

INSPECTION REPORT

MABS CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106405

Headteacher: Mrs S Santus

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 261563

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	439
School address:	Standishgate Wigan
Postcode:	WN1 1XL
Telephone number:	01942 749200
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Barber
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mabs Cross Primary is a very large school, with 439 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. It is a popular school and numbers have risen considerably since the previous inspection. Most pupils start in the reception year and leave at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils that join after the reception year is lower than the national average. When they start school children's attainments vary considerably but most have the skills and knowledge expected for their age, particularly in language and in their personal and social development.

Fifteen pupils have statements of their special educational needs, which is a higher proportion than in most schools. A further 48 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. The school has forged close links with a local special school, which caters for pupils who have severe learning difficulties, and the most able of these pupils regularly join in with the school's activities. A small number of pupils have been identified as being gifted or talented.

The area in general is more disadvantaged than most and this is reflected in issues of high unemployment. A few pupils are cared for by the local authority and a small number come from families who are refugees or asylum seekers. Most pupils come from British families. Twenty-five come from other ethnic backgrounds and the school receives funding to help support five pupils who speak English as an additional language

The school has an Investors in People award and a People and Places award for its work on improving the environment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
			Science
			Geography
			History
			English as an additional language
31718	D Shields	Lay inspector	
30834	A Lawson	Team inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
23375	J Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Religious education
			Special educational needs
24031	I Idle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
			Music
			Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school where teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum and good links with the community and other schools. They have positive attitudes to learning and are happy in school. Very good leadership and management from the head teacher and deputy head teacher have ensured that standards have either been maintained or improved. The school achieves all of this at an average cost and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership and management from the head teacher and deputy head teacher have helped the school improve at a good rate since the previous inspection.
- Some very good teaching ensures that standards in science are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching ensures that standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- A splendid range of after school clubs and activities helps to enrich the curriculum
- The ethos of the school is such that pupils flourish and gain in maturity and independence.
- The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and they do well. Pupils who are gifted and talented get some support but not to the same high level.
- Pupils are extremely keen to learn and to take part in all the school has to offer.
- Though the informal means by which teachers promote pupils' personal, health and social development is very good, the formal programme is not as effective.
- At the start of lessons, teachers do not always make the best use of the time of teaching assistants.

The school continues to be effective. All of the key issues identified in the previous report in 1998 have been tackled successfully and the school has done especially well to raise standards in information and communication technology and design and technology. Curriculum co-ordinators now lead and manage their subjects effectively and there is good teaching in all year groups.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well in most subjects and very well in mathematics and science. Those who have special educational needs achieve very well while those who are gifted and talented progress at the same rate as all other pupils. When they start in the Foundation Stage children's skills and knowledge are generally typical for their age and by the end of the reception year they have made steady progress to achieve many of the early goals in the areas of learning that make up their curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are above average and those in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology match those expected for pupils' age. In science and design and technology pupils are already starting to forge ahead and standards are above those expected. By the end of Year 6, the standard of work seen in English, mathematics and science reflects the results of last year's national tests. The school did not achieve the ambitious targets it had set for raising standards, as a result of a large number of the year group having started the school part way through the key stage. Standards in information and communication technology

are continuing to rise and now match those expected. In design and technology, standards are beyond those expected for pupils' age. Throughout the school, standards in religious education match those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. They behave very well and there were only two short exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. There is good teaching and learning in all key stages and the school's procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall, but good in English, mathematics and science. A very wide range of after-school clubs and educational outings enrich the curriculum and there are good links with the community and other schools. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the school has been imaginative in overcoming the problem of having a sloping yard and no field. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well and the links with parents are good. This is a school with a warm and welcoming ethos where all pupils are valued.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The head teacher and deputy head teacher make a very effective team and their leadership of the school is very good. The leadership and management of senior teachers are good. Governors do a good job on behalf of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and are very happy with what it provides. Pupils are proud of their school and talk animatedly about the lessons and activities that they most enjoy.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make more efficient use of the time of teaching assistants at the start of lessons, when teachers are talking to the whole class.
- Ensure that pupils who are gifted and talented are given more activities or tasks to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Improve the organisation and management of the formal programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Seek the views of parents and pupils more systematically.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well during their time at Mabs Cross. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are well on the way to achieving the early skills and knowledge expected in each area of learning. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, religious education and information and communication technology all match those expected by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, information and communication technology and religious education match those expected. In mathematics and science standards are well above average. A real success for the school is that standards in design and technology are above those expected for pupils' ages. Throughout the school girls and boys achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve steadily and gain the skills and knowledge expected for their age in the areas of learning.
- Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2.
- In science, standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in design and technology have risen considerably and are now above those expected.
- In information and communication technology, standards are also beginning to rise though older pupils have a lot of ground to make up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well and reach the standards of which they are capable.

Commentary

1 When they start in the reception classes, children's attainment varies significantly but most have the knowledge and skills expected for their age. An appropriate curriculum and teaching that is largely satisfactory and sometimes good ensures that they learn at a steady rate. Consequently, by the end of the reception year most achieve the early goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics. In other areas of learning work was sampled so no firm judgement can be made.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 Good teaching of reading results in many pupils in Year 2 achieving standards that are above average. Last year, a third of the pupils in Year 2 achieved a higher level and this brought the school's overall standards up. Only ten per cent of pupils failed to reach the expected level despite the fact that almost a third had special educational needs. The fact that a number of these did extremely well to overcome their barriers to learning and reach the levels expected for their age is a fair reflection of the school's success.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (28.0)*	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.2 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.4 (29.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

* The school's results will be higher than this when they are reviewed in coming weeks.

3 Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in science. They get off to a good start in Years 1 and 2, when they learn to predict, test out theories and record the results of their experiments. In Years 3 to 6 they go on to build up a formidable body of knowledge about scientific facts and theories. Standards have been high for the last couple of years and are rising at a faster rate than the national trend. This is largely as a result of good and very good teaching throughout the school.

