

INSPECTION REPORT

CANON BURROWS C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashton-under-Lyne

LEA area: Thameside

Unique reference number: 106249

Headteacher: Mrs E Horridge

Lead inspector: Mr A Giles

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th May 2005

Inspection number: 266555

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	456
School address:	Oldham Road Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire
Postcode:	OL7 9ND
Telephone number:	0161 3304755
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stenten Withnall
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Canon Burrows is a Church of England voluntary aided Primary School serving the area of Waterloo to the north of Ashton-under-Lyne town centre. It is located in an urban environment with a mixture of older terraced housing, council owned property and private housing developments. At the time of the inspection there were 456 pupils on roll, including 42 in the nursery, which is significantly bigger than the average-sized primary school. Since the last inspection the number on roll has risen significantly, becoming a two form entry in September 2000. A large number of new pupils entered the school between the ages of seven and 11 and in the present Year 6 these mobility figures are significantly higher than the national figures. The school serves a community with a mix of social advantage and disadvantage, as well as receiving twenty five per cent of its number from outside of its normal catchment. On entry into the school pupils' ability is generally in line with that expected nationally, with some working below this level. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is lower than the national average. Since the last inspection the number of pupils identified as having English as an Additional Language has risen and the present numbers are above the national average. Eight per cent of pupils, below the national average, are identified as having special educational needs. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The school was designated 'Beacon Status' in 2001 and as a result was intensively involved in training partnerships with other schools, especially with its pioneering and nationally recognised work for the integration of environmental education. It achieved ECO school status in 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004 and was the first winner of the David Bellamy Environmental Awareness Award in 2000. The school received School Achievement Awards in 2001, 2002 and 2003. It has a Silver Artmark and a Sports Activemark as a result of curriculum innovations and strengths in these curriculum areas.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17709	Alan Giles	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Physical education
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
24031	Iris Idle	Team inspector	Art and design
			Design and technology
23375	John Hicks	Team inspector	English
			History
			Geography
17794	David Hardman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Science
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			Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Canon Burrows Primary is a very effective school with many excellent features. It is ambitious and constantly evaluates the quality of provision, enabling it to either improve where necessary or to sustain the many qualities already in place. It is a very popular school that is highly regarded in the community. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very effective leadership and management that have created a whole-school shared vision and developed practices that are very well respected in the community and wider afield.
- The very good achievements of pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Very effective teaching that meets the needs of all pupils very well.
- Very well behaved pupils, who have very good attitudes to learning are enterprising and very keen to take on extra responsibilities.
- A stimulating learning environment, enhanced by an innovative, creative and inclusive curriculum.
- Outstanding progress made in addressing two issues, Foundation Stage provision and the planning of lesson for all abilities, raised at the last inspection.
- Inconsistency in partnerships with secondary schools to ensure the best possible transfer arrangements for pupils and the sharing of expertise for staff development.

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection and has significantly improved overall standards. The key issues for improvement, reported at the last inspection, concerning the appropriateness of lesson planning and provision for the Foundation Stage have been very well resolved. As a result these two areas of school life are now considerable strengths of its provision. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have also considerably improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A*	B	B	D
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A*	A	A	A

*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.*

The achievement of pupils is very good. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Inspection findings show a very strong drive for learning in the Foundation Stage. Present children are making a very good start to their learning with the majority achieving levels above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Present Year 2 pupils are likely to achieve standards that are well above those found nationally in English and mathematics. Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve well above average standards in science and above average levels in English and mathematics. The slight reduction in standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics, compared to recent years, is due to the larger number of pupils who have special educational needs. Also because of the high numbers who have joined the school since doing their Year 2 tests. School actions have resulted in good improvement in pupils' writing skills, the main reason for below average grades in comparison to similar schools. Improvement measures, implemented since the last inspection, have resulted in Year 6 pupils now achieving standards that are above those expected nationally in ICT. Pupils make good progress in art and design and achieve well throughout the school. Standards reached by pupils are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational need, including those with statements of their educational needs, achieve very well

against the targets set for them. All pupils who have English as an additional language access the curriculum very well and make similar progress to pupils of all other abilities.

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils treat each other with respect and are unfailingly polite to staff and other adults, including visitors. This contributes greatly to the very good ethos of the school in which pupils of all abilities are fully included. Pupils have exceptionally high levels of respect for the feelings and values of others and the very rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils from different ethnic groups integrate fully and seamlessly into the life of the school. The schools' mission statement places the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of pupils at the centre of school life. The very good levels of punctuality and attendance reflect pupils' enjoyment at coming to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching and learning are very good. Excellent planning for lessons shows the teachers' commitments to high standards and to the equality of opportunity for all pupils. Overall assessment procedures are very good. There are very good systems for tracking, target setting and reporting the progress pupils make. This information is very well used to modify learning tasks in lessons to match the previous achievements of pupils. Learning is very well enriched by a curriculum that has many innovations, notably the pioneering and nationally recognised work of using the school's local nature reserve to both promote environmental issues and learning in discrete subjects. Learning is further enriched using cross-subject themes, especially through the arts and the wide range of out-of-school clubs and visits to places of interest. The school makes good provision for pupils' care and welfare and has developed extensive links with other primary schools via its environmental education training. The links with local secondary schools are less developed, reducing the potential for further sharing of practice and improved transfer arrangements for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are very good. Excellent leadership and vision by the headteacher and the senior management team has ensured that action plans are targeted to achieve the highest possible standards. Leadership is developed throughout the school and other leaders produce plans that reflect accurate pictures of provision in their subjects. They share these with colleagues who develop excellent team work that ensures a shared vision to achieve the school's ambitions and goals. A considerable strength of the school is its management procedures that allow for frank self-evaluation and ongoing strategic planning for improvement. This has been critical in ensuring the school maintains its achievements at the same time as pre-empting future needs. The very good governing body supports the school very well in addressing a range of issues. They are a 'hands on' body and have been integral to the development planning that has implemented much change since the last inspection. They ensure all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents feel their children enjoy coming to school and that they are making appropriate progress. They feel that the school is responsive to their concerns, is well led and that teachers have high expectations of pupils to work hard. A small number believe behaviour is sometimes over-boisterous at lunchtimes. Pupils speak overwhelmingly favourably of the very trusting relationships with adults in school. They feel valued and know that their opinions count.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do to improve further are:

- Further develop partnerships with secondary schools to ensure the best possible transfer arrangements for pupils, and to share expertise for professional staff development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Overall standards in mathematics and science have been well above the national average, in English they have fluctuated from above to well above average, since the last inspection. This is compared to an average judgement in all three areas at the last inspection. Inspection findings show a very strong drive for high standards in the Foundation Stage. Presently children are achieving levels above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Present Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve standards that are very well above those nationally in science, continuing a notable strength of the school, and above the national average in English and mathematics. Improvement measures implemented since the last inspection have resulted in Year 6 pupils achieving standards that are above those expected nationally in ICT. As a result of consistently high standards the school was awarded the national 'School Achievement Awards' in three consecutive years between 2001 and 2003. It was also invited to become a 'Beacon School' to share its considerable expertise with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards have risen dramatically since the time of the last inspection.
- Children make very good progress in their early years at the school, a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The school has successfully addressed issues concerning writing standards, the reason for the lower similar school grade in the 2003 and 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6.
- Improved resources and staff training have resulted in higher standards in ICT compared to the last inspection.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is the reason why high standards are maintained in each year, irrespective of the characteristics of the cohort.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.7 (17.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.6 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (17.9)	16.6 (16.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (27.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.6 (28.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.1 (31.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1 The 2004 national tests for seven-year-olds in reading and mathematics were well above the national average in comparison to all schools. The writing results were above the national average. These standards are maintained when compared to similar schools. The overall performances in the three areas of learning in the last three years have been well above the national median and the trend in improvement at this age is in line with that seen nationally.

