

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105241

Headteacher: Mr W T Heaton

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 25 – 27 April 2005

Inspection number: 267802

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: 5 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 192

School address: Church Road
Kearsley
Bolton
Lancashire
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Telephone number: 01204 333101
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr V Gethin
Date of previous inspection: 26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school in Kearsley near Bolton. It is an average size school and currently 192 pupils are taught in seven classes. The school is an old Victorian building on two floors and a strategy is in place to cater for wheelchair access. Outside space is limited especially for the youngest children. Attainment on entry is below average. The area the school serves is socially and economically less advantaged than the national picture. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An above average number of pupils have special educational needs and five of these have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. Difficulties include moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioral difficulties. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual time is above average. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and all speak English confidently. Over the last four years the school has had considerable staffing difficulties with change of teachers and long term absences. This has now stabilised.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
32831	Mr J T Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Most pupils attain at least average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and there are many examples of good teaching particularly among the younger children and those in Years 5 and 6 and achievement accelerates as pupils get older. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good in the reception class and children make a good start to their school lives.
- Standards are below average in reading, mathematics and science in Year 2 because teachers do not use assessment effectively to ensure work is challenging the higher attaining pupils who as a result are underachieving.
- The teaching of writing in the infants is unsatisfactory and standards are well below average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress to reach the targets set for them.
- Governors ensure statutory requirements are met but are not sufficiently involved in making decisions about future developments or in calling the school to account for its performance.
- Moral and social development are good and most pupils behave well although a small core of pupils harass others and do not respond well to the school's efforts. Insufficient attention is given to teaching pupils about life in a multi-cultural society.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection. The rate of progress has been hampered by several staffing difficulties which led to a dip in standards from which the school is now starting to emerge. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much better and standards in English have improved in the juniors. The progress of higher attaining pupils in the infants remains a weakness. New planning has led to improvements in art and design and music. The school no longer has mixed age classes. Subject co-ordinators have extended their monitoring role and now are more informed although more remains to be done in using this information. Statutory requirements are now met. Multi-cultural development still needs attention.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E*	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	D	C
Science	E	E	D	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average E-very low
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**.

From a below average starting point achievement is good in the Foundation Stage¹ and children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. The good progress in their personal and social skills enables them to get off to a good start to their school life.

Results of national tests in Year 2 dipped considerably in 2004 and were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The main reason for this dip was the low number of pupils reaching above average levels. Current Year 2 pupils had a difficult introduction to school with many staff changes. As a result, they did not reach the level expected for their age as they

¹ The Foundation Stage starts when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class.

started in Year 1. Taking this into consideration their achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall but higher attaining pupils continue to underachieve. This is holding down overall standards which are below average in reading, mathematics and science. Writing is not taught effectively and so underachievement is more widespread and standards are well below average.

Test results in Year 6 last year showed that in response to better assessment and challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 standards were starting to rise. Compared with similar schools, pupils were doing as well as expected in mathematics and science although English was a weakness because few pupils reached above average levels. Current standards show continuing improvements and standards are now average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils made slow progress in Year 3 and 4 because of staffing disturbances and they did not reach their predicted targets. Progress accelerated in Years 5 and 6 and overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach the targets set for them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. In lessons behaviour is often good and pupils try hard. A small core of pupils harass others and do not adhere to the school's policy on bullying. Insufficient attention is given to teaching pupils about life in a multi-ethnic society. Attendance dipped last year but is now average which is usual for the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. A considerable amount of teaching seen was good although a small amount in the infants was unsatisfactory. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage is a result of the teachers' knowledge of the needs of this age range and the emphasis on learning through practical activities. This ensures learning is enjoyable. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is not sufficiently challenging and the teaching of writing is unsatisfactory. Teachers give too much attention to completing a task rather than focusing on what pupils are to learn. Very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is characterised by very high aspirations of academic and personal standards. As a result, pupils mature, work hard and much is achieved in these classes. Throughout the school, staff encourage pupils to try and behave well. Consequently, in most lessons pupils settle quickly and work hard. Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to participate fully in lessons. Assessment is satisfactory but not all teachers make full use of assessment information. As a result, some teaching seen in the infants was unsatisfactory because tasks did not match pupils' ability. The curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of visits and visitors make learning more exciting. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall with good opportunity to play sport. Overall, accommodation and resources are good. Close links with the community especially the church enrich the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management overall are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and is improving the school's procedures to examine its own practice and to respond more effectively to its findings. Subject leaders now focus more on what needs to be done to raise standards and the impact of this can be seen in the juniors. Governance is unsatisfactory. Although governors fulfil their statutory duties they are not well enough informed to hold the school to account, nor are they sufficiently involved in planning for improvement in the overall quality of education. The overall effect of management is satisfactory and enables the school to run smoothly.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall parents and pupils have satisfactory views of the school. Many are happy and especially pleased with the teaching. However, there are concerns about harassment and behaviour. Although the school has clear procedures to deal with this it remains a concern noted by the inspectors because of a small core of pupils who choose not to conform especially at lunch or break time.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- make more use of assessment to ensure all lessons are challenging and so improve the progress of higher attaining pupils in the infants in reading, mathematics and science;
- raise standards in writing in the infants by improving the quality of teaching;
- strengthen the role of the governors;
- extend opportunities to learn about life in a multi-cultural society and find even more ways to instill in a small core of pupils the importance of caring for each other.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Currently, standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education in all areas of learning.²
- Higher attaining pupils do not make enough progress in Years 1 and 2.
- Writing is not taught well in the infants and standards are well below average in Year 2.
- Challenging teaching in Year 5 and 6 accelerates learning and the achievement of the older pupils.
- The good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.