4 Teachers' commitment to raising standards in design and technology has paid dividends. From being below those expected at the time of the previous inspection they have risen tremendously and are now above what is expected for pupils' age. From Year 1 onwards pupils practise and improve their skills of designing, making and evaluating models so that, by the end of Year 6 they are competent in all aspects of the subject.

5 Standards have also risen in information and communication technology. As resources and teaching have improved so has pupils' skill and competence. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had a good grounding and standards match those expected for pupils' age. Standards are prevented from being higher by the end of Year 6 because older pupils have had a lot of catching up to do. Though their skills match those expected they have not had the time to develop their expertise sufficiently to make standards higher.

6 Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well. This is largely because of the school's very good provision which includes clearly focused targets, plenty of help from teachers and teaching assistants and work that is pitched at the right level to challenge and ensure that they play a full part in all lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and they behave extremely well. This is reflected in the fact that there were very few exclusions in the last year. The school promotes pupils' social and moral development very well. Their cultural development is promoted well. There have been improvements to the way that teachers promote pupils spiritual development and this is now satisfactory. Most pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy lessons and are very keen to attend after-school clubs.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and effective policies to achieve this.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. This mirrors the good role models of teachers and the informal arrangements for promoting their social and moral development.

Commentary

7 Pupils are keenly interested in all aspects of their learning. They listen carefully and are eager to respond to questions or be involved in discussions. They talk about their work confidently and show a very positive attitude to school. The good range of extra-curricular activities offered at lunchtimes and after school help to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of fair play and

teamwork. These activities motivate pupils well and they are keen to be involved. The commitment of the staff to these additional activities is very good.

8 The behaviour of pupils is very good and this is due to the high expectations of all the staff who work with them. Not only is this seen in classrooms but also as pupils move around the school and during their time in the playground. The stability and teamwork of the staff and the effective policies for behaviour ensure that the emphasis is on pupils' learning rather than managing behaviour. Pupils are involved in setting school and class rules and this has a positive impact on their behaviour.

9 Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's aims. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils clearly respect their teachers and the good role models they see help them to form good relationships with each other. They work very well together in pairs and are fully aware of the need to take turns and share ideas. They are sensitive to the needs of others and support pupils with learning difficulties very well. Older pupils have a good range of responsibilities that contribute to the running of the school, such as for caring for the younger pupils and acting as monitors during lunchtime.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.7%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – African

No of pupils on roll
413
7
2
3
3
2
8

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching and a rich, varied curriculum are the main strengths of the provision but close links with parents, the community and other schools all play a part. The ethos of the school is one of calm, respect and courtesy where staff take good care of pupils and have their welfare at the heart of everything they do.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection and there is now good teaching in each key stage. In the past it has been strongest in Years 3 to 6 but by appointing new staff and encouraging supportive team work in the department the head teacher has introduced some equally good teaching to classes in Years 1 and 2. The assessment of pupils work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good command of the areas of learning and the subjects they teach.
- The activities teachers provide are often exciting and challenging and pupils respond by working hard and being keen to learn.
- The methods used to teach pupils are effective and help them acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate overall.
- In lessons, good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve very well.
- Pupils who are gifted or talented do not get the same quality of support though they progress at the same rate as other pupils.
- Teachers do not always make efficient use of teaching assistants at the beginning of lessons but at other times teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	11 (21%)	19 (36%)	22 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

10 Teachers have a good knowledge of the areas of learning and the subjects of the national curriculum. In the Foundation Stage, staff use their thorough knowledge of how young children learn to plan activities that are interesting and challenging. Children take full advantage of these and are often absorbed in their work. They try hard with reading and writing tasks and are pleased when they get things right. In design and technology and information and communication technology teachers' expertise has improved since the last inspection, due in part to a well-planned training programme. This is most noticeable in design and technology where teaching had previously been unsatisfactory. In this subject, teachers now use a high quality programme of work to plan activities and ensure that skills are taught sequentially. This has brought about a rapid rise in standards to the point that they are now above those expected. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 have been working with the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy for some years now and have a thorough understanding of how to teach the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Their success is evident in the way that most pupils achieve well in these subjects.

11 Many of the activities planned by teachers are exciting and demanding so pupils enjoy their work and look forward to lessons. For example, in the Foundation Stage children bake, dance, play instruments and create pictures using paints, crayons and computers. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are set challenges to solve problems in mathematics and science and to research facts about other cultures, places and religions in history, geography and religious education. Very often the challenge comes from the questions that teachers use to put pupils on the spot and make them think. For example, in a good geography lesson pupils in Year 4 were asked to consider why life expectancy was lower in an African country than in a European one and how education differed in both. Pupils respond particularly well to the many exciting first-hand experiences planned by teachers. A group of pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about a visit to a local museum mill and their knowledge was very detailed because they had learned so much from the visit.

12 The methods used to teach subjects are effective and ensure that pupils learn at a good rate. There is a fair balance between time planned for the whole class to engage in discussions and answer questions and that allowed for pupils to practise and consolidate what they have learned. A good feature of the teaching throughout the school is that teachers use the final minutes of most lessons to go over what has been learned and pull together the main points. This helps pupils to

know how well they are learning and, significantly, keeps pupils keen to achieve their best. Older pupils are taught in groups of similar ability for English, mathematics and science and this works well. Teachers also make sound use of homework to further support and increase pupils' learning. Right from the foundation stage pupils are expected to read at home and, as they get older, they get more frequent and difficult homework in English, mathematics and in researching other subjects.

13 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs continues to be very good. Pupils from a local special school are fully integrated into the school, with equal access to the curriculum and the same opportunities as other pupils to make progress. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual targets. Individual programmes of work are very specific and are linked to learning needs and, where relevant, to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers are good at matching work to the abilities of these pupils and consequently they achieve very well in relation to their starting point.

14 Teachers are not yet ensuring that pupils who are gifted and talented get the same good deal as those who have learning difficulties. The school has identified these pupils but teachers are not yet planning work that meets their needs in the same systematic way that they do for those who have learning difficulties. For example, other than what is on offer to all pupils there is very little to promote particular sports, artistic or musical talents of pupils. The head teacher and governors recognise that, in a school that prides itself on ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve their full potential, this is a priority for development.