2 Standards in English were above those of all schools in the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils. They have ranged from above to very high in the last four years. In mathematics and science, test results at this age have been consistently well above the national average, science results are often very high. The performance of boys and girls in all three core subjects is well above the national median for their age group over the last three years. The trend in improvement at this age is above the national trend for all schools. These results are maintained and often improved on, when compared with schools with similar free school meal statistics. When compared with schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2 the 2004 English results were below average. The school identified some issues with the writing aspect of these tests as well as below par performances of some of the most able pupils.

3 There is a very strong drive for high standards in the Foundation Stage and children get off to a very good start in their learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Presently, children are achieving very well and are likely to reach levels above those expected for their age, with a significant proportion reaching levels well above those expected in all areas of learning. They achieve very well because teachers provide a very good range of activities that maximises their learning in early reading and writing activities, practical mathematical activities and with countless opportunities to learn about the world around them.

4 The school has made a very good improvement in standards achieved in English since the previous inspection. Presently standards are well above those expected in Year 2 and are above by Year 6, where the particular cohort has significantly more pupils with special educational needs than previous ones. By Year 6 pupils have developed an ability to listen carefully and with full attention so that they respond well to questions. They speak quietly, but with precision, when sharing ideas and this helps to maintain the very good working atmosphere in classrooms. Standards in reading are well above expected levels by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 really enjoy reading and show a keen interest in a wide range of authors and subjects, describing their particular preferences sensibly. The processes following recent identification of the need to improve standards in writing have been rigorous and thorough. The curriculum has been strengthened to ensure deeper and more detailed coverage to extend writing styles and purposes.

5 Inspection findings confirm continuing high standards in mathematics in Year 2. Pupils of this age achieve very well in solving numerical problems appropriate for their age, both orally and mentally. Work in books shows that the most gifted would be better prepared for the next stages in their learning if presented with tasks similar to those given to some Year 3 pupils. Present standards in Year 6 are likely to be above those expected nationally. A lack of confidence in their own ability is an issue with some pupils, especially amongst the high numbers who have special educational needs. These and other pupils are achieving very well, reflected in the way they learn to use their understanding of number in a wide range of practical contexts. This is because they use a range of very good problem solving strategies given to them by their teachers.

6 Pupils are achieving very well in science. Standards have remained consistently high over a number of years. This is due to a curriculum that has a strong emphasis on the whole school environment, practical investigations and the identification of whole school themes that are followed with increased rigour and depth as pupils get older. The school focus on the environment and the excellent outdoor facilities both in the grounds and the nature trail make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding in science. Pupils make very good progress in the skills of investigating, as well as in understanding and remembering scientific facts. By Year 6, pupils have a very broad range of knowledge about science. They are independent learners and responsible investigators. They record in their own words and are expected to make decisions about the best way to present their results. Most do this very well, often using very good diagrams, graphs and tables. A pinnacle of the school's success in science and environmental work is the achievement of ECO school status in 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004 and being the first winner of the David Bellamy Environmental Awareness Award in 2000.

7 Pupils achieve well in ICT, standards have improved well since the last inspection by regular access to a new computer suite. By the time they reach Year 6 they are attaining standards above those expected for their age. Pupils now use ICT with increased confidence and this has a

significant impact on their learning and attitudes in a wide variety of lessons. Pupils make good progress in their art and design studies and achieve well throughout the school. Standards reached by pupils are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the school has successfully achieved a silver 'Artmark' in recognition of its provision. Pupils explore and use tones and textures well and layer different shades of one colour of paper to create patterns. Work is linked well to their learning about other cultures but opportunities to work creatively and express their own ideas and emotions using paint are limited.

8 Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well against the targets set for them. Specialist learning support staff ably support these pupils in withdrawn groups or learning and working alongside their classmates. The large number of voluntary helpers in classes also aid learning for pupils of differing abilities, but sometimes they require further advice and planning to maintain the pace of learning compared to other groups in the class. Pupils who have been identified as having English as an additional language benefit from very good literacy provision and access all areas of the curriculum very well. This includes two pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in curriculum areas and receive appropriate provision in and out of classes. A very small number of Year 2 pupils would benefit from additional number challenges in the latter part of the year. In both discussions and questionnaire returns parents report strongly that they feel their children achieve well. Similarly, in conversations with inspectors, pupils talk about having to work hard.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for their personal development is very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance is very good and they are very punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very good ethos and a harmonious learning atmosphere.
- Adults and pupils enjoy very good relationships with one another.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is referenced strongly in the school's mission statement and pervades all aspects of school life.
- Pupils really enjoy school and declare their lessons interesting and fun.

Commentary

9 The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development can be witnessed in all aspects of school life. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well in lessons and in outside play areas. They treat each other with respect and are unfailingly polite to staff and other adults, including visitors. This contributes greatly to the positive ethos of the school in which pupils of all abilities are fully included. In classrooms teachers and pupils work very well together without being distracted from their essential focus on teaching and learning. Pupils are pleased when awarded certificates celebrating particularly good behaviour and strive to achieve higher standards as a result. The school has very low levels of exclusions and there were none at the time of this inspection. Pupils have exceptionally high levels of respect for the feelings and values of others and the very rare incidents of bad behaviour, including bullying, are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils from different ethnic groups integrate fully and seamlessly into the life of the school and there is complete racial harmony. To enhance pupils' cultural development the school is careful to teach all pupils the customs and value of many other cultures so they are equally valued.

10 Pupils feel valued and know that their opinions count. All classes nominate two members to the School Council and the Eco Council, and both these bodies contribute fully to the life of the school. For example, shared ideas and designs resulted in the implementation of new school gardens. Pupils take increasing responsibility for the management of the Council as the year progresses and they thrive on it. Pupils really enjoy taking on other responsibilities such as the regular maintenance of the school nature trail. Older pupils say they particularly look forward to

listening to younger pupils read at lunchtimes and are proud that this contributes to higher standards. The Playtime Buddies system involves pupils from all classes, right down to the youngest pupils. Teachers have prepared them well by using role-play so that they know how to help and support each other. Pupils also help with the exchange of books in the library. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative as demonstrated when they raised money for the Tsunami appeal by operating a range of stalls.

11 Provision for developing pupils' spiritual awareness was very good at the time of the last inspection and it is now excellent. The entire atmosphere of the school is spiritually uplifting and pupils are constantly made aware of this critical element in their development. Opportunities for developing spirituality have been embedded in all curriculum guidance since the previous inspection. Additionally, much clearer links are now made with studies in citizenship, care of the environment and personal, social and health education. The rich and varied curriculum therefore now places the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of pupils at the centre of school life. School assemblies contribute very effectively to the spiritual development of pupils. They are very enjoyable and pupils show deep spiritual qualities when they reflect quietly on issues such as "Loving One Another". Other opportunities for spiritual development abound, including Circle Time in classes where pupils sensitively share their feelings about personal and wider issues in a mutually supportive atmosphere.

12 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and securing the attendance of pupils. However, the very good levels of punctuality and attendance are equally due to the fact that pupils really enjoy coming to school. Questionnaire returns and conversations with parents show very positive opinions concerning behaviour in and out of school and are appreciative of the fact that the school treats their children fairly and helps them to become mature citizens.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (96.2%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There has been no permanent exclusion, but one fixed exclusion in the last academic year.