Commentary

1. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below average. Achievement is good in the reception class because of effective teaching and a rich curriculum. As a result, by the end of the Foundation Stage many have reached the early learning goals³ expected for their age. The school places considerable emphasis on developing children's self-confidence so that most enjoy learning and are well prepared to start in Year 1.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁴ in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.0 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.3 (13.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.4 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The trend in the results of national tests has been below the national picture in Year 2 and dropped significantly last year being well below the average of all schools and of schools with a similar intake. Staffing disturbances contributed to some of this under achievement as did an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. More stability in the teaching in Year 2 has led to some improvement although standards remain below average in reading, mathematics and science. These pupils had several different teachers during their time in the Foundation Stage and as a

² Areas of learning include communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

³ Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

⁴ The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by all pupils in another similar school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a level 1, 15 points for a level 2 and 21 points for a level 3. The average score is calculated by adding up all of the points and then dividing by the number of pupils who were tested.

result did not reach the level expected by the time they started in Year 1. Taking into consideration this below average starting point overall achievement is satisfactory. However, a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils is at the

heart of the below average standards and these pupils are underachieving. Standards in writing are well below average and underachievement is more widespread because the teaching is unsatisfactory with a lack of clarity about the purpose of tasks and how these will lead to an improvement in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (22.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.9 (24.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.2 (26.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. When analysing the results of national tests in Year 6 the above average number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times must be taken into consideration. The school has tended to lose the pupils who did well in their national tests in Year 2 as parents have moved out of the area. Another contributory factor to last year's results was that Year 6 was especially large (35 pupils) and also had a high number of pupils with special educational needs. However, it must be noted that although the overall trend in results over the last four years has been below the national trend results showed an upturn last year. This has been achieved with more stability in staffing and the strong team of teachers now in the juniors. Assessment procedures are better and staff track individual progress and spot those needing additional help. The decline in standards has been stopped although overall test results last year remained well below the national average in English and below average in mathematics and science. However, when compared with similar schools standards were average in mathematics and science suggesting progress had been satisfactory in these subjects. Standards in English remained below average because of the few pupils working at above average levels. Current standards indicate the school has successfully built upon the improving picture and standards in Year 6 are now average in English, mathematics and science. After a slow start in Years 3 and 4 when these pupils failed to reach their predicted targets, achievement has accelerated in Years 5 and 6 and overall achievement is satisfactory. Additional booster classes are successfully enabling more to reach the level expected for their age and are having some success in pushing more on to reach above average levels although in science more could be working at this level.
4. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The school has a high number of experienced support staff who help in class and in additional small group activities that enable these pupils to make good progress. Throughout the school, there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. No child is learning through English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully included and make the same progress as their peers. Academically gifted pupils are underachieving in the infants because of the lack of focus on challenge. Their needs are met in the juniors and they especially make good progress in Year 5 and 6 as teaching becomes more demanding.
5. Evidence from the examination of pupils' work in information and communication technology (ICT) indicates that standards are average in Years 2 and 6 and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is now good because the school has improved resources and teachers make effective use of the ICT suite and computers in class.

6. The previous inspection identified a weakness in music and art and design in the infants. More detailed planning is in place and although limited teaching was seen during the inspection the focus on creativity has improved and the work seen was at the level expected for this age. Although other subjects were not a focus for the inspection an overview of standards does not identify any subjects falling below average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Their personal development is satisfactory, with strengths in moral and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Attendance was well below average last year but has improved so far this year and is closer to average.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good but is unsatisfactory by a small minority, particularly at playtimes.
- The school successfully gives the vast majority of pupils a clear sense of right and wrong and the benefits of considering the needs of others.
- Cultural development, particularly knowledge of minority ethnic cultures, is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.7
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.

7. Although the overall attendance was well below the national average last year, there has been a substantial improvement and it is average so far this year which is the usual picture for the school. Unauthorised absence is average. The school rewards pupils who have good attendance and the education welfare officer assists in contacting parents of pupils who have too much absence or who are regularly late. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring attendance and ensuring that they know which pupils are in school.
8. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are satisfactory. However, parents and pupils expressed a concern about harassment. This is reflected in their responses to the questionnaires completed for the inspection. Conversations with older pupils confirmed that a small but significant group of pupils cause trouble from time to time and this worries them and occasionally spoils their enjoyment of school. Although no incidents were observed directly during the inspection, staff were seen reprimanding and counselling pupils in their aftermath. The school is very aware of this problem and has taken many steps to try and eliminate these problems. Over the last two years the school has taken action by excluding several pupils for poor behaviour and physically hurting other pupils. Other actions to alleviate the problem include a new behaviour policy with strict and clearly understood sanctions, discussions with parents and the appointment of pupil mediators to try and defuse minor incidents before they escalate.
9. It is important to note that in general the school is orderly and pupils well behaved. In assemblies behaviour is often exemplary. Pupils enter assemblies with respect and sit quietly giving close attention to the story. They participate enthusiastically in the singing and a real sense of community is developed. In most lessons pupils are attentive and keen to answer the teacher's questions. This is particularly strong at

the upper end of the school. Most pupils start work quickly when asked and the higher attaining pupils persevere when they encounter problems and present their work well. However, some pupils have short attention spans and are easily distracted, particularly when asked to record answers or take the task beyond what is already provided by the teacher.

10. Assemblies comply with requirement to have a daily act of worship, and prayers are said at the end of the day. Close relationships with the church are very evident in the life of the school. Spirituality is promoted sensitively in assemblies with prayers, reflection and a religious focal point to the occasion. In the broader sense, however, spiritual development is only satisfactory, with insufficient examples of pupils having the opportunity to develop personal inner strength and self-respect for their own views and to marvel at the nature of their world. Although religious education was not inspected as a subject, pupils spoken to seemed to have little knowledge of the religions of others, although their knowledge of Christianity is good.
11. Most pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong. Moral development is good and well fostered by the school in assemblies and personal and social education lessons. Pupils collaborate over the setting of rules, which the vast majority accept. This makes them even more aggrieved that there is a small minority who do not abide by them. The school council is relatively new and has begun to bring an element of consultation and awareness of participation to pupils but as yet is insufficiently developed. Generally social development is good with most pupils able to work harmoniously together. The school works hard to achieve this despite the failings of a few. Pupils organise events to raise money for charities and collect shoeboxes with presents for less fortunate children at Christmas. The older pupils are particularly eager to take on responsibilities around the school, such as those of 'playground pals' and as mediators.
12. At the time of the previous inspection there was insufficient awareness amongst pupils of the other cultures of many Britons who are not represented in their largely white community. This is still the case and there is little emphasis on multi-cultural aspects of life in Britain in the teaching, resources and displays around the school. Pupils are given a better insight into their own culture, particularly in literature, when following a theatre visit older pupils study Shakespeare with enthusiasm. There is little art linked to well known artists displayed around the school, however, and although pupils sing well, their knowledge of famous composers and artists is very uncertain.

Exclusions

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	149	3	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	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 overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory with a good range of visits and sporting activities. The attention given to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Links with the community are good and with other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. These are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 and are satisfactory overall in other years. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory with some useful information now available to guide teachers' planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on practical experiences and this is a significant factor in children's good achievement.
- Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have high expectations of pupils and this increases the rate of learning of the older pupils.
- The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers make good use of resources, are encouraging and have high expectations of behaviour so that lessons run smoothly.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support and this is beneficial for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively when setting work and in Year 1 and 2 especially this leads to a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	3 (9 %)	15 (45 %)	13 (39 %)	2 (6 %)	0 (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.

13. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. All staff have a good understanding of the needs of these children. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught imaginatively through games and rhymes and these skills stand children in good stead when they move to Year 1. Integral to most activities is the effective development of social skills although occasionally insufficient opportunity is available for children to choose their own activities and so they are not always confident to work independently. A positive feature of the teaching is the focus on first-hand experiences to stimulate the children's curiosity and enliven their learning. Children enjoy school and find learning fun.
14. The best teaching seen during the inspection was in Years 5 and 6 where teaching was often very good. Teachers share their enthusiasm with pupils who are generally eager learners. They have high aspirations for them and constantly push them on to achieve higher standards. The lively pace of lessons keeps pupils on their toes and there is always a good response to questions. This challenge effectively leads to pupils using and applying their skills and knowledge and discussions show a desire to improve.
15. A positive feature in many lessons throughout the school is the effective use of resources to make lessons more interesting. The use of ICT, especially the interactive white board, instantly captures pupils' interest in the opening to lessons as well as extending their ICT skills. Similar strengths include the high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff make good use of the school's reward system and this, plus

encouragement based on the often warm relationships between staff and pupils, leads to pupils learning in an orderly atmosphere.

16. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and so they achieve well. Teachers, skilled support teachers and classroom assistants work as effective teams to target substantial help and support for individuals in the classroom and in small groups. These staff

collaborate to draw up individual educational plans for all pupils on the special educational needs register. These are detailed and identify clear targets which staff refer to when planning for these pupils. When one target is reached another is set which leads to effective learning.

17. English was a weakness in the previous inspection and the school has implemented several changes to raise standards. The focus on speaking and listening has led to more imaginative use of vocabulary and this has improved pupils' skills of writing creatively in the juniors. However, this success is less evident in the infants and the teaching of writing in these classes is unsatisfactory. In the lessons seen teachers were insecure when demonstrating the skills of writing and some advice was confusing and did not lead to effective learning. A weakness, also seen in other classes, is the emphasis placed on the completion of a task rather than on the extension of pupils' learning. For example, in Year 2 the pupils enjoyed changing full stops to commas but had little, if any, understanding of the purpose of commas or how to use them in their own writing.
18. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory with some good features. A manageable number of tests and informal assessments are used which provide the school with enough information to track pupils' progress as they move from class to class. Teachers are now using this information to select pupils for additional support. This good practice has been effective in boosting the pupils in Year 6 to enable them to reach and in some cases exceed the level expected for their age. A weakness in the use of assessment is in keeping alert to pupils' on-going achievement and adjusting work accordingly. This is done well in a few classes but is unsatisfactory in the infants and leads to a lack of challenging activities for the higher attaining pupils who are consequently underachieving. For example, worksheets are used which are not matched to the differing abilities of pupils and lead to some pupils not making best use of their time to extend their knowledge and skills.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory. Provision of resources including staffing is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school effectively promotes ICT in other subjects.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- In the Foundation Stage, there is an imbalance between opportunities for independent learning and teacher directed activities and the facilities for outdoor play are limited.
- The match of support staff to the curriculum is very good.
- The school has a good number of sports teams and learning is enhanced through a good range of visits and visitors.

Commentary

19. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects. Whole school planning has been improved since the previous inspection and the school no longer has mixed age classes. In all subjects, suitable planning guidelines, based on national guidance, provide effectively for the continuous development of skills and knowledge across the school.

20. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are firmly established. Reading sessions outside literacy lessons support learning successfully. Booster classes in English, mathematics and science provide good consolidation of the curriculum in Year 6. However, the curriculum in these subjects does not completely meet the needs of higher attainers in Years 1 and 2 and this results in some underachievement. The ICT curriculum is a strength

and includes well developed links with other subjects which help consolidate learning in English, mathematics and science as well as aiding research in, for instance, geography and history. Imaginative uses of programs in art and design, when Year 2 pupils work on screen in the style of famous artists, bring a further dimension to the curriculum.

21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Records of individual needs are well maintained and the school seeks additional advice from professionals when needed. These pupils often benefit from additional support either in class, in a small group or individually if appropriate. Occasionally, pupils miss elements of other lessons for additional support but this is kept to a minimum.
22. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is suitably based on the six national areas of learning and meets children's needs satisfactorily. Well planned practical activities are lively and interesting but opportunities for independent learning are not well developed. Reception children generally reach the expected standards and so are well prepared for entry into the infants.
23. The high staffing levels, and the quality and quantity of resources, support the curriculum effectively. The school has a good number of teaching staff. The deputy headteacher does not have a full time teaching commitment and along with several support teachers, provides additional help for staff by small group teaching and taking lessons for teachers. This has enabled the school to put into place the government's initiative to ensure teachers have time to plan and monitor during the school day. The very good number of teaching assistants supports the curriculum very well especially in providing help for lower attainers as well as those with special educational needs. The accommodation is spacious but outside playground areas are not attractive as a learning environment. This hampers the curriculum for Foundation Stage children. Access to the first floor would be difficult for pupils with mobility problems but the school has plans to overcome this if the need arises. Information and communication technology resources are particularly good with smart boards used in most classes and good facilities in the computer suite. Pupils say they enjoy selecting a story book from the library but it is not well stocked with non-fiction books, including multi-cultural texts, and some are old and need replacing.
24. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory although the range is somewhat limited to sport and music. Pupils are proud to represent the school in football, netball, rounders and athletics as well as swimming. There is a good take up of the coaching provided by a local football club. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument or to join the choir. Opportunities to extend skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as art, crafts and drama, are limited. The curriculum, particularly in history and geography is enhanced by well organised visits. A wide range of visitors successfully extend the curriculum beyond school by sharing their expertise.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring pupils health, welfare and safety are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory academic and pastoral guidance and support. Pupil involvement in the work and development of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Staff check the daily safety of pupils closely although more formal assessments are not carried out with sufficient regularity.
- The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs although the needs of the academically gifted are not as well met.

- Pupils in Year 6 have individual targets which enable them to be more involved in their learning but this good practice is not as effective in other years.
- The school provides additional advice, often including professional advice, to help pupils overcome their personal difficulties.
- The school has initiated several new ideas to include pupils more in the organisation of the school.

