

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AIDAN AND OSWALD'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Royton, Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105721

Headteacher: Mr P Beattie

Lead inspector: Mr Clive Davies

Dates of inspection: 12-14th July 2004

Inspection number: 257546

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	395
School address:	Roman Road Royton Oldham
Postcode:	OL2 5PQ
Telephone number:	0161 6522558
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Hindle
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Aidan and Oswald's is a larger than average Roman Catholic primary school. It is situated in Royton, which is a township within Oldham, and serves mainly Catholic families from the Parish. However, the school is no longer exclusively serving Catholic families, although most of the pupils are of the Catholic faith. The school does not have a nursery so the pre-school experience of children starting in the reception varies considerably. On the whole their personal and academic skills match those expected for their age when they start school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school serves a mixed catchment area, with a large number of parents owning their homes. The vast majority of pupils are white with only 13 pupils attending who are from families who originate from outside the British Isles. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs list is below average although the number with statements for special needs is about average. The school was awarded an Achievement Award in 2003 and a Football Association Charter Award in 2001. It is also part of the Local Education Authority's 'Unity in the Community' and 'Link Schools Project' initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3639	Clive Davies	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology
9798	Viv Ashworth	Lay inspector	
32507	Chris Quigley	Team inspector	Mathematics, physical education, special educational needs
32616	Kevan Crowther	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, PSHE
30781	Wendy Richardson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning, art and design, design and technology, music

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8-11
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11-15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15-16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17-27
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an adequate level of education for the pupils but there are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the headteacher. At the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are above the national averages. However, the standard of work in other subjects is much more varied. Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in Years 3 to 6 where it is having a positive impact on the learning and personal development of older pupils. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The standards attained by Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science have been either above, or well above, average for the past few years.
- Pupils read very well, with the older, more able pupils drawing on their reading experiences to debate issues that are pertinent to them.
- Pupils successfully use a full range of strategies to help solve mathematical problems.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 with effective challenge being provided for all pupils in the core subjects.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the headteacher, which are unsatisfactory.
- There is a significant amount of underachievement in geography, history and art and design.
- Pupils are not being provided with enough information about what they need to do to improve their work. Feedback through marking is particularly weak.

The school was last inspected in April 1998 and has made unsatisfactory progress since that time. Many of the issues identified at that time still remain, especially in relation to the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and the balance of activities provided in reception.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The vast majority of pupils achieve appropriately but there is variation between the good achievement of Year 3 to 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science and the underachievement noted in geography, history and art throughout the school.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	B	B
mathematics	A	A*	A	A
science	A	A*	B	B

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

National test results at the end of Year 6 have been consistently good for many years, with pupils in Years 3 to 6 making very good progress when compared with their attainment at the end of Year 2. However, the quality of work produced in English, mathematics and science on a day-to-day basis is far better than work produced in other subjects. This is because the school has successfully raised standards in the core subjects but this high quality has not yet had an impact throughout the curriculum. When children first start in the reception, they display personal and academic skills that are in line with that expected for their age. There are strengths in their ability to talk and listen and they are confident communicators who find it easy to converse with adults. Satisfactory progress and achievement in the reception class leads to most children attaining the expected learning goals in each of the six areas by the end of their reception year. This solid platform helps pupils attain standards that are better than expected for their age in the Year 2 national tests in reading and

writing. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science but, in other subjects, the quality of work does not match the level pupils are capable of achieving. In Years 3 to 6, the achievement of all pupils is good in English, mathematics and science, which leads to the school's good national test results. However, the same inconsistency noted in other subjects is evident for older pupils. Additional provision, often out of school, in physical education and music helps to raise standards in these two subjects. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6, after recent improvement.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are exceptionally confident when communicating with adults. The vast majority of pupils behave well and are a pleasure to be with. However, the school could make more of the pupils' ability to take on additional responsibilities. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is enhanced well through opportunities provided in the family assemblies.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school ensures that provision for the core subjects is of a good quality. However, other subjects are not as well provided for. Extra curricular activities in sport and music have helped to enrich the curriculum. **Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in Years 3 to 6.** The good and confident communication skills of the pupils is aiding their learning. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6, which has led to pupils being effectively challenged in English and mathematics, has helped to maintain high standards in these subjects. However, the lack of consistency in teaching methods and the lack of structured support for staff new to the school has led to the quality of learning for pupils in other subjects not being as effective. Pupils are not provided with enough information, through marking and targets, to help them recognise what it is they need to do to improve. Assessment arrangements are therefore unsatisfactory and lack rigour.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory leadership and management procedures by the headteacher results in limited systems being in place to help check on the quality of teaching and learning. The school's staff appraisal cycle has not been adhered to and this adds to the concerns about support and challenge for staff. The school improvement plan is not rigorous enough leading to the school's ability to self-evaluate being weak. The management of the provision for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The relatively new governing body has begun to address some of these issues and is determined to bring about improvement. There is much work to be done to ensure that all staff are appropriately challenged and supported and that information about the progress being made by pupils is being used effectively to help pupils to learn and achieve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are mostly happy with the school but some issues related to the management for pupils with special educational needs gives them concern. Pupils are happy at school but would wish to have more say about the way aspects of the school are organised, especially at lunchtimes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- improve the quality of leadership and management of the headteacher;
 - raise pupils' achievement in geography, history and art and design throughout the school;
 - improve arrangements for checking pupils' progress especially feedback through marking.
- and, to meet statutory requirements:
- the school needs to ensure that its appraisal cycle is adhered to.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The vast majority of pupils achieve appropriately but there is variation between the good achievement of Year 3 to 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science and the underachievement noted in geography, history and art throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- For the past few years National Curriculum test results for Year 2 pupils have been above average and, for Year 6 pupils, they have been well above average.
- The achievement of pupils in English, mathematics and science is far better than it is in other subjects.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in the core subjects and achieve well.
- Pupils' are confident oral communicators and they make good use of this in their lessons.
- Pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy are not used as effectively as they might be in other subjects.
- Good additional provision, often out of school, for physical education and music results in standards being good in these subjects.

