

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middleton, Manchester

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105806

Headteacher: Mrs S Drummond

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 June 2005

Inspection number: 267816

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 73

School address: Thornham Lane
Slattocks
Middleton
Manchester
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Rev C Fallone

Date of previous inspection: 19 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's is a Church of England Voluntary Aided primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of four and eleven. It is situated on the outskirts of Rochdale. This is a below average-sized primary school in England with 73 pupils on the roll: 36 boys and 37 girls. The roll has fluctuated a little in recent years. Children arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels but, overall, the attainment on entry is a little below average. Pupils are organised into three classes. The pupils come from a large area of mixed semi-rural and town characteristics. There are a few significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private dwellings. It is usually an area of low mobility, but this has changed recently. The great majority of pupils are white, and a very small minority come from mixed-race heritages. None of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is around the average. Twenty pupils are on the list of special educational needs and there is a wide range of learning difficulties. This proportion is above the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully challenged attempts to close it. The school has received the following awards:

- Investors in People in 2001;
- Healthy Schools in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	Mathematics English Geography History Physical education English as an additional language
19343	M Howel	Lay inspector	
19709	J Fisher	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St John's is a good school. Pupils' good achievement and very good personal development are fostered by effective teaching, leadership and management. The values that underpin the work of the school ensure that all pupils benefit equally from what it has to offer. As a result, the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the age of 11, standards in mathematics are well above average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
- Achievement in basic writing skills is only satisfactory by Year 6.
- The Foundation Stage (reception) does not have a designated and fully equipped play area.
- The lack of a hall hinders provision for indoor physical education.
- The enrichment of the curriculum is very good.
- Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is very strong.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.

Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection and there have been further significant improvements in the standards and provision in information and communication technology. The governing body is now much more effective in its role as a 'critical friend'. The amount of good and better teaching has improved and this is in the face of significant staffing changes and a less experienced staff team. However, basic writing skills have not improved since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to improve further because of its effective leadership and management, particularly the strong commitment to evaluation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the reception year with levels of attainment that are a little below average overall. Children achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1, most will exceed the goals they are expected to achieve by this age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and some aspects of physical development. In Year 2, standards seen are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These findings confirm the trend in national test results over the last three years. At Year 2, boys do better than girls in reading and mathematics, but the inspection did not provide secure evidence to explain why. In Year 6, standards seen are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. The picture presented in the 2004 national tests was based on four pupils, two of whom had special educational needs and with this profile it is not possible to draw secure conclusions about standards. However, since 2000, results in national tests have mainly been above average in English, mathematics and science. There is little difference between boys' and girls' standards in English, but girls do better in mathematics and science. Targets are challenging and met. The trend in results is below the national one, but there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs amid some small year groups. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and the gifted and talented make good progress towards their set targets. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' basic writing skills, such as

handwriting, spelling and punctuation could be stronger. Standards in information and communication technology are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their knowledge and understanding of life in a multicultural society is satisfactory. Pupils like school and this is very much appreciated by the parents. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Across the school, the proportion of good and better teaching is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, the particular strengths are the insistence on high standards of behaviour and the promotion of equal opportunities for pupils. In a number of lessons, the use of information and communication technology by teachers has added to their classroom skills and further promoted pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are mostly effective. Teachers use the information very well and this leads to pupils being given strong challenges, for instance higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science investigations. However, the marking of pupils' writing is not improving their basic skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

The curriculum is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very strong and promotes their good progress. The programme is very well enriched by activities outside the classroom and the normal school day and this has much to do with the very good links with the village community. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because:

- there is no designated outside play area for reception children to develop their large physical skills;
- there is no school hall and this affects the opportunities for indoor physical education.

The quality of care is good and very warm relationships are fostered between adults and pupils. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good. The school has very good practices for involving pupils in decision-making and valuing their views. Links with parents are very good. Partnerships with other schools and colleges are effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governors provide effective support and guidance for the school. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher provides good leadership and receives strong support from staff, who manage subjects well and work hard to evaluate provision and standards. This is particularly strong in English, mathematics and science. Parents appreciate the hard work and expertise of the whole staff. Management of the school is good and this showed itself in the way the school marshalled itself to successfully stave off closure.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school and appreciate the ways that the school plays a central role in the community. They have seen a number of improvements in recent years. Parents recognise that the staff work extremely hard for their children. Pupils also speak highly of their school and are proud of their membership of it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve achievement in basic writing skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve provision for physical development in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve accommodation for physical education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are gifted and talented (all groups). Standards are a little below average when children enter reception, above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics are strengths of the school.
- Across the school, standards in speaking, listening and reading are above average.
- In Year 6, the basic writing skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not good enough.
- Skills in information and communication technology are helping to boost achievement in other subjects.

Commentary

- 1 In the period since the last inspection, it is difficult to judge whether results in national tests have improved or not because of the varying sizes of classes and the inconsistency in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, it is clear that the school has been working hard and successfully to improve standards in several subjects, such as reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Standards and achievement in basic writing skills are not as good as those reported at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, parents are very satisfied with their children's achievements over time and point to improvements in areas such as reading and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (14.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.0 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 The school had a relatively small cohort of ten pupils taking the tests in 2004 and this means that caution is needed when drawing conclusions from the data because each pupil represents ten percent of the year group. Standards for Year 2 pupils in 2004 were below average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared with all schools and those with the same proportion of free school meals (similar schools). Compared to all schools nationally and similar schools, proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 were well below average in reading, writing and science. Mathematics results were well above average. Over 3 years, results in reading and mathematics were above average, whilst writing results were average. In the same period boys did better than girls in reading, but less well in mathematics. There was no significant difference in writing.

- 3 In 2004, there were just four pupils in Year 6 and two of those had special educational needs. As a result, extreme caution needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions from the data. In fact, the only useful course is to draw some general points from the trends over time. Over 3 years, results are close to average in English, mathematics and science and the overall trend is below average. Comparing the results of boys and girls shows that there is little difference in English, but the gap appears to be wider in mathematics and science, with girls doing better. Since 2000, test scores in English have generally been ahead of the national average, with 2001 and 2002 showing a significant move ahead. Mathematics and science scores have been generally ahead of the national average.
- 4 On entry to the Reception Year, children's attainment represents the full range and overall standards are a little below average. The children are taught well and they make good progress in the year. As a result, children are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and some aspects of creative development. They are also on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals in physical activities that develop their small manipulative movement skills. However, shortcomings in the accommodation for indoor and outdoor play means that they have too few opportunities to develop their large movements such as climbing, scrambling and swinging.
- 5 In English, standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in speaking, listening and reading. Achievement is good. The school has worked particularly hard and successfully on developing reading, with a strong focus on improving the interest of the older boys. Writing standards are above average in Year 2 and achievement is good. However, standards are average in Year 6, where the quality of pupils' basic writing skills are not as good as they ought to be, most particularly in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Achievement is satisfactory overall because the content and range of much of the writing is good. The school is aware of these shortcomings and work is being developed that will highlight the need for:
- greater pride in the finished piece of writing;
 - improved marking that will pinpoint weaknesses and evaluate pupils' progress towards their own individual targets.
- 6 In mathematics, standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Achievement is good. Pupils in Year 2 have good skills in number, measures, shape and problem-solving. The main reasons for this good progress from the well-developed foundations in Reception Year are:
- good teaching;
 - high expectations.
- In Year 6, the highest attaining pupils work at above average standards in all of the aspects of the subject except data handling, where they reach average levels. The other groups of pupils attain, at least, average standards in all of the aspects of the subject. There are examples of mathematical skills and competences being effectively used in other subjects and this helps to raise attainment.
- 7 Standards in science are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Achievement is good. These findings represent good developments in the subject, most particularly in relation to pupils carrying out investigations in a careful and correct manner. In fact, the older pupils are much improved at planning and carrying out their own investigations. The developments in the use of information and communication technology has led to good opportunities for progressing further in science, such as:
- researching facts and findings from CD ROMs;