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	408	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	24	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0

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 provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment of pupils' work is very good. The curriculum is very good. Pupils are well cared for and the school has established very good links with parents and within the community and has good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils learn very well. The quality of assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school identifies best teaching practices and then effectively shares these with all staff to further develop their own expertise.
- Assessment practices and findings are used to accurately match tasks in lessons and to ensure the challenges given are relevant to pupils of all abilities and interests.
- Significantly more very good teaching than the last inspection.
- Pupils respond very positively to a range of challenging questions and problems, either independently or by collaborative group work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	18 (56%)	9 (28%)	4 (13%)	0	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.

Commentary

13 Teaching is very good overall. Since the last inspection the school has focussed on, and acknowledged, the way that talented teachers with specialist skills can impact on provision and also improve their colleagues' skills. This kind of professional development has been instrumental in raising standards in science, mathematics, art and design and dance, and especially makes learning interesting through the identification of a wide range of practical activities. Similarly, the school uses external expertise, when necessary, to improve expertise across the curriculum.

14 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good in all areas of learning. Since the last inspection learning practices have been developed at this age that engage and motivate pupils very well. All staff have very high expectations and they provide a very good and imaginative curriculum which meets children's needs very well. In both the nursery and reception classes teachers and support staff work very closely together to support individuals and groups of children. This ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. This sets the pattern later in the school because excellent planning is enabling the school to prioritise the inclusion of all children, of all abilities, in every activity. This shared knowledge is also impacting on the professional ability of teaching assistants. Their numbers and expertise, including other adult support, have grown considerably since the last inspection. This expertise is an important factor in the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils who are more gifted and talented.

15 Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work and to articulate their strategies for solving problems or research findings. This results in them gaining confidence and the ability to independently explore and research for themselves. This has been a strong feature of development since the last inspection. From imaginative play in the early years, to investigating flower parts and the patterns for Pythagoras theory in later years, the use of problem solving skills is a feature of

learning. There is a positive learning ethos in all lessons. Learning is exemplified by a combination of learning facts and appropriate skills, balanced with independent and group research. Lessons are interesting, stimulating, enjoyable and enhanced with purposeful activities and exciting resources. In the very best lessons pupils work at a very brisk pace and respond very well to their teacher's very high expectations. In a small number of lessons the pace of learning is less rigorous. For example, in some mathematics lessons mental starters are not always challenging enough. Also over-long teacher explanations sometimes serve to consolidate previous learning, for example in naming properties of shapes, and misses opportunities to extend thinking further.

16 Throughout the school there are very good and thorough assessment procedures in place. All adults use them to gauge children's development, progress and achievement across all areas of learning. They use these findings very effectively to build on each child's previous learning and to meet their individual needs at the next stages of learning. In all lessons observed teachers adapt planning materials to the specific needs of individuals and groups. However, although Year 2 pupils consistently achieve high standards in mathematics the most gifted are not consistently challenged with work that further tests and extends them. The marking of pupils' work in English and mathematics is outstanding. Teachers take immense care to record and value their pupils' learning and to agree the way ahead. Older pupils, especially, enjoy self-assessing their own work and this encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning, especially to meet agreed targets, in a mature way. Although assessment is good in other subjects, the school has identified the need to use English and mathematics practices to develop assessment procedures even further.

17 The vast majority of parents feel that teaching is good and that they are well informed about the progress being made by their children. They are completely unanimous that teachers expect pupils to work hard and further challenges, via homework and extra classes, are relevant and successful. Similarly, pupils state that they have to work hard but are helped by their teachers when needed.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good, innovative curriculum. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment through the school's use of visits, visitors and the school environment, are very good. The equality of access and opportunities for all pupils in the curriculum is excellent. Learning resources and the school's accommodation are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is innovative and is based on supporting all learning through the environment and this results in work that is often creative and exciting.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and children benefit from a very broad range of activities.
- An extensive range of work outside of lesson times enriches the curriculum very well.

Commentary

18 The curriculum is very well managed and audited by the senior management team and subject leaders and this ensures that it retains a breadth and balance relevant to all needs and interests.

19 A major strength is the use of a thematic approaches, where leaders plan whole-school themes, bringing coherence to learning across the whole school, as well as strong links to other subjects.

20 The curriculum is rich and stimulating and has the whole school environment as its base. For example, pupils on the 'Eco Committee' speak very proudly of the use of the outside environment in many subjects of the curriculum. They show considerable awareness of the adverse effects of litter on the natural environment. This in turn has led to a whole school project on

recycling products which has had a very positive impact on many of their studies. The impact of the environment is shown in many subjects. In ICT Year 5 pupils produce editions of the "Eco Newsletter." One issue celebrates the award of the fourth Eco Flag to the school. The use of reports in columns and suitable pictures enhanced the visual effect of the newsletter and show pupils' skills in the use of ICT. The high quality displays throughout the school show that pupils benefit from a curriculum that gives them many unique opportunities to develop their artistic and creative skills through their understanding and studies of the school environment and across many other subject boundaries.

21 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage, including the nursery, is very good. The outdoor provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a very wide variety of experiences that are very well planned and organised. For example, during the inspection children in the nursery went on a "Bear Walk" through the nature reserve and staff used language very well to point out the rich range of colours and textures seen in the plants and trees. Staff placed a strong emphasis on the need to care for the environment and children responded very well by ensuring they did not damage any plants as they walked along beside the stream.

22 Pupils are encouraged to learn through first hand experiences through the many well-planned and appropriate visits and visitors. The quality of visits helps to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, a recent visit to the theatre by Year 6 pupils, where they had a workshop backstage as well as seeing a Shakespeare play, enhanced their work in English considerably. This is a very good example of a key feature of the curriculum that extensively attempts to develop pupils' understanding by combining the skills used in art and design, music, dance, poetry, story telling and creative writing. The use of local education authority coaches greatly enhances sport for pupils in the school and this often extends to extra curricular clubs that provide further opportunities for pupils to extend their sporting skills. This has contributed to the 'Sports Activemark' being awarded to the school. The range of interesting activities offered by the school is actively endorsed by parents.

23 Resources are very good and their effective use has a positive effect on both teaching and learning. The accommodation overall is good. It is well organised, scrupulously clean and well maintained. The school makes the best use of the recently newly built spaces, and this is enhancing learning in areas such as drama, music, art and design and ICT. It has developed an innovative and exciting outside environment to further complement learning. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and the teaching assistants contribute very well to the achievement of all pupils, they are especially used effectively to support pupils who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. Planning identifies the needs and targets for these pupils very well.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for pupils' care and welfare, and provides very good guidance and support. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The level of adult support in lessons is a significant strength of the school.
- Many pupils are involved in decision making activities that make a very positive contribution to increasing their self-esteem and helping them to become responsible citizens.
- The school rightly considers itself a healthy and safe environment and are aware of some minor omissions.

Commentary

24 The quality of day-to-day support and care is very good. The school ethos promotes mutual respect and good relationships and is matched by vigilant support systems. The school works very well with other professionals and outside agencies, for example, with the Social Services

Link worker and the Education Welfare Officer to maintain these systems. Very good tracking systems successfully records the academic achievements of pupils, and teaching and non-teaching staff enhance these with additional informal pastoral support. A small number of parents mention they are concerned about over-boisterous play during lunchtimes. Pupils, who volunteer to be 'buddies' during these periods, provide valuable support for others. However, it was observed during the inspection that at times a lack of engagement and organisation by lunchtime staff in the playground leads to some inappropriate behaviour not being spotted quickly enough. Statutory health and safety checks are rigorously observed by the school and minor issues pointed-out were quickly acted on.

