as a result did not apply much mental work. The pace of learning was satisfactory but the outcome in terms of finesse was not of a high standard. Boys in particular were too keen to finish tasks quickly rather than to aim for the refinement of their skills. Nonetheless they make sound progress overall. Higher attainers are able to move and pass the ball with no break in their rhythm. Average attainers have sound control of a netball when they stand still and throw and catch with a partner but when on the move the degree of control lessens and there are not always able to place the netball where they would choose. Lower attainers are somewhat clumsy and lose control of the netball. Because of the good quality support pupils who have special educational needs are able to join in for most of the lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school because of the sound teaching and learning and an interesting curriculum. The standards reached are in line with the expectations in the Bolton Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. There are satisfactory opportunities for all to learn new knowledge, but older children are not always given sufficient opportunities to extend their writing and research.

122. By the end of Year 2 pupils know about the Christian faith with stories of the birth and life of Jesus. They study symbols from other religions and other forms of religious expression such as Hannukah, and have recently studied Diwali. At the time of the inspection, some pupils were personally involved in Ramadan and the celebration of Eid, and pupils are learning about Islamic festivals. An attractive display in the school entrance supports knowledge of Islam with the inclusion of jigsaws, books, greeting cards and other artefacts. By the end of Year 2 pupils' knowledge is developing appropriately, enhanced by external visits to a church and a planned visit to a mosque.

123. In Year 1 the quality of teaching was good as pupils were helped to recall previous work, on the Christmas story. Work in this lesson was well matched to pupils' levels of attainment and this helped the questioning to follow suit. Pupils made good gains in using relevant vocabulary: for example showing that they understand what a census entails. By the end of Year 6 pupils have built on these early foundations satisfactorily developing their knowledge and understanding for example of Islam and Judaism. Such studies make good cross-curricular links with history and art. The quality of teaching was sound in a lesson in Year 6 where pupils made satisfactory gains in comparing reports of the events of Christmas from two writers in the New Testament, Matthew and Luke, analysing where they matched and differed and discussing the results. They progressed to a discussion of what constituted a miracle. Resources provided by the teacher encouraged pupils to describe their thoughts and feelings about personally experienced miracles.

124. The overall standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Planning is thorough and in general, work is well planned to cater for all the classes including those of mixed ages, with most pupils able to achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are included well. The subject co-ordinator has had oversight of the subject for many years and brings enthusiasm to the role but assessment has not been tackled. It is informal and insufficiently helps the planning of work. Pupils' interest and knowledge is enhanced through the use of the good range of resources which includes artefacts, videos and tapes, and a range of books. The co-ordinator has developed resource packs for each module in the scheme and pupils are given good opportunities to handle a range of artefacts. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is not well enough supported through visits and visitors from a variety of cultures and faiths.