- giving multimedia presentations that illustrate pupils' knowledge and understanding of topics such as food chains and habitats.

- 8 Standards in information and communication technology are above average in Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils show confidence when working with computers or other machines, such as programmable robots. The use of appropriate techniques means that pupil competence is having the desired effect on learning across a range of subjects, for example:
- word processing in English and history;
 - discovering information in geography and religious education;
 - developing the skills of presentation in a range of media, such as sound, pictures and text. These presentations form the centrepiece of assemblies for the whole school.
- 9 Standards and achievement in religious education will be inspected and reported separately by the diocese.
- 10 Other subjects were sampled during the inspection and it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards and achievement in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual learning targets and achieve well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are progressing well and show good leadership and confidence in lessons, where they will willingly take the lead in their groups. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are also progressing well, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work. Their behaviour and personal development are very good. Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The attendance rates at the school are very high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The provision for pupils' multicultural development continues to have limitations.

Commentary

- 12 Since the previous inspection, attitudes, behaviour, the development of personal qualities and the rate of attendance have continued to be major strengths of the school. Parents' and pupils' views expressed during the inspection are entirely in line with the judgements of the inspectors and they are confident that the school deals well with any incidents that may occur. In the Foundation Stage, the children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development.
- 13 Pupils are happy at school and enjoy their lessons. They are positive and enthusiastic learners who hold their teachers in high regard. There is a very positive atmosphere throughout the school that reflects the very high quality of provision for

pupils' personal development. Pupils respond well to their teachers, and they are very willing to take an active part in their lessons. An example of this involvement was seen when an infant pupil proudly brought into school a 'leaflet' he had made about the sinking of the Titanic. He had obviously found the previous day's lesson very interesting, and had felt he wanted to continue with the topic at home. Pupils are confident to make suggestions and voice their opinions, and show respect for the views of their fellow pupils. There is very good support for after school activities, and the pupils and parents appreciate the dedication of the staff in organising these clubs.

- 14 Pupils show good levels of interest and concentration during lessons. They enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. All Year 6 pupils take great care over the preparation of their individual presentations during assemblies, and enjoy this opportunity to share an interest or hobby with the rest of the school. Some older pupils act as playground 'buddies' and they take this role seriously. The members of the school council are enthusiastic and have enjoyed their recent involvement in planning fund raising events to support a child in Rwanda. Many of the pupils were involved in the recent activities to prevent the school closure, and this provided them with a good opportunity to understand how their school is a part of the wider community.
- 15 There is a consistently high standard of behaviour in the school and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Both during lessons and in their break times the pupils live up to the teachers' high expectations. There is very good co-operation between pupils during lessons. They work very well together and offer help and support to one another. The pupils clearly enjoy their break times and make very good use of the large playing field. There is a good mix of age groups during these breaks, with the older pupils ensuring the younger ones are not left alone. The school does not have a dining hall, but the pupils manage very well in the classrooms and there is a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. Overall, pupils work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour such as bullying, racism, and sexism.
- 16 The opportunities for pupils to gather insight into beliefs and develop their spiritual awareness extend very well across the curriculum. For example, in some assemblies, pupils have a prayer and reflection time to consider the plight of others or give thanks for what they have. The school places a very high priority on moral and social development. The pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and show a very good regard for the work of others and the school environment. They respond very well to the school rules and are highly aware of the consequences of their behaviour. The pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. Their experiences and horizons are broadened by such activities, and they enjoy the opportunities to share the interests and expertise of other adults. Despite having keen insights and understanding of the local community, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding of living in a multicultural society. However, pupils visit the sacred buildings of other major world faiths, such as a Jewish synagogue, but as yet have no contact with pupils from contrasting cultures.
- 17 Attendance rates are very high in comparison with other schools. The rates of unauthorised absences are also significantly better than at other schools. This is a

reflection of the support of the parents and the importance the school places on regular attendance. Punctuality is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.4	School data	0.0
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is good, including the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils’ learning. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good. The school has good procedures and practices for care, welfare, health and safety. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good. The links with parents and the community are very good. The links with other schools and colleges are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has been maintained in the face of significant changes and greater inexperience.
- Music teaching by the specialist is highly successful.
- Marking in Years 3 to 6 does not relate directly to pupils’ individual targets.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	14	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- 18 Since the last inspection, there has been a significant change in the teaching force. As a result, the staffing profile is much more inexperienced than previously, most particularly in Years 3 to 6. So, it is a great credit to all concerned that the outcomes of the lessons observed are a little better than at the time of the last inspection, with more good and better teaching. Parents are very happy with:
- the teaching their children receive;
 - the expectations of staff on their children to work hard;
 - the nature and amount of homework given to their children.
- Inspectors agree with their views.
- 19 Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. All of the lessons observed were at least good and there were examples of very good and excellent practice. The particular strengths are:

- the very good planning that provides children with interesting and challenging activities;
- the very good relationships that enable staff to successfully insist on good and positive behaviour;
- the very effective use of classroom assistants that ensures the very good promotion of equal opportunities.

All of these strengths, and others, were much in evidence in the excellent lesson based on the children's work about the Titanic. Staff work very hard and creatively to overcome the fact that the accommodation and resources for physical development are unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are effective and provide staff with good information about children's needs, knowledge and understanding.

20 In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The majority of lessons observed were good and these included sessions in English and mathematics. The most significant strengths are similar to those reported for the Foundation Stage. However, in the one very good information and communication technology lesson, the main strengths were:

- the very effective planning enabled staff to give useful demonstrations on how to program the robot toy;
- very good use of resources, including clear posters that showed the pupils the progression in orders for the robot;
- the opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively. Particularly impressive was the way that pupils ask questions of each other and discuss solutions.

Assessment procedures and practices are good.

