

INSPECTION REPORT

Corpus Christi RC Junior and Infant School
Stechford

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique Reference Number: 103424

Headteacher: Mr A Cunningham

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Richardson

Dates of inspection: 29th November - 2nd December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706678

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and Infant
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lyttelton Road, Stechford Birmingham B33 8BL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Paul Devaney
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs R Watkins Lead Inspector	Mathematics	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Equal opportunities
Mrs J Clayphan	Information technology	Special educational needs
Mr C Kessell	Science	Staffing, accommodation, and learning resources
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards in reading are above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The caring Catholic ethos is a strength of the school.
- Most pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to their work.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- Planning for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology is good.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents.
- Links with the local parish are good.
- The school implements its aims and policies well.

Where the school has weaknesses

- The progress made by pupils in design and technology in both key stages, and art in Key Stage 2, is unsatisfactory.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of pupils' handwriting.
- The curriculum and resources for children under five are unsatisfactory.
- The roles and responsibilities of governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped.
- The time available for teaching is not always used efficiently.
- The school accommodation is unsatisfactory and adversely affects teaching and learning.
- Some health and safety matters need to be addressed.

The weaknesses of the school are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The governors, headteacher and staff have responded satisfactorily overall to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report. However, some areas for development have yet to be addressed. Information technology now has a firm place in the school's curriculum and standards are now much improved. The quality of teaching is better than it was, particularly in Key Stage 2, where there is now greater consistency. Teachers have produced a policy for the more able pupils, but, occasionally, these pupils are not sufficiently extended because they do the same work as the rest of the class. The quantity and quality of the school's book stock has improved considerably since the previous inspection, but the reading scheme is not always appropriate for the most able readers. There have been improvements in monitoring and appraisal of the quality of teaching, but curriculum co-ordinators do not all have a clear view of standards of teaching and learning throughout the key stages. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team are underdeveloped. Although the school accommodation is still unsatisfactory and there are related health and safety concerns, a major building project is planned for the very near future. The school continues to sustain the strong Catholic ethos valued by parents and community. In addition the school has introduced further initiatives, such as the school's literacy and numeracy strategies, target setting for groups of pupils, the introduction of a computerised mathematics program, additional literacy support for identified pupils, and the establishment of a computer suite.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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By the age of five, the majority of the children in the reception classes are in line to achieve and sometimes exceed targets set nationally for children of this age. Their personal and social development is very good.

The information shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average when compared nationally, and also well above when compared to similar schools. Results in mathematics are very high when compared with similar schools. The work seen in information technology is in line with expected standards.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Good
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching was good overall in the 85 lessons observed, with 6 out of 10 lessons being good or better. Teaching for children under five was never less than satisfactory, with 36 per cent of lessons being good or better. In Key Stage 1, 60 per cent of lessons were good or better and in Key Stage 2, teaching was particularly good with 85 being good or better. Only one lesson in each key stage was judged unsatisfactory. During the week of the inspection, the school learned that a member of staff had died. The commitment and dedication of the teaching staff was shown in their decision to go ahead with the inspection and in the quality of their lessons under such difficult circumstances.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and this contributes to their progress. Their behaviour is good overall.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory.
Ethos*	The school maintains a strong, caring Catholic ethos in which pupils can make at least satisfactory progress.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. The head teacher provides effective leadership but the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and the senior management staff are under developed.
Curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school's literacy strategy is well implemented and the numeracy strategy has been satisfactorily introduced. The curriculum for children under five is not always appropriate. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, although the outcomes are not well used to inform curriculum planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is adequately staffed. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Resources are improving.
Value for money	The school gives satisfactory value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- The caring Catholic ethos.
- The positive attitudes the school promotes.
- The standards the school achieves.
- The amount of homework.
- The readiness to listen to suggestions and complaints.
- The availability of governors at the surgery held every term and also at other times.

What some parents are not happy about

Parents are supportive of the school. Nearly every parent who completed the questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors was positive about the job the school is doing. Inspectors confirm parents' positive views. The strong Catholic ethos is a strength of the school. The school is welcoming and promotes good attitudes to learning, which lead to pupils making at least satisfactory progress. Governors are happy to talk with parents. The reading scheme has been updated but there remains a need for more good quality literature. Inspectors found little evidence of limited feedback about homework and none about follow-up to complaints, but the school has noted these comments.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve the quality of education and raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- q modify the curricular planning so that:
 - it is more appropriate for the needs of children under five (*paragraphs 27, 45, 91, 101, 105*);
 - it provides adequate time for worthwhile experiences in design and technology and art*, (*paragraphs 45, 73, 92, 147, 151*);
 - the time of classroom assistants is used more efficiently, (*paragraphs 36, 90*);

- q ensure more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by reviewing the roles and responsibilities of governors, senior managers, the special needs co-ordinator and all curriculum co-ordinators, (*paragraphs 39, 73, 76, 78, 81, 87, 88, 93, 94, 120, 135*);

- q rigorously pursue plans to improve the school accommodation in order to provide a more effective and safer learning environment*, (*paragraphs 82, 177*);

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated below:

- the use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and inform teaching, (*paragraphs 37, 46, 48, 50, 51, 130, 135, 163*);
- resources for children under five, (*84, 91*);
- opportunities for independent learning, (*paragraphs 13, 32, 45, 97, 111, 162*);
- improve the quality of pupils' handwriting, (*paragraphs 13, 33, 113, 114*);
- health and safety issues, (*paragraphs 65, 82, 84*).

* *Issues marked with an asterisk are already identified in the school development plan*

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Corpus Christi RC Junior and Infant School is a larger than average, two form entry school with 364 pupils on roll; an equal number of boys and girls. The school roll has remained stable since the previous inspection. The pupils are taught by 14 full time teachers and one part-time teacher, who are supported by three full time, and four part time, support classroom assistants. Children enter the two reception classes in the September before they are five. The entry is staggered, with the youngest children entering first, and the remaining children joining them a few at a time over the first two weeks. There were 50 children in the reception classes at the time of the inspection, nine of whom had already reached their fifth birthday. Pupils entering the school represent all ability levels but with the attainment of the majority being average to above average. Twenty-eight per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. Twelve pupils are at Stages 3-5 of the National Code of Practice and three of these have Statements of Special Educational Need (Stage 5). One per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, which is a bit higher than in most schools.
2. The school is situated on the eastern fringe of the city of Birmingham. The area where the great majority live has a variety of homes, including small terraced houses, large detached properties and local authority housing. Although there are a few families without work, there is a good range of jobs and professions undertaken by other parents. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This represents a rise of seven per cent since the previous inspection, and is broadly average when compared to other schools.
3. The school's mission statement is to create a Christian community where:
 - ◇ pupils can grow in their faith;
 - ◇ pupils can reach their full potential;
 - ◇ all pupils feel equally valued;
 - ◇ pupils can enjoy a happy and caring environment.
1. The school's immediate priorities are to:
 - ◇ implement the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - ◇ introduce the Birmingham Grid for Learning;
 - ◇ review the special needs policy;
 - ◇ review the time allocation for National Curriculum subjects.