15 At the start of some lessons, teaching assistants have no part to play while the teacher talks with the whole class. Sometimes this can be for fairly lengthy periods so their time is not being used efficiently. Once pupils settle down to group or individual work teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the teaching by giving good help and advice to those who need it and in particular working with groups of pupils who have special educational needs.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and is substantially enriched by a splendid range of extra-curricular activities. Though it fully meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs, it is not yet meeting to the same extent the needs of pupils who are gifted or talented. The accommodation is satisfactory and there are good resources in many subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra-curricular activities are well supported and enrich the curriculum considerably.
- A high level of inclusive education is fostered by very productive liaison with a local special school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is still at a very early stage of development.
- The school has overcome the limitation of having no playing field.

Commentary

16 The school provides a good curriculum that is much enriched and enlivened by additional activities such as extra-curricular clubs. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and take great pains to make their lessons as interesting and stimulating as possible. They add an important dimension when they bring in visitors to work with pupils on a wide range of learning tasks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from residential visits that greatly help their personal and social development.

17 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. As a result, they achieve very well. A high level of inclusive education is further enhanced by very close and productive links with a local special school. This benefits those pupils with severe learning disabilities who attend

this school and the mainstream pupils who also gain from the social interaction and additional teaching expertise. The full range of pupils with special educational needs is identified at an early stage and appropriate individual action plans are drawn up to support their learning.

18 Staff and governors have recently agreed procedures for identifying those pupils who are gifted academically but, without the views of parents and pupils, staff cannot be sure who has talents in other areas. Similarly, while teachers find it fairly straightforward to teach the academically able pupils at a higher level they are not sufficiently aware of what is available to promote the skills and talents of others. The senior management team and teachers recognise that this is an area the school needs to work on and have rightly identified it as a priority for work in the coming year.

19 Teachers have had to be creative in order to overcome the problems of having no field and a yard that slopes considerably. A tribute to their skill is that pupils' games skills have not fallen below those expected. In large measure this is because teachers enable pupils to play in leagues and tournaments that take place at other local primary schools; though this does mean that all games are 'away' from home.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for well. The school ensures their health and safety and teachers provide them with good advice and guidance. Pupils are involved in the school's work, but teachers do not often enough seek their views or enable them to have a say in matters that are important to them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are familiar with the school's health and safety procedures.
- Many staff are well trained in first aid.
- Pupils feel that they have a good relationship with the adults in the school.
- There are no formal procedures in place to seek, or act upon, the views of pupils.

Commentary

20 The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. A good proportion of all the adults working in the school have had training in initial and emergency first aid procedures, which is up-dated at regular intervals. In discussion with pupils, they are very confident about day to day procedures. For example, even very young pupils know where they need to go to if there is a fire drill and they are aware of why they have to be sensible when evacuating the building. Pupils are able to name the person on duty to look after them at breaks and lunchtimes and know that this changes on a regular rota. The rotas and fire drill instructions are clearly written out and displayed at child height in each classroom and around the school, so all are able to read the guidance for them. Any health and safety procedures relating to curriculum subjects are taught thoroughly. Consequently pupils of all ages are quite able to explain how to use design and technology tools and equipment safely and why it is important to wash their hands before handling food or after scientific experiments. The school staff all ensure that safe practice is promoted well in lessons.

21 The relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel that all staff in school give them good support and advice with their work. In English and mathematics pupils are given individual learning targets, which they feel help them to make progress. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they are happy with the way their work is marked on a day-to-day basis. As one pupil said: 'When our work is marked, it isn't just a tick. We know why something is good or what we need to do to improve. Teachers do talk to us about this'. Pupils also feel that they are well prepared for tests and yearly examinations.

22 Pupils are involved in the work of the school and because of the trusting, open relationships they have with staff, they do feel that their views on many issues are taken into account. However, the school has as yet no formal procedures in place to seek, or act upon the views of pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to have good links with parents, other schools and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed about their children's work and progress.
- Pupils benefit considerably from the links with a local special school.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their work to restore Mabs Cross historic monument and it has earned the school a national award.
- Although staff always listen to parents' opinions, concerns and suggestions, the school does not often seek their views in a formal way.

Commentary

23 Parents continue to receive good quality information from the school, particularly regarding the progress that their children have made. Annual reports provide a clear picture of pupils' achievements and in most classes teachers set suitable targets to help them do better in important subjects such as English and mathematics. The reports generally give a view of pupils' attitudes to learning so that parents know whether their children are working hard. Parents whose children have special educational needs are always invited to attend the frequent reviews of their children's progress towards their individual targets. They are also given good advice about how they can continue the school's work and help their children at home. Teachers also set aside time to meet with parents and talk about how well their children are doing. The fact that consultation evenings are so well attended is testament to how useful parents find these meetings. In addition to receiving substantial information about their children's progress, parents are kept fully informed about the life of the school and its daily routines through regular, well presented newsletters.

24 The school has forged close links with a local school for pupils who have special educational needs. A number of the most able pupils from a local special school attend Mabs Cross each day. For part of the time they are taught by class teachers and a specialist teacher, which means that they have good access to the wide curriculum offered by the primary school. For literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils from Hope School are taught in a small group where very good teaching ensures that they get a lot of extra attention and help. As a result, they make very good progress towards the targets in their programmes of work. All pupils benefit from the inclusion of these pupils in the school. They learn tolerance and respect for one another and work in harmony and friendship.

Some time ago pupils undertook a project to find out about the cross that stands in front of their school. They decided that Mabs Cross, which has a history dating back to the crusades, was of great importance to the local community and as such should be restored and given greater prominence as a landmark. With help from their teachers, pupils approached the Mayor for funding and became very involved in subsequent work to restore the cross to its full glory. On the way, pupils learned a lot about the history of the community and gained many social skills that will stand them in good stead as adults. They talk animatedly about the work and are thrilled when locals and visitors stop to look at the cross or enquire about it. The work initiated and carried out by pupils earned the school the national award People and Places and they are rightly proud of this.