21 Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good. The majority of lessons observed were good and, in addition, there were similar numbers of very good and satisfactory lessons. The two very good lessons were in music and they were taught very successfully by a specialist teacher. The main strengths in these lessons were:

- the very good use of African music to set the scene and the subsequent development of rhythms with the drums;
- the ample time for pupils to experiment with the instruments showed their skills, knowledge and understanding of rhythm and beat;
- the very effective introduction of specific language, such as 'accentuated beat'.

This deployment of the specialist teacher also allowed the classes to be organised into their year groups, so that physical education can be taught to small numbers at the same time. This is important because the only indoor accommodation is a classroom, with very limited space.

22 Overall, in the majority of lessons in Years 3 to 6, the main strengths are:

- the very strong emphasis on pupils behaving well which allows pupils to concentrate and apply themselves to tasks;
- the very good use of classroom assistants which enables pupils to access all that the lessons have to offer.

In these classes, there are examples of conscientious marking by teachers. Teachers give praise and encouragement, but pupils are not always given greater knowledge of the standard of their work or the pinpointed advice that would indicate the standard achieved or how they could improve their work. In English, teachers mark to the objectives of the lesson and not to pupils' own personal targets, as a result pupils' knowledge of the progress they are making is lessened. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning from lessons and pupils often bring work in from home to contribute to the work in school.

- 23 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and in other groups is good. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics. Teaching assistants provide good support and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Targets in pupils' individual educational plans are clearly focused and appropriate to pupils' needs.
- 24 Formal assessment procedures are effective in reception and Years 1 and 2 and the information is used effectively to plan the next stages in learning and check pupils' achievement. The recently introduced systems for assessment in the subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not yet fully in use and where they are the period has been too short to judge their value. The school has a good range of effective procedures for analysing statistical data from tests and assessments. The information is used very effectively to identify those pupils who need additional help and support. Pupils' performances in the external tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are analysed and the subject leaders adapt their planning to focus upon any identified weaknesses. However, the marking of pupils' English work in Years 3 to 6 is not ensuring that the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are as good as they could be.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall, but outdoor provision for the reception children remains unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a well planned and stimulating curriculum within and beyond the school day which fully meets statutory requirements.
- The provision for both special educational needs and personal, social and health education is very good.
- The ethos of the school ensures that all groups of pupils are fully included in the experiences that it offers.
- Links to support learning outside the school day are very good.
- A very wide range of interesting and varied extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, enriches and supports the curriculum very well.
- The support staff makes a significant contribution to the success of the curriculum.
- The curriculum for the reception children is very well planned to meet all children's specific needs. However, there is no designated, well equipped outside area.
- Good improvements have been made to the building, however the lack of a hall means that whole classes cannot do indoor physical education.

Commentary

- 25 The strengths identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained and there have been good improvements in several areas. Parents appreciate the efforts made by the school to provide a wide and interesting range of activities within and outside the school day. They also judge the school to be fair in the way it ensures that all pupils have equal access to all that is on offer. Inspectors agree with their views. The success of the curriculum is based on:
- strong leadership from the headteacher and governing body;
 - the commitment of the subject coordinators;

- the development planning of the curriculum.

As a result, the staff has had the opportunity to develop and share their knowledge and expertise with each other, the governing body and parents.

- 26 The curriculum makes a good contribution to the school's caring ethos, for instance through:
- ideas discussed in assemblies;
 - very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship, which meets the needs of all pupils very well. This commitment is also highlighted in the school's recent qualification as a Healthy School.
- Due emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy and effective links are made between subjects, particularly in science, information and communication technology and design and technology. Provision for information and communication technology has improved well since the previous inspection and the quantity and quality of resources give far more frequent opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills.
- 27 Throughout the school, provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Early analysis and diagnosis of needs from entry into school are carefully used to plan appropriate individual programmes for individual pupils. Teachers are ably assisted by very conscientious, trained teaching assistants.
- 28 The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop their own self-worth and confidence. Issues to do with sex and relationships, drugs and health education are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility through the recently formed School Council. Citizenship is promoted through involvement with the community, especially the local church where pupils are regular contributors, both at festivals and fund-raising events.
- 29 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is securely based on the nationally recognised Early Learning Goals within the six areas of learning. It provides interest and a high level of challenge in all areas of development for all children, with the exception of physical development. Children make an early start in reading, writing and mathematics and consequently make good progress throughout the reception class. The school does not have a designated, well-equipped outdoor area. As a result, the reception children are unable to take part on a regular basis in some of the activities suggested as part of their curriculum.
- 30 The curriculum is enhanced by a very wide range of interesting and exciting extra-curricular activities and educational visits. After-school clubs are popular and attendance is high. The quality of visits helps to enhance pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Pupils participate enthusiastically in activities varying from choir and music, including the school orchestra and recorder group, to art, sports and French. In addition, very good use is made of inspirational visitors to extend pupils' all-round education. Links with the school's community through the performance of concerts and musicals, visits and visitors and sponsored fundraising activities help to support learning beyond the school day.
- 31 Good improvements have been made to the accommodation since the previous inspection. Despite this, the provision for outdoor play equipment remains

unsatisfactory. There is no designated play area for the reception children to work and play in, no easy free - flow access to the outside and no large - sized physical education equipment. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Furthermore, the lack of a hall means that whole classes cannot do indoor physical education, such as gymnastics together. In practice, classes are taught as discrete year groups in a very small space. The school is adequately resourced with the exception of outside play equipment. It is very well resourced in information and communication technology which is a significant improvement in provision and is used effectively to enhance learning across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

There is good provision for the pupils' care, safety and welfare. The school provides very good support and guidance for the personal development of the pupils. The pupils are very well involved in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ethos of the school and the very good relationships within it, make a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to express their views.
- The school provides a secure environment for its pupils.

Commentary

32 The very good relationships between pupils, and between teachers and pupils are a continuing strength of the school. The teachers have good knowledge of all the pupils and ensure that the great majority of their individual needs are met. The parents are particularly happy with the care provided and feel the teachers know how to motivate and help the individual pupil. The pupils are very confident that their teachers will always listen to their concerns and will offer them help and support. As a result of these very good relationships there is a very secure and safe atmosphere in the school. Pupils and teachers are relaxed and comfortable together, and this was seen at the start of the day when pupils come into school eager to share their news with their teachers.

33 There are good opportunities for pupils to express their opinions and make suggestions. The school council is well supported and the pupils are enthusiastic about the work they do. The council has worked with the teachers in planning the fund raising for a new child sponsorship scheme in Africa, and is now taking an interest in more healthy school dinners. The pupils have been fully involved in the plans for the building of a school hall and play area. They have been given the opportunity to put forward their views and suggestions, and have seen the finished plans. Pupils help their teachers to draw up the individual class rules at the start of the year, and this helps them to appreciate why some rules are necessary. The small size of the school and the very good relationships, make it easy for pupils to talk to the teachers at any time about their ideas or concerns. Arrangements for introducing pupils to the school are good.