Commentary

- 1 The National Curriculum test results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have been either above, or well above average, for the past few years. The only exception being the Year 2 mathematics results in 2003. The table below shows that Year 2's results for reading and writing have been approximately one term in advance of other schools nationally for some time. The same picture emerges for mathematics, with the exception of the 2003 results, and for science, when taking account of teacher assessments. The 2004 results (for which there are no comparatives available yet) are similar to the 2003 results.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 The Year 6 National Curriculum results are even more impressive, especially for mathematics. As the table below shows there is an average of approximately two terms difference appearing between the school and the national results. The analysis of improvement seen between Year 2 and Year 6 is also very impressive with pupils having made good progress in these years. Again, the 2004 results are similar to the 2003 results.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.9 (31.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.5 (31.4)	28.6 (28.3)

- 3 The achievement of pupils in English, mathematics and science is not being reflected in work in other subjects, especially geography and history. Too frequently the work completed in these subjects lacks the same rigour as the work does for the core subjects. There is a tendency to spend too much time on the core subjects without ensuring that pupils are making sufficient use of their skills in other areas. The overall standard of work produced in other subjects, including, art and design and technology lacks the same quality control as it does in English and mathematics. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of work in geography and history and too often there is a superficial knowledge of these two subjects. In art, whilst there are good examples of large-scale work, such as the work on large models associated with the story 'James and Giant Peach', pupils' skill level in drawing and painting is not as high as it should be.
- 4 In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Within these subjects pupils are able to demonstrate improvement in basic skills, such as the analysis and evaluation of their reading; ability to apply their numeracy skills in problem solving; and, the ability to investigate and carry out experiments in science. Apart from the evidence indicated by National Curriculum test results, which show good improvement between Year 2 and Year 6 for consecutive cohorts, it is clear that pupils are far more confident about talking about their work as they get older. For example, pupils' writing has a maturity, which sees the more able being able to move backwards and forwards through time. In mathematics, pupils explain solutions to each other in a very 'matter of fact manner' giving the impression that this is something that is familiar to them. In science, pupils are able to talk about identifying variables and what the results of their experiments might mean in a wider context. This is a much-improved position compared to their Year 2 work and is something that is happening consistently throughout the school. As a result many pupils who were not attaining at the higher levels in the national tests at Year 2 are now doing so at Year 6. Similarly, pupils who were not attaining at the level expected for their age at the end of Year 2 are now doing so at the end of Year 6.
- 5 Pupils are confident communicators. This is helping and aiding their progress throughout the school. In the core subjects much is made of this and pupils are able to explain processes well. However, the pupils' ability to set out arguments orally in history and geography is not always maximised to benefit their achievement in these subjects. Pupils ability to hold adults in lengthy and mature levels of conversation were seen at their best during discussions about reading, mathematical principles and investigational work in science. During discussions more able pupils had about reading habits they described with some maturity how some characters from books they have read had an emotional impact on their lives. For example, one pupil talked of a character in a book that was exposed to violence at home and expressed a view that she would not have coped as well as the character in her book. During discussions related to how pupils found answers to problems posed to them, pupils were able to explain with much articulation how they had arrived at different answers. They also found it easy to challenge each other in these situations. This indicated that they were used to debating in this way in their classrooms.
- 6 Unfortunately, pupils are not required to make the most of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The school's emphasis on core subjects is partly responsible for this. There is every indication that the pupils are more than capable of making more of their skills but are not often required to do so. Work in other subjects therefore is not at the same level as seen in literacy and numeracy books. This work is often unmarked or at best has far less detail associated with the marking than is seen in the core subjects.
- 7 The school has long had a tradition for its involvement in sport and music. This is being supported by very good quality outside agencies that provide additional activities for pupils. As a result standards in these two subjects have risen and are above the level expected for pupils' age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good. The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- School has been successful in building pupils' confidence and self esteem to a high level.
- Relationships throughout the school are strong.
- The attendance rate is much improved this year, and more typical of attendance in general.
- The school has not yet sufficiently developed the pupils' appreciation of other cultures.

Commentary

- 8 Attitudes to learning are good overall. Pupils' behaviour is good and they respect their teachers. The pupils want to learn and they enjoy their work. Staff are usually consistent in their implementation of the school's behaviour policy and have high expectations. Inappropriate behaviour is soon identified. However, the practice of requesting those pupils who misbehave to wait outside the classroom for part of the lesson is not always effective. Pupils are naturally open, polite, and friendly with visitors and show very well developed confidence and self-esteem. They are considerate towards each other and play co-operatively. The majority display an enthusiasm for school and are keen to take advantage of the opportunities it offers, particularly through the various extra curricular activities in which many take part. There is very little bullying in school and pupils are confident that any reported incidents are dealt with speedily and effectively.
- 9 Relationships and personal development are good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and set an example to those in the year below. They are given some opportunities to exercise wider responsibility, for example by Year 5 they help in the office and with the younger ones at playtime. The school has not yet got a school council, which reduces the opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility.
- 10 School assemblies and the religious ethos of the school play a major role in nurturing the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. Pupils celebrate their personal and collective achievements with joy. They willingly collect for a variety of charities and are very conscious of those who need help. The lunchtime arrangements, whereby pupils have to queue for a long time to be served, are not conducive to creating an atmosphere that promotes social development.
- 11 The provision for multicultural development was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Although the school has attempted to improve the provision, no plans have yet reached completion. There is still plenty of scope for the pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world they live in to be developed further, within and outside the curriculum.
- 12 Attendance has now returned to its original level, after a year when many pupils and staff were absent through sickness, and is good. Therefore the table set out below is not typical of the school's attendance over the past few years. Most parents are supportive of the school's approach to maintaining high standards of attendance. However some parents continue to take family holidays during term time, which adversely affects the teaching and learning process.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (90.5%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

13 There was one exclusion in the previous academic year, as the following table shows.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – African
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
382
6
1
1
2
1
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school ensures that provision for the core subjects is of a good quality. However, other subjects are not as well provided for. Extra curricular activities in sport and music have helped to enrich the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- More able pupils are being effectively challenged in Years 3 to 6 in the core subjects.
- The lack of structured support for teachers new to the school sometimes leads to inconsistency in teaching methodology.
- The pupils' good communication skills aid their learning.
- Pupils are not provided with enough information, through marking and targets setting, to help improve their learning.
- Assessment arrangements are weak.