25 From the Foundation Stage onwards, the accessibility of staff is a strong feature of the partnership between home and school. Parents are able to see their children's teachers before and after school and make appointments to talk to them for longer if necessary. In this way staff are always prepared to listen to parents' views, concerns and opinions. However, teachers recognize that they do not often seek parents' views about the big issues that affect the school in a formal way and because of this they miss opportunities to strengthen the partnership further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The head teacher and deputy head teacher make a very effective team and their leadership of the school is very good. The leadership and management of senior teachers have improved since the previous inspection. Those who lead the core curriculum subjects, English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, are good managers and those leading other subjects, who have less experience, are satisfactory. The work of the governing body is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head teacher and deputy head teacher is very good.
- The head teacher and deputy head teacher create effective teaching teams.
- The school makes good use of performance data to identify weaknesses and raise standards.
- The governors do a good job on behalf of the school.
- Those subject co-ordinators who manage the foundation subjects do not monitor and evaluate their subjects as effectively as more experienced staff.

Commentary

26 The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and her leadership is very good. She has established a challenging, but supportive atmosphere in the school in which all staff strive to improve the quality of their work. A very good feature of her leadership of the school is the ability to create effective teams of teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff feel that their work is valued and as a result of this, there is a constant desire to improve what they do. This has a positive effect on the standards achieved and the attitude and behaviour of all pupils. The head teacher and deputy head teacher work together as a very effective team. They, along with the subject leaders in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, make good use of national and school test data to identify any weaknesses in standards or teaching. This results in a quick response to tackle emerging issues, and a good focus on raising standards.

27 A major issue from the previous inspection was to improve the quality of curriculum management. This issue has been tackled successfully so the leadership and management of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are good. Leadership and management of the other subjects are satisfactory and good in some instances. For example, in design and technology the subject leader has been instrumental in bringing about significant changes leading to a good improvement in standards.

- Not all co-ordinators have had training for their role and they are sometimes not clear how to use their time to the best effect to monitor and check the work of teachers and children.
- Not all co-ordinators have yet had the opportunity to check the quality of teaching in their subject, so they have no clear view on where the strengths and weaknesses are.

28 The management of the school is good. There are very good procedures enabling the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis and in this, the administrative staff make an effective and valued contribution. They are well trained and provide a welcoming point of contact for parents and visitors.

29 The governance of the school is good. The chair of governors supports the headteacher well and provides an appropriate, well-informed source of challenge to management decisions. The governing body is well organised and in discussion, it was evident that the governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are involved in the regular review of the school improvement plan and through their review of subject action plans; they have a clear sense of the school's priorities for improvement. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities with rigour. They actively promote the school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, ensuring that the budget is used wisely to provide a good level of support staff in the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	979, 844
Total expenditure	943,254
Expenditure per pupil	2,068

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48,234
Balance carried forward to the next	36,589

30 The management of the school's finances is good. The head teacher and governors take every opportunity to obtain extra funding through special grants and local initiatives. As a result, school toilets and cloakrooms have been renovated to a high standard and a new food technology room has been built and fitted out with quality resources.

The school has very good procedures to ensure that it applies the principles of best value and in this, the governors are very pro-active and informative. The school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31 It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to make judgements about the school's provision in all areas of learning. Those relating to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development were sampled and information about the way that staff promote children's personal and social development was derived from all observations of lessons and the day to day work of the school.

32 Staff promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world through a wide range of activities based on first-hand experiences. For example, in a very good activity they explored food and observed how the baking mixture changed shape and texture when cooking fairy cakes. They found out about bones and the skeleton by feeling their own and looking closely at animal bones through magnifying glasses.

33 Each day children have opportunities to draw, paint and make models. Sometimes these are linked with other work, such as when they drew skeletons with chalk on black paper. At other times, there are activities that are chosen by children because they enjoy cutting, gluing and handling the range of media provided by the school. In music, children learn the names of common percussion instruments such as tambourines, triangles and drums and they know how to hold these properly. Children are very keen to take part in musical activities. They try hard to play in time with the beat and succeed in playing softly and loudly.

34 Children have daily activities which develop their physical skills including playtime outside and lessons in the hall. In one lesson children enjoyed warming up by playing the 'beans' game and were very keen to show how they could jump into and out of hoops, landing with bent knees. A good feature of these activities is that children who have special educational needs play a full part because of the extra help they get from staff. As a result, they are confident enough to have a go and achieve as well as other children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers help children to share their emotions and feelings with one another.
- Children are expected to be independent.
- Staff are good role models for children.

Commentary

35 Teachers use assemblies and story time to help children understand feelings and emotions such as fear and anger. For example, in an assembly, the teacher read children the story of an owl who faced up to his fear of flying. Children were interested in the story and later, were confident enough to reveal some of the things that frightened them. In lessons, teachers frequently ask children how they feel when they have done something good or for the first time. The praise that they get for effort as well as for success helps raise children's self-esteem and is a key factor in why relationships between staff and children are trusting and friendly.

36 Staff encourage children to be independent in their day-to-day activities, for example, in getting their own aprons and in finding the equipment they need to complete a task. Before a physical development lesson in the hall, children in one class were expected to take off their clothes and fold them so that they could easily be put back on at the end of the lesson. Some managed this easily but for many it was a challenge to get sweatshirts over their heads and plimsolls on the right foot. However, staff were very patient and allowed enough time for everyone, including children who had special educational needs to succeed. The result was a line of children who were pleased with what they had done and ready to get on with their lesson. It is a similar picture at playtime when children are expected to get their hats and coats on. Teachers are always ready to help with zips and buttons but children have to make the effort first.

37 Staff provide good role models for children. They are patient, understanding and explain instructions clearly so that children know exactly what is expected of them. As a result, there is usually a calm working atmosphere in the reception classes. Children are encouraged to work together, help each other and share equipment good-naturedly. Teachers are always polite to children who respond in the same way, often without being told. For example, as a long line of children collected a piece of toast and went out to play, many said 'thank you' to the adult holding the dish.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide daily opportunities for children to develop spoken language through conversations with adults.
- Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of reading and writing.
- Children see adults read and write and are encouraged to do the same.
- Teachers do not always plan sufficient follow-up activities to reinforce what children have learned in bigger groups.