34 There is an effective health and safety policy in place and the school takes very seriously the care of the pupils. The school has in place the necessary and effective

child protection procedures, and all staff will be receiving training in September. As part of the healthy school initiative, fresh fruit is available at breaks, and all pupils are encouraged to walk at least some part of the journey to school. Some older pupils come to school on their bicycles, and this is helped by the location of the school on a quiet lane. In the past the pupils have grown some fruit and vegetables in the school garden and it is hoped this will be restarted in the near future.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are very supportive of the school's work.
- There is very good communication between the school and the parents.
- The links with the church and the local community are very well established.

Commentary

- 35 There was very good support for the school from the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and from those who returned questionnaires. They are particularly pleased with the progress their children make and the good teaching provided by the school. Their children like coming to school, and the parents appreciate the good extra curricula activities provided. When the school was under threat of closure, the parents and the community worked very hard with the school to persuade the local authority to keep it open. This is a strong indication of the effective way that the school seeks, values and acts on parents' views. This joint enterprise has strengthened the partnership with the parents, and the school is very pleased with the continuing support they are receiving.
- 36 The parents find it very easy to talk to the teachers, and they like the 'open door' policy. There are two parents' evenings each year and, in addition to the good full annual report in the summer, parents receive a brief 'settling-in' report during the autumn term. The homework and reading diaries are used as a good means of communication between home and school. The school has held training workshops for parents but these have not proved popular. However, parents said that if they needed information about how to help their children, the teachers were very ready to offer assistance. There are regular newsletters sent home and these keep parents fully informed about forthcoming events and staff news. The school has good procedures to deal with any concerns and complaints.
- 37 Pupils and teachers are highly involved in church activities and clubs outside school hours, and this additional time spent together during their leisure time helps towards the very good relationships seen in the school. The school premises are used regularly by a number of church groups during the week. The pupils enjoy using the church for special festival services, and these events are very well supported by the whole community. There are well established links with the high schools and transfer arrangements are effective and the pupils benefit from school's involvement with local cluster groups of schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is effective. The headteacher provides good leadership. Key staff support the headteacher well in leading and managing their areas of responsibility. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is much more effective in its role as 'critical friend'.
- The small staff reacts very professionally to its responsibilities as managers of subjects.
- Priorities for improvement are well researched, planned for and resourced.
- Policies for spending are effective.

Commentary

38 Since the last inspection, the school has undergone significant changes to staffing, and change to the school's religious status. It has also dealt successfully with the difficult experience of being threatened with closure. As a result, a great deal of pressure has been exerted on the governing body and senior management. It is to the great credit of all concerned that these potential pitfalls and barriers to improvement have not been allowed to lessen the effectiveness of the school. In fact, the governing body case to prevent closure was compiled so well that it has made a significant contribution to the very good improvement in its work. Parents are satisfied that the school is well run. The school correctly points to the following barriers to raising achievement:

- the accommodation, particularly the lack of a hall;
- the low levels of expectation and aspirations amongst some parents. This is noticeable in the lack of parental support for reading among a minority of pupils.

39 The governing body is effective and supports the school well. Governors bring many skills and talents to their duties and undertake appropriate training. Responsibilities are delegated effectively to individuals and committees and there are good systems for reporting back. Governing body affairs are conducted in a business-like manner, are well documented and all statutory duties are met. This is a very good improvement on the findings of the previous report. Governors' knowledge and understanding of what goes on in the school is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. As a result, they are now in a position to challenge and question management and, in turn, the local education authority. The governing body is also very successful in involving the local community in school affairs and the Chair of Governors (the local Vicar) ensures that the school's 'mission' to develop a 'Sense of community' is a reality.

40 The headteacher leads the school well. She displays a high level of commitment and effort for which she is both valued and respected by the school community as a whole. She gives a strong focus and direction to the school that is based on:

- extensive and developing monitoring of provision;
- clear values for academic and pastoral achievement of all the pupils;
- delegating and clarifying responsibilities, so that all on this small staff bear some responsibility for what goes on in school;
- adding impetus to school improvement planning;
- creating a positive climate for improvement from which the school can now move on to a position of added strength.

- 41 The school benefits from the effective leadership of staff with management responsibilities. They are fully supportive and their management of subjects is strong. The headteacher gives a firm, but sensitive, steer to their work and this has successfully created a corporate sense of responsibility and commitment among all teaching and non-teaching staff. The key areas of strength are:
- the knowledge and understanding of strengths and shortcomings in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology has led to good improvement in all of these subjects;
 - the good support for individual teachers in both formal and informal ways;
 - the promotion of a clear commitment to teamwork and reflective teaching;
 - a commitment to raising educational standards.
- 42 The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The school is committed in its strategic plan to reducing barriers to learning. Key factors in this are:
- the strong awareness of all staff and governors about the statutory requirements that relate to these pupils;
 - the good arrangements for staff to keep records and track the progress of identified pupils;
 - the maintenance of effective individual education plans and recognition that reviews are rigorous;
 - the maintenance of good working relationships with partners, such as parents and outside agencies.
- 43 The school actively reviews its provision and teaching approaches through the continuous process of performance management and evaluation. Evidence for this work is drawn from, for example:
- lesson observations;
 - standards in English, mathematics and science;
 - the tracking of pupils' achievements;
 - the regular checking of teachers' lesson planning.
- As a result, there is a detailed development plan. This is supported by action plans for a range of curriculum areas. Other action plans cover, for instance, promoting a healthy lifestyle. Targets are set with costings, responsible personnel, and criteria are outlined against which success can be measured. This system has been successful recently in improving provision in mathematics, science and information and communication technology and the process is continuing. For example, it has recognised a need to focus on writing as an area for development in English and on data handling work to improve attainment in mathematics.
- 44 The school's financial resources are managed efficiently and effectively. Good use is made of funding, some in the form of grants, and contributions from external agencies, for improvements to the building and curriculum resources. The school's educational priorities are clearly identified in the school improvement plan and the governors' budget setting process is linked closely to the plan, focusing appropriately on improving educational outcomes. They also have a clear policy for the use of the budget surplus which highlights:
- the central importance of employing and developing good staff;
 - retaining monies that will make a contribution to improving the accommodation, particularly the building of a hall and establishing a discrete play area for the Reception Year.

Good procedures are in place for obtaining good value for money in the purchasing of supplies and services. Financial control and routine administration are very well managed by the headteacher and school administrator.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	266,292
Total expenditure	288,426
Expenditure per pupil	3,812

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59,046
Balance carried forward to the next	36,912

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** and supports children of all capabilities and backgrounds well and leads to good achievement. Currently, there are no children designated with special educational needs. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection with effective planning that has been refined to better cover all areas of learning and further opportunities for children to actively engage in a range of activities. When children start in the reception class their skills and knowledge cover the full range of abilities, but overall are a little below average for their age. Strengths in the good teaching are:

- the very good planning;
- the insistence on high standards of behaviour;
- the very good teamwork between all staff that creates a caring, learning environment.

As a result, children are well motivated, have very positive attitudes and behave very well.