Commentary

25. The school has satisfactory health and safety procedures for assessing risks associated with the premises and these are generally secure. However, although members of staff, such as the caretaker are vigilant on a day-to-day basis, formal assessment by governors is too infrequent, particularly given the age and layout of a building with so many stairs. Safety issues are discussed at governors' meetings. Equipment is inspected regularly and fire protection has been well assessed and recently brought up to standard. Risks are assessed for major off-site activities but this has yet to be extended to activities within school. Child protection procedures are sound and the support given by outside agencies is seen as good by the school. The designated teacher's training is good, but staff need to have more written guidance on procedures to be followed and signs to look for. Pupils who have accidents at school are well cared for by staff.
26. The midday supervisory staff are trained in general supervision and play management but lack specific instruction on behaviour management, which is a clear need given the problems caused by a few pupils. In addition, there are occasions when there are insufficient staff on duty in the junior yard.
27. Staff know the pupils well and pass on information as required to the next class at the end of the year. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. They are assessed and have education plans, which are tailored to their individual needs. Those pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems also receive specialist individual counselling and are given target sheets, which give them the chance to earn rewards for achievable improvements in behaviour. Those who have been excluded are given counselling to reintegrate them into the school. Unfortunately these efforts are not always successful and a few pupils do not respond appropriately. Classroom assistants are supportive of those pupils with special educational needs. The use of assessment to set individual pupils targets so that they know what to do to improve is well established in English and mathematics in Year 6 and is an effective tool for learning and pupils know how to improve. Targets are on display in other classes but as yet are not making as much impact on learning as in Year 6.
28. The school has begun to consult pupils about their wishes on specific issues such as playtime games and has responded to those views. It has also sought more general opinions about how they perceive school but has not fed back the results of those surveys, which lessens the sense of the pupils having a meaningful voice. In its endeavours to improve behaviour and social development, the school has appointed peer mediators and playground pals. These pupils are available to help others at lunch and break time and this extends their relationship skills but it is too early to judge their effectiveness on improving behaviour. The school council has made a good start in involving pupils in making decisions about school life but as yet systems are not fully developed which would enable it to facilitate true dialogue between the pupils and the staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and good links with the community. Liaison with other schools provides satisfactory support for the education of the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents support the school but a small number raised concerns.
- Many parents help children by hearing them read at home but others do not take up the opportunity to be involved with their children's learning.
- The school has strong links with the community, particularly the church.

Commentary

29. Many parents expressed satisfaction with the education their children receive. However, parents at the meeting held before the inspection and in their responses to the questionnaire raised concerns including consultation with parents and about the behaviour of a few pupils and bullying. This was a concern of nearly a third of parents in their questionnaire which, however, was only returned by a quarter of parents. This paints a picture of a school where links with parents need to be strengthened. The school is aware of this tension and endeavours to keep parents in touch with what is happening in the school and to involve them more in their children's learning. However, not all parents respond positively to these initiatives.
30. Overall information to parents is satisfactory. Annual reports meet statutory requirements but are rather stilted and do not give targets for improvement in a way that is useful for parents to give support at home. Regular newsletters and information about what will be taught during the term are more useful to parents. Many teachers write to parents about what is happening in their class and most parents feel they can talk informally to staff if they have small problems but a few expressed concerns about lack of response. The school arranges regular formal meetings with teachers and parents find these useful. When their children start school, parents are given a sound introduction to what they will be doing and how they will be taught.
31. The school tries to involve parents more in their children's learning and many hear them read at home and this raises the children's enthusiasm for books. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept in touch with their children's support by signing a copy of their individual educational plans. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator has difficulty in getting all parents to fulfil this request. Similarly, parents do not always support the school by fulfilling their statutory duties regarding their children's attendance. The school has organised three sets of workshops for parents with Bolton College but these were not well attended.
32. The school has good relationships with the community it serves. The church is very supportive and is used by the school for a service once a week. The vicar is a governor, visits the school regularly and makes a positive contribution to religious education and personal development, as well as supporting mathematics. The building is used regularly for young people's organisations and as a meeting place for local groups. Members of the community visit the school to support various areas of the curriculum, such as the nurse for sex education and Bolton Wanderers coaching staff for sport. The school choir sings in the church and in old peoples' homes at Christmas. There are satisfactory links with other schools and these are growing, particularly the participation of the senior management team in the meetings organised by the local cluster of schools. This increases their awareness of developments in education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory. The effectiveness of management is satisfactory and the school runs smoothly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Partnership⁵ is effectively improving strategic planning.
- The management of special educational needs is good.
- Some staff carry too many management responsibilities and their plans to improve their subjects do not identify how actions are going to raise standards.
- Monitoring of teaching is improving practice in the juniors but has not been fully effective in the infants.
- Governors are not closely involved in decision-making and rely heavily on the headteacher for information.
- Money is spent prudently to meet identified needs.

Commentary

33. Leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher is satisfactory. They work together as a team and have jointly benefited from the school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Partnership. This has made them more aware of national initiatives and has brought a sharpened focus to the educational direction of the school. The headteacher and key staff are now working as a team with high aspirations for pupils. The effects of this have been demonstrated by the recent improvement in standards in Year 6 and in the overall quality of teaching.
34. The most obvious area of improvement has been in strategic planning. The current school development plan is a satisfactory guide to development and includes audits and action plans for all subjects. However, these action plans have weaknesses. Firstly, they are not firmly based on an analysis of assessment information and secondly the proposed actions do not make it clear *how* the intended improvement in standards will be brought about. These two weaknesses have become apparent to the staff over the last two years as they have taken part in the school's new approach to self-evaluation. This approach has included systematically monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life and has incorporated the opinions of parents and pupils. The school is now more forward-looking and self-critical. As a result, the school has a more informed picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders have been concentrating on these and their actions are far more effective than the school development plan would suggest. Although the school has a better idea of what requires attention its judgements about the school are not always accurate; sometimes they are too high and sometimes too low. This is caused by a lack of understanding about what is typical in the national picture. The sharing of experiences with other schools is helping the school to gain a more accurate picture of its current position.
35. The many staffing changes and employment of temporary staff has led to some staff carrying too many roles. For example, the subject leader for mathematics also has the responsibility of the co-ordination of ICT together with full-time class teaching. This is a big work load and not necessarily the best deployment of the workforce. Nevertheless, the overall leadership and management of subjects are satisfactory. Monitoring responsibilities have recently been increased as the school has implemented the requirement to provide staff with time to carry out these extra roles. In line with the focus on better self-evaluation this time has been used productively to

⁵ The Primary Leadership programme is made up of leadership teams in 25% of primary schools nationally. The purpose is to raise standards in English and mathematics and to improve the quality of leadership and management.

monitor teaching and review work. The effective use of the findings of these evaluations can be seen more in the juniors than the infants. For example, in mathematics the pupils are now following a consistent approach to setting out calculations and this is raising standards. The main weakness in the management of subjects is the use of monitoring

information to support teaching in the infants. Visits to other schools to observe good practice are arranged but have come too late for some pupils currently in Year 2. A success story in the school is the improvement in ICT. This has been brought about by effective management. The co-ordinator has improved resources, planning and training and is well informed about the next steps needed to build on these changes.

36. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management which ensure the requirements of the Code of Practice⁶ are fully met. The needs of these pupils are closely monitored and reviewed throughout the school. A wide range of strategies, such as booster sessions for specific groups of pupils, is employed to promote success and children benefit from the good links with outside agencies who provide specialist knowledge and assistance as appropriate. The school is committed to inclusion and provides places for pupils of all abilities knowing that this may prove difficult. The weakness in inclusion is related to the lack of sufficient attention to the higher attaining, including academically gifted, pupils in the infants.
37. The school has difficulty in recruiting governors and the weaknesses in their work identified at the previous inspection have largely continued. Governance of the school is therefore unsatisfactory. Whilst the governors are supportive of the school's aims, particularly its link with the church, they do not take a sufficiently close interest in its work to enable them to help drive the school forward from a position which, until recently, has been weak. For example, governors were invited to take part in the school's self-evaluation process but they did not feel sufficiently confident or motivated to accept. Governors have a basic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because these are explained to them, but they are unwilling to delve deeply and challenge the school about the results of national tests and tend to look for reasons outside school. They meet each term to discuss routine business and meet their statutory obligations with the advice of the headteacher and the local authority. However, they are far too reliant on that support rather than generating their own independent view. They do not have sufficient first hand knowledge, either through training or more frequent visits to see for themselves, to act as a true 'critical friend' of the school, particularly in educational matters.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	648,256.00	Balance from previous year	76,945.00
Total expenditure	567,460.00	Balance carried forward to the next	80,796.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,843.228		

38. Control of the school's finances is satisfactory but has been hampered by a change in the local authority ICT support, which has had some teething problems and is, as yet, not well understood by the school. Nevertheless, the school is able to set a balanced budget and model various alternatives. The current budget shows money is spent correctly to meet identified need. The large surplus from last year has been spent wisely to rectify longstanding deficiencies in the building. The school applies the principles of best value when making major spending decisions. The new self-evaluation process has resulted in a clearer understanding of setting priorities based

⁶ Special Educational Needs Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate support to further their learning and personal development.

on the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the school's policies and provision. When priorities have been identified, for example in building work, the school has good procedures for ensuring that the money is well spent. The additional spending on support staff is good value for money as it enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The good provision in the reception class identified in the previous inspection has been sustained. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally below that typical of this age group especially in early communication skills and mathematical development. Teaching and learning are good overall and this leads to good achievement. The children are on course to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class. Children with special educational needs benefit from additional help from adults and this enables them to play a full part in all activities and make good progress to reach the targets set for them. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum leader provides good leadership but her management of this important stage of education is not fully recognised by the school and is hampered by the lack of a delegated budget.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a happy, secure environment for learning.
- Relationships are good and children learn to get on well together.
- Opportunities for independent learning are limited.

Commentary

39. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Children are on course to reach the expected standard by the end of the reception year and achievement is good.
40. The strong teamwork between staff underpins the stimulating yet safe experiences offered to the children. Support staff are particularly well deployed and consistently provide good role models and foster good relationships. All adults promote children's confidence and self-esteem successfully by using praise and encouragement. Routines are well established and children know what is expected of them. Consequently, children feel secure. They enjoy school life and are enthusiastic learners who concentrate for good lengths of time. Children co-operate well overall because of the clear standards set and through practising skills in well organised activities, such as the imaginatively planned role-play areas, and group games. They generally take turns and share equipment fairly although a few find it difficult to work as a team to pull the parachute in the same direction. Children are not always given enough chance to select tasks for themselves. As a result, whilst they generally follow instructions well, they are less skilled in using their initiative and becoming independent learners.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early literacy skills are taught thoroughly.
- Work is planned carefully to build on what children already know.
- Group tasks do not always consolidate learning well.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are good. Most children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and this represents good achievement.
42. Staff promote speaking and listening skills effectively across all aspects of this area of learning. Consequently, children talk confidently and purposefully, for instance, to describe an unseen object in a 'feely box'. Systematic teaching of letters and their sounds ensures that most children recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. They successfully combine three letters to make simple words and recognise several frequently used words. They use this knowledge constructively in their reading and writing. Through careful observations of children at work, staff build up a clear picture of what children can do. This assessment is used carefully to plan suitable new work to meet the children's needs. As a result, children make good progress in skills. Occasionally, when group tasks are insufficiently focused, or involve rather dull worksheets, children lose interest and the pace of learning slows.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Numeracy Strategy is suitably adapted to meet children's needs.
- Group tasks consolidate whole class learning successfully, but demonstrations in whole class sessions are not always effective.
- Staff use their good knowledge and understanding of children's needs to plan interesting lessons.

Commentary

43. In response to good teaching and learning children achieve well and are well on their way to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
44. Lessons are well organised with a clear focus on skills. Lively, simple mental mathematics problems challenge children successfully. Interesting group tasks involve children practically and purposefully, for instance, in counting, sorting, and sequencing activities, as well as in exploring measurement and shape. Practical group tasks are clearly focused so that children reinforce and extend their skills. When demonstrating to the class, insufficient use is made of practical number lines to support children when adding and subtracting through counting on or counting back. Most children recite numbers to 20 and are learning to count in twos to find two more or two less. They accurately compare by length using appropriate language such as *short*, *shorter*, and *shortest* and they recognise several two-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan suitable topics and tasks which promote learning successfully.

- Opportunities to explore the school locality as a learning environment are limited.
- Visits and visitors bring the curriculum to life.

Commentary

45. Achievement is good and children are on line to reach the early learning goal in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.
46. Teaching and learning are effective and the current topic work on pets is well planned and holds children's interest successfully. Tasks are effectively organised and well managed to promote a range of skills and knowledge. For instance, through the teacher's skilful questioning about the care of pets, children find out about and identify features of living things. This is developed further as children design and make a kennel for dogs using a construction toy with a clear purpose in mind. There are few opportunities to explore the natural world outside the classroom because of the nature of the school site. Nevertheless, visits, for example to Macclesfield Forest, are carefully planned to extend children's experience. Visitors, such as police and fire officers and a nurse, successfully support pupils' appreciation of people who help us. Pupils are adept at using ICT to support their learning. They confidently control the mouse to click and drag objects on the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy physical activities.
- Outdoor accommodation is limited and unattractive.
- Time in outdoor play sessions is not always used well.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children achieve satisfactorily and are on line to reach the early learning goals.
48. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved outdoor facilities with the marking out of the playground. However, due to the constraints of the building, access is still restricted to whole class organised sessions and the area lacks stimulation. Use of the school hall for physical education lessons partly compensates for this and enables children to make satisfactory progress. Activities are planned carefully to promote physical skills. Children are generally well managed and enjoy these sessions. In the lesson seen children showed satisfactory skills as they aimed bean bags into a bucket and kicked a ball to knock down skittles. They enjoy steering around obstacles on scooters. A weakness in the organisation is the provision of too many activities. This leads to children moving too much between activities and this does not lead to effective learning. It is also difficult for adults to check on pupils' learning and so plan suitable new work. Too much time is often spent explaining tasks and little is left for developing skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good variety of resources are well organised to extend children's experience.
- Some tasks do not challenge children's creativity sufficiently.