Commentary

38 Staff try hard to promote the development of language in everything children do. When coming into school or leaving at the end of the day staff have a quiet word with children and maybe ask how they are. Children respond to these enquires by being keen to talk about their lives as when in the run up to bonfire night a number burst into school with news of fireworks they had seen and heard. When working with the whole class, teachers are careful to include shy children in the discussion by asking them pertinent questions and giving them time to answer. In the same way they ensure that children from ethnic minorities and those who have special educational needs understand technical terms by asking them questions and repeating explanations. In this way children are extending their vocabulary and are set to achieve the early goals in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception class. In all classes, staff use technical terms when appropriate and encourage children to copy and repeat these. For example, after looking at and feeling bones children were able to use the terms 'skeleton' 'ribs' and 'joint' in their conversations.

39 Children watch teachers read and write each day and in this way see how important these skills are to everyday living. Classrooms contain many words and phrases about the topics children are engaged in and in this way children learn that reading and writing is part of every aspect of their life. Each day, teachers read stories to children and talk about the words and pictures in books. In this way children know that the words and pictures tell the story and learn to read from left to right. A number of children choose to read books by themselves and they are keen to read to adults. In the same way, children see adults writing for many reasons and begin to do so themselves in imaginative play and at other times. Children's books often include sentences that the teacher has written and that they have traced over or copied. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children write short sentences independently and include simple punctuation such as capital letters and full stops.

40 Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. The strategies they use to help children identify and read the sounds of letters work well. Consequently the most able children are already, in the autumn term, reading and making simple three letter words. For example, by repeating the same sequence of events each time, the teacher helped children identify beginning, middle and end sounds in short words. Similarly, when it comes to writing, teachers put a lot of effort into ensuring that children form letters correctly. They plan a wide range of activities that children have great fun doing, such as making letters from play dough and folding the letter snake.

41 In some lessons, teachers miss the chance to reinforce children's learning. This happens when the choice of activities on offer is too wide and is not confined to practising or exploring what has just been taught. For example, after a very effective activity involving reading and writing there were few activities available for children to carry on with the task or just practise what they had learned so a number chose unrelated activities of a different kind, such as playing with small world toys.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use songs and rhymes productively to reinforce children's understanding of number.
- Practical activities help children find out independently about the pattern and relationship between numbers.
- Mathematics is a good teaching feature of everyday activities.

Commentary

42 Teachers make good use of songs and rhymes to reinforce children's mathematical understanding. Children respond positively and enjoy singing and acting out rhymes about numbers. They were particularly thrilled by a song involving 'Ten Sparkly Fireworks' and most could hold up the correct number to match the display of fireworks.

43 Much of the teaching is based on practical activities, which help children explore the pattern and relationship between numbers. For example, in ordering and comparing numbers children were able to identify which were more or less than others. In activities involving addition or subtraction teachers always ensure that children have objects that they can move around to see for themselves how the number relationships emerge. This, and the use of number lines, works well and is one of the reasons why children are quick to grasp these concepts.

44 Teachers use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and most have no difficulty in working out how many slices of toast are needed or how many more pieces of jigsaw they have to find. They

pick up mathematical language such as 'full' and 'empty' as they explore in sand and water and know the names of common shapes because they are available for touching, sorting and drawing around.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are improving throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in reading.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Teachers' lesson plans do not contain activities for those pupils who have been identified as gifted or talented.
- Learning support staff are not used well enough in some lessons.

Commentary

45 Standards of speaking and listening meet expectations in Years 2 and 6 and this represents good achievement from when pupils first enter school. A good feature of the initial part of lessons is the way teachers provide stimulating activities to extend pupils' vocabulary. This is particularly evident in those classes with a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are given time and support to express themselves with clarity and to understand words that are not familiar to them. In classes where learning support staff are used well, they spend this part of the lesson explaining vocabulary to individual pupils and this ensures these pupils are fully included in the lesson. In some classes however, learning support staff are less involved during this initial part of the lesson and this is not a good use of their time. In discussion with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, it was evident that pupils are developing a confident approach when expressing their views and opinions. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language are learning to speak English quickly because teachers ensure these pupils fully understand new vocabulary as it is introduced. These pupils achieve well.

46 Pupils are taught reading skills well throughout the school and as a result, most pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are on target to reach standards that meet the national expectation. A good proportion of pupils is predicted to reach the higher levels in tests and this represents good achievement for these pupils. What teachers do well is to introduce pupils to a good range of authors and styles of writing. To raise standards in writing, the school agreed that one of the approaches would be through fostering a love of reading and ensuring that children had access to good quality books from a wide range of authors. As a result of this decision, pupils are beginning to appreciate how authors use language to write interesting, exciting stories and this is beginning to have a positive effect on their own writing. The quality and range of reading books in the school is very good. Teachers read stories with much enthusiasm, modelling for pupils how to read with expression and this is effective, particularly with older pupils. The use of books and the Internet to develop skills in searching for information has improved since the previous inspection.

47 The use of information and communication skills to support learning in English is satisfactory, with older pupils' in particular using word-processing skills to present their work attractively. There is less evidence of day to day use of information and communication skills to work on the initial drafting and editing of writing. The use of the Internet to support research contributes much to the pupils' reading skills.

48 By the examination of test data, the English subject co-ordinators and other key members of staff identified weaknesses in pupils' writing skills, which meant that they did not reach standards that were high enough when compared to national expectations, or when compared to similar schools. As a result, strategies have been developed that are now proving successful. For

example, some teaching staff have been moved to different year groups, new resources have been purchased and all staff give pupils clear guidance in how to plan and organise their writing. As a consequence, test results in 2003 showed an upward trend in Year 2 and Year 6. At this early stage in the school year, pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are matching standards found in most schools.