The school has also set targets for pupils' attainment for the year 2000.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	33	23	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	25	26
	Girls	21	21	19
	Total	41	46	45
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	72 (83)	82 (88)	83 (86)
	National	79 (80)	82 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	21	25	25
	Girls	21	21	19
	Total	42	46	44
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	74 (90)	82 (90)	82 (86)
	National	79 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	19	20	39

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	34	37	36
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87 (65)	95 (60)	95 (67)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	30	30	31
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	77 (63)	77 (58)	79 (67)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

²

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days
(sessions)
missed through absence for the
latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.8
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.3
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school
age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	16
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1.Children enter school with widely differing ability levels, which, overall, are similar to those expected for children of this age, except in their personal and social development, and aspects of mathematics, where their attainment is above average. The vast majority of these children have had pre-school experience.
- 2.At the time of the previous inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were at least in line with national averages in both key stages. In all other subjects, where standards were evaluated, pupils' achievements were around expectations, with the exception of information technology, where achievement was poor, and music, where standards were above the national expectation. Since 1995, standards have risen steadily and, in the 1999 National Curriculum tests, pupils in Key Stage 1 achieved levels that were about in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science, when compared both nationally, and with similar schools. Those in Key Stage 2 achieved levels that were well above average in English, mathematics and science. For example, the percentage of pupils achieving Levels 4 and above in mathematics was 95 per cent, compared with the national average of 69 per cent. When compared to schools of similar backgrounds, standards in English, mathematics and science were also well above average, particularly in mathematics.
- 3.During the inspection, inspectors judged standards to be at least average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, at the end of both key stages. However, the standards are not as high as those achieved by the group of pupils, in Key Stage 2, who took the tests in 1999. The school explains this by showing that the previous Year 6 class was of above average ability. Test results at Key Stage 1, show that girls perform significantly better than boys but, by the time pupils leave the school, there is very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 4.The school has worked hard to raise standards in information technology, which have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Music remains a strength of the school.
- 5.Children under five make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning, and all are expected to attain the targets set for them nationally by the time they are five. Some of the brighter children achieve higher than expected standards in mathematical and language development, and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. Standards in personal and social development are higher than expected for children of their age.
- 6.In Key Stages 1 and 2, rates of progress are at least satisfactory in most subjects, but unsatisfactory in design and technology in both key stages and in art in Key Stage 2. Progress is good in music in both key stages and in physical education at Key Stage 2. The practice of discussing objectives with the pupils at the start of individual lessons, or a series of lessons, is common and in many lessons opportunities are offered for pupils to evaluate the progress made. During the inspection, progress in lessons was seen to be good overall and very good where teaching was of a very high standard. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that progress over time has been satisfactory overall, but with good progress made in some classes.
- 7.Pupils' attainment in the different elements of English is average in Key Stage 1, but above average in Key Stage 2. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is above average in both key stages. Inspectors observed that pupils listen well and they concentrate for long periods

when listening to others speaking. Their understanding of what they hear is good. Most pupils use a good range of vocabulary to explain their work and to express their ideas and opinions.

8. Standards in reading are also above average. The school strongly encourages regular reading habits and is well supported in this by parents. Reading books are generally well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, but, occasionally, they are too easy and fail to challenge the reader. The range of good literature available to readers is very limited and some reading books are in poor condition. This was a criticism in the previous inspection report and the school has done much to address the issue but there is still room for improvement. Pupils in Year 2 read fluently with good expression and use a range of strategies to establish meaning when faced with unfamiliar words. They express opinions about the characters and make simple predictions. By the age of 11, pupils are confident, enthusiastic readers and have developed good research skills such as the ability to skim and scan for information. However, their knowledge of how a library is organised is more limited. Some try to explain classification systems, but most are unaware of their existence.
9. Standards in writing are a little below average in Key Stage 1 and around average in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 write in sentences that are mostly punctuated with capital letters and full stops, and their spelling is about average for their age. However, over-use of commercial worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to write for themselves and the brighter pupils in particular are not always fully stretched. Pupils in both key stages write for a good range of audiences and purposes, and those in Key Stage 2 use language very effectively to create atmosphere. Handwriting is below average in both key stages. Pupils in Year 2 do not attempt to join their writing, and the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to use a print style well into Year 5. Many pupils in Year 6 do not use joined handwriting spontaneously. Teachers' expectations are generally too low in this aspect of English. In the few classes where pupils are encouraged to produce writing of good quality in their exercise books, for example in Year 4, they make good progress.
10. The school has introduced the literacy strategy successfully and it is clearly raising standards. It is well planned, and there is a good programme of work that links well with other subjects such as history and science, where pupils record information in a wide variety of ways, although, occasionally, there is an over-emphasis on the topic element.
11. In mathematics, standards are average in both key stages. Although the National Curriculum tests for 1999 showed pupils' achievements to be well above average, this year's group of pupils is not such a high ability group, and is not expected to achieve such unusually high standards. However, good work is undertaken in numeracy sessions to build a secure platform in basic arithmetic, including counting, number bonds and tables. The school is in the early stages of implementing the numeracy strategy and it is too early to judge its impact on standards. Accuracy and speed are improving, but there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils gain quick mental recall.
12. Standards in science are satisfactory in both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress. Attainment is sound in investigation and experiment and pupils learn to set up and operate a fair test, make predictions, observe the process and outcome, and to record the results in enough detail, for example when investigating growth conditions in micro-organisms.
13. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with nationally expected standards at the end of both key stages. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is some effective use of computers in English, mathematics and science. However, although standards have been significantly influenced by improved resources, the school cannot give computer access to a whole class at the same time and this impacts upon the progress that some pupils make. In classes where teachers feel confident with information technology, pupils make better progress.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall, in relation to their previous attainment. However, when pupils receive good quality support from the special needs co-ordinator or classroom assistants in small groups or in one-to-one teaching situations, pupils' progress is often good.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

15. The school is an orderly and friendly community. Pupils behave well nearly all the time. They come to lessons ready to learn, and this good attitude contributes to the progress they make. Other aspects of their personal development are also good. Children under five enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy. They behave well, and respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. They know the daily routines well, and develop good levels of concentration. They are eager to take on responsibilities, such as acting as register or milk monitors.

16. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in three lessons out of four, and their response seldom becomes unsatisfactory. They come to lessons ready to learn, and this is apparent in the way that, in all age groups, they listen carefully to their teacher, follow instructions, and are often eager to answer questions. Even younger ones frequently concentrate well, and older ones, especially, persevere with their tasks, for instance, during group work in literacy and numeracy, where they work independently, without direct intervention by the teacher. Often, pupils show real interest and enthusiasm for their work.

17. Behaviour is good. Pupils know that they are expected to behave well and the way they comply contributes to the orderly life of the school. Their good attitudes often leave little room for misbehaviour in lessons. They follow the classroom rules that they have themselves helped to define. The previous inspection found that disciplined behaviour contributed much to the quality of learning and pupils' achievements and this is still the case for most pupils. In a few lessons in Key Stage 1, pupils fidget and chatter at times, slowing the progress of learning. This tends to relate to a lack of consistency in teachers' expectations of behaviour, and, at times, to the way work is presented to pupils. There are a few pupils in both key stages who find it particularly difficult to behave, and require the application of particular management skills. Behaviour around the buildings and site is also generally good, but a few pupils lack self control, and tend to be over boisterous when not closely supervised. Pupils look after resources and generally show respect for the school premises, though there is a little carelessness with litter. Behaviour seldom becomes so poor that it becomes necessary to exclude a pupil.