Example of outstanding practice

All children were dressed in quality costumes as crew (adults), or first, second, or third class passengers (children), experiencing the last moments aboard the ill-fated ship, the Titanic. Teaching was highly stimulating, the range of practical activities, which covered all areas of learning, were exciting, consistently challenging and the management and organisation of the children stemmed from an experienced knowledge of the needs of young children and how they learn. Resources were of high quality. The crew were purposefully attending the first class passengers dining sumptuously at the captain's candelabra lit table, whilst others ate more meagrely elsewhere. Recreational pursuits on deck, (outside), such as croquet, sketching, reading or sedate waltzing were enjoyed by the first class passengers, whilst other passengers were crowded below deck (inside), revelling in energetic Irish jigs. All children were totally engaged in their activities throughout the session and achieved very highly, because, not only did they glimpse a social insight into the past, but learning was such an adventure!

Good assessment procedures are in place and all staff know the children well so that activities are always realistically challenging. The effective and imaginative provision of relevant resources to support learning are always of high quality and often made by staff and parents. Activities are exciting for all children, good links are made across the areas of learning and give children rich, practical opportunities to engage fully in all the areas of learning, with the exception of physical development. As a result, the children achieve well and attain standards above those expected in most areas of learning, except physical development which is satisfactory overall. There are continuing improvements in the provision for outdoor play equipment, but it remains unsatisfactory. There is no designated play area for the reception children, no easy free - flow access to the outside and no large - sized physical education equipment. These shortcomings are well known by the school and plans are very advanced to overcome the problems. However, the funding is not yet available.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from good teaching, well organised daily routines and the high expectations set by all staff.

- Relationships are warm and friendly and promote high levels of confidence and enthusiasm for learning.
- Children have very high standards of behaviour.
- Adults provide very good role models.
- The opportunities for learning through play are good.

Commentary

45 This area of learning is central to the work in the reception class and contributes very effectively to the children's achievements in the other areas of learning. By the end of the reception year most children attain standards above those expected and achieve well because teaching and learning are good. The reception classroom is an exciting environment with very well planned learning opportunities so that children are eager to try activities. The input is continuously positive and the teacher's strong emphasis on learning through play ensures that children's social skills are being continually well developed. The staff develop effectively the children's understanding that good behaviour is expected and provide activities that encourage them to work together and co-operate. All adults act as very good role models, helping children to form positive relationships and care for others. As a result, children's self-esteem is enhanced, as observed when role-playing passengers on the Titanic.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skilful teaching affords very good early opportunities for children to become competent in basic skills.
- A wide range of very well organised resources are used very effectively to promote children's early communication, language and literacy skills.
- Regular practice helps children to become competent in key skills of speaking and listening and writing during independent and imaginative role-play activities.
- The level of support from the teaching assistants is very good.

Commentary

46 Teaching and learning are good and most children achieve well and are on target to exceed expectations in this area of learning, particularly in reading by the end of Reception Year. Skilful questioning, sensitive listening and exposure to the very stimulating environment offer many varied opportunities for children to talk, listen, read and write and engage their imagination and interest. Most children speak fluently and volunteer information about their activities, but others give short answers unless prompted. The well equipped *Seaside shop* and *Ice Cream Van* give children good opportunities to regularly experiment, develop and practise their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Early reading skills develop very well through the use of stimulating games, such as *Jump in the Hoop* and *Sound Buttons*. Recognition of letter sounds and skills of blending and segmenting sounds within words, such as *ss*, *ff*, *sh*, *ch*, are made fun and motivate the children to succeed. Writing is good and higher attaining children write well, for example – '*Fred Flintstone found a fish.*' Information and communication technology is used well for literacy

games. Children are beginning to develop mouse control as they drag and drop items of Bo Bear's clothing across the screen with increasing competency.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very skilful planning and organisation and high expectations give very good early opportunities for all children to become competent in basic skills.
- Well-chosen, stimulating resources and a very wide range of activities support and motivate children.

Commentary

47 Children are well on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals, make good progress and achieve well because of:

- good teaching;
- very good planning;
- high expectations;
- very effective support from the teaching assistants.

Achievement is also promoted by a wide range of activities which provide good opportunities for them to solve problems and use their mathematical thinking and ideas. The children acquire a good level of understanding through the use of practical activities. Number jingles, counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, recognising relationships and working with number, shape, space and measures enrich all aspects of mathematical understanding. Children count to 10 and beyond, to 100 and back in tens and benefit from a very good variety of practical activities that reinforce mathematical understanding. In the shop, they use 5p and 10p coins confidently when purchasing items and higher attaining children need little support when giving change from £1. Mathematics programs on the computer are used well to reinforce and consolidate learning. With very good adult support the children begin to recognise repeating patterns and use appropriate shapes to make representational models, such as triangles.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a very good range of interesting activities to stimulate children's curiosity and broaden their experiences.
- Effective links are made between all other areas of learning.
- Staff make good use of the outdoor area and visits out of school to enrich children's experiences.
- Good use is made of computers to enhance children's learning.

Commentary

48 Children achieve well and are on target to exceed the Early Learning Goals because of the effective teaching that presents a wide range of opportunities to learn through observation and investigation. Learning is consequently an exciting experience incorporating interesting activities, both inside and outside the classroom to arouse the children's curiosity. They learn successfully about the world around them. Mainly through very well planned, investigative themes, such as *Materials*, in which they sort, successfully, different types of materials into groups and label *flufiy* (fluffy) *waiyt* (white), strong. Geographical skills are very effectively developed by studying the

habitat and climate of hot and cold lands. Children make good use of simple computer programs to paint pictures and reinforce work in reading and writing and develop a sense of the past when they study photographs of household appliances. They enjoy designing and making, and ongoing work and photographic evidence confirms this, especially the wide range of junk model vehicles and finger puppets.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's ability to manipulate small tools and equipment develops well because of focused teaching.
- Resources are much improved since the previous inspection, although outdoor play equipment remains unsatisfactory.
- The lack of a dedicated, well equipped outside area restricts certain aspects of children's physical development.

Commentary

49 Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Physical skills develop well as a result of regular opportunities for all children to use a wide range of very well organised, appropriate resources, such as tabletop games, modelling materials and simple tools to improve hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. The teaching in this area is good and generates enthusiasm and eagerness and consequently most children show increasing dexterity. In these elements they are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. No formal physical development lesson was seen, but in movement around the classroom, the playground and the school, children have confidence and good control of body movements. Apparatus for physical development has improved, but opportunities for children to develop their climbing, scrambling, sliding and swinging skills are curtailed by the lack of large outdoor equipment. This aspect is unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extensive resources significantly contribute to learning.
- Creative development is linked well to all other areas of the curriculum.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to use their imagination in role-play and stories.