49 This represents good leadership and management of the subject, which is leading to improved standards in writing and indicates that the strategies chosen by the school are proving to be successful. Standards are set to improve further. Examples of independent writing by older pupils in Year 6 show the emergence of a sharp, pacy style, with effective use of short sentences to engage the interest of a reader. Pupils are encouraged by teachers to be more adventurous in their choice of words and phrases, which results in some effective writing. For example, one pupil writes; 'The wind whipped leaves across the playground as the gaggle of mums and dads waited at the school gate'. A current weakness in teachers' planning is the lack of specific tasks and activities to further challenge those pupils who have been identified as being gifted or talented.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 In history, geography, science and religious education, pupils write in a range of styles to present narrative accounts. The high quality of handwriting is a good feature throughout the school and work is well presented. Science reports are well written and pupils explore writing from different viewpoints in history. The use of literacy skills to support learning in other subjects was a recent initiative introduced by the English subject co-ordinators and is still a current focus for improvement. The school has purchased new teaching resources to support the use of literacy in other subjects. Staff training has been undertaken to discuss how key literacy skills could be used in other subjects. As a result of this emphasis, teachers make good use of literacy skills to support learning. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that most pupils learn and achieve well.
- Teachers make the subject enjoyable and interesting by good use of teaching techniques and materials so pupils learn and achieve well.
- There is a strong and effective emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well but the needs of gifted and talented pupils are not well met.

Commentary

51 Standards of attainment in mathematics are average in Year 2 but above average in Year 6. In the 2003 national tests an average proportion of Year 2 pupils reached the expected standard but fewer than average reached the higher levels. Year 6 pupils exceeded the expected standard and a higher percentage than average reached the higher levels. Overall, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection but have improved when compared with similar schools. Pupils' progress through the juniors has improved further so that all pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school because of the high level of additional support they receive. Pupils with severe learning disabilities are exceptionally well taught as in a lesson on mathematical shapes where one pupil proudly declared, 'I'm an independent learner'. The school is at an early stage in developing a suitable curriculum for pupils they have identified as gifted and talented and their special needs are not yet fully met.

52 Teaching is good throughout the school although there has not been enough time for this to have a sufficiently positive effect on standards in the infants. The subject manager has carefully

managed the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy since the previous inspection and it is taught with confidence and flair by many teachers. Linked to a core commercial scheme for mathematics there have been improvements in planning and assessment that are helping to raise standards further. Teachers are particularly good at making the subject stimulating and pupils say that 'mathematics is fun'. This was seen in a Year 6 upper set lesson on probability where the teacher used well-prepared playing card resources skilfully to gain and hold pupils' attention and interest. Throughout the school there is a particularly strong and successful emphasis on developing pupils' confidence and facility with numeracy. For example, pupils in the lower set of Year 4 are challenged to perform some difficult mental calculations when combining numbers to make a given total and respond enthusiastically so that all groups achieve well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53 Teachers ensure that mathematics is used and developed across a wide range of subjects and, as a result, pupils learn to appreciate the value of the subject in a range of practical situations. For example they use their mathematical knowledge and understanding well in science when they record their findings as charts, graphs or tables. Year 6 pupils use their practical skills well when they estimate and measure the dimensions for their building structures.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the work involves testing, experimenting and investigating.
- Teachers always use technical terms and scientific words.
- By questioning pupils, teachers help deepen their scientific thinking.
- Pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Specialist teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is working well.

Commentary

54 A particularly effective feature of the teaching is the many practical activities that help pupils widen their scientific knowledge and understanding. This starts in Years 1 and 2 when pupils are encouraged to find things through each of their senses. So, for example, after a walk around the school pupils were able to record as pictures some of the sounds they heard. By the time they are in Year 3, pupils are so familiar with carrying out experiments that they know how to make a test of the strength of magnets fair by placing the paper clip in the same position and altering only the size of the magnet. Pupils enjoy this type of work tremendously and say it is one of the best things about science lessons. Pupils in Year 5 were thrilled at the idea of having a windsurf sail in the classroom and could hardly wait to test out their theories about air and its properties. Once again, by demonstrating scientific principles in a practical way the teacher immediately captured the interest of pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils predict the outcomes of experiments confidently and go on to devise fair means of testing their hypotheses. This feature of the teaching is one of the main reasons why standards in science are well above those expected.

55 Throughout the school, teachers always use the right scientific terminology when explaining concepts and results. The effect of this is that pupils repeat the words in their explanations and consequently build up an extensive scientific vocabulary. The success of this strategy is evident in the way that pupils in Year 2 use terms such as 'prediction' and 'conclusion' when writing about their experiments. Those in Year 6 already use terms such as 'photosynthesis', 'producers' and 'consumers' in their work on food chains. Teachers ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language can cope by giving them further explanations and sometimes by using simpler terms that they can use in their recording.

56 Teachers are very good at questioning pupils to find out what they know but also to deepen their thinking. The questions that they ask individual pupils show how well they have assessed what they can do and, more crucially they know how to take them onto the next step in their thinking. For example, in a very good lesson, lower attaining pupils in Year 3 were helped to set up a fair test after the teacher asked them questions such as 'how could I test this if both magnets attracted the clip?' Similarly, after much questioning pupils in Year 6 decided that food chains always start with a plant because they produce their own food. However, in this lesson the teachers' questioning led one girl to query the theory with regard to insect eating plants, which showed a remarkable confidence to question the rules of science.

57 Pupils' work is always marked and teachers write the sorts of comments that help them know what they need to do to improve. When they get something wrong teachers explain why and when they get it right there is always praise. At the end of each topic pupils are tested to assess what they have learned and in this way teachers know which areas of learning will need revising later in the year. Pupils also have a part to play by completing a simple evaluation sheet of what they think they know well or have not understood. This is a superb way of ensuring that they have a good understanding of what they have learned and is one of the key factors in developing pupils' confidence and love of science. A particularly good feature of the marking is that teachers consistently prompt the most able pupils to look further into science and the lives of scientists. This works well and older pupils are very keen to talk about what they know and about their favourite scientists.