Commentary

14 Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was of a satisfactory or better standard. The table below which shows that 59 per cent of the teaching was either good or very good exemplifies this. However, this does not reflect a true picture as most of the lessons seen were within the core subjects, where provision is considerably better than it is within the

foundation subjects. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage of Learning, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6 because of the strengths within the core subjects. However, assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	12	11	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

- 15 Within the core subjects there is good attention to the needs of pupils of different ability. Lessons are carefully planned to take account of their needs and aptitudes. There were good examples of this occurring in English, mathematics and science lessons in Years 3 to 6. The challenge being provided for more pupils in these lessons was a strong feature. In Year 5 and 6 numeracy sessions, for example, good targeting of questions at different pupils challenges the more able to think more deeply. This results in pupils having to apply their skills of approximation to help them come up with appropriate answers. During literacy lessons, teachers frequently ask the more able ‘to think of another way..’ This together with the care given to the range of tasks that are organised during the independent and group part of the lesson aids the challenge for all, especially the more able. In science, more able pupils are expected to have carried out additional research. This was seen at its best during a Year 5 lesson when pupils were finding out information about the planets. More able pupils in this class were expected to consider which of the Internet sites they visited were most helpful to them.
- 16 Teaching methodology varies considerably across the school. Teachers are allowed to develop their own methods to the point that there are few ‘whole school’ approaches to the learning. The limited amount of monitoring that is happening is directly responsible for this. The lack of quality and planned support for teachers new to the school, especially those in their early stages of teaching, results in the good strategies employed by the majority of teachers not being shared across the school. This results in introductions to lessons often being too long and in the occasional incidence of bad behaviour not being dealt with effectively. At its worst, good teacher preparation is not being as effective as it could be because the attention of pupils has waned. Very often, support at a most basic level would help individual teachers be able to maximise learning opportunities for pupils. In these situations, too often the teacher is concentrating on the ‘delivery’ of the lesson rather than the impact that their teaching is having on the pupils’ learning.
- 17 In the vast majority of lessons pupils’ attitudes to learning is enhancing their ability to learn effectively. Pupils are generally confident communicators who are keen to be engaged and involved in lessons. This helps the introductions of lessons to be effective because the quality of the dialogue between the teacher and pupils and between the pupils themselves is of a high order. Pupils throughout the school take a deep interest in the topics being studied. They bring to the lessons their own general knowledge, which adds to the quality of their learning. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, where pupils’ focus was on writing a recount letter, pupils were able to draw from their knowledge of the locality to make the task much more pertinent to them. Their motivation and the quality of their contributions are increased by their ability to converse with confidence.
- 18 The quality of marking varies considerably across the school. The marking is better within the core subjects, but within the foundation subjects, especially geography and history the marking is often weak or perfunctory. Similarly, the school is not making use of individual learning targets for pupils to help them gain a better understanding about what needs to be done to help them improve. The combination of the weak marking and the lack of a strategy

for target setting is not helping pupils to learn as effectively as they could because they have limited knowledge of what to do to help them improve their work. There are limited formal assessment procedures in place. The school is not effective in tracking pupils' progress and there is very little information available to help teachers or pupils to focus on areas for improvement. The issues raised about assessment in the previous inspection have not been dealt with adequately and this is now a major issue for the school.

The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's participation in sport and music enrich the curriculum well.
- The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well resulting in provision in English and mathematics being good.
- Provision in some subjects is unsatisfactory and this leads to underachievement.
- Provision for special educational needs is satisfactory although the management of the provision is unsatisfactory.
- The balance of activities in the Foundation Stage of Learning needs to be improved.

Commentary

- 19 Good opportunities to become involved in sport mean that nearly all pupils are involved in extra curricular activities. The school has a strong sporting tradition and is extremely successful in local school competitions. The football team has been particularly successful in the Catholic Schools Cup competition, which it has won many times. There are good opportunities for boys and girls to play competitive sports. The recently revived chess club also gives good opportunities for those pupils who do not enjoy contact sports. Residential visits give good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and outdoor and adventurous activities. All pupils have the opportunity to attend during Years 5 and 6 and the schools educational visits leader is well trained in organising these visits. The school also has a strong music tradition, with many pupils learning to play instruments. These pupils regularly play to the local community and their audiences think highly of them.
- 20 The quality of the curriculum for English, mathematics and science is good and this has led to improvements and better achievement in these subjects. There are, however, significant weaknesses in the curriculum, especially in geography, history and art and pupils underachieve in these areas. This is because there is insufficient monitoring of the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes weak and the programmes of study are not covered to the required depth. The balance of time given to these subjects is not sufficient and as a result, standards are lower than the nationally expected levels. The school's aim to develop 'well rounded' pupils is not matched by the curriculum offered by the school. In physical education for example, participation in sport is good but discussions with the subject leader suggest that dance and gymnastics are not delivered as well.
- 21 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. This is a slight improvement since the last inspection. However, some parents are unhappy with how the school communicates with parents on their children's progress and some have justifiable concerns that the review process is sometimes lacking in depth. Whilst there has been improvement in the provision on a day-by-day basis, which is now satisfactory, the overall management of the provision is unsatisfactory.
- 22 The balance of activities in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is unsatisfactory and does not fully reflect the national guidance for the provision of children in the Foundation Stage of

Learning. However, this is a fast improving position with staff training and a new will within the school to move quickly to take on board the messages outlined in the National Foundation Stage of Learning guidelines. One of the main issues is that there is still reluctance on behalf of some staff to allow pupils to be independent. Too frequently well-planned activities do not challenge the children sufficiently because there is too much direction provided for them. This is particularly the case when the children are working out of doors or during creative activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides unsatisfactory guidance and support for its pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures comply with national guidelines.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough
- The absence of a school council and a formalised system for listening to the views of pupils inhibits the work of the school.