25 The very active school councils are an important aspect of school life. They are testimony to the way the school listens to the views of pupils and the way in which they themselves want to be involved in the daily life of the school. The elected representatives of the School and Eco Councils become increasingly adept at running and recording their own meetings. Their involvement in initiatives taken in response to environmental and health awareness issues is outstanding. Their views are effective in bringing about change. This was seen in the deployment of benches in the playground, improved toilet provision, a worry box for pupils to share their concerns, for example to tackling bullying, and the use of playground buddies to support other pupils. Assemblies and circle time are used to address issues such as, friendships, emotions and behaviour and information from pupils is shared if appropriate. The excellent assembly at the start of inspection demonstrated both the high quality of relationships that exist within the school and the high degree of trust needed for pupils to perform as they did.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good. Links with other schools are good. There are also very good links with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'Beacon School' partnership with local primary schools produced excellent linked provision in areas of environmental education.
- The artistic, spiritual and multicultural dimensions of the work of the school are enhanced by the wide range of visitors to the school.
- The links with secondary schools, especially those where pupils transfer, are minimal and lack the strong partnerships of other strategies.

Commentary

26 The school views it as important to share its innovatory practices, policies and successes with parents and other friends and associates of the school. Curriculum information is provided regularly in class newsletters for parents and the school prospectus promotes the school very well. Parents give very good support to school activities, such as plays, social gatherings, class assemblies and parents' evenings. Over twenty parents help regularly in the school, working in classrooms and the library. Information and arrangements to discuss pupils' progress support partnerships between home and school very well. Meetings between parents, children and teachers early in the year discuss future targets. These are reviewed half-way through the year. End-of-year reports are a clear and informative summary of these processes and suitable next-stage targets are woven into the scripts as considered necessary. Reviewing procedures and transition meetings with parents of pupils who have special educational needs are very well prepared. Parents are very happy with the appropriateness of this information also with levels related to the homework given to their children.

27 The school established a national reputation for its pioneering 'Beacon' work with many other primary schools working on the theme of environmental education. The development and use of the valley area next to the school significantly enhances the curriculum and learning for pupils. The school receives much community and business support for this project and other visits to

places of work are also a feature of the school's work. There are good links with local schools and colleges to provide work experience and training placements for students. Useful further curriculum links are being made with the local sports college. However, liaison with other partner secondary schools, to further develop curriculum initiatives or links between Years 6 and 7, are less well established. This limits the opportunities to share subject expertise, develop teaching practices and to improve the transition between primary and secondary school for Year 6 pupils. The school's voluntary aided status ensures very strong links with the church, with clergy, pupils and teachers playing an active involvement in school and parish life. A significant reason for the innovatory and creative curriculum in the school is the range of visitors and speakers to the school, including storytellers, artists, dancers, musicians, visiting sport coaches and those who represent other faiths and beliefs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The leadership of the key staff is very good. Management is very effective. The governance of the school is very good. The school is dealing with aids or barriers to learning very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent vision by the headteacher with the help of a very competent senior management team has ensured that action planning is targeted to achieve the highest possible standards.
- Excellent self-evaluation procedures have been critical in raising standards since the last inspection and pre-empts future needs exceptionally well.
- The very good governing body supports the school very well and has been an important critical friend in the development planning that has implemented much change since the last inspection.
- Excellent team work has ensured a shared vision to achieve the school's ambitions and goals.

Commentary

28 The headteacher has very successfully shared her vision for the school with her senior management team. She is keen to delegate significant whole-school roles as part of their professional development and these have been critical in the school's success. This has been particularly relevant to the work of the deputy headteacher, who is pivotal in the day-to-day monitoring of practices. The vision also reflects the very good work done by subject leaders in developing their action plans which are then prioritised into whole-school improvement plans. These procedures have recently been critical in identifying the need to improve writing standards and previously to improve provision in the Foundation Stage and the assessment and planning for learning. Such high quality procedures have resulted in innovations in practices. The award of 'Beacon Status' gave the school an extra positive dimension to its work. Shared training with a number of partnership schools has been highly influential in defining the role of subject leaders and the use of the local environment in learning. The school is very well placed for future developments and is regarded by the Local Education Authority as an exemplary model of a 'self sustaining school.' Parents are unequivocal in their views that the school is led and managed well.

29 Excellently prepared school development plans have been at the heart of procedures that have so dramatically raised standards since the last inspection. These reflect the very good management structures in place that emphasise the importance of the development of staff and the systematic observation and monitoring of teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators set very good standards in this respect. The expectation is for them to be actively involved in monitoring standards in their areas. They do so very well because they are open and reflective to new ideas and help colleagues deliver their visions. This engenders excellent team spirit. Practices in English and mathematics have set these high standards and are being used to develop monitoring in other subjects. Recent developments in ICT and the Foundation Stage are testimony to these practices. Procedures to develop professional competence have had significantly positive outcomes in terms

of raised standards and increased staff confidence. The deputy headteacher manages assessment procedures very well. These are used well to provide the processes for tracking and the reporting of progress. Standardised tests are used very well to analyse patterns in strengths and weaknesses, and to inform subject action plans and reports for pupils and parents.

30 The governance of the school is very good. Governors are very knowledgeable about the schools' strengths and weaknesses and provided very good strategic support when the school significantly increased in size and needed a major re-build. There is a clear agenda to ensure statutory responsibilities, including race equality, are met. The very good improvements made since the last inspection are testimony to the successful strategies in addressing key issues for the school to maintain its momentum. The governors are very aware of the performances of pupils in local and national contexts and this enables them to work as critical friends of the school. They are increasingly improving this role by supporting the senior management team in the day-to-day monitoring of the work of the school. In this respect the chair of governors plays a leading and important role.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	999,470	Balance from previous year	100,718
Total expenditure	990,269	Balance carried forward to the next	109,919
Expenditure per pupil	2,235		

31 The office deals very effectively with the varying daily financial and administrative demands. The headteacher and governors have had a very good understanding of the school's financial position and the way in which the school needs to identify financial priorities. Between them they have established a policy of best value practices, including the use of a large carry-over budget to compensate for new building costs, also to finance the improved resources for ICT. Both have impacted very well on pupils' learning. The school has developed effective teaching and learning practices for the increased numbers of pupils who enter the school with English as an additional language. The school provides very good value for money when the educational provision and pupils' levels of achievement are set against the financial circumstances in which the school operates.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32 Children get off to a very good start in the Foundation Stage. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children achieve very well and reach levels above those expected for their age and a significant proportion reach levels well above those expected in all areas of learning. There is a very strong drive for learning in the Foundation Stage and there are many reasons why children achieve so well. Teaching is very good in all areas of learning. All staff have high expectations and they provide a very good and imaginative curriculum which meets children's needs very well. Staffing levels are generous and all children are supported very well. Relationships are very good and, as a result, children's personal skills rapidly improve. Very good leadership and management have ensured that the nursery is well integrated into school life and there are very good procedures in planning, monitoring and assessment. Assessments are used very well to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with special educational needs. The accommodation and resources are good, the outdoor provision is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers understand the needs of children very well.
- Excellent relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of highly effective learning.
- Teachers' planning is very good and they make lessons interesting and exciting.