18. Relationships are good. Pupils of all ages are cheerful and helpful to each other and to all the adults in the school. Roman Catholics, and the few from minority ethnic communities, accept and respect each others' backgrounds. These good relationships contribute to the real sense of community. In lessons, progress in every age group is assisted by the way pupils help each other and co-operate together when this is part of the lesson.

19. Pupils readily take on responsibilities when this is asked of them. In all age groups they cheerfully carry out various duties that help with classroom organisation. The oldest ones show a good sense of responsibility in the way they help to keep order around the school at lunchtime, and house captains and vice-captains take real pride in their role in operating the house points system. Pupils respond well to charity appeals. In all age groups they show initiative in their work when the activity allows this, although such opportunities are limited.

Attendance

20. Attendance is satisfactory, as at the previous inspection. It is around the average seen in other

primary schools. Pupils' regular attendance contributes to the progress they make. Unauthorised absence is lower than the average, because parents seldom keep their children away without good reason. A few children tend to arrive late for school in the morning, interrupting activities at the start of the day

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

21. The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the eighty-five lessons observed almost three quarters were good or better and one fifth very good. Only one lesson in each key stage was judged unsatisfactory. During the week of the inspection, the school learned that a member of staff had died. The commitment and dedication of the teaching staff was shown in their decision to go ahead with the inspection, and in the quality of their lessons under such difficult circumstances.
22. The school has worked well since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and its staff development programme, ably led by the deputy head, has been successful in this. Strategies, such as the reorganisation of classes so that younger, less experienced teachers are well supported by those with greater experience and expertise, have proved effective.
23. Teaching for the children under five is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good practice. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of what children need to learn, but they do not plan their lessons under the recommended areas of learning for children under five. They plan activities for differing ability groups within the class, but, on occasions, the activity set does not pose sufficient challenge for the brighter child. For example, during a numeracy lesson in one of the reception classes, children were asked to order bears from the biggest to the smallest which they could do easily, and no further challenge was offered. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and enjoy good relationships with the children. The support assistants work closely with the teachers and give good support to the children in their groups.
24. In Key Stage 1, six out of ten lessons are good or better and in Key Stage 2, seven out of ten lessons are good or better, with two in ten being very good.. The quality of teaching for music is very good in both key stages. Teaching of art is satisfactory throughout the school. No direct teaching was seen in information technology, geography, or design and technology.
25. Very good lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, very good subject knowledge, very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and very good planning that makes clear what pupils are expected to know, understand and do. In these lessons, activities are well matched to pupils abilities, the teachers are well organised, relationships are very good and teachers use clever questioning techniques and judicious praise to challenge and motivate pupils. In the rare unsatisfactory lessons, teacher's planning is not so well matched to pupils' prior attainment, or expectations of work and behaviour are too low.
26. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and only very occasionally is there evidence of weaknesses in knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan well together in their year groups and the more experienced teachers are happy to share their knowledge and expertise with younger, less experienced teachers. Since the previous inspection, an intensive programme of appraisal and professional development has raised teachers' awareness and confidence. For example, the school's literacy strategy is being well implemented as a result of staff training and shared expertise.
27. Teachers' planning is good throughout the school. Long-term planning ensures satisfactory

coverage of all elements of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology. These plans are then translated into medium term plans that ensure that pupils will make appropriate progress as they move through the key stages. Teachers work together well to ensure that pupils in parallel classes receive the same experiences.

28. The format for short-term planning is consistent throughout the school. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities in most lessons, although, overuse of commercial worksheets does sometimes prevent the more able pupils from developing independent learning habits. The previous inspection found that more able pupils were insufficiently challenged and this area for development has been addressed, with a whole-school policy and strategies to help such pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Although these procedures are partially successful, there are occasions, for example in mathematics, when all pupils are given the same work. In one of the Year 2 classes, all pupils are given the same spellings to take home and learn.
29. Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour although, in some classes, the 'hands up' routine is not well established and pupils call out and make unsolicited comments that slow the pace of the lesson. In such lessons, noise levels sometimes become unacceptably high and the teacher has to shout to gain control. Occasionally, such inappropriate noise levels are allowed to persist and this affects the progress that pupils make. In most lessons, however, there is a calm, industrious atmosphere and pupils are actively encouraged to take a pride in their work. Well-disciplined lessons provide a good learning environment in which pupils make sound and often good progress. Expectations of pupils' handwriting skills are too low.
30. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good throughout the school and based upon mutual respect, but, on rare occasions, there are incidents of a minority of teachers employing an abrasive manner that does not fit well with the school's mission statement.
31. Teachers are energetic and generally well organised. Activities are well prepared in advance and pupils know what they have to do and how long they have to do it. An effective balance of whole-class, group and one-to-one teaching give the lessons interest and pace and caters for individual needs. Sometimes, lessons are very imaginative, for example when a Year 4 teacher uses stage directions to teach adverbs and pupils act out their scenes accordingly.
32. Teachers generally use time and resources well, although the very long sessions for literacy and numeracy sometimes result in over-long lesson introductions. Classroom assistants and parents make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and are often involved throughout the lesson. Occasionally, however, adult helpers are not employed during the long introductions and this is a waste of resources.
33. Teachers assess pupils formally and informally, but it is unclear how the outcomes of such assessments are used. Discrepancies at the end of Key Stage 2, between teacher assessment and national test results, suggest that there is room for improvement in pupil assessment. Marking is generally positive and there are some very good examples of helpful comments that tell pupils how they might improve their work. Often, there is an immediate response to such comments.
34. Teachers are very aware of pupils with special educational needs and are responsible for the first stage of the National Code of Practice and preparing work within the class curriculum for these pupils. This often works well in literacy and numeracy, when many of the activities are arranged for different ability groups. However, this practice is not consistent and is managed more effectively by some teachers. In lessons where pupils with special educational needs are expected to undertake the same work as the majority of the class, progress is more limited,

unless these pupils are supported by classroom assistants.

35. Pupils at Stages 2 and 3 of the National Code of Practice are withdrawn by the special needs co-ordinator or given in-class support. The quality of teaching for these pupils is good. However, the special needs co-ordinator acknowledges the need to review whether it is more appropriate for pupils to be supported within their own classes.

36. Homework is used satisfactorily and sometimes well, in both key stages, to reinforce learning, although there are some inconsistencies. For example, in a Year 2 class, all pupils are given the same spellings to learn, regardless of differences in ability.

40. **The curriculum and assessment**

37. The previous report stated that the curriculum was broad and relevant, and fully met statutory requirements, but that the school should have higher expectations of its more able pupils. It should accord a firm place to information technology in the curriculum.

38. The curriculum for the children under five is inappropriate, since it follows discrete subjects such as literacy and numeracy rather than an integrated programme, which is more suitable for very young children. It is not planned to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes³, and not enough time is given for children to learn through play. The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced to ensure that the children receive a regular worthwhile experience in all the areas of learning. For example, art is timetabled once every two weeks. The lack of art experiences was highlighted in the last report, and remains a weakness. Personal and social development is not rigorously planned so opportunities are missed to further develop this area.