Commentary

- 23 The school takes account of the physical and emotional well being of pupils and provision for their safety, health and welfare are satisfactory. Child protection procedures comply with local guidelines and national requirements. The governors make appropriate health and safety checks annually and the legal requirements to carry out risk assessments are met.
- 24 The quality of support and guidance for pupils is unsatisfactory. Marking and target setting are rarely used to guide pupils' academic development in the most advantageous way. Teachers' marking rarely helps pupils to understand what it is that they need to do in order to improve their work. Assessment procedures are therefore unsatisfactory. There are isolated examples of marking being used to inform pupils' of differing abilities what they need to do next; but in general, marking does not challenge pupils and move learning on. Pupils' are rarely set targets, which give guidance on how to improve. This is true in all subjects, but is particularly evident in history and geography. Tracking of pupils' academic progress is weak. There are few formalised systems in place and as such, there is a lack of coherence across year groups and particularly between infants and juniors. Subject leaders have a limited understanding of the issues involved with, and the importance of, monitoring and evaluating pupil progress.
- 25 The systems to guide and support pupils personal and social development in the foundation stage are satisfactory. Children are assessed on entry to the school and an individual profile is updated to highlight progress and achievement. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. The school has unsatisfactory systems for acting on pupils' views. There is no school council for pupils to air their views. As there are no formalised systems in place, therefore pupils' ideas are not always listened to. This leads to some pupils believing that their views do not matter.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school.
- The school has very close links with the church.
- The quality of information about pupils' standards and progress needs improvement.
- Links with the community is an area for further development.

Commentary

- 26 The parents have positive views about the school and generally feel it serves the catholic community well. The two main concerns involve the quality of information on pupil progress and whether school takes account of parents' concerns. There is an open door policy and parents are welcome to come into school. Parents receive detailed information in the prospectus and governors' annual report. There are termly newsletters, additional letters home and details of topics to be covered in class. There are also regular assemblies and two parents' evenings to which parents are invited. A significant minority of parents have concerns about the leadership of the headteacher.
- 27 As part of their development plan, the governors sent out a parent questionnaire a short time ago to obtain a more formal view. It is anticipated that parents will continue to be consulted. Most complaints are dealt with to the satisfaction of the parents. A number of parents help in the school and one or two of these are able to bring particular skills such as assistance with information technology. However there is no formal training in place. The pupil reports are satisfactory overall, although they are not consistent in quality. Most of them give full information on what has been achieved by the pupil, but do not say what has not been achieved. Parents would like this information to give them the opportunity to identify and improve the weak areas. In the same way, targets are not always given nor are they always specific enough to assist parents.
- 28 There is an active Parent Teacher Association which organises successful events to fund equipment and enhance the school's resources, which the school values. There are satisfactory arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the adjacent Catholic High School, although facilities are not shared. The high school pupils and students from Oldham College come into school for work experience. There are very few business links and this is an area for development. There are some links with other schools involved in sport, choral speaking and music. School is also seeking to develop a link with a multi faith school in Oldham. There are, however, very close links with the Church, which is an important part of school life. The Church is used by the school, for both masses and school celebrations, where parents, pupils and staff, join together in worship and thanksgiving.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management by the headteacher are unsatisfactory and this results in low achievement in areas other than the core subjects and unsatisfactory support and challenge for staff.
- There has been unsatisfactory improvement in some areas of the work of the school since the last inspection.
- The staff appraisal system does not meet legal requirements and is unsatisfactory
- Governors challenge the school well and are beginning to have a strong, positive influence on the direction of the school.

Commentary

- 29 The leadership and management by the headteacher are unsatisfactory. This is the result of a lack of vision for the school and inadequate systems to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Although there is a clear mission statement in a written form, this is not brought to life by the day-to-day work of the school. For example, the aim of

'developing well-rounded pupils' is not matched by the curriculum offered by the school, which results in some pupils underachieving in some subjects. Financial planning is weak: Spending decisions are made without reference to a clear vision. This results in missed opportunities to improve achievement. For example, at the end of the last financial year, the school had a large surplus budget due to rapid changes in staffing. However, this situation has not been adequately seized upon, leading to further missed opportunities to allow staff to monitor the work of the school. This means that the headteacher has an incomplete and sometimes inaccurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result of this, the weaknesses in the curriculum have not been highlighted and this has led to underachievement in some subjects. It has also resulted in inadequate support for teachers, as they do not have regular feedback on their performance. This is particularly so in the case of new teachers to the school, who have received unsatisfactory formal support, although colleagues have given a good level of informal advice and guidance.

- 30 The headteacher and senior staff do not have an overall understanding of the quality of teaching due to the lack of monitoring. This has led to a situation of underachievement in some subjects. In some subjects, mathematics for example, the subject leader has made good improvements to the quality of teaching but this has been through informal yet effective systems to improve pupils' learning. This is not the case however in other subjects and this is unsatisfactory. Where areas for improvement have been identified through analysis, the strategic planning to make improvements have been weak, with no adequate means of monitoring and evaluating the success of actions.
- 31 Because of the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. For example, provision for outdoor play in reception has not been addressed and is still a weakness. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now satisfactory, but the management of the process by the headteacher has led to a small number of parents being dissatisfied with the way in which their children's needs are being met.
- 32 The appraisal cycle for teaching staff does not meet statutory requirements and has not been implemented for almost two years. Teachers do not have personal targets and their performance is not monitored. Because of this, they do not know their strengths or areas for development. This has led to methodologies teachers employ being too variable.
- 33 Governors are determined to improve the leadership of the school. They have re established the headteacher's appraisal and wish to establish a vision for the future of the school. They have found it difficult to make timely spending decisions because of the lack quality information on the school's strengths and weaknesses and the lack of direction for the school. Despite this, a well-informed and effective Chair of Governors is beginning to effectively shape the work of the governing body and has appropriately challenged the school to improve.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	939 616	Balance from previous year	14 911
Total expenditure	891 290	Balance carried forward to the next	48 326
Expenditure per pupil	2 268		