Commentary

49. Children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to reach early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children benefit from a wide variety of activities. Children enjoy using paint and pastel to explore shape and colour and take great pride in singing together. Staff provide clear demonstrations so that children successfully learn techniques such as when modelling with clay. Work on display indicates that sometimes children spend too much time following instructions and not enough in developing their own creative ideas. Children show some imagination when playing co-operatively in the well resourced and attractively presented role-play areas like *The Jungle*. However, more intervention from adults is needed to extend play into more imaginatively acting out a story.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 have started to rise and pupils especially enjoy reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress to reach the targets set for them
- Teaching of writing is unsatisfactory in the infants and standards are well below average.
- Teaching is especially challenging in Years 5 and 6 and this accelerates learning for the older pupils.
- Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in Years 1 and 2.
- The co-ordinator has a clear picture about strengths and weaknesses in the subject but has not monitored teaching effectively.

Commentary

51. Standards in Year 6 are average and achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were below average. This improvement has been slow because of staffing difficulties and an increase in the number of pupils who start the school at different times throughout the school year. The school tends to lose the higher attaining pupils when families move out of the area. Results in national tests in 2004 were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The overall performance of the pupils was held down because few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. The school has analysed results and the pupils' test papers and given more attention to the needs of these pupils. Pupils are often taught in smaller groups according to their ability and this enables the teacher to focus more closely on the needs of the pupils. This improvement is not evident in Year 2 where overall standards are below average. In fact, results in 2004 were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools. Some of this decline can be attributed to the pupils having an unsatisfactory start to school life. They have had several changes of staff and did not reach the level expected for their age at the end of the reception year. Taking this low

start into account the overall achievement of most is satisfactory. However, the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils is leading to underachievement of this group of pupils. In writing, teaching is unsatisfactory and underachievement is more widespread and standards are well below average.

52. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress to meet the targets in their individual education plans. They often have additional help in class so that even if the work is not pitched at the correct level help is at hand and they are able to complete the tasks.

53. Skills in speaking and listening are satisfactory. In Year 2, most pupils listen attentively to stories but switch off during the discussion and leave the answering of questions to others. Most answer clearly but a few have a narrow vocabulary and find it difficult to organise their thoughts into sentences. This improves in the juniors and the focus on extending speaking and listening through drama has been effective in enhancing pupils' imaginative vocabulary. When discussing their work in other subjects many include technical terms correctly. A weakness is in the recognition of formal and informal language and this is also a drawback in writing.
54. The school allows additional time daily for reading and this is having a positive effect on pupils' enthusiasm for reading. In Year 2, standards are below average although achievement of most is satisfactory. Most read accurately but few are competent researching for information in a non-fiction book. This improves in the juniors and overall standards in Year 6 are average. Achievement overall has been satisfactory but is currently good in Year 6 especially for the higher attaining pupils. Most scan a text to find the required information and higher attaining pupils go one step further and skillfully identify how an author captures the reader's interest.
55. Writing has been the school's weakest aspect of literacy and the co-ordinator has sought advice and additional staff training. This has reaped more improvement in the juniors than the infants. Drafting is taught well and pupils recognise the importance of planning their work. Standards are average in Year 6; many pupils organise their writing into paragraphs and write well punctuated interesting stories. Standards are well below average in Year 2 and achievement is unsatisfactory. Particular weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 are a lack of confidence in putting ideas down in writing and the accurate use of punctuation. Pupils in Year 2 are not being sufficiently challenged to write imaginatively which would enable them to achieve above average standards.
56. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is often very good and especially challenging and keeps pupils well focused on the task in hand. The vast amount and quality of work completed in these years is evidence of the pupils' good rate of learning. This challenge is less evident in Years 1 and 2 where teachers are not making sufficient use of assessment information to ensure tasks match pupils' ability. For example, in Year 1, pupils were asked to write a poem but did not have the skills to complete this and many had to wait for adult support. Work sheets are not always matched to ability and higher attaining pupils often complete tasks that are too easy. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory and teachers do not clearly demonstrate or model writing for the pupils. There is a higher focus on teaching than learning. Teachers rely too much on their knowledge to tell the pupils how to complete a task rather than developing a new skill. As a result, pupils complete a task correctly but are unsure about the purpose of the task and how it will extend their writing skills. This leads to ineffective conclusions to lessons as well as confusion for the pupils.
57. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The action plan in the school's development plan does not make it clear how identified actions are to raise standards. However, in response to more rigorous self-evaluation, this plan is now being replaced to show specifically how the school is responding to the findings of current assessment. Although monitoring of teaching has been carried out and has been effective in the juniors, it has been ineffective in the infants and opportunities to model and share good practice are missed. The library is used well, especially the

fiction section. However, the non-fiction stock, especially of multi-cultural texts, is limited.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The promotion of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. It is good in the older classes where teachers identify in their planning the style of writing to be used in other subjects. For example, pupils write accounts and descriptive writing in history. Most lessons include effective discussions to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to enhance the efforts of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 has led to improving standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Mathematics is enhanced by good resources, particularly in ICT.
- Inconsistent use of assessment information means that work is not always well matched to the pupils' ability resulting in a lack of challenge for potentially high attaining pupils in the infants.
- Behaviour is generally well managed and pupils behave well in lessons.