39. The quality of the curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, and meets statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. However, there are some unsatisfactory aspects of the curriculum for art, design and technology and geography, which are mainly to do with inadequate planning for pupils' progress and limited teaching time. There is a sound sex education policy. There is no formal drugs education policy at present. The balance between subjects is broadly satisfactory, although literacy and numeracy have over-generous amounts of time, due to the placement of playtimes during the day. Therefore there is less time available for the non-core subjects, and provision is inadequate for design technology at both key stages, and for art at Key Stage 2. Information technology has appropriate importance and emphasis in the curriculum. Provision for information technology was a key issue in the previous report and this area for development has been addressed well. Target setting has been established within the school to improve the standards in literacy and numeracy, and the first targets have been reached.

40. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. In its provision for pupils with special educational needs, the school has responded satisfactorily to the National Code of Practice and a recently reviewed policy, that acknowledges the staged referral system, is in place. The local education authority offers good support and advice and the school uses their recommended documentation for this process. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils are sound. Reviews are completed regularly and these are satisfactorily documented. The previous inspection report identified that the school's policy of staged identification of pupils with special educational needs was not operated fully across all age groups. This is no longer the case. However, a majority of pupils' individual education plans have targets which are related to literacy, when in some instances, targets for other areas of the curriculum, for example, numeracy, would also be appropriate.

41. The previous inspection report judged that more able pupils were insufficiently challenged and the

³ The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five.

school has addressed this area for development satisfactorily by introducing work at appropriate levels of difficulty for different groups within each class in the majority of lessons. However, some brighter pupils are still not fully challenged at all times. For example, there is insufficient evidence of work set at a distinctly higher level in mathematics. Pupils are not yet sufficiently encouraged to organise their own learning.

42. There is very effective planning in place for the majority of subjects, with the exception of design and technology. All other subjects have appropriate policies and detailed schemes of work. These are developed further in medium term plans. Teachers of parallel classes work closely together to ensure consistency of the fortnightly planning. There is some assessment of the delivery of lessons, but this is an area for further development. There are general curriculum targets in some classes that the pupils have helped to formulate.

43. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities offered to Key Stage 2 pupils, many of them sporting and geared to inter-school competitions. Non-sporting clubs include an after school art club and a lunchtime guitar club that are very much enjoyed by the pupils.

44. The school has sound systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment. Children under five are assessed on entry, using the locally agreed baseline assessment. This gives a good indication as to the abilities of the children and highlights any special educational needs. The teachers know their children well, but there are limited formal assessment procedures used to monitor the progress of the very youngest children.

45. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' attainment in literacy, numeracy, science and information technology. Records of the Baseline Entry Assessment and Key Stage 1 test results are kept, which together with the non-statutory tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, are used to place pupils in ability groups. It is unclear whether teachers refer to attainment records when doing their long term and fortnightly plans. An analysis of National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage, and other test results undertaken by the staff, has enabled the school to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in its curriculum provision for science and mathematics, which it has addressed successfully.

46. Assessment is used to identify targets for learning, but there is room for improvement in this aspect. For example, there are some wide discrepancies between teacher assessments and test results at the end of Key Stage 2 that appear to indicate weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum levels. Targets have been set for overall levels of attainment to year 2000 and the school is making good progress in achieving these. The process of setting and sharing firm targets for classes is strong, though this has not yet been extended to groups or individuals.

47. Pupils' progress in reading is monitored throughout the school, both through tests and informally. Pupils are assessed informally in the non-core subjects, but formal records are not kept. There are no up-to-date school or individual portfolios at present. There is an effective marking policy to ensure that procedures are standardised across the school. Assessment is used well in science and mathematics to inform curriculum planning, but there is limited evidence that it is used effectively to alter short-term plans. In English, there is room for improvement, and it is absent from the non-core subjects. Reports to parents include information on the results of standardised tests, and give specific details about pupils' progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, as was stated at the previous inspection. Parents are happy with the attitudes fostered by the school. The successful provision made by the school is underpinned by the Catholic aims of the school, but there is a lack of explicit planning for these aspects of pupils' development in the subjects

inspected. As a result, opportunities are missed at times for adding to pupils' experience, especially in particular aspects of cultural and spiritual understanding.

49. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Catholic beliefs and values are very strongly emphasised. For instance, these are given a high profile in the entrance area, through the aims and values in the mission statement and home school agreement displayed there, and by means of religious artefacts and pictures. This emphasis is continued successfully by displays throughout the school. Daily routines also play a full part. Class teachers lead pupils in prayer at key times during the day. Pupils are helped to value this dimension to their lives and it is notable that at times they talk of how they turn to individual prayer. In lessons, opportunities are taken at times to include exploration of others' values. When pupils study the history of Tudor times, for instance, they learn how St Thomas More aimed to be 'the King's good servant, but God's first'. Little is done to introduce pupils to the beliefs and practices of religions other than their own. At times pupils are enabled to reflect on their own lives and express their own feelings, as when children in reception showed, for a moment, a real sense of wonder at the quickly processed photographs of their recent walk. Often, their feelings and ideas are insufficiently built on, as when an imaginative piece of writing about Romeo and Juliet was recognised, in the teacher's marking, only by a dry comment about the good use of paragraphs.

50. The good provision for moral development flows from the beliefs and values upheld in the school. A display in one classroom, for instance, asks children "Are you a Good Samaritan?" and reminds them "We should treat others as we like to be treated". Pupils are helped to understand why some actions are right and others are wrong. The well-organised system of awards adds appropriately to pupils' understanding. Consideration of right and wrong is further encouraged by the way teachers help pupils to formulate their own classroom rules each year.

51. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The expectations of, and examples shown by staff during the daily life of the school, make an important contribution to pupils' understanding of how they should interact with others. In lessons, pupils are asked to work together at times when this will help their progress. They carry out various duties; for instance, the oldest ones are all expected to take turns at ensuring orderly behaviour around the school, and some of them as house captains, regularly help count up house points for the weekly award. However, there is no formal structure, such as a school council, to enable pupils to put forward their own ideas about the functioning of their school community. Pupils are helped to recognise the needs of others in the wider community outside school, for example, when collecting harvest produce for distribution to the needy. In the reception class, opportunities for social development are limited because of the way learning activities are structured.

52. Cultural development is satisfactory overall. By means of the strong links with the parish, and trips to historical and other sites, pupils are helped to an appropriate understanding of their own cultural background. A new multicultural policy and a carefully planned syllabus for religious education place a good emphasis on ways of deepening understanding of the richness of other faiths and cultures, but this is reflected, only to a limited extent, in other areas of school life. Older pupils do not gain sufficient understanding of the multi-cultural traditions represented in their own city.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. Pupils are well supported in their learning and personal development, within a very caring atmosphere, as was found at the previous inspection. Arrangements for their welfare are satisfactory.

54. Pupils benefit from the generally very warm and caring attitude of staff. They are helped to settle happily when they first join the reception classes. For example, lunch time staff give the

youngest pupils especial care as they eat their dinners, and there is a system, in early weeks, for older pupils to help care for them in the playground. Parents appreciate the way their children are cared for and confirm that they come happily to school.

55.The good care extended by the headteacher and all staff was especially apparent during the inspection, when they had to tell pupils of the death of one of their teachers and help them come to terms with this. The sensitive approach was very well matched to pupils' needs, and completely in accordance with the aims and values of the school.