Commentary

33 In personal, social and emotional development, teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well in this aspect of their education. They make rapid progress and reach levels above those expected for their age. The excellent relationships between all the adults working with children set an excellent example. Consequently, children learn to take turns and share the resources. The staff work very well together to maintain consistently very high expectations of children. All adults give very good encouragement to children which means that children readily join in activities. For example, in a short session of imaginative play two children acted as doctor and nurse looking after an injured bear in the hospital. Behaviour is very good in a range of situations. Children know the routines and keep to them; they behave sensibly and many choose activities independently. For example, in the nursery, children enter in the morning, hang up their own coats, they then choose activities from around the room confidently and independently. Children of all abilities respond well and find their work enjoyable because it is planned and pitched at the correct level to provide interesting challenges. Examples of children's previous work in the reception classes shows a very good range of activities that promote their personal development, for example, they show respect for plants and animals in their work on the environment.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a very good range of activities that maximises children's learning.
- Early reading and writing activities are threaded through all the areas of learning very well.
- All staff use every opportunity to enhance children's communication skills.

Commentary

34 In all activities, there are very good opportunities for the children to develop their language skills. Children achieve very well and their skills improve as they respond to the opportunities to talk about their activities. The children in the reception classes make very good progress and reach levels above those expected for their age. Reading and writing skills are developed systematically through carefully planned activities. For example, in a very good reception lesson the teacher used photographs of 'Teddy', the bear in hospital following an accident. The very realistic hospital setting and a letter from 'Teddy' to the children kept them all enthralled and filled them with enthusiasm to write their own letters to him hoping for his quick recovery. When answering questions it was very clear that the children related very well to the lesson as they explained accidents that had happened to them in the past. Through various activities, children learn to write the letters in the air and recognise them when looking through storybooks. There are many opportunities in the nursery for children to use language. For example, they were very excited when the teacher pointed out something new growing on their bean plants and they were eager to share their ideas of what the pods looked like. Children are given many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through purposeful and imaginative play, such as 'The Hospital Corner' and through responding to stories and repeating rhymes. In the reception classes, there are many opportunities for children to share books throughout the day and a significant number are already reading very well. They read sentences clearly and know that they begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop. In discussions, they explain how they take books to read at home and thoroughly enjoy the challenge provided as the books extend their reading skills. Children enjoy listening to their teachers reading to them and they remember repeating words or phrases. In the nursery, the sharing of books, listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are carefully planned so that children learn letter sounds and a few simple words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching places a strong emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are put to good use across many areas of learning.
- All staff provide very good support for all activities.

Commentary

35 The very good teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve very well and they reach levels above those expected for their age. Many mathematical activities are of a practical nature and, together with the use of exciting resources, support children's learning well. This is because of the strong emphasis placed on developing not only number skills but also the use of opportunities in other areas of learning to promote and develop mathematical links. For example, in a very good session in the nursery, children used different number cards to match the numbers on a series of pictures. When painting 'Teddy', children described how they painted two ears, two eyes, one nose and one mouth on their picture. Adults stress mathematical language right from the start so that children recognise the shapes and numbers they are using. In another good example, in a lesson with the reception children developing their number skills, children ordered numbers from nine to nineteen correctly in a game using numbers cut out and written on cards. In a session on the carpet, the teacher challenged children very well as they counted on and back from ten to one hundred. The majority achieved success and visibly glowed when praised by the teacher for their very good mathematical skills. This type of support shows the value of excellent relationships between staff and children because it inspires them to do their best at all times. Children in reception use laptop computers very well, they create recognisable bears on the screen and count the features as they put in eyes, ears, a mouth and a nose. This idea of grouping was reinforced very well by staff in the nursery when children were taught to use the language of 'full' or 'empty' when talking about how they were using sand to fill containers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff have high expectations and a very good knowledge in this area of learning.
- Teaching provides children with countless opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- All the available space is used to provide a good range of direct experiences.

Commentary

36 Teaching and learning are very good and help to ensure that all children achieve very well and, in the reception classes, children's' understanding is above the level expected for their age. In the nursery, children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. The outdoor area is a very good resource and the staff use it very effectively to support learning. For example, the children went on a 'Bear Walk' through the nature reserve and staff used every opportunity to point out the various colours and textures of different plants. They named trees and discussed with the children how important it is to care for all living things. Children responded very well and took great care walking round the reserve not to damage any plants. All the Foundation Stage children use the area outside the classroom and have planted their own vegetables there as well as looking after plants in the classrooms. This helps them to understand the needs of the plants to grow well. The imaginative play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and, in the nursery, children enjoy imaginative play in the 'Hospital' and dress up as butterflies as part of the nature theme. This theme of caring for and understanding nature is carried on very well in reception and Monday morning brought great excitement when the baby chick they are rearing was brought back from a child's home. Children listen attentively to the plays, songs and stories in assemblies. Children in the nursery explore the properties of different materials and children in reception develop this work very well when they make models of buildings. Computers are used regularly. At first, children in the nursery need a lot of adult help but in reception children move the mouse and use very good control of the finger pad to create self portraits and realistic pictures of teddy bears. Children in reception support their scientific work very well when selecting a program on magnets and one clearly stated 'Magnets pick up metal but not plastic'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Access to outdoor areas is very good and children achieve very well when moving through an adventure play area with control and co-ordination.
- The teachers plan a wide range of activities that develop physical skills alongside other learning.

Commentary

37 Most children are well on the way to reaching above the expected standards in the reception classes. There is a small, dedicated, secure outdoor area in the yard and a large imaginative area outside the nursery that all children use. In addition, the nature reserve is a well used facility to extend learning in a variety of ways. For example, staff combined physical activities on the yard when children used wheeled vehicles to move freely around the space with an adventure trail in the garden area. Children in reception classes enjoyed the activities and used the available space well as they showed good control of their vehicle, carefully avoiding others in the area. When they moved to the adventure area they climbed over, under and along a variety of challenging wooden structures showing good control of their bodies, especially when walking along a narrow beam. Although no physical education lessons were seen during the inspection, children

move sensibly around the school, for example when going to assembly or going out to play. They show good awareness of space when using the different activities set up in their classrooms, for example in the nursery, children dress as butterflies and 'fly' around the room sensibly without any collisions. Teachers plan the use of scissors, paintbrushes, pencils and other tools in daily activities and this provides children with many very good opportunities to develop their physical skills. As a result, children confidently cut paper, paint lifelike pictures and a significant number hold pencils correctly when they write legible sentences in their language work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the needs of young children very well and this leads to very good learning.
- Children are provided with a vibrant range of activities that enrich their learning.

Commentary

38 Exciting resources and very carefully planned adult intervention mean that children learn very well through imaginative play in the areas where they act out roles as doctors and nurses in the 'hospital'. Teaching and learning are very good, as a result children achieve very well and reception children attain levels that are above those expected for their age. In the nursery, adults help children to create scenes in which they can use the language they have learned earlier and so sustain their play independently. Adults are very good at seizing children's ideas and extending them. In one activity, for example, children followed up their 'Jolly Phonics' work with 'w' words to select and describe objects they pulled from a 'feely bag'. They used good descriptive language to describe the objects they removed such as wheel, wool and whale. In nursery, children are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint and use brushes to express their ideas in imaginative paintings. In the reception classes, children enjoyed the experience of cutting out the different parts of a bear then using the punch and split pins to attach the arms and legs. In a combined Celebration Assembly with nursery, reception and Year 1 pupils, children learn new songs and sing the ones they know, such as the 'Tidy Up' song, very tunefully and enthusiastically. Children make their own models using scissors, tape, glue, coloured beads and paper shapes to decorate their handbags. As in other areas, because of the excellent support by all staff, there are many opportunities for staff to talk with children as they play in order to extend vocabulary and ideas. For example, children draw pictures and make presents for Teddy who, they explain, is in hospital.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good so that pupils enjoy their learning and strive for the highest of standards.
- Very good assessment procedures, are used well so that pupils of all abilities know how well they are doing and how they can improve their learning.
- The curriculum for English is very well managed and planned and pupils' interest is enhanced by its breadth, richness and depth.
- Pupils use their English skills very well in other subjects so that their high literacy standards are developed in an all-round way.