- 34 The total income figure includes £25 000 taken from a capital grant to balance the budget. It also includes £48 000 for building works to create disabled access. The £48 326 balance has not been satisfactorily allocated, leading to missed opportunities to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 35 Provision for children in the foundation stage of learning is **satisfactory**. When children first start in the reception class they display personal and academic skills that are in line with those expected for their age. There are strengths in their abilities to talk and listen, they communicate confidently and have a good knowledge of the world in which they live. This is above the level expected for children under five. Achievement in mathematics is good and satisfactory in the other five areas of learning. By the time children enter Year 1 most children have achieved or exceeded the national early learning goals and many are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum.
- 36 Achievement is satisfactory because the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The curriculum is planned to provide a range of activities and matches needs in all except physical and creative development. Although the staff have worked hard to follow the national guidelines for the under fives curriculum there is still a lack of balance between child initiated and adult led activities that was highlighted in the last inspection. This means that opportunities for children to make choices; work creatively in independent situations initiating their own play or following their own ideas, for example, in painting and drawing are limited. The staff work well together as a team and have close links with the pre school playgroup. The indoor areas provide a satisfactory environment in which children can learn. The lack of a secure outdoor area with provision for children to take part in child led activities, for example, large construction equipment, wheeled toys and climbing equipment is unsatisfactory. This has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. Staff maintain good records and can easily identify children's progress but targets are not shared in sessions, which means that children are unclear about what they are expected to learn.

Personal social and emotional development

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development **is satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected for their age.
- Most children are self assured, have good attitudes to school and behave well
- Children work and play together well.
- Opportunities for children to collaborate and make their own decisions in the outdoor area are very limited.

Commentary

- 37 The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development permeates most areas of learning and teaching is satisfactory. Children have settled well into school because of the happy and secure environment provided for them. They work and play amicably together and behaviour is good. They listen attentively to their teachers and are confident to answer questions or speak to adults. The organisation of activities helps to develop their independence, particularly when they have the opportunity to move between activities and work without too much direction by adults. However, opportunities for children to play collaboratively in the outside area are very limited. Their personal skills are good as they attend to their own toilet needs, dress and undress, put on aprons and help to tidy up. Relationships are good and staff know the children well, which helps them understand their varying, needs. Class teachers and classroom assistants use praise effectively to boost confidence and enjoyment in learning. This is having a positive effect on children's

development in this area and by the end of reception they are performing at a level above that expected for their age

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use opportunities in lessons to encourage speaking and listening.
- Support staff generally contribute to children's progress well.
- A range of activities promotes language skills in all areas of learning.
- Staff effectively promote early reading and writing skills in formal aspects of lessons.
- Opportunities for child discussion, negotiation and interaction are sometimes hampered by the dominance of adults supervising them.

Commentary

- 38 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In better lessons the pace is brisk, children do not spend too long on the carpet listening and have time to choose their own activities. They then engage in their own conversations and initiate their own learning through play. There is an absence of adult intervention in role-play situations, for example the home corner to promote learning. Sometimes activities are directed too formally. When this happens opportunities are lost for children to exchange ideas with one another in discussion. Teachers use literacy sessions effectively to promote speaking, listening, and early reading and writing skills.
- 39 Children's achievement is satisfactory and by the end of reception their skills are at the level expected. Some are above the level expected for their age especially in reading. Many children are reading confidently, know their entire alphabet, read and spell a number of commonly used words. They make good attempts to read and spell unfamiliar words using the phonic strategies they have been taught. They enjoy stories, can identify main characters and write sentences for their 'Blackpool Zoo' class book.
- 40 The classrooms are resourced adequately to support early literacy skills but the lack of outdoor facilities means that further opportunities to motivate and enthuse children to communicate and use language are lost.

Mathematical development

The provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the time children end their reception year are above the level expected for their age and children achieve well.
- Teaching is good and promotes learning.
- Children have good attitudes to their work and show good levels of concentration.
- Opportunities for children to explain their mental strategies or play number games independently need developing.

Commentary

- 41 Teaching is good overall and planned activities support children's numeracy skills. Although there are opportunities to use mathematical skills in games such as skittles these are sometimes over directed, limiting children's thought processes. This results in time wasted

queuing up to have their turn. Children of reception age can count to 50 and some beyond this. They can count in 10's and sequence numbers to 10, or beyond. They have learnt ways of writing down simple calculations and many can recognise the number of spots on the faces of dice without counting them individually. Mentally, some can work out additions to 10 but are not always asked to explain how they have reached the right answer, which would move learning on further. Achievement in this area of learning is good and most are attaining the early learning goals for this area with many moving beyond these goals. Children listen to their teachers and concentrate well on their tasks, answering questions with enthusiasm and interest.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of planned activities and the use of the environment enhances teaching in this area of learning.
- There are opportunities for children's natural curiosity to be stimulated.
- A safe outdoor area, as identified during the previous inspection has still not been provided.
- There is a shortage of planned activities to explore, experiment and discover in the outdoor area to enhance the curriculum and support teaching and learning.

Commentary

42 Satisfactory teaching and many planned activities stimulate learning for example, baking, church links, visits and visitors. Standards match those expected by the time children enter Year 1 and achievement is satisfactory. The use of the immediate environment is an aid to learning. These activities stimulate interest in the world outside the classroom and develop observational skills. The visit to Blackpool Zoo has extended children's knowledge of animals and excited their curiosity. By the end of reception, they are at the level expected and some achieve beyond this. Work with small construction kits, for example, Lego, teach children about structures but the lack of large construction equipment identified at the previous inspection is still an issue. This is unsatisfactory. Religious education is taught through acts of worship, classroom stories, prayers and services in Church. Attempts to improve the multicultural awareness of children have begun with the link with an African parent who has visited reception classes. The range of opportunities for children to investigate and experiment both indoors and out is an area for development.

Physical development

The provision for physical development is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of outdoor facilities inhibits opportunities for large-scale physical play.
- Physical education and dance lessons help to ensure children's physical development.
- There is a range of opportunities to develop hand and finger skills.
- Highly structured team games in which individual creativity is limited are inappropriate.