56.Teachers encourage and sustain pupils' interest in learning. Systems of awards are well used to recognise good work and good efforts. Pupils appreciate the way that learning objectives are often explained clearly to them at the start of a lesson. The way their work is marked is often supportive and they benefit, in terms of their learning, from working towards targets set for their improvement. Suitable arrangements are now made to pass on information when pupils move to a new class, meeting a criticism in the previous inspection report. There is still room to further increase the use of such information.

57.Pupils with special educational needs receive support that helps them to make satisfactory progress overall. There is, however, room for reconsideration of the way this support is organised to maximise its effectiveness. There is appropriate liaison with a range of outside services that contribute to pupils' support.

58.Management of behaviour is generally good. In lessons, teachers often adopt a very positive approach, firmly establishing expectations and correcting emerging misbehaviour with little disruption to learning. In a few classes, strategies for managing behaviour are applied less effectively. Rarely, inappropriate shouting, used as an attempt by staff to improve behaviour, damages the otherwise very caring atmosphere. The behaviour policy is generally very helpful. The school is aware that additional guidelines are required, to advise teachers on the use of restraint if this becomes necessary, for instance to ensure pupils' safety.

59.Bullying causes little concern because staff encourage friendly attitudes and act effectively when poor interactions do occasionally arise between pupils. Pupils are confident that teachers sort out any bullying problems that arise.

60.Satisfactory attention is given to arrangements for monitoring attendance. The computerised registration records are managed effectively, and good attention is given to following up any emerging concerns about individual attendance or lateness. Good attendance by particular classes or individuals is awarded. Registration routines are generally conducted correctly, but in a few instances afternoon registration is forgotten and this is unsatisfactory.

61.Various good routines, including arrangements for first aid, are in place to promote pupils' welfare. Good procedures are fully in place for dealing with any child protection issues that arise; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Health and safety matters do not get sufficient attention. Although staff generally have a caring attitude towards maintaining the school as a safe learning environment, various matters currently give rise to concern. *A list of the nine significant items to address, has been given to the headteacher.*

Partnership with parents and the community

62.Parents' interest and support is fostered very successfully, and this helps pupils to make progress with their learning. Satisfactory links are also in place with the local community, especially with the local parish, so as to contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development.

63.Parents appreciate the encouragement offered for their involvement, including the good flow of newsletters and other information about school events and concerns. They welcome the brief

summary of the work for each term distributed in most age groups. The prospectus and governors' annual report both contain much useful information, though the prospectus says too little about provision for pupils with special educational needs. The welcome booklet for parents of children joining the reception year gives a very good basis of general information, but misses the opportunity to inform parents about the curriculum their children will follow when they start school. Nearly all parents come regularly to the consultation meetings arranged for them to talk to teachers. They also appreciate the curriculum meetings organised, for example, the recent information and communications technology workshop, and come to these in good numbers. Regular governors' surgeries provide a further channel for liaison with parents, supplementing parents' ready access to teachers.

64. The vast majority of parents feel well informed about their children's progress. Annual reports give a satisfactory picture of the progress a pupil has made in each subject, often with a good level of detail in mathematics, English and science. The best ones also suggest the next steps for pupils' learning. Debriefing sessions are held to discuss National Curriculum test results with parents of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
65. Good efforts are made to inform and involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in aiding their progress. Parents are informed by class teachers when pupils are first placed on the school's special needs register and the special educational needs co-ordinator is available if parents request to see her. Parents of pupils with special educational needs in the later stages of referral are invited to review meetings and most parents attend the reviews. Although parents are not involved in setting targets for individual education plans, they are very involved in the formation of behaviour plans, which are just developing in the school.
66. Parents support the school's expectations about homework, and this helps pupils' progress. For example, the way they help pupils at home contributes to the good standards pupils reach in reading. Learning is further assisted by the way a few parents regularly help in lessons and with other activities. The parents' association makes a significant contribution to the school by regularly organising fundraising and social events for pupils and parents, that fund the purchase of extra resources such as books.
67. Strong links with the local parish community continue to support the school's aims and values, as at the previous inspection. Pupils and staff, joined by parents and other members of the parish, worship together every week in the parish church next door to the school. Pupils arrange displays of work in the church, and Christmas productions are frequently performed there. Part of the church site, next door to the school, has been made available as an extra playground.
68. A few other links with the community, such as a walk by the children in the reception classes to the nearby post office, also contribute to the breadth of pupils' learning. However, there are no ongoing links with local business or industry, and few visitors from the community are invited into the school to add to the breadth of the curriculum.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

69. The school is energetically led 'from the front' by the headteacher, who cares about the school and is ambitious for the pupils. He articulates the school's aspirations well, working hard to sustain the school's ethos and to improve standards. The headteacher has been in post for nine years, during which time the school roll has increased from 270 to 364. At the same time, the number of classes has risen from 9 to 15. The school is highly regarded in the community. During the week of the inspection, the school learned that a member of staff had died and the

headteacher's strong leadership and caring consideration for the needs of the pupils, staff and parents was remarkably successful in holding the school together during this sad and stressful time. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy head and a team of dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff. Relationships with the governing body are good. Despite a lack of clarity in some job descriptions, the school has established a workable model of management, with opportunities for some co-ordinators to monitor teachers' planning, pupils' work and teaching. All staff with curriculum management responsibilities have undertaken a large amount of work to formalise and develop planning for their subject. However, the roles and responsibilities of most co-ordinators are not sufficiently developed and, in some subjects, such as design and technology and art, a clear overall picture is unavailable, hampering effective curriculum development. All co-ordinators are keen to develop and support their subjects further. For example, the co-ordinator for literacy is interested in developing a system of target setting for individual pupils. The school monitors overall standards and rates of progress and is developing its practice in this.

70. Key stage co-ordinators hold regular discussions relating to continuity and progress and the senior management team also meets half-termly to discuss matters that have arisen, and to consider new initiatives. However, the senior management team does not meet frequently enough to be able to monitor provision as effectively as it should. This was identified as an area for development in the previous inspection and, although there have been improvements, it remains so.
71. The headteacher and staff receive positive support from the governing body. Link governors are in place for literacy and numeracy and more recently, for special educational needs. Illness and recent changes to the governing body, have resulted in the latter aspect of monitoring to be temporarily neglected. Governors with curriculum responsibilities attempt to visit the school regularly. There are regular termly meetings of the governing body and of the committees for finance and premises, curriculum, admissions and staffing. Each curriculum meeting covers a particular subject and a presentation is made to the committee by the subject co-ordinator. Meetings are minuted and committees report regularly to the full governing body. The school development plan, which is detailed for the period 1999-2000, includes success criteria, resources and time scales and extends into a three year plan. This is, however, simply a list of intentions that lacks detail about how such aims are to be achieved.
72. Some governors have an unsatisfactory attendance and training record. For these reasons, and despite the good input of some individuals, the governing body as a whole is not in a position to exercise its proper strategic role. Although the governors understand the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities, there is an over-reliance on information provided by the school. The governors have much respect for the professional judgement of the headteacher and staff but there is an absence of independent procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of aspects of school life, or for evaluating the outcomes of initiatives, particularly in terms of strategic planning. The governing body was not involved in drawing up the current year's school development plan and this is unsatisfactory.
73. There are weaknesses in the management of provision for children in Early Years. There is no formal Early Years co-ordinator, but the two teachers work as a team and ensure that there are similar opportunities provided for the children in both classes. There is limited monitoring of teaching and learning in the reception, as neither teacher has time to visit the other class.
74. The school acknowledges the need to review the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and this is identified within the school development plan, which shows that the organisation and time-tabling for these pupils is to be reviewed. Although pupils receive good teaching when they are withdrawn from class for additional support, there is not a sufficiently clear view within the school on whether this is the most effective way of providing such support. This issue is becoming particularly important, given that the number of pupils

with special educational needs has risen significantly since the previous inspection. In a minority of cases, some pupils are withdrawn from numeracy for literacy support, and this is unsatisfactory.