Commentary

39 The school has made a very good improvement in standards achieved in English since the previous inspection. Standards are well above expectations by Year 2 and are likely to be above the national average by Year 6, where the particular cohort has more pupils with special educational needs than previous years. The school had a number of issues to address after the previous inspection and has done this very successfully. It has been particularly effective in raising standards substantially throughout the school. This has been achieved by accurate identification and assessment of any weak areas and a whole-team approach to remedying them. Recently, writing was identified by this process and the school has been rigorous and thorough in its attempts to raise standards, especially by strengthening the curriculum to ensure deeper and more detailed coverage to extend writing styles and purposes. Much improved planning of lessons ensures that pupils of all abilities are taught in ways relevant to their particular needs. The exceptionally good marking of work is another major improvement. Together with challenging, individual learning targets this ensures that pupils' learning is tightly focused on what will best help them to raise their standards of work. This thoroughness extends into lessons where pupils are in ability sets. For example, in the upper ability English sets, work is meticulously planned to bring out the very best from all pupils. Equally, pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for. Their needs are clearly identified and recorded early in their school life and teachers consider them individually and carefully when planning lessons.

40 There has been an emphasis on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills since the last inspection and they are now of a very high standard throughout the school. From Year 1 pupils are successfully encouraged to work in pairs to formulate questions or refine their understanding. This helps them to support each other in their learning by sharing ideas and testing their understanding. By Year 2 pupils are using a good range of technical and descriptive vocabulary when they talk excitedly about what they have learned about snails. Pupils in Year 3 show further refinement in their speaking and listening skills when they compare and contrast the work of different authors and give reasons for their own preferences. This evaluative use of language continues to be developed so that pupils discuss their work and that of their classmates with perception and clarity. By Year 6 pupils have fully developed the ability to listen carefully and with full attention so that they respond well to questions. They speak quietly but with precision when sharing ideas and this helps to maintain the very good working atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported and encouraged so that they join in discussion fully and make suggestions with confidence.

41 Standards in reading are well above expected levels by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 really enjoy reading and describe, with pleasure, how their very good skills have been carefully and systematically developed by very good teaching. They show a keen interest in books and read from a wide range of authors and subjects, describing their particular preferences sensibly. Older

pupils show they enjoy poetry when they quote lucidly and accurately from the poems of William Blake and others. From Year 1 pupils are systematically taught the skills they need to decipher new words. They learn how non-fiction books are constructed and use the contents, index and glossary pages effectively to answer questions. Parents and grandparents help with reading practice so that pupils' skills are enhanced and closer community links are forged at the same time.

42 The quality of teaching is very high and very good teaching was seen in all year groups. Teachers plan and resource their lessons very well so that they meet the needs of pupils of all abilities equally well. They use a wide range of teaching styles so that lessons are interesting, stimulating and enjoyable. This ensures that pupils engage fully in their learning and that they are continually challenged to raise their standards. Teachers expect a lot from their pupils and, in turn, pupils expect a great deal from themselves. They concentrate hard in lessons and teachers make sure that lesson time is used well by keeping up a good pace of learning. Relationships in classrooms are very good indeed. Pupils respect and value their teachers and this motivates them to do their best so that pupils of all abilities achieve very well.

43 Teachers assess the work of their pupils very well at a number of different levels. The results of national tests are analysed in detail and any identified weaknesses are addressed so that overall standards continue to rise. The marking of work is outstanding and this is a huge improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers take immense care to record and value their pupils' learning and to agree the way ahead after discussion. Pupils in Year 6 really enjoy self-assessing their own work and this encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning in a mature way.

44 Leadership and management of the subject are both very good. The subject leader works in close collaboration with the headteacher, staff and governors to produce a termly action plan. This is why staff are so well aware of the school's priorities and how they can best contribute to maintaining and raising overall standards. There is a clear emphasis on valuing the contributions of pupils to the planning process. Teaching staff form working parties with a clear goal of school improvement and their reports are valued and promoted in subsequent work. The hard-working subject leader has a full program to monitor the teaching and learning of English and this enables her to give support and guidance that is focused and relevant.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45 Close links between pupils' work in English and the other subjects of the curriculum are a strong feature of the school. Teachers' planning includes specific and detailed opportunities for pupils to use and develop the full range of English skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. This encourages them to develop their learning in a realistic, cohesive way and to appreciate the power of language in a wide range of situations. This was seen when Year 5 pupils write about their interview with King Alfred using their word processing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection.
- Very good planning for lessons ensures pupils are challenged rigorously, although there is some scope to challenge the most gifted mathematicians at the end of Year 2.
- Very effective use of investigation and problem solving improves pupils' understanding.
- When teachers use the newly installed whiteboard technology it considerably improves the pace and efficiency of lessons.

Commentary

46 Standards in mathematics have been consistently well above the national averages for pupils aged seven and 11 in the last four years. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged as average at both age groups. Inspection findings confirm continuing high standards in Year 2. Pupils of this age achieve very well in solving numerical problems appropriate for their age, both orally and mentally. Work in books shows that the most able would achieve even higher standards if presented with tasks similar to those given to some Year 3 pupils, especially at the end of the school year. Present standards in Year 6 are likely to be above those expected nationally. This slight reduction, compared to recent years, is explained by the rise in the number of pupils who have special educational needs. Also by a dramatic increase in the numbers who have transferred from other schools in the period since their last national tests.

47 Whole-school planning and delivery is very effectively based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been instrumental in ensuring consistency in approach to teaching and learning since the last inspection. Standards of teaching observed are very good overall. The planning for all lessons is excellent because it identifies the needs of all pupils very carefully. This is helped by knowledgeable teaching assistants, who play a significant role in the learning of pupils of all abilities. In the very best lessons pupils work at a very brisk pace and respond very well to their teacher's very high expectations and use of resources, such as an interactive whiteboard, to give visual stimulus. In other lessons the pace of learning is less rigorous. At certain times the volunteer helpers in lessons were not sufficiently challenging their groups and the pace of working was not matching the work of other groups. Similarly, in some lessons the mental starters are not always speedy and challenging enough. At times over-long teacher explanations consolidate previous learning, for example in naming properties of shapes, and miss opportunities to extend thinking further. These explanations are much more efficient in the lessons that use interactive whiteboards.

48 Pupils' achievement in the subject is significantly enhanced by the acquisition of 'key words' and technical vocabulary. Teachers are ensuring that discussions using these words, especially to explain patterns and theories, are a strong feature of lessons. Year 5 pupils use logical descriptions when decoding and encoding digital patterns and Year 1 pupils make very good progress for their age in working with money 'totals' and 'change.' The very good achievement of these pupils is reflected in the way teachers provide tasks that require understanding of number in a wide range of practical contexts, ostensibly by using very good problem solving strategies. This was seen in Year 6 classes where pupils investigated the relationships between the diameter and circumferences of circles and the patterns shown in growing polygons.