Commentary

43 The staff work hard to compensate for the lack of outdoor facilities by teaching a formal physical education lesson weekly and a dance lesson each fortnight. They are aware of the shortcomings in provision for physical development but have not been financially empowered to bring about change sufficiently well. Satisfactory teaching ensures that children have

opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by using pencils, paintbrushes, malleable materials and small construction kits. Beanbag games develop co-ordination well. The lack of wheeled toys, large construction kits and apparatus that allows children to slide, crawl, climb and balance in an informal way without adult direction limits physical development and co-ordination. Children enter school at the level expected in this area and slowly add to their physical skills but higher standards are inhibited by the narrow opportunities available. There is unsatisfactory improvement in this area since the last inspection. The use of highly structured team games in which creativity is limited and time spent queuing are not making the best use of available time to promote physical skills.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are appropriate opportunities for creative development in art, music, and dance.
- The range of opportunities to be creative, particularly outdoors, is too narrow.
- Too much adult direction in art work limits imagination and creativity.
- The staff have worked hard to implement a more creative curriculum but lack direction from the headteacher.

Commentary

- 44 Satisfactory teaching ensures that children have opportunities to draw, paint and make objects from a variety of media. Play areas indoor give scope for acting out real life or imaginary situations but there are missed chances by adults to move learning forward by sensitive questioning and prompting. There are few opportunities out of doors to be creative. Staff take out painting, water, books and games but the range of opportunities is unsatisfactory.
- 45 The lack of large construction material, role-play materials or opportunities to garden for example prevent children from using their imagination in large scale creative play. There is unsatisfactory improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection. The provision of ready mix paints also limits choice when mixing and exploring colours and textures in paint. When children are allowed to paint freely without direction their sense of colour is good and they use their imagination well. Children enjoy singing rhymes and play together amicably. A small range of activities provided on the 'busy table' help to promote chances for children to use their imagination. Appropriate dance lessons are provided each fortnight.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Curriculum test results for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have been above, or well above, national averages for some time.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and achieve well in English.
- More able pupils are able to display much maturity when talking about their reading experiences.
- Pupils' good communication skills are aiding their ability to participate actively in lessons.
- There is not enough use being made of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 46 The National Curriculum test results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have been good for some time. In Year 2 results have been consistently above the national average for some years. In Year 6 they have varied between being above, and well above, the national average for some years. The 2004 results are similar to the 2003 results and although comparative results are not yet available they are likely to continue the trend for the next few years. The main reason why results have been so impressive is that the school gives good attention to teaching pupils the basics skills of literacy and in enabling pupils to make the most of their good oral communication skills in English lessons. Teachers are confident in teaching reading and writing and have made good use of the National Literacy Strategy to help them develop progression and continuity in their teaching.
- 47 Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 3 to 6. This is confirmed by the good and sometimes very good, improvement seen the test results of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. In Years 1 and 2 much time is spent on providing pupils with a platform to help them show maturity in their reading and writing as they get older. In writing, for example, Year 2 pupils have established a confidence to write in sequence and use an appropriate range of adjectives when doing so. Their secretarial skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are good. By Year 6, however, pupils' writing is predominated by strong opening features, containing a mixture of description, dialogue and action. They also use a full range of adjectives and adverbs with words like, 'bellowed' and 'reassuringly' being used frequently. They also have the ability to move backwards and forwards through a story and use asides to create a strong sense of humour and appropriateness. The improvement is therefore very apparent and analysis of books on a year-by-year basis shows that this good improvement is continuous and developing through Years 3 to 6.
- 48 There is good attention to developing pupils' reading skills throughout the school. A recent change in Years 1 and 2 has added to the time now being devoted to listening to pupils read and this is having a positive impact on the standards in reading because good attention is being provided during these sessions to widening pupils' reading skills. By the time pupils are in Year 3 most are competent readers who demonstrate good fluency and expression. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to debate issues associated with the books they have read. More able pupils make use of their reading experiences to consider everyday issues that may, or may not, directly impact on their lives. For example, one pupil talked with great maturity about a main character in a book that had lost a close relative and how it had made her more aware of the potential emotional impact such a death might have within her own family. Another described the impact a story about violence in the family had had on his feelings about being more fortunate than others. These enthusiastic readers were capable and able to make the link between books being read for pleasure and also having an impact upon them as maturing individuals.
- 49 Teachers are mostly confident about teaching literacy. They appreciate the structure provided by the National Literacy Strategy and are therefore able to make the most of pupils' good oral communication skills in lessons. From early on reception-aged children are articulate and confident communicators. As they move through the school, teachers make use of this by ensuring they have 'talk partners' and providing them with opportunities to debate and discuss pertinent issues. Pupils are quick to point out features within lessons that they have some knowledge about, as was the case in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were writing a persuasive letter associated with the beheading of Anne Boleyn. Here pupils were quick to recount from their known general knowledge to add to the quality of the debate. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on valuing the opinions of others, even though it may not reflect their own. The ethos of encouraging pupils to talk to each other and to offer opinions and views has had the impact of making pupils confident in answering out in front of others, either in class or in larger gatherings, such as, assemblies.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 Although there were good links made between literacy and other subjects during the inspection, evidence from on-going work showed that pupils' literacy skills were not being used as effectively as they might in other subjects. Year 6, for example were using the Internet to find out more about Olympic competitors and Year 4 were successfully linking their literacy work with that of the Tudors. However, the quality of work produced in history and geography did not match that being produced in literacy and this is an area that the school needs to give urgent attention to.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above the national average.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Pupils enjoy problem solving and can apply their mathematical knowledge and skills well.
- The subject leader has implemented some informal, yet effective, systems to improve provision in mathematics.