Commentary

50 The children are on target to attain standards that exceed the Early Learning Goals. Achievement is good because they have access to a very good range of carefully chosen resources, which provide interesting opportunities to explore all the elements of this area of learning. Teaching is effective. Children's artwork shows good progress. It reflects their developing understanding of famous artists such as Picasso

and skills in painting, drawing and collage work. Cutting, sticking and gluing techniques are developing well when they create attractive collage patterns and prayer mats. The children make very good use of role-play areas either co-operatively or alone. For example, on board the *Titanic*, their play was closely linked to all other areas of learning. The throwing of a dice to obtain a place in the lifeboat, the game of deck croquet and their formal dining event, enhanced their mathematical, physical education, communication and social skills very effectively. Familiar songs such as *Hickory Dickory Dock* are sung in tune, in time, and with verve.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The coordinator has an accurate view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.
- In Years 3 to 6, the basic writing skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not good enough.
- Throughout the school, skills in speaking, listening and reading are good.

Commentary

- 51 Since the previous inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. This is because the main strengths have been maintained, particularly in speaking, listening and reading. However, the quality of writing is not as good as reported then and the school is aware that there are shortcomings and is working towards improving on them. Evidence from the inspection is consistent with the results of national tests which show that in Year 2 standards are above average and achievement is good. By Year 6, overall standards are above average, with speaking, listening and reading as the stronger elements. Overall, all groups of pupils make good progress, but only satisfactory progress is made in the development of basic writing skills.
- 52 Pupils of all ages are confident speakers, both on a social level and in more formal situations, such as contributing to school assemblies. They share opinions and exercise their imagination. The majority listen carefully when required and provide appropriate responses. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and benefit from a good range of books available at the school. They are accustomed to reading independently. Younger pupils use dictionaries and spelling aids, and are beginning to know how to get information from reference books. By Year 6, pupils read fluently, accurately and with expression. They talk about their preferences and know which authors they like. They are encouraged to read widely and are developing an enjoyment of reading and a love of books. Pupils' reading is usually well supported at home and parents make good use of the home/school reading diary. Guided reading sessions at the beginning of the afternoon are used very effectively to encourage pupils to read widely for a range of purposes.
- 53 In relation to pupils' writing, it is clear that the standards and progress are less than in other aspects of the subject, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The main reasons for this are:
- pupils are not showing enough pride and care in their work and this has led to weaknesses in spelling, handwriting and punctuation;
 - teachers are not ensuring that pupils have a clear view of their own rate of progress and how to improve further.
- 54 Despite these shortcomings, the range of writing is good and in the best pieces of work there are high levels of productivity and skill. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write. In the lessons observed there were clear objectives for the lessons, resources were used well and tasks proved challenging. Teachers throughout the

school are keen that pupils develop good basic skills and this is particularly successful in reading. However, in the Year 3 / 4 class, time was used less well when the teacher provided the pupils with an example of how to produce a piece of writing. As a result, part of this otherwise good lesson did not interest the pupils because:

- the pace of this part of the lesson was slow;
- there was insufficient use of pupils' ideas;
- good opportunities to use the interactive whiteboard were missed.

55 Assessment and record keeping are satisfactory. Reading records are helpful because they indicate individual pupils' strengths and difficulties. Writing samples are kept in pupils' folders and these give clear indications about what pupils know, understand and can do. However, they do not give clear indications of what pupils need to learn next. For example, marking does not provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they have to do to improve their work, nor is assessment used effectively to plan for individual pupils' future needs. The main reason for this is that teachers' comments are not directly related to the targets set for pupils and do not help the pupils to know how they are progressing in the meeting of these targets.

56 Overall, leadership and management are good because the coordinator is well aware of the shortcomings in writing and is working hard to raise standards, particularly amongst the boys. The evidence from the most recent development work in reading is that the school is well placed to improve standards further. For example, the coordinator recognised that the older boys were losing interest in reading and standards were dropping. As a result, new reading materials were purchased and discussions with the pupils show them to be thoroughly enjoying the new stock. The coordinator gets the information she needs from a wide range of monitoring, such as:

- tracking pupils' achievement, and this led to a discovery of weaknesses in spelling;
- analysing pupils' books;
- analysing teachers' planning every half-term;
- observing lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57 By the end of both key stages, good use is made of other subjects to help develop skills of literacy. For example in Year 2:

- pupils write about the environment in geography;
- writing in history relates to Henry VIII and to being an evacuee in World War II.

Skills and attitudes are further developed in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils have good skills in using the library to find information and their writing is found in a range of subjects such as:

- personal, social, citizenship and health education as they write about endangered and extinct species;
- design and technology, when evaluating their designs for a bedroom;
- religious education work about Christianity and Judaism.

Across the school, there are good examples on information and communication technology being used in writing and reading work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good basic skills in mental arithmetic, number and problem-solving.
- Lesson planning provides pupils with challenging activities.
- The use of information and communication technology has improved teaching and learning.

Commentary

58 Standards in mathematics are on course to be above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. These are similar findings to the previous inspection and the strengths identified at that time have been maintained. Important factors are:

- successful teaching that has benefited from recent training;
- good leadership and management that accurately recognises the strengths and few weaknesses in the provision and pupils' learning;
- the introduction of the interactive whiteboards in the classrooms.

Pupils in all groups make good progress across the school and achieve well. There is currently no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the teaching is good. These and other factors continue to have a positive impact on the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils.

59 Year 2 pupils build well on their early mathematical experiences gained in the reception class, counting to 20 and ordering numbers accurately to 100. They look at patterns in numbers and solve problems well. They are confident with number bonds and place value, and most pupils count accurately in 2s, 3s, 5s and 10s from different starting points. Most pupils identify a range of flat and solid shapes correctly. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were able to identify correctly and recall the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes whilst exploring everyday objects. Pupils identify a range of coins, using them to solve a variety of problems. They have a clear understanding of hour and half-hour. In measuring activities, most pupils use standard and non-standard units with care. They undertake a range of practical activities successfully. In problem solving activities, most pupils identify correctly the necessary operation to find an answer. By Year 6, pupils continue to make good progress because:

- the quantity, quality and range of their work are generally good;
- work is closely matched to pupils' needs and, as a consequence, the highest attaining pupils are stretched and those that need extra support and assistance receive it at the right time;
- the development of pupils' investigative skills are regularly and well developed.

The higher attaining pupils are consistently working at above average levels in all aspects of their work except data handling, while the rest of the pupils are consistently working at never less than average levels in all aspects of their work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the structured support they receive. Pupils work hard with their tasks and show enthusiasm and this ensures they learn well.

60 The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and is now having a significant impact on pupils' standards. This is particularly noticeable in the good start to lessons when pupils' knowledge of mental arithmetic and their speed of response are often challenged. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare their lessons well. They teach all aspects of mathematics well. Teachers' planning is good and recently the use of the interactive whiteboards has become an integral and important part of the teaching and learning. High expectations, good explanations, very clear planning and the sharing of lesson objectives, all ensure that pupils are involved in challenging and worthwhile tasks. Teachers make good use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and homework is used well to extend their learning. Pupils are very well managed across the school and this is reflected in their very good attitudes and behaviour during lessons. Assessments are not used consistently to

establish clear individual targets for pupils' future learning. Whilst marking is satisfactory overall, it is not consistent throughout the school in terms of giving pupils clear guidance as to how their work can be improved still further and meet targets set for them.