49 The subject has been very well led since the last inspection by a teacher who has recently left for promotion to a deputy headship. It is provisionally being co-ordinated by the Headteacher who is continuing the very good procedures to track the progress pupils make as they move through the school and to make changes to provision when deemed necessary. Examples of these processes are clearly evident in the changes made to the present Year 6 programme, adapted to meet the special educational needs of a significant number of pupils. The processes to evaluate the provision for mathematics are excellent. Since the last inspection regular audits have effectively monitored all aspects of provision. Most recently there has been a focus on practical and investigative problem solving strategies and this was a very strong feature of the work observed in lessons and in all books. Pupils' work is characterised by well-presented and logically explained answers in all aspects of their work. The marking of this work is outstanding. Clear targets are set by the teachers as a result of the care taken to record and value previous learning. Pupils are very well aware of their own achievements and this is helping them to focus on the next stages in learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50 Pupils make very good use of their numeracy skills in their science studies. As their experimental skills are developed, as they move through the school, so their measuring and recording skills become more sophisticated. The emphasis placed on ICT in the school is further developing numeracy skills, especially with the use of graphical representation and interpretation.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of specialist teachers is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievements, particularly in Years 2 and 6.
- The curriculum is very well led and managed because the themes are co-ordinated very well to ensure all pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant scientific curriculum.
- Teachers strike a good balance between teaching scientific facts and developing pupils' skills in investigating.

Commentary

51 Pupils achieve very well in science. Standards have remained consistently high over a number of years and are better than they were at the last inspection, when they were average. Pupils in the present Year 6 are on course to match these well above average results. One reason for the high standards in Year 6 is the way the knowledgeable specialist teachers make science interesting through a wide range of practical activities. An example was seen in a very good Year 6 lesson identifying the various parts of a range of plants and flowers. These were dissected by the pupils, who then used lenses and charts to identify different parts such as the stamen, stigma, style ovary and petal. The very clear introduction and the use of scientific language in the question and answer session at the end of the lesson reinforced pupils' learning very well. Standards in Year 2 are significantly higher than those assessed by the school in 2004, when pupils' results were below those expected for their age. The main reasons for this improvement are the way the co-ordinator has improved the planning of the curriculum and the use of specialist teachers in the subject. Pupils in Year 2 are now reaching standards that are above those expected for their age. All pupils achieve well because they enjoy good, enthusiastic teaching that takes account of individual needs. Consequently, they listen carefully, get involved and work hard.

52 Another reason for the high standards is the very effective leadership and management of the subject. The whole curriculum is planned by the co-ordinator with a strong emphasis on using the whole school environment as a stimulus and practical investigations. Planning links very closely to assessments so that teachers know how well their pupils are achieving and they then plan their own lessons taking account of the standards reached by individuals in their class. For example, Year 2 pupils plant seeds and look after sunflowers and learn the needs and requirements for plants to grow healthily. This work on seeds was developed and extended in a lesson when the teacher used a great variety of fruits that pupils dissected to find the seeds. When comparing one fruit with another they consolidated their understanding of the wide range of seeds to be found in nature. One group reacted with great excitement when a melon was opened and the vast array of seeds was on view. The school focus on the environment and the excellent outdoor facilities both in the grounds and the nature trail make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding in science. The 'Eco Committee' spoke very proudly of the way the area is used by pupils throughout the school in their science work. For example, they have explored different habitats for mini-beasts, undertaken stream dipping and repaired a bank of the stream because of erosion. The respect for the environment shown by teachers and pupils has resulted in a number of awards in Environmental Education including the award of a fourth 'Eco Flag'. The Eco co-ordinator is very well organised and ensures these high standards are maintained. The school shared these practices and achievements with other schools through its pioneering 'Beacon' work.

53 Lessons are always well prepared and teachers keep things bubbling along with clear explanations and good questions. They have very good relationships with pupils and make sure all are involved. As a result, pupils are well behaved, busy and learn to think for themselves. Work is carefully matched to pupils' ability so that all get the most from lessons. For example, the higher attaining pupils are often challenged by harder questions, or more open ended tasks. Teachers keep careful records to help plan for this. The best marking asks pupils to think more deeply. However, although the marking of pupils' work is always supportive, it does not often set targets for what pupils need to do next to improve or extend their work. Pupils make very good progress in the skills of investigating, as well as in understanding and remembering scientific facts. Teachers often teach the two things alongside each other. Pupils are given plenty of chances to find things out for themselves, but teachers do not stand back when some knowledge would help. At the end of the task to explain how the flowers being studied were pollinated, pupils extended their knowledge by using reference books or computers to find out how other plants are pollinated. By Year 6, pupils have a broad range of knowledge about science. This includes their own research from books and the Internet. Teachers in this final year then pull it all together very well, using a thorough revision programme. Teachers encourage pupils to become independent and responsible investigators. For example, pupils record in their own words and are expected to make decisions about the best way to present their results. Most do this well, often using good diagrams, graphs and tables.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning, means that pupils' skills and understanding have improved rapidly.
- There is a high expectation for pupils to use computers to research information on the Internet and to use it to support their work in a wide range of other subjects.

Commentary

54 Pupils achieve well, they now use computers effectively in the computer suite because they have regular sessions to develop their skills. Pupils' attainment by Year 2 is in line with the level expected for their age and by Year 6 it is above the expected level. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their knowledge and skills when they work on computers. Teaching and learning are good and many pupils use computers confidently. This has a significant impact on pupils' achievements, attainment and attitudes in lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class improved their knowledge and understanding of framing accurate questions when completing research into Viking Boats on the Internet. They confidently extended their work by selecting written descriptions and suitable pictures to copy and paste into their own work. They confidently used the facilities to move objects and writing around the screen as they experimented with the layout.

55 Pupils in Year 2 explain how they save their work and how to print the finished product. In the computer suite, Year 6 pupils use multi-media presentations in their studies and they use hyper links to move quickly to other pages. In some subjects, there is good use of ICT to enhance pupils' work. For example, pupils in Year 5 use a spreadsheet to plan a party for twenty five people, they use a price list of various items and enter the correct formula so that the computer provides them with the cost of their selections. In this lesson, pupils worked very well co-operatively and relationships were very good as they shared putting in the data and discussed which items to have on the menu for their party. Pupils have very good attitudes when using computers and they concentrate on their tasks very well. Year 2 pupils discussed their use of computers and showed how they used them to enhance their mathematical knowledge when making graphs and pie charts of their favourite foods. Older pupils are confident using ICT and explain how to enlarge an imported picture and to move it around the screen to improve the visual effect of their work. All teachers challenge pupils very well by reminding them to think about what they are trying to achieve

when using computers. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils used a music program to support their understanding of sounds and harmony as they selected their own sounds and placed them in a certain order on the screen. After listening to their own compositions, pupils altered the sequence to compare the effectiveness of their efforts.

56 Improvement since the previous inspection is good and pupils in all years now work at an improved level. This is mainly due to good leadership and management by the co-ordinator who ensures there is clear guidance for the subject that teachers follow and very good teaching by staff, particularly for older pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57 The school uses the dedicated computer suite and classroom computers effectively to promote learning across other subjects. For example, pupils use graphs and floor robots to support work in mathematics by putting in distance and turns to make the robot follow a set path. The displays of pupils' work around the school show the frequent use of ICT to enhance their work in English with stories and newspaper articles typed in a variety of styles and colours and with suitable pictures pasted on to the page. Pupils often use ICT for research in history and geography and for design in art and design and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

58 Not enough teaching was seen in history and geography for a firm judgement to be given in these subjects. However, teachers' planning was scrutinised, pupils' work sampled and inspectors talked with pupils.