Commentary

59. The results of national tests in Year 2 declined sharply in 2004, in contrast to a rising trend from 2001 to 2003. Results were well below the average for all schools nationally and also when compared to schools in a similar context. A major factor for this was the changes of staff which resulted in a succession of temporary teachers. This has now been resolved and there is greater staffing stability. Inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 are below average but not declining further and as these pupils did not reach the level expected as they started in Year 1, their achievement is satisfactory. However, a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils leads to these pupils underachieving and few are exceeding the level expected for their age. The focus is on the use of number and many carry out simple calculations correctly at a level expected for their age but many struggle with calculations beyond 100 and lower attaining pupils do not have a secure understanding of subtraction and addition.
60. A more positive picture of improvement was evident in the results of national tests in Year 6. In 2004 results were below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools indicating many pupils made satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence supports this improving picture and indicates that standards have continued to rise and are now broadly in line with standards expected of pupils in Year 6. This improvement has been brought about by very challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 and better assessment procedures which give staff a clearer picture of what pupils need to do to improve. Data shows these pupils made a slow start to the juniors but learning accelerated in Years 5 and 6 and overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 successfully apply their knowledge of multiplication tables to solve problems. A review of pupils' work shows higher attaining pupils confidently work in decimals and fractions at a higher standard than expected for this age.

61. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. No teaching was less than satisfactory and much was good or better. The best teaching seen was in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils rose to the challenge to apply their knowledge of co-ordinates to develop their understanding of parallel and perpendicular lines. In a very good Year 6 lesson, higher attaining pupils responded very well to the difficult task of using formulae to calculate the areas and perimeters of compound shapes. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and provide the school with useful information to aid planning. In

Year 6, this information is used well to set pupils clear targets which are regularly reviewed so that children know what they should be able to do and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is not used well in the infants to identify and help higher attaining pupils. Although this was seen to be effective in a lesson in Year 2 when the higher attaining pupils were challenged to record their data using charts, a review of pupils' work indicates that this is not always the case. The overuse of worksheets that do not match pupils' ability does not lead to effective learning. Potentially higher attaining children, in particular, are not given sufficiently challenging tasks in Years 1 and 2.

62. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by skilled support teachers and classroom assistants who work closely with the class teachers to ensure good progress to reach the targets in their individual education plans.
63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although standards in Year 2 are not as high as those identified previously there has been an increase in the number of pupils reaching average levels. Standards in Year 6 are similar to the last inspection. More time is now available for tracking individual progress, monitoring lessons and reviewing pupils' work. As a result, the co-ordinator has an informed idea about what is needed to lead the subject forward. This is not clear in the current action plan in the school's improvement plan which does not make a clear link between actions and their intended effect on standards. The level of resources for mathematics is good and ICT is used effectively to facilitate better learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Mathematical skills are practised and developed effectively across the curriculum. Teachers plan well to promote mathematics in other subjects. For example, in geography pupils look at maps using different scales and in history time-lines help to put historical periods in context. In ICT lessons, mathematics is particularly used well for data handling with many examples of tallies, charts and graphs to be found on display. Teachers also use ICT lessons to reinforce mathematical concepts as when Year 3 pupils were given extra help with addition and subtraction.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Year 2 because higher attainers do not always do as well as they could.
- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment data to plan new work.
- Good teaching is raising standards in the upper junior classes.

Commentary

65. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils last year showed signs of some improvement. Although standards were below the national average, when compared with similar schools they were average and this is an

indication that most pupils had made satisfactory progress. These standards have been further developed and currently in Year 6 are average and overall achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, standards are below average and are similar to the last year's teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. This in part reflects considerable disturbance to staffing in this class during their time in reception and Year 1 and the low standard on entry to school of this cohort. In both Years 2 and 6, the overall performance is brought down by the low percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels.

Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory with an increase in the number of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. However, the weakness in provision for the higher attaining pupils has not been fully addressed. Tracking of pupils and scrutiny of work indicates that whilst the vast majority of pupils make satisfactory progress there is some underachievement by potential higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

66. Pupils in Year 6 present their results in a variety of tables and standards are improving because of better use of investigation to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts. It is not clear from the evidence available how much pupils are involved in planning their investigations but most show a satisfactory ability to predict their findings based on earlier knowledge and understanding. The emphasis on investigation is also evident in the infants although the overuse of worksheets is leading to a lack of challenge especially for the higher attaining pupils. For example, pupils describe the most important requirements for life but do not move to the higher level of explaining how changes in these requirements affect living things, such as lack of water in plants.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with good teaching seen in upper junior classes. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and plan a wide curriculum across all attainment targets. Resources are well prepared to support teaching points and provide interesting and relevant practical experiences. In the juniors, planning for investigational science has recently been much improved. This is having a beneficial effect not only on the development of investigational skills but also on pupils' knowledge of other aspects of the curriculum. In Year 4, for instance, pupils show good skills and draw appropriate conclusions when melting chocolate and wax to find out if the same material can exist as both a liquid and a solid. Expectations of higher attainers are not high enough and work in class does not always provide enough challenge to meet their needs. There are copious assessment procedures but data gathered is not used efficiently to plan work that matches pupils' ability. Individual or group targets are not set in science and so pupils are not aware of what they need to do to improve. Marking of work in books does not tell pupils how to improve. The many support staff are generally well deployed with teaching assistants providing focused help for groups in class and support teachers enabling classes to be split into smaller teaching groups. This works particularly well in the booster classes which are currently preparing Year 6 pupils for the National Curriculum tests. In Years 5 and 6, lessons have clear objectives and teachers use questions skilfully to focus pupils' efforts and guide their learning. This good practice is less apparent in other years.
68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is more effective in the juniors than in the infants. Monitoring of standards, teaching and learning is carried out efficiently and there is now a shared commitment to raising standards. This is more evident in current action than in the subject's action plan which does not include clear targets that can be measured to check on their success.
69. Links with literacy are well developed, especially with writing in Years 3 to 6, when the specific characteristics of report writing and instructions are clearly reinforced in recording investigations. Links with numeracy are good in the use of graphs and charts as well as practising accurate measuring and computational skills. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to support learning through

well chosen programs and use of the smart board. In Year 5, very good use was made of a computer microscope when pupils investigated parts of a flowering plant.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- The good resources for ICT are used effectively and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, enjoy a high level of encouragement from skilled support teachers and classroom assistants.
- The subject is effectively led and managed resulting in increased staff confidence and therefore good quality teaching.
- Information and communication technology is used well to promote learning in other subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