- 61 Leadership and management are good. The key strengths are:
- monitoring of lessons and sampling of pupils' work has occurred and areas for development have been identified, such as data handling;
 - regular reports from monitoring are provided for the class teacher and the headteacher;
 - the identification of training needs and the encouragement to staff to improve their own practice.

Extending the reports from monitoring to the governors has not happened because there is not a strong link with the numeracy governor. Resources for mathematics are good and, together with the support offered by the teaching assistants, are used well by teachers on an everyday basis. The use of information and communication technology is good, overall, and has improved teaching and learning. The subject continues to be a strength of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 62 Pupils' good skills in mathematics help support their learning in other subjects particularly design and technology, information and communication technology, science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science is based very effectively on practical activities and the use of information and communication technology.
- The scheme of work is good and points to good assessment opportunities, but teachers' marking does not always extend pupils' learning.
- The subject supports the school's curriculum for personal, social and health education very well.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.

Commentary

- 63 Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Overall, all groups of pupils make good progress. They also achieve well due to good teaching and their own willingness to learn. The good standards seen at the previous inspection at the end of Year 6 have been sustained. Nevertheless, this is a good and improved picture because of:

- the introduction of a good scheme of work;
- improved planning for investigative science;
- the increased use of information and communication technology.

The pupils benefit from the newly consistent approach to assessment that enables staff to track individual pupils' achievements. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge across the curriculum and older pupils are very skilled at planning and discussing their ideas and applying their knowledge.

- 64 Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to plan their own investigations, make predictions and observe carefully. They present their evidence in a variety of ways, such as in

writing, tables and using block graphs, for example, to put animals in their correct habitat. They know a wide range of facts about various forms of life. They identify characteristics of physical processes, such as electrical appliances that light up, move, get hot and make sounds. Most importantly, pupils are beginning to conduct fair tests, such as the monitoring of the rate of growth of a bean from day 1 to day 8. In Year 6, pupils confidently use fair tests to demonstrate varying one factor while keeping the others constant, for instance, when looking at fungal growth. Recording of written reports, particularly those of the lower attaining pupils, are sometimes brief and less well presented. Pupils build successfully on skills, knowledge and understanding gained previously, for example:

- they know that light comes from a variety of sources including the sun;
- they carry out simple experiments;
- they know a lot of scientific facts, including the ways in which micro organisms can move from one food source to another and how this can cause food poisoning.

Pupils systematically conduct experiments, which include careful measuring in Newtons of the force of objects in air and water. Pupils use the school library and CD ROM to research facts and give very good multimedia presentations on the Food Chain Pyramid and habitats of sharks and eagles. Pupils learn to think and act like scientists and record their findings accurately, which has a significant effect on their progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their interest and enthusiasm are evident.

65 Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective teaching methods progressively build up pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 progressed from stretching a slinky toy and squashing a soft toy to using play dough to make objects, then accurately identified and named the forces they used, such as pulling, pushing, twisting, squeezing to change their shape. Teachers focus very well on ensuring that pupils understand scientific terminology, including the meaning of a 'fair test', and use it in their discussions and experiments. Lessons meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and when pupils carry out the same work the lower attaining pupils receive very good support from the teaching assistants. Numeracy skills are applied well in measurements and the collection of data and pupils present them well in a variety of forms often using computers. In one lesson seen in a Year 6 class, the review at the end of the lesson was too brief and did not allow enough opportunity to consolidate and extend learning.

66 Leadership and management are good. The coordinator has a clear vision of what needs to be done next and understands the need to focus on pupils' written reports of what they have done. Improved strategies for monitoring what is being taught are in place. A portfolio of pupils' work of what pupils are expected to do at a certain age is a useful tool for adult reference. Science plays a strong part in the teaching and learning of personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet, personal hygiene and the care necessary when using medicines and other drugs from professional external agencies, such as the Life Caravan, as well as their teachers. Links with other subjects are used effectively to enrich pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, such as the use of an interactive whiteboard to introduce investigative work on changing circuits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject supports other areas of the curriculum well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes contribute to the success of their learning.
- The resources have improved significantly and are used well.

Commentary

- 67 Standards across the school are above average and achievement is good for all groups of pupils. These findings are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, there has been good improvement because of:
- the consistently good teaching;
 - better access to computers;
 - the very good support from the teaching assistants.
- Furthermore, the coordinator teaches Year 1 and Year 2 and this, combined with a new scheme of work and a significant input of very good resources, is helping to improve pupils' knowledge and skills in other subjects. Pupils are highly motivated by the new resources, apply their skills in a variety of ways, are very productive and have good levels of application and behaviour.
- 68 The new curriculum makes effective use of national guidance, which aids teachers in their planning to ensure a full range of opportunities for all pupils. There is a comprehensive portfolio of pupils' high quality work, which shows that pupils' skills develop well and that there is good coverage of all aspects of the subject. Teachers regularly make good use of both the desktop computers and the newly acquired laptops. In addition, teaching and learning benefit from, for example:
- the use of interactive white boards;
 - access to the means of producing a multi media PowerPoint presentation;
 - the use of audio and video tapes and digital and video cameras.
- 69 It was only possible to see two lessons that were linked to other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning was good. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were actively engaged in preparatory work for giving instructions to a floor robot. In addition, during a class assembly, pupils in Year 6 presented a science topic skilfully to the rest of the class using text, images and sounds. A comprehensive, high quality portfolio of pupils' work and achievements shows that all aspects of the curriculum are covered thoroughly. Furthermore it provides good evidence of the level of individual pupils' ability and records rates of progress. This helps teachers to understand how well pupils are progressing and where teaching should lead next. An assessment system is being introduced which tracks pupils' performance and evaluates skills.
- 70 Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has considerable knowledge and expertise, which she uses very well in her own teaching and to guide other staff. There is a timetabled amount of time for direct teaching of the subject and the co-ordinator views this as a way to further develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 71 Information and communication technology is used very well to support and consolidate learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils frequently use computers in their classroom to support and enhance learning. In English, pupils use

word processing to produce original stories and poems. They use a graphics package to make attractive book covers, such as *The Cold Forest* and *Santa to the Rescue*. Pupils interrogate databases in mathematics and science to extract information. Science and design and technology skills are enhanced by retrieval of information from the Internet, for example, to design and make a Tube Kazoo.

HUMANITIES

During the inspection, one history lesson and no geography lessons were observed. Although work analysis and discussions provide good sampling information, it is not possible to make judgements in these subjects on the quality of provision, standards, achievement, teaching, learning and leadership and management.