58 The strategy of using specialist teachers to teach science in Years 4, 5 and 6 works very well. It ensures that pupils get the same quality of teaching and have equal opportunities to make progress. As the three teachers involved all have a good scientific background their knowledge of the subject is strong and this is evident in the lucid way that they explain facts and concepts. Additionally, they constantly bring in other aspects of science so that pupils see the subject as a whole rather than in separate concepts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and communication technology is used well to support other subjects.
- Pupils develop their computing skills well.
- The work achieved is of a high quality.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- There are no resources for pupils to monitor environmental conditions and change.
- The Internet cannot be accessed in classrooms and mini-suites.

Commentary

59 In all the lessons seen, good teaching helped pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Since the last inspection, facilities and resources have improved significantly. The school now has two computer suites, one for the teaching of information and communication technology skills and the other to support other subjects, as for example, when used as a language laboratory to support the teaching of French. All staff have received national training, which has extended their expertise and confidence. Monitoring and assessment of the subject is also in place now. The two subject leaders undertake most of the teaching and this ensures good progression of pupils' skills. In discussion, pupils demonstrate good computer skills and are very confident when talking about their work or explaining the processes they use. The majority of pupils have computers at home and these help pupils to practise regularly the skills learnt in school.

60 The teaching of information and communication technology is good because teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use the Internet well to support their teaching and demonstrate

very effectively to whole classes using the digital projector. The high expectation of teachers is demonstrated clearly by the high quality of work pupils achieve. Planning clearly identifies tasks to meet the needs of all pupils in the class and teaching assistants support those with special educational needs very well.

61 Pupils really enjoy information and communication technology lessons. They settle quickly, listen carefully and work very well in pairs, sharing the time available very fairly. Year 2 pupils create very good pictures using a simple paint package and use the shape tools well when drawing a house. They carefully make sure that all their lines meet 'because if not, the colour will fill the whole picture.' Pupils show a good understanding of how to correct their work, both when word processing and when designing panels for a stained glass window. They confidently access the Internet for research, download pictures and paste these into their text. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils very quickly learn to flip and rotate a picture in order to produce a symmetrical design and such skills are developing quickly. This is due to the very good teaching in these lessons. During discussions, pupils in Year 6 were very keen to try new multimedia software for the first time. The more able pupils experimented confidently and quickly achieved a three-slide presentation that included animation, colourful backgrounds and a range of different fonts.

62 The subject is very well led by two enthusiastic teachers, both of whom have very good subject knowledge. They teach by example and support other colleagues very well. They have a very good overview of information and communication technology and their very positive approach to lessons stimulates pupils who make correspondingly rapid progress. A thoroughly organised portfolio demonstrates good progression of skills and good examples of high quality pupils' work. Monitoring of teaching has taken place and pupils' achievements are assessed at the end of each unit of work but the results are not sufficiently used to extend the learning of the ablest pupils. Although the school has no resources to monitor environmental conditions and change, these are available within the local authority and are already planned into the programme of work for pupils in Year 5. Pupils in Year 6 use their own time to work in the suite to create and sell a weekly school magazine. Year 5 pupils have the responsibility of installing software to be used in lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63 During the inspection, plenty of examples of information and communication technology skills being used in other subjects were observed and this aspect of the teaching and curriculum is good. Pupils use the language laboratory to extend their French speaking skills. They investigate healthy living by visiting a supermarket web site and find that 'drinking apple juice is as good as eating apples' as part of their design and technology work. Much of their work links directly to numeracy when they produce a range of different graphs and spreadsheets. Literacy is supported well as they develop their word processing skills by writing instructions, poems and stories. They use the Internet to research information relating to the fire of London in history. Pupils in Year 2 extend their understanding of the work of the artist Mondrian by using a paint package to create their own pattern in the style of the artist. The opportunity to have a second computer suite has enabled these links to develop quickly over the past few months.

HUMANITIES

64 Work in geography and history was sampled by observing a small number of lessons, looking at the work in pupils' books and on display and by talking with them about both subjects.

65 In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop geographical skills through following the travels of Barnaby bear and from the work they do on the fictional island of Struay in Scotland. They understand how this island differs from Wigan in terms of its physical and man-made features. Teachers in Year 4 made good use of homework to prepare pupils for a lesson about an African village. Pupils enjoyed the homework and many had researched facts using the Internet, while others had written or drawn about the country and some had even made flags.

66 In **history**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk excitedly about famous people such as Guy Fawkes showing good knowledge of the political reasons behind the gunpowder plot and why it failed. Older pupils talk animatedly about the ancient Egyptians and the work they have done on Henry VIII and the Tudors. They know rhymes to help them remember the order and departure of his wives and, like the younger pupils, have a firm grasp of the politics of the period. One of the strengths of the teaching in both subjects is the first-hand experiences that pupils gain from educational visits to museums and on field trips. These bring the subjects to life and are often the topics that pupils remember most about.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved so standards have risen and are now satisfactory.
- Assessment and monitoring of standards are not sufficiently well developed.

Commentary

67 Standards of attainment have risen since the previous inspection when standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be unsatisfactory. Standards are now satisfactory at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 show that they have enjoyed their lessons, especially when they are encouraged to develop and write down their own ideas. They show proper respect for the customs and practices of non-Christian religions, as when they say, 'peace be upon Him' when speaking the name of Mohammed.

68 Teaching is satisfactory in through out the school and pupils steadily develop their knowledge and understanding of major religions including Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Teachers take care to link pupils` learning about religions to their social and emotional development. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class learn about Ramadan and consider the effect of fasting on Muslim pupils so they gain in understanding and develop better empathy with their classmates. Teachers use religious artefacts and teaching resources well to help make lessons interesting. For example, pupils in Year 6 are clearly impressed and delighted when shown the special dress to be worn by a schoolmate on Id-ul-Fitr day. Teachers take pupils to visit churches so that they become familiar with the traditions and architecture and develop good relationships with the local clergy.

69 Teachers are given sufficient guidance and help with planning their lessons and the full curriculum is taught. However, some specific topics are taught more than once, so better planning is needed to ensure the logical progression of pupils' skills and knowledge. Existing assessment procedures are not used consistently by all staff and there needs to be a clearer focus on standards when the subject is being monitored and evaluated.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70 During the inspection art and design, music and physical education were sampled through observing a small number of lessons, looking at work on display and talking with pupils about what they know.