Commentary

- 51 Standards in Year 6 are well above the national average. They have a good understanding of place value, including the value of digits after the decimal point. They use this knowledge to multiply and divide by any multiple of 10 with ease. Pupils have a good understanding of negative numbers and use them to calculate changes in temperature. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of the times tables and they rapidly recall facts, using them to solve problems. Standards in Year 2 are above the national average and have been for many years. Pupils have a good knowledge of addition and subtraction and use this to solve problems well. They read and calculate time well and recognise and identify halves, quarters and eighths of shapes. Pupils have a good knowledge of doubles and halves and use 'near doubles' as a strategy for calculating. They also round numbers to the nearest 10 and use this to help them solve calculations.
- 52 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve appropriately in mathematics. They start Year 1 with attainment in mathematics slightly above the national picture and attainment in Year 2 is above the national picture. This represents satisfactory progress and achievement. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, however, achieve well. By the time they reach Year 6, their attainment has risen to well above the national average, representing good achievement.
- 53 The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 have a good command of the subject and they use this to give pupils careful and clear instructions. They challenge pupils well and as a result, the most able pupils achieve well and the less able are supported well. Teaching resources are used well. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher engaged pupils well by using digit cards so they could experiment with totals as they tried to create a 'magic square' where all lines made the total of 15. The pace of lessons is usually good and this leads to a high level of productivity. However, in nearly all lessons observed, teachers' talk dominated at the expense of pupil discussion and thinking time. This limits pupils' involvement in lessons and sometimes leads to lower productivity in whole class teaching sessions. Teachers give too little time to collaborative learning and pupil explanation. This limits pupils' ability to articulate their ideas. Learning targets are not used and written marking is weak. This means that pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work.

- 54 Pupils in Year 6 relish problem solving. They have a very good ability to instantly recall number facts and have a good range of calculation strategies, which they apply well. In discussion with a group of pupils, they relished the opportunity to set each other mathematical problems. They challenged each other on their calculations and delighted in proving their answers with well thought out written proofs. Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics.
- 55 The subject leader has led the subject well in Years 3 to 6. Informal, yet effective, systems for monitoring individual pupil progress help him to target support well. As a result, achievement is high. The leader has not had any formal opportunity to monitor and has had very little input into Years 1 and 2. As a result, achievement is not as high for these pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 56 Satisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum but there are missed opportunities in geography and science to develop graphs, tables and charts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6 pupils have achieved well in this subject.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to learn specific scientific vocabulary and use investigational skills.
- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to make good progress.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to help pupils understand how to improve their work.
- The subject co-ordinator has had too few opportunities to monitor and evaluate classroom teaching.

Commentary

- 57 Standards attained in science exceed those expected for pupils' in Year 6. Achievement is good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6. This is due to the use of consistently imaginative and stimulating teaching methods. In Years 5 and 6 opportunities are given for pupils to develop scientific skills by setting up investigations. This is an improvement from the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the subject including the use of correct scientific vocabulary and conducting a valid experiment. In Years 5 and 6 pupils confidently use their knowledge in experimental and investigative activities. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the principles of fair testing, for example, as was seen in a Year 2 lesson involving testing how waterproof materials are.
- 58 Teaching and learning are good overall. The best lessons were in Years 3 to 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work also showed very good examples of scientific enquiry being carried out by Year 4. This was especially the case in the work undertaken on vertebrates and invertebrates. Pupils have been taught the importance of collecting and using appropriate evidence. Most pupils enjoy science lessons, especially those that give good opportunities for practical activities. In a lesson seen on the planets in Year 5, good cross-curricular links were developed between science, ICT and mathematics. Pupils make good progress because of demanding work and high expectations from teachers. In year groups, other than Year 5 and 6, teachers sometimes direct the learning too closely and, as a result, pupils are not sufficiently involved in developing their scientific skills through planning their own investigations or posing scientific questions. This can lead to a slowing down in the pace of lessons leading to pupils' progress not being as rapid as could be expected.

- 59 Assessment information is sometimes not used well enough to identify what pupils already know and what they need to do in order to improve. Marking is at its best when challenging targets and questions are posed, as is found in Year 4 work. However, marking is often a series of ticks, which fails to give pupils information about what they need to do next in order to make progress. Pieces of work are generally marked but do not always show pupils what they have done well and how to improve the overall standard of their work.
- 60 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about pupils making progress in this area. She has identified appropriate and realistic priorities for improvement. However, the subject co-ordinator has had limited opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations.
- Much work lately has led to improved provision for ICT throughout the school.

Commentary

- 61 Pupils' skill level is in line with national expectations. Year 2 pupils are independent in their ability to word process and can alter text according to style, colour and size. They are not as strong in the area of control technology. This is an aspect of the subject that the school has recognised as requiring further development. Year 6 pupils are able to set up their own multi-media presentations, although many were not at the stage of adding audio to their presentations. Older pupils in Year 5 were very competent in using a CD ROM and the Internet to find out more about the planets they were studying in science. The more able Year 5 pupils are able to talk with some authority about the merits of one Internet site as against another when needing to find out more details about their planetary research. There is a strong sense of improvement in pupils' standards, mainly as a result of increased teacher confidence.
- 62 The school has undergone a radical re-evaluation of their resources for this subject and are now at the stage where they are beginning to feel the benefit of the increased resourcing and professional development training that has occurred in the past few months. The new and enthusiastic, subject leader has helped to develop a thorough and effective development plan and there are close links with the Local Education Authority to help provide the range of services that the school seeks. All of the hard work that has occurred in the past few months has led to improvement in provision. The school is at a stage where a new scheme of work is to be formally introduced although many staff are already working to the broad outline of the scheme. Much good work has happened since the previous inspection, although most of it has happened recently. As a result of increased staff confidence, improved resourcing and more curriculum continuity, pupils' skill level is improving.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 63 There are pockets of good use of pupils' ICT skills occurring especially in Years 3 to 6. The use of ICT to help pupils carry out research as part of their science work on planets is a good example. Within this lesson there was good consideration given to the needs of pupils of different ability, both in relation to their ICT skills and scientific knowledge and understanding. However, in other subjects, such as geography and history, there are missed opportunities to involve pupils in making use of their ICT skills to further their understanding or to record their

findings. The use of pupils ICT skills across the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is weak and an area that has been recognised for improvement within the school's development plan.