70. In Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with those found nationally. Overall, pupils make good progress in ICT throughout the school. In Year 2, pupils access the correct program confidently and correctly enter data on a tally chart. Higher attaining pupils save their results and then create their own questions for another chart showing good word processing skills. A significant proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working at above average standards. These pupils successfully use databases and spreadsheets and some are currently preparing a PowerPoint presentation. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards in ICT were found to be unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6.
71. There are good resources for ICT throughout the school and the computer suite, with its supply of laptops, together with the inter-active whiteboards enhances pupils' learning. Teachers use the ICT suite to teach specific skills which are then practised in lessons in class. Many lessons are enlivened by teachers' confident use of the inter-active white boards which capture pupils' interest and widen their experiences.
72. Teaching and learning are good. The confidence of the staff has grown through effective training, good advice and support from the co-ordinator. Good use has been made of local authority expertise and visits to other schools to observe good practice. In the area of control technology, for example, which the previous inspection judged to be unsatisfactory, increased staff confidence has led to improved teaching. This was seen in Year 1 when pupils were taught how to program a mechanical toy successfully, using function keys. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was of a good quality. Teachers have good subject knowledge and so are confident when responding to pupils' questions. Lessons are well planned and, in the best sessions, go at a brisk pace, thereby ensuring that all pupils are fully engrossed in their tasks.
73. Leadership and management are good and this is a major reason for ICT being the school's success story. Clear thinking and a focus on improving teaching has led to a rise in standards and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The subject leader has worked effectively to improve resources by obtaining considerable financial investment. This is having a positive impact on standards and the on-going plans for development up to 2007 include further extending resources to ensure the school keeps up-to-date.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Pupils ICT skills are used to good effect in many subjects across the curriculum. The readily accessible laptops, classroom computers and 'smart boards' play a significant part in maintaining pupils' interest and in enhancing their learning. Information and communication technology provides a vehicle through which numeracy and literacy skills are advanced. In addition to the ICT sessions to cover the requirements of the subject, there are lessons to promote cross-curricular links. During the inspection there was evidence of links with art and design, geography, history and science.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

75. As only one lesson was seen in geography and two in history no judgement can be made about the overall provision for either subject. Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits. These include visits to museums to aid the study of Egyptians, Greeks, Tudors and Victorians as well as visiting differing localities to look at physical and human geographical features. The challenge in tasks for higher attaining pupils is not always evident in examples of pupils' work but pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
76. In the lesson seen in geography, teaching and learning were good and the pupils were well prepared for their pending field work visit to a local farm. Pupils show a satisfactory range of skills when collating information about the effect of traffic on business and local people. They decide on several useful approaches to collect information that will help them in future field work.
77. In history, the teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Pupils are working at the level expected for their age. In Year 6, pupils recognise the reasons for evacuation in World War Two and how this affected the lives of those involved. However, in the lesson the focus on writing rather dominated and was more evident than the development of pupils' historical skills.
78. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving as staff are working more as a team to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. Current action plans do not do justice to the changes being put in place as they do not make a close link between actions and improvement in standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. Only one lesson was seen in art and design, design and technology and physical education and two lessons were seen in music. It is not therefore possible to make an overall judgement on provision. Teachers' planning and work on display indicates that statutory requirements are met in coverage of the subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and their role in monitoring standards, teaching and learning is well developed.

Art and design

80. Evidence from work on display indicates that standards in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in most schools. In Year 2, this is an improvement since the previous inspection, and there are now sufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment with a range of media and develop their own ideas with some imagination. They explore colour when mixing paint in pattern making and show sound control in their observational drawings of daffodils. In Year 6, pupils use their own sketches drawn on a geography field study to create attractive watercolours of a landscape. Their work shows sound observational skills, emerging sense of perspective and sensitive use of colour. In the lesson seen in Year 6, teaching was good. The teacher set challenging learning objectives based on the structured development of skills. Good relationships boosted confidence but there were too few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work.

Design and Technology

81. A review of pupils' work shows good attention is given to designing as well as making skills. Pupils' abilities to evaluate their own work are well developed in Year 6 but not evident in Year 2. In the lesson seen in Year 2, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils investigated winding mechanisms. Resources were well prepared and accessible and pupils were

managed effectively so that learning was fun. However, lesson objectives were not well focused and some pupils were uncertain of the outcomes expected. Year 2 pupils have designed and made an 'emergency vehicle' with good attention to the design and making process. Finished products are well presented but there was no evidence of pupils' evaluation of their work. Pupils in Year 6 explored various designs before making slippers to their own specification. They produced carefully labelled designs, displayed accurate measuring skills, and sound cutting and assembling skills in making a product. The evaluations of their own work show perceptive insights and suggested improvements.

Music

82. Music was a weakness in the last inspection and improvement has been good. Creativity is given more attention because of the new planning guidelines followed by teachers. In the two lessons that were sampled, standards were average and the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Both lessons included a variety of activities including opportunities to sing, play instruments and to compose. In Year 1, pupils recognise high and low in their singing and respond correctly to a picture symbol. The teacher was a temporary teacher and her expectations were a little too high and pupils struggled to accomplish the playing tasks set but enjoyed experimenting with the different sounds the instruments make. Year 6 pupils follow musical notation when singing and select suitable musical instruments for their compositions about a space journey. They are starting to evaluate their own work but not yet suggesting to others how their efforts could be improved.
83. A strength in the school is the quality of singing. Boys and girls, young and old, derive great pleasure from singing and the quality is often very good. This makes a significant contribution to the feeling of belonging to a community that is experienced in assemblies.

Physical education

84. In the lesson seen in Year 1, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils were performing at the level expected for their age and showed satisfactory control as they hopped, skipped and jogged to warm up. They understand that exercise is good for them. The lesson was organised well and moved into a small ball game which pupils enjoyed although the scoring system was too hard for some who became confused. Discussions with pupils show most enjoy physical education lessons. They go swimming in Year 6 and currently only three pupils are not confident swimmers. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to a day's visit to a local centre where they will experience a range of adventurous, outdoor activities. A strength in the subject is the good range of extra-curricular activities and the netball teams have been especially successful. These opportunities are open for boys and girls and make a significant contribution to pupils' social and moral development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. No lessons were seen during the inspection and so it would not be appropriate to make an overall judgment on teaching and learning. However, it is clear from the evidence available that the school's promotion of personal development is good.
86. The school follows the national planning guidelines and supplements them with additional resources to match the needs of the school. All classes have lessons

devoted to pupils' personal development. These start in reception with Circle Time⁷ and progress to more serious discussions in the older classes. Topics include making choices, relationships and

⁷ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no disruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times so pupils can feel confident that they can talk at ease without interruption from other pupils.

caring for others. Links are often made to themes in assemblies which usually include a message linked to personal development. Staff are very aware that not all pupils are responsive to their teaching in these sessions. To reach these pupils, staff have arranged one to one sessions on anger management and other activities. For example, one class has a notice board inviting pupils to record any special messages. Many have taken the opportunity to send happy greetings to each other. The school has a large *Golden Tree* which is a visual record of achievements in a range of activities and this helps to develop pupils' self-esteem. The school is encouraging keeping safe and healthy eating in science lessons and by providing fruit as a snack for the younger pupils. Opportunities to support both local and national charities encourage pupils to learn about their roles as citizens and how to play a part in society beyond school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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