75. Parents are positive about the management of the school, particularly the termly surgeries held by the governing body, where governors are happy to listen to their concerns and suggestions. The enthusiasm and professional expertise of all staff contribute much to the effective learning environment and good relationships and commitment to equal opportunities that are reflected in the very positive, caring ethos of the school.

79. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

76. The school is staffed with an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of pupils and to deliver the National Curriculum.

77. The school has made satisfactory progress on the staffing issues raised by the previous inspection. Procedures for staff appraisal are now established and linked to professional development and the school development plan. There is a good range of in-service training taking place. However some job descriptions are out of date. There are satisfactory induction procedures to support newly qualified teachers.

78. Little progress has been made with respect to the unsatisfactory accommodation. The school is on two sites. The temporary classrooms, which have been at the school for many years, are in poor condition and lack some basic facilities such as toilets and sinks. This is not only inconvenient, but also limits teaching and learning, for example, when science investigations involving water are planned. There is no central library to enable pupils to fully develop their research skills. The inspection team shares the continuing concern of parents over the unsatisfactory accommodation. A planned building programme of £750,000 over the next two years will do much to remove these difficulties. In the main building, the toilets are smelly and unhygienic.

79. Outside, there are no grass playing fields but the school makes use of those nearby during the summer. The school makes good use of the swimming baths and the curriculum is enriched by planned visits of educational interest, which add to the pupils' all round development.

80. Accommodation for the early years is unsatisfactory. There is unequal provision in the two classes. The smaller classroom is not suitable for young children. There is not enough room for activities such as use of the home corner, construction toys or use of sand and water, so this limits the curriculum that is able to be offered. The room is designed for children to sit still in desks, which is unsuitable for such young children. There is no designated secure play area for children under five and, therefore, no opportunities for them to develop their physical skills through the use of sit on and ride toys, or climbing apparatus.

81. Resources for children under five are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of large construction equipment, resources for imaginative play, jigsaws, and no provision for sand and water play. Lots of the resources are old and need replacing, for example, the equipment in the home corner. The dolls available for play are all white which does not reflect the multi-cultural nature of our society.

82. The previous inspection reported on the unsatisfactory provision of the book stock. The quantity and quality of books have been improved but further improvement is needed. For example, some reading books are in poor condition. The provision of learning resources is sound and programmes of development are in place in literacy, numeracy, and information technology. Resources are generally accessible and are of satisfactory quality. They are also used effectively in the teaching of all subjects except design and technology.

86. The efficiency of the school

83. The overall efficiency of the school, in terms of its financial planning and control, use of staff and learning resources, and administrative and financial control, is sound. Financial planning is well organised. Budget forecasting makes use of sound techniques that ensure that financial decisions are based on the best information available. Governors receive comprehensive reports. The use of finance is now linked to the achievement of targets for senior staff and pupils' attainment, which was a weakness identified by the previous inspection. However, the governors are inadequately involved in the preparation of the budget. They approve rather than help to formulate the budget and its links to the school development plan.
84. Governors, with the support of the headteacher, are aware of the need to obtain value for money and have sound procedures for ensuring that best financial value is obtained when purchases are made. Liaison with teachers, awareness of statutory assessment results, visits to school and comments from parents and pupils are used as effective sources of information. There are few formal monitoring procedures and little reference is made to national comparisons to enable the governors to have a secure view on how well the school is doing year-on-year.
85. Governors, advised by the local authority and the headteacher, have proper regard for a limited financial reserve. Their spending decisions, for example, on staff training, and provision for pupils with special educational needs, are prudent and made in line with the school development plan and the priorities for the school.
86. Teaching staff are deployed satisfactorily overall with some good features, such as the use made of senior staff members for classroom monitoring activities. Support staff perform a valuable role effectively supporting teachers and making a good contribution to pupils' learning. In many cases, they are used well in classrooms but on a few occasions, for example, at the beginning of some literacy lessons, classroom assistants are spectators rather than being more actively involved in children's learning.
87. The reception teachers do not receive their own budget for the early years so there is no forward planning for replenishment of resources. There is some inefficient use of time as children are often expected to sit for long periods of time on the carpet watching others, rather than experiencing for themselves. This occurs, for example, during numeracy and literacy sessions. Too much time is given to complete some activities, for instance, when ordering bears from the biggest to the smallest. The teachers have a somewhat inflexible approach to the timetable and ensure that activities fill set periods of time rather than meet the needs of the child.
88. The use of the accommodation and learning resources available to the school is satisfactory overall, but there is some inefficiency in the use of the time available for teaching. Literacy and numeracy sessions are often significantly longer than the recommended time, and this limits the time available for some non-core subjects such as art, and design and technology. The structure of the school day is not a good match to the new curriculum requirements that the school must address in the coming year.
89. Funding provided for pupils with special educational needs is supplemented by the main school budget to fund the co-ordinator's work and to develop resources. However, there has not been any analysis by the school or governors on whether this is the most effective use of these resources. Support for pupils with Statements of special educational need is provided and managed by the local education authority.
90. The overall efficiency of the school's financial control and administration is good. All appropriate procedures, including computerised records, are in place to ensure reliability and accuracy.

The school's most recent audit found no matters of significant concern. The school's administration officer is appropriately experienced for the financial and administrative duties that she performs. She undertakes her responsibilities conscientiously, though her job description is out-of-date. She is well supported by the school's other clerical staff and, together, they provide good support to the headteacher and the rest of the school community.

91. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and, as a result pupils' progress and attainment is also satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development whilst at school are good. Taking these factors into account, together with pupils' average attainment on entry, as well as the above average financial resources available to it, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money; a judgement also made by the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Personal and social development

92.Children under five start school with well-developed personal and social skills. They enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy. They behave well, and respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. Children know the daily routines well, and develop good levels of concentration. They are eager to take on responsibilities, such as acting as register or milk monitors. They change for physical education sessions with little adult help, and fold their clothes neatly in a pile on their chairs. They show respect for school equipment, and tidy up efficiently at the end of lessons. They learn to take turns and share, for example during a music lesson, when they waited patiently for their turn to play the instrument. They make satisfactory progress and, by the age of five, they achieve above average standards in this area of learning.