71 In the three **music** lessons observed, the teaching seen was very good and pupils achieved well. The good subject expertise of teachers is used well to extend pupils' learning. One teacher takes another class for music while her own class has a physical education lesson. The advantage of doing this is that a greater number of pupils benefit from the talents of each teacher. The older pupils enjoy a weekly 'singing' assembly, very enthusiastically helped by two teachers and a teacher from a local special school. They sing tunefully, their words are clear and they show a good level of dynamics. Pupils sing rounds in three parts and hold their own part well. They clearly enjoy their

music. In all the lessons seen, pupils had ample opportunity to compose and perform, a significant improvement since the last inspection. A wide range of instrumental lessons enhances the music provision in school. Concerts in the community also contribute much to pupils' musical experience.

72 In **physical education**, the school compensates well for the lack of a playing field, a sloping playground and a hall with poor acoustics. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and high expectations. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils developed very good hockey skills. Their concentration and skills, when dribbling the ball on the slope, were very good and they used the hockey stick well to push and turn the ball. The school provides a wide range of sports activities including judo and athletics and pupils take full advantage of them. The commitment of the staff to these activities is to be commended.

73 In discussions, pupils talked confidently about their work in **art and design** lessons. The work on display shows that pupils have good drawing skills. Discussions revealed that the oldest pupils had a wide knowledge of famous artists and their work and were eager to talk about their preferences. Analysis of pupils' work in sketchbooks and on display throughout the school does however show that pupils do not get enough opportunity to evaluate or reflect on their own or other people's work. This is an important area for improvement.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those typical for pupils' ages.
- The leadership and management of the subject is good and has brought about significant changes.
- Teachers' planning does not identify tasks and activities for pupils of different abilities.

Commentary

74 The subject is taught well and teachers have a good understanding of the subject. As a result of this, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above those typically found. In discussions with pupils it was very clear that even the youngest pupils in Year 2 have a clear understanding of the planning, making and design process. One boy was able to identify with clarity what he would change about a model with a winding mechanism, were he to make it again. Older pupils in Year 6 spoke with understanding about their plans for shelters. They used the Internet to explore how to reinforce their shelter, then made models to test out the best methods of reinforcing a structure. This led to a clear understanding of how building engineers and surveyors take into account structural safety when designing. A very good feature of the curriculum is how teachers gainfully use opportunities to introduce pupils to the work of real designers. For example, a local carpet designer worked productively with pupils on the design and production of carpet tiles. As a result of this work, pupils had their carpet tiles made in a local factory, which they later visited to look at the processes involved.

75 The subject is led and managed well. The good features are:

- By rigorously monitoring planning and evaluating what pupils were doing by evaluating a sample of their work, the subject co-ordinator significantly changed the way the subject was taught in the school.
- A focus on the development of skills was promoted and the whole school timetable was changed, enabling pupils to practise their emerging skills regularly.

76 A searching audit of resources led to the purchase of new, good quality tools and equipment. Pupils have been taught how to use these competently and they are fully aware of attendant health and safety issues. These initiatives have been very successful in raising standards

from unsatisfactory at the previous inspection to being above those typically found in most schools. This represents very good improvement. A weakness for the school to tackle is that when teachers plan lessons, they still do not plan activities matching the full range of their pupils' abilities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77 The school's planned programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education was sampled and not inspected in depth. Although the informal provision for this aspect of pupils' development is apparent in all of the school's work and equally evident in its ethos, the planned programme is at an early stage of development. It still requires more thought about the organisation of groups and classes. The programme and its aims are sound and teachers have rightly set aside time for pupils to discuss issues of importance to them. However, in some lessons the group is too large to promote the intimacy needed to talk about problems or to give pupils the confidence to share their feelings. In addition to this, with such large groups many pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to join in. A second feature in need of rethinking is that in some lessons the teacher does too much talking, further reducing the time for pupils to share their views and opinions. On the other hand, with manageable class sizes, some of the teaching in this area of the school's work was outstanding, as the following shows.

In an outstanding lesson a teacher in Year 2 set the scene for a lesson about special people by reminding pupils of the rules.

Pupils' anticipation and excitement grew when she brought out her 'special bag'. The teacher explained to pupils that they had to look carefully inside the bag and they would see a very special person. They were told not to shout what they saw because this would spoil the surprise for others. One by one, and in total silence, they peered inside. As the tension mounted no one broke the rules but there were a lot of smiles because of course what they saw in the bag was a reflection of their own faces.

After this wonderful introduction the teacher introduced pupils to the character, Lola the leopard. This tiny soft toy provoked many 'oohs' and 'aahs' from boys and girls, but no one got up from their seat. The tiny "shy and scared" toy was placed in an upturned tambourine for safety. The teacher explained that, she could be passed round in this so everyone could have a look at her, but no one must rattle the tambourine or she would be frightened. Every single girl and boy showed immense care and control as they tenderly handed the leopard round, not once did the tambourine rattle and there was a great sense of empathy with the tiny soft toy.

The pupils could hold Lola later in the lesson while they spoke confidently, giving an example of something special they liked or something they felt they were good at. The extremely trusting relationships between adults and pupils were clearly shown when, later on, each pupil, spoke to the person next to them, then had to say what they liked most about this friend. Boys and girls all gave examples, sometimes with very discreet prompting from the teacher or teaching assistant. There was absolutely no embarrassment as boys commented about "the clear sparkling eyes of their friend" or girls stating that the boy next to them was "always kind and helpful".

Every contribution was valued and appreciated by the teacher, who towards the end of the lesson thanked everyone for speaking and working so hard. To end, the teacher told the pupils they were going to pass a special smile round the circle. With virtually no prompting each child in turn, behaving impeccably, turned to their neighbour and looking directly into their eyes gave a great big

beaming smile! The effect of such a simple gesture was electrifying to see and brought a tear to the eye.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	2
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).