59 Pupils enjoy a rich, interesting and challenging curriculum in **geography** and pupils of all abilities rise to this challenge successfully. They systematically develop a detailed body of knowledge about the world, including their own local environment. Pupils are taught the specific skills and language of geography from an early age. For example, younger pupils develop their mapping skills when they study their local village at first hand and identify the main physical and human features. They begin to contrast their own local environment with that of children in other countries. This contributes very well to their social, moral and cultural development. Pupils use their English skills very well as when they write summaries or discuss the moral aspects of the world banana trade. Older pupils undertake a comprehensive series of field exercises. They demonstrate their skill in using ICT to produce attractive individual booklets when studying settlements. Teachers emphasise the need for quality work in their marking and the pupils respond by presenting their work neatly, accurately and with well-deserved pride. Since the last inspection, very good planning and assessment procedures, including portfolios of work, have been introduced. These help to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject is wide-ranging and relevant.

60 **History** presents a similar picture to geography. Very good use is made of first-hand learning during visits. Younger pupils visit the Teddy Bear Museum to study the history of toys and older pupils visit places such as the Yorvik Centre when studying the Vikings. Additionally, visitors demonstrate the principles of archaeology, demonstrate how Tudor instruments were played or discuss their real-life experiences during World War II. Learning resources are comprehensive and the impact of their use is evident in pupils' books. Samples of pupils' work show a consistent emphasis on high standards of content and presentation. High quality marking of work rewards pupils' efforts and shows them how to take the next steps. Pupils start using different forms of evidence from an early age and older pupils work confidently and independently to synthesise information, including that gained from examining artefacts. All pupils develop a vocabulary of historical terms and use this well when writing interesting accounts. They develop a strong sense of chronology from an early age by using time lines.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

61 In **music**, it is clear from discussions with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of the music file that the subject has a high profile in the school. In assemblies, pupils sing very enthusiastically and the performance of pupils in one assembly celebrated the traditions of other cultures through both dance and music. A group of pupils singing a two-part production called 'war and peace' expressed the feelings of anger and quiet very well. The singing of a variety of hymns is planned for the assemblies. For example, a combined Foundation Stage and Year 1 celebration session was very successful when pupils sang well known hymns such as 'Jesus Loves Me' with great enthusiasm. Occasionally music is used to support other subjects, for example, in a Year 3 lesson using computers, pupils created their own effective compositions using the sounds and notes in the programme. The choir is taught by an expert in music and pupils sang very well as they quickly mastered a new song and performed it in three different parts.

62 There is a range of **design and technology** projects taking place each year. These include a good balance between making models and food technology. Pupils understand and use the design, make and evaluate processes in designs for playgrounds, building houses, pneumatics, cams and pulleys and by creating circuits. They use their good art and design skills to draw sketches and give explanations and considered evaluations of how successful their work has been and areas for improvement. Year 6 pupils use ICT to research the history of the Ferris wheel as part of their work on fairgrounds. The evidence shows good understanding of how pulleys can be used to create different movement and different speeds, but were built using a given kit rather than using their own ideas. The co-ordinator has carefully considered the individual needs of teachers to provide appropriate training. He also gives older pupils very good opportunities to develop real life skills, working with large tools as they create steps, paths and bridges in the school nature reserve.

63 The school has very recently identified the need to update the schemes of work for some areas of **physical education** to ensure better continuity in learning from year to year. A project being presently undertaken with the local sports college is intended to achieve this aim and also to have an impact on updating teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. It also intends to widen the programme for physical education and to help colleagues' planning for the subject. The present use of the local authority sports' coaches is having a beneficial impact on providing the necessary breadth and relevance of activities. With the help of school staff they also contribute to a good range of extra activities and competitive games to enhance learning further. Evidence provided by the school shows pupils involved in a wide range of dance activities. Some of these are presented as part of 'Arts Week' and link very well with musical and literature themes.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers expect pupils to use sketchbooks to improve their creativeness and these are used well.
- There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of skills.
- Visiting artists contribute significantly during Art weeks to the standards pupils attain.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their painting skills.
- Links with local secondary schools to extend pupils' work in art and design are not yet in place.

Commentary

64 Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Standards reached by pupils are above expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. The analysis of sketchbooks shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop a good range of art and design skills. In Year 2, they explore the tones and textures created by using a range of different pencils. Tone and texture was also explored well in a very good Year 2 lesson. The very enthusiastic teaching really encourages

pupils to layer different shades of one colour of paper to create a pattern. They then very carefully add contrasting colours to make their imaginary animal. Their behaviour is very good and they work with great care for a good period of time. The two teachers in this lesson gave very good support and encouragement and this enabled pupils to extend their art and design skills and their knowledge of a range of materials well. Pupils mix paint and understand primary and secondary colours. Interesting patterns are achieved when they design and make their own printing blocks. This work is linked well to their learning about other cultures as they observe Mendhi patterns and create their own.

65 Both the portfolio of work and sketchbooks show that there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of skills. The theme for all classes during the inspection was collage and pupils in Year 4 use their sketch books well to develop good pencil drawings of imaginary insects as the basis for their finished collage. These pupils show very imaginative use of materials as they carefully bend and stick perforated metal foil to create the body. The good selection of materials available encourages them to look at different shades of one colour or to use a complete contrast to draw attention to various parts of the insect. Year 5 pupils extend these skills further by creating a beach scene. The very good input by a parent really challenges pupils to think about how they can represent the spray of the waves when selecting materials. Feathers are used very effectively and pupils are encouraged to explore their sense of touch well as they use these materials.

66 Pupils have good opportunities to work with many different artists, both in school and at the local art gallery. The school makes good use of the many workshops available at the gallery and all pupils visit at least once a year. Artists work in school during annual Arts weeks and this gives pupils good opportunities to work on a larger scale. Photographic evidence shows younger pupils enjoying squirting paint onto large sheets and creating patterns in the paint using toys with wheels, their fingers and their feet. Older pupils work well with clay to create very pleasing large coil pots decorated with relief decoration of animals. These are proudly used to hold large plants, included in the very attractive displays on the main school corridor. These displays have a significant impact on both pupils and adults as one enters the school. Year 6 pupils feel that 'they learn a lot of skills in art and design' and really enjoy their visits to the local gallery particularly when working with collectable materials to create people in different poses.

67 Although the teaching of painting skills throughout the school is good, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use paint on a regular basis. Watercolours are used in some classes, for example, small flower paintings linked to pupils' work in science, but opportunities to work creatively and express their own ideas and emotions are limited.

68 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The two very enthusiastic co-ordinators have devised a new scheme of work and the thorough planning they produce supports teachers well. Assessment is in place and used consistently across the school. One of the co-ordinators shares her expertise on the use of sketchbooks and levelling work well by leading training at Tameside Art Network meetings. Links with local secondary schools and the technology college are not yet in place to extend pupils' access to a still broader experience in this subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69 Not enough teaching was seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) for a firm judgement to be given in this subject. However, teachers' planning was scrutinised and pupils' work sampled.

70 The school is placing considerable emphasis on establishing a **PSHCE** programme firmly based on the individual needs of its pupils. As well as discrete allocations on weekly timetables, including circle time for younger pupils, PSHCE is integrated well into other subjects and developed through well-planned learning activities and assemblies that encourage independence and responsibilities for all ages. Younger children in the Foundation Stage respond willingly to interesting activities that make very good contributions in developing their independence and responsibility. The school and Eco Councils are regarded as an important element of the work and both are co-ordinated well by the school. Regular meetings and council functions are helping pupils to increase their

confidence and self-esteem as they learn to work harmoniously with each other and with other adults. Integral to the curriculum for PSHCE is the work of the school towards the 'Healthy Award Schemes,' for which it has achieved stage 1, and is working towards stage 2. Aspects of the scheme are linked well to other areas of learning sex and relationship education and drug education and the 'Healthy Initiative Scheme', as well as the very good development of pupils' personal and social skills through circle time activities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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