93.The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Relationships between teachers and children are very positive and friendly. Teachers provide opportunities for children to co-operate together, for example, when making cakes, and when going for a walk to post a letter to Father Christmas. Children are given appropriate encouragement and praise to raise their self-esteem, and show pride in their work. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour, and the few incidents of immature behaviour are sensitively dealt with. However, teachers do not formally plan for this area of learning and there are many missed opportunities when teachers could further advance the personal and social development of the children. For example, there are very few occasions when children can choose activities, and take some responsibility for their own learning. Although teachers do incorporate role-play into their lesson plans, opportunities are rarely given for children to use the home corner for co-operative play.

97.

97. *Language and literacy*

97.

98. Children enter school with varying language and literacy skills. They make steady progress, and achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five, with a few more able children working within the early levels of the National Curriculum, particularly in reading. This was the situation at the previous inspection, and the good standards of reading have been maintained. Children enjoy books, know that print carries meaning, and handle books carefully. The children recite the alphabet, and the majority know the names and sounds of the most commonly used letters. Brighter children recognise frequently occurring words in the text, and effectively use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. The majority of the children listen attentively, particularly during 'big book' time, and become thoroughly involved in the story. They contribute well to class discussions, and confidently share their experiences with adults and their peers. For example, children were very keen to tell others what they had seen on their walk to the post office. Most children write their names and hold a pencil correctly, although there are a few children whose deftness is not sufficiently developed to enable them to form their letters accurately. A few brighter children 'copy-write' effectively, and are beginning to form words unaided. All the children follow a series of instructions well, such as which ingredient to add next when making their cakes.

98.

99. The quality of teaching of language and literacy is satisfactory overall, with some good features. The teachers are successfully using the literacy strategy, although the time spent is sometimes too long for such young children. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and ability, and plan their lessons well, matching the task to the ability of the child. They very effectively use 'Big Books' to stimulate the children's interest in reading and writing, and use of the class puppet further motivates the children. Effective use is made of role-play to encourage language development. For example, children are encouraged to act out the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children are encouraged to take reading books home each night to share with their parents. The classroom helpers effectively support children with special educational needs, enabling them to make sound progress.

99. *Mathematics*

99.

100. Children start school with about average abilities, but their knowledge of shape is good. They make sound progress, and by the time they are five they have reached the Desirable Learning Outcomes, with about a third of the children working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. The children confidently recognise simple shapes such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square, and are developing their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, such as cube and cone. The children confidently count backwards and forwards to 20, and some know their numbers to 30. The majority understand 'one more than', and 'one less than', and can calculate simple sums mentally. They match objects to numbers accurately, and correctly place missing numbers into the sequence of numbers to ten. They successfully order bears and balls from the biggest to the smallest. Children with special educational needs are given good support in the class, and they make good progress.

100.

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The numeracy strategy is being used to deliver the mathematics curriculum, with varying degrees of success. Teachers generally use the whole-class time to enhance the children's quick recall of number, but, in some lessons, not enough attention is paid to this. Teachers put appropriate emphasis of the correct use of mathematical language, and set appropriate activities to match children's abilities. However, children are often expected to sit for long periods of time on the carpet watching other children do the activity, rather than learning through direct experience. The more able children are sometimes set unchallenging tasks, such as ordering the size of bears, which they could do easily. Children are not given opportunities to 'play' with sand and water to help their understanding of capacity.

101. *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

94. Children have a sound understanding of the world around them. They make satisfactory progress in this area of learning, many of them building on experiences from home. They know where they live and how to get to school. They confidently talk about their experiences, such as making cakes, and know that cakes are made from flour, sugar, eggs and margarine. They are well aware of the need to wash their hands before cooking, and they know that care must be taken when cooking, as the oven is hot and an adult must help. They recognise that the ingredients change as a result of heat. They follow simple road safety rules when walking to the post-office to post their letter to Father Christmas at the North Pole. They program the Roamer to go forwards and backwards, and use the computer confidently. They use the mouse to move icons around the screen, and know how to restart the program. They know the seasons, and appreciate the need for warm clothes in the winter.

95. Although teachers do not plan appropriately for this area of development, the quality of teaching is good overall, with a range of activities and experiences offered to the children. Teachers use questioning well to probe children's understanding, for example, of the process of making cakes. Every opportunity is used on the walk to the post office to promote the children's understanding of their local environment, as when children were encouraged to look at street furniture, and think why things such as manhole covers were there. High expectations are set and relationships are good.

Creative development

96. There was little evidence of creative activity seen during the inspection. However, in the lessons observed and in the scrutiny of children's work, progress is only just satisfactory. The children reach average attainment by the age of five. They sing a variety of songs well, memorising the words. They play untuned percussion to accompany the singing, effectively keeping the beat, and holding the instrument correctly. They interpret music appropriately to perform a dance depicting the nativity story. They use pencils, crayons and paint to make representations of

themselves, and use fabric collage techniques to make a large-scale picture of 'The Jolly Postman'.

97. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, although in the one music lesson that was observed the quality of teaching was good. In this lesson, the specialist teacher had good subject knowledge, and successfully involved all the children, who sang enthusiastically. Insufficient time is given to develop the children's creativity, other than music lessons. No painting was seen during the inspection, and the one artistic activity that was seen was when the children coloured in pre-cut card to make an angel. The lack of art experiences was mentioned in the last report as a weakness, and it remains so. Opportunities to develop children's creative imagination are given through role-play, but the teacher prescribes situations for this, so children have few opportunities to develop imaginative situations for themselves. The curriculum is very structured, and opportunities for play and the development of the children's imagination through choice of artistic activities are limited. Resources for creative development are unimaginative, and children are offered a narrow range of media. This adversely affects the progress of the children.

105.

105. *Physical development*

98. Children enter school with average physical skills. They make sound progress, and attain the desired standard by the age of five. They use the school hall for physical education, where they run, jump, and skip with an increasing awareness of space. They control their movements well when they change direction and speed, and travel using different parts of their bodies. They move effectively to music using their bodies to show different moods. For example, they hang their heads and walk very slowly to show tiredness. They do not have opportunities to explore large outdoor climbing or play equipment, such as 'sit on and ride' toys, as there is no designated play area for children under five. Children show satisfactory control when using small tools such as scissors, and when handling implements for rolling, mixing and sticking.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, although there was a lack of confidence shown in the dance lessons seen. The teachers were very dependent on the use of a taped lesson, which limited both their flexibility, and opportunities for the children to explore movements for themselves. Limited opportunities are given for children to develop fine control such as when using paintbrushes, or when doing jigsaws, and to explore various-sized construction equipment. Resources are limited. There is a lack of large construction equipment to enable children to use their manipulative skills to join parts using nuts and bolts and screwdrivers.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. **English**

100. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessments show that the pupils' attainment in English was in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 1, and well above average at Key Stage 2. Although the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 and above for reading was below average when compared to all schools, the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, the percentage achieving Level 3 was above average. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools. These standards are generally reflected in the inspection findings, which show that pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and reading is above and often well above average in both key stages. However, standards in writing are not of the same high quality.