HUMANITIES

Provision in history and geography is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenge and enrichment to the curriculum is in evidence in Years 3 and 4
- Pupils across the school underachieve.
- There are issues about the uniformity of curriculum coverage across and within Year groups
- Curriculum co-ordination is unsatisfactory
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 64 Discussions with pupils about on-going work in history and geography revealed that the provision was unsatisfactory for these subjects. It is clear from these discussions that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of some aspects of work and there is a superficial knowledge of the subjects studied. Standards in geography and history by Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected for these age groups. However, achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is a decline from the situation found at the last inspection.
- 65 In **geography**, Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of human and physical geography. They understand the differences between an island and the mainland, but are less secure in appreciating that people in other locations have different lifestyles to their own. In Year 6 topics undertaken include the Water cycle. Pupils' work gives little evidence of a range of sources being used, such as maps, photographs and ICT. Work in books indicates that there is insufficient opportunity for developing practical geography skills.
- 66 In **history**, Year 6 pupils have studied Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. Discussions with pupils reveal a shallow understanding of the deeper aspects of the way of life of people in the past. There are issues about the uniformity of coverage across Year groups, with some classes within Year groups studying a greater range of topics. Year 2 pupils have undertaken work on the Great Fire of London, Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War; however, this work is dominated by worksheets, giving little opportunity for pupils to explore different presentational techniques. In Year 4 there is evidence of challenging teaching, good use of resources and information, with marking relating well to the needs of pupils of different abilities. There are good examples of pupils appreciating how things change over time, for example, in the work on Tudor buildings and settlements.
- 67 The curriculum has been enriched by, for example, the Year 3 visit to the Roman Fort in Manchester. However, there is no overall plan of visits to ensure that pupils broaden their understanding in each subject. Marking is perfunctory in both subjects, with few comments to help pupils make progress, apart from that seen in Year 4. There is limited evidence of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills being used to support work in the humanities. Where cross curricular opportunities are taken, they work well, such as in the work covered by pupils in Year 4 on contrasting the locations of Mumbai and London looking specifically at temperature and climate.
- 68 Leadership of both subjects is unsatisfactory. The subject leader has been unable to carry out checks on teachers planning, scrutinised pupils' work or observed teachers teach. There are issues about the uniformity of curriculum coverage both within and across Year groups and consequently issues about teachers planning and delivery. Plans for improving the

provision in both subjects are unclear, as little time has been allocated to the co-ordinator to undertake this work

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 69 No lessons were seen in design and technology, and only one lesson seen in music. It is not therefore possible to make an overall judgment on provision, teaching or learning in these subjects.
- 70 In **art** one very good lesson was seen but art provision is unsatisfactory overall. Displays of work help to enhance the environment but quality is inconsistent. Pupils' abilities to draw and paint are generally under developed though some good quality drawings were seen in Year 6. There are links to artwork in other subjects such as history, geography and mathematics. Work in portfolios and on display show levels in art and design throughout the school are below that expected for pupils' age and lacking imagination.
- 71 Progress is not monitored therefore pupils do not systematically acquire skills based for example on exploring line, tone, texture, form and shape. Too often pupils are painting within outlines drawn by adults and work in older pupils sketchbooks lacks detail. Prescriptive direction means that creativity is restricted. The range of media on offer is narrow. There is limited evidence of reference to famous artists, the exception being in Year 3 where pupils have looked at Giacometti sculptures and in Year 1 where pupils have studied Clarice Cliffe. Resources in school are insufficient to deliver this aspect of the curriculum. There is therefore clear evidence of under achievement in art and design across all year groups.
- 72 In **design and technology** pupils follow the nationally recommended programme of work throughout each year. Scrutiny of portfolios shows work throughout the school to be at the level expected for pupils' age but coverage of all the units suggested by national guidelines and the school curriculum plan are not in sufficient depth. Links are made with other subjects as, for example, money containers made by pupils reflect mathematics and art and design work. There is limited evidence of pupils being involved in evaluating their work.
- 73 In **music** the peripatetic music teacher makes a very good contribution to developing pupils' knowledge and skills that is an improvement since the last inspection. Additional time is provided for pupils to learn brass, woodwind, guitar or percussion. The example set by his lessons is planned to add to the subject knowledge of staff who do not specialise in music. His expertise ensures that the standard of instrumental work and percussion is above the level expected. In singing, Year 5 pupils tackle two-part singing, diction is good but attention to dynamics is an area for development. The quality sometimes suffers in pupils' over enthusiasm; resulting in loss of tone. Opportunities in assemblies and school performances have a positive impact on the ethos of the school.
- 74 The leadership and management of **art and design** and **design and technology** by the subject co-ordinators are unsatisfactory because they have not been made fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. The leadership of the peripatetic teacher supports the **music** co-ordinator but his visiting schedule does not allow checking on whether his input to class teachers is having an impact on their own skills in teaching music. There are no systems to monitor the progression of skills in aesthetics or assess the impact of teaching on learning.
- 75 During the inspection, no lessons were observed in **physical education** due to timetable restrictions. As a result, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision, standards or the quality of teaching. Discussions with the subject leader, however, suggest that the school's involvement in sport is good and this enriches the curriculum well. However, the teaching of gymnastics and dance is not as developed as it should be. The subject leader has had only very limited opportunities to develop the subject and has no way of monitoring standards and achievement across the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes positive relationships and respect for each other.
- Adults in school act as good role models for the pupils.
- Provision for PSHE is unplanned within the curriculum.
- Co-ordination of this area is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 76 The majority of the pupils are very adept at speaking and articulate their thoughts well. By the time the pupils leave the school they are confident individuals with sensible opinions and a real sense of responsibility. Pupils are polite and courteous. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and how their actions impact on others. The staff provide pupils with good role models and take time to listen and respond to their needs and worries.
- 77 The lack of a school council to provide a forum for pupils to contribute to the school's development does not afford the pupils a formalised system for making their voices heard. The PSHE co-ordinator is on maternity leave and there is no overarching view taken by the school on the place of PSHE. The curriculum for this area of work lacks cohesion and therefore there is limited progression and continuity in the provision.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).