In **geography**, there is a good mix of work in the infant classes. Pupils look for and identify Manchester as their nearest city, and London as a contrasting and more distant location. They know that London holds a special importance as the capital city. Pupils have a sound understanding of the various methods of transportation and communication around the country. They are also aware of the moral and social need to look after the environment and know some of the ways that this is done. In the juniors, pupils build well on the work done previously. Their attention is drawn to places beyond our national shores and they take a close look at the human and physical geography of Egypt. Links with other subjects include using the internet (multimap) to find locations and how to get there from the school. Overall, the programme of work throughout the school is typical for pupils of this age.

In **history**, the evidence from work analysis and teachers' planning shows a programme that is typical for primary-aged pupils. In the infants, pupils learn about Henry VIII, with particular attention paid to his changing marital status and the power of his personality. Pupils also have a good insight into the lives and difficulties people faced during the Second World War. A particularly strong element is their knowledge and understanding of being an evacuee. Pupils throughout the school are also introduced to studying the similarities and differences between life in earlier times and today. The junior pupils use timelines to illustrate this. Furthermore, they build on their knowledge and understanding of the life and times of Henry VIII by looking closely at the way the Tudors explored the world and the importance of travelling by sea. In the satisfactory Year 3 lesson observed, pupils were looking at the reasons over time that people moved from their home areas. They were provided with a range of reasons and they decided successfully whether they applied to the past or the present.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection, two music and two physical education lessons were observed, but only a very small proportion of the programme for each subject was seen. No art and design or design and technology lessons were observed. Although work analysis and discussions provide good sampling information, it is not possible to make judgements in these subjects on the quality of provision, standards, achievement, teaching, learning and leadership and management.

In **design and technology** and **art and design**, units of work are taught in half termly blocks. In both subjects the required curriculum is in place, and knowledge and skills are built upon systematically through effective schemes of work, which give detailed guidance on planning. All elements of the subjects are covered well. Analysis of teachers' plans indicate that in design and technology all pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques and develop the expected skills as a result of designing and making a variety of

products. Planning indicates that in art and design, teachers provide good opportunities for all pupils to use appropriate techniques, explore and investigate their feelings and work creatively through the use of different media. Formal assessment arrangements are not in place. Resources for both subjects are good. There is good evidence to indicate that information and communication technology is used regularly and frequently in both subjects.

Cultural development is enhanced by the study of a range of famous artists such as:

- Picasso and his still life work in the Cubism style;
- Clarice Cliff and her vivid patterns and pottery.

Effective links are made with other subjects such as history. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 designed and made a large Egyptian sarcophagus and good facsimiles of clay burial pots. Pupils benefit creatively from the use of a rich variety of resources and frequent opportunities to use them.

In **music**, pupils across the school enjoy singing and listening to music, and practising musical instruments whether in lessons or in the extra tuition sessions provided. A positive feature is the use that is made of the specialist teacher's very good expertise in music. In assemblies, music such as La Mer by Claude Debussy sets the scene for a reflective atmosphere. Pupils sing tunefully, in time, but quietly, with less attention paid to diction, breath control and phrasing.

In the two lessons observed the quality of teaching on African rhythms was very good and all pupils achieved very well. The very good use of resources by the teacher, who demanded high standards of understanding and performance resulted in pupils following quite complicated rhythmic patterns by the end of the lesson. Pupils in Year 3 entered the room to African drum music and all, including the more reticent pupils, were successfully drawn into the subsequent relevant discussions on the type and sounds of the instruments, such as the Karimba and the Kudu horns. Good questioning and the stimulating beat and rhythm of the drumming raised awareness of music from other cultures. Very good progress was seen in a more challenging Year 6 lesson, when pupils were given further knowledge and practised more complex rhythms, from four count beat to nine. All were fully challenged, no time was wasted and all pupils worked very hard throughout the lesson.

The appropriate use of music, ranging from La Mer to South African drumming and dancing, plays a major part in ensuring that music contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. There is no overall system securely in place for recording what pupils know, understand or can do in the subject over time. Evidence from talking to teachers shows that the pupils who take part in the music clubs and choir fully enjoy the opportunity to participate with others, not only in school, but also at outside venues. Visiting instrumental specialists provide very good support.

In **physical education**, the school does well to ensure that pupils receive a full programme of activities despite not having a hall. Sport and other physical activities are given full attention and competitive matches are a significant part of the school's very wide enrichment programme. The school uses several strategies to overcome the lack of accommodation, including:

- reducing class sizes so that some gymnastics work can be done in a classroom;
- visiting the local designated sports college to use their facilities.

However, these measures are not ideal and only serve to highlight the need for a hall to be built.

Swimming has a full part in the programme and records show that all pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 able to swim 25 metres. Resources are at least adequate for

most areas of the curriculum, with the exception of gymnastics. The school only has mats for this part of the programme because the lack of space makes any more complex work difficult to do.

In the two lessons observed, there was a good lesson in Year 6 and a satisfactory one in Year 3. In the Year 6 athletics lesson, the main strengths were:

- a good warm-up that ensured that pupils were thoroughly prepared for the practising of specific running skills;
- effective discussions about the effects of exercise on the body and the varying and successful styles of running, such as using long/short strides;
- working in pairs so that pupils watched each other and reported strengths and weaknesses in style and skills. Pupils are good at providing positive feedback.

Good progress in improving technique was evident during the lesson.

In the Year 3 games lesson, the strengths were:

- good instructions about how to make an accurate throw;
- the breaking down of skills so that small parts of the full activity could be studied and improved, such as keeping ones eye on the target when throwing;
- effective help for individuals.

However, the warm-up for the lesson was too short and did not focus on the body parts most needed for the activity. Pupils made sound progress in developing their accuracy and in discussing technique.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

A clear policy and whole-school scheme of work ensure that knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as pupils move through the school. The introduction of a curriculum framework directs when aspects are to be taught and allocates teaching and learning time appropriately. This makes a major contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

The arrangements for personal, social and health education including sex and relationships education, drugs and alcohol are very good. The school has reviewed and incorporated these elements into the school's curriculum planning and the Life Education Caravan staff provides a valuable input. The programme of work is often taught through subjects. For example, the importance of a healthy diet is carried through direct and related subjects, as in science and physical education.

The commitment of the staff to supporting this area, informally, ensures that pupils' learning is consistently reinforced in day-to-day interaction. The very good conduct of pupils throughout the school day gives sufficient evidence of the worth of personal, social and health education on the work of the school. The ethos in the school is warm and friendly and there is a very strong commitment to ensuring that each child is cared for well. This makes a significant contribution to the good achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This area of study is well led by the headteacher.

Self-esteem and self-confidence are raised through circle time, when pupils know they have a safe place to talk about their feelings and the things that are important to them. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, but visits to other schools of different backgrounds and cultures do not take place.

The school attaches importance to the development of Citizenship as seen in the newly formed school council, which is regarded as a good way for pupils to accept responsibility and to express their views formally. Pupils gain a greater understanding of aspects of citizenship through participating in many fund raising events for charities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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