101. The introduction of the literacy hour is having a significant impact on standards. Pupils are responding well to the range of fiction and non-fiction offered in literacy lessons and this is developing their competence in reading and writing. Literacy is well taught and skills are developed effectively throughout the school. Pupils are beginning to use their skills in writing in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in history and in science. Research skills are being developed through the use of non-fiction books, for example in history, where pupils search for information on their topics, although there is no school library to reinforce such skills. Information technology is used well for drafting and redrafting stories, poems and accounts.
102. Standards in speaking and listening are good in both key stages. Children in the reception class develop language skills effectively through role-play, for example when they act out the story of 'Red Riding Hood', although opportunities for them to engage in less structured role-play activities are insufficient. Pupils throughout the school listen carefully, sometimes for long periods of time, and show by their responses that they understand what others are saying. They express themselves confidently, using appropriate language structure and a good range of vocabulary when expressing their opinions and explaining their ideas. A minority of pupils demonstrate weaknesses in grammar, but standards in speaking and listening are generally a strength.
103. Most pupils attain appropriate levels in reading by the time they are seven and a good number have skills that are above average for their age. Pupils show a good appreciation of the value of books from an early age and all enjoy stories and rhymes. Pupils employ a good range of reading strategies, for example in breaking unfamiliar words into syllables to establish meaning. In Year 2, pupils predict events in their shared reading sessions and talk about the characters and plot. They distinguish between fact and fiction and know how information books are organised. They understand the term *direct language* and use this knowledge and understanding in their writing. All pupils read regularly and frequently and the school fosters a reading culture that is well supported by parents. Many pupils enjoy reading stories from the Bible. Most pupils read to their parents at home and this is very effective in building confidence and an interest in reading. Pupils' attainment is above average by the time they are eleven. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to build up a critical awareness of literature, for example when pupils in Year 4 compare two books about life in Tudor times. In Years 5 and 6, pupils evaluate extracts from newspapers and other sources very competently and discuss their effectiveness in providing clear and useful information. They offer suggestions on how flawed instructions and accounts might be improved. Pupils show a particular enjoyment of poetry and talk about the way in which conventions such as alliteration can create an atmosphere. Pupils in Key Stage 2, are gaining a good understanding of different kinds of books, for example biographies and autobiographies. Pupils have a sound level of reference skills and, in Year 6, pupils locate information within the text with confidence. Opportunities for private study are limited and, although the majority of pupils are reading at appropriate levels, a few are reading books that are too easy for them. Many pupils visit the local library with their parents, but most are unaware of how a library is organised. None showed any understanding of classification systems. Some parents feel that the range of reading books offered to pupils in the school is too narrow and inspectors agree that there is a need for a greater range of good quality fiction and non-fiction. Those pupils who express preferences for particular authors have mainly developed such preferences at home. This was a criticism during the previous inspection and, although there has been heavy spending in this area, it has been insufficient to fully address the issue.
104. By the time they are seven, pupils write for a variety of purposes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use phonic knowledge effectively in their spellings and many are beginning to identify compound words in their writing. Pupils in Year 2 punctuate their work effectively, using capital letters and full stops. By the end of the key stage, brighter pupils are already learning to use language to good effect in story writing to create atmosphere. Sometimes, these pupils do not always

make the progress of which they are capable because an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets often limits pupils' opportunities to write for themselves. Pupils in Key Stage 2 write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the main features of a newspaper report and write their own reports, for example on the sinking of the Titanic. They use descriptive language effectively when writing reports. When writing stories, they understand how to create a setting that will capture the reader's attention from the outset. They write poems using figurative language effectively. For example, a vacuum cleaner is described as *..a long necked beast with a hard armoured shell that sucks the floor cleanand then returns for more*. Good use is made of draft books, in which pupils try out their ideas. Information technology is used effectively, throughout the school, in drafting and redrafting work.

105. Handwriting skills are weak throughout the school. Pupils do not naturally attempt to join their writing, even towards the end of the key stages and work is often untidy because letter formation is weak.
106. Pupils make sound and often good progress in their work in English in both key stages. However, scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that they have made satisfactory progress over time, with good progress made in some classes. There are some differences in the quality of work between year groups, but with careful planning, teachers ensure that pupils in the parallel classes receive the same experiences and this results in them making generally similar progress. The previous inspection report criticised the progress made by pupils at the lower end of Key Stage 2 and this area for development has been satisfactorily addressed. Although pupils in Year 3 are acknowledged to be a lively and challenging year group, good teaching ensures that they make thoroughly sound and often good progress. Progress in speaking and listening is maintained at a good level throughout the school. Pupils use their skills for debate, group and class discussions and, occasionally, drama throughout the school. Attendance at the weekly Mass provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Parents report that end of term productions are of a high quality. Pupils develop a good range of reading strategies as they move through the key stages and most display an interest and enthusiasm for reading for pleasure. Attainment in reading is closely monitored and progress is assessed regularly by teachers. Pupils make sound progress in writing for different audiences and purposes. The introduction of the literacy hour has made a significant impact on the development of pupils' grammatical knowledge and understanding of language. Information technology is used well to extend pupils' drafting and redrafting skills. Pupils' experiences of a range of different styles and purposes for writing within the literacy hour are well developed within other areas of the curriculum to extend and challenge the pupils. However, progress in handwriting is unsatisfactory. For example, many pupils in Years 4 and 5 have not yet developed a fluent joined script.
107. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall, in relation to their prior attainment. However, when pupils receive good quality support from the special needs coordinator or classroom assistants in small groups or in one-to-one teaching situations, the pupils' progress is often good. More able pupils make sound progress. The progress of brighter pupils was an issue in the previous inspection and the school has done much to address this area for development, including a whole-school policy. However, there is still room for improvement. In some lessons, pupils are given the same work to do. Over-use of commercial worksheets sometimes limits their opportunities to write for themselves and there are insufficient opportunities for personal study. In a Year 2 class, pupils of all abilities receive the same list of spellings to learn. Parents are generally happy with the levels of homework set for pupils, although there are some inconsistencies in the use of this strategy for enhancing pupils' progress.
108. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to their work in English are good. They enjoy their work, join in well with class discussions, and show imagination and enthusiasm in their creative work.

Many pupils read for pleasure at home and most take books home to share with parents.

109. The quality of teaching for English is good overall with elements of very good teaching in Key Stage 2. The previous inspection report identified weaknesses in teaching in the upper key stage that have now been overcome. Individual lessons are well planned with satisfactory use of resources and good organisational strategies. The format of the literacy hour is giving a clear structure to lessons. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are well taught but teachers pay insufficient attention to progress in handwriting and some fail to provide good role models with their own writing; for example using a round print style in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and, where they have high expectations and the work is challenging, high standards are achieved. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good and contribute well to the progress that pupils make. Although most teachers employ a quiet, caring tone when talking to pupils, there are examples in both key stages, of teachers' voices being over-loud and this interferes with pupils' levels of concentration.
110. Most teachers have very good strategies for dealing unobtrusively with inappropriate behaviour but, occasionally, where teachers have not fully established the 'hands up' routine, pupils shout out and make unsolicited comments. Sometimes the noise levels become too high and these teachers have to resort to shouting to establish order. Very occasionally, inappropriate noise levels remain unchecked.
111. Reading records are thorough and detailed and provide clear evidence of pupils' progression, although there are few diagnostic comments in pupils' home/school records to inform parents of the next step. Marking of pupils' work is generally satisfactory, with some good examples of comments to help pupils to understand how they may improve.
112. The subject is led by a well qualified co-ordinator who has the skills to develop the subject throughout the school. She has supported the development of the literacy hour well, and receives non-contact time to visit classrooms to monitor standards in teaching and learning. So far, visits have been informal with no agreed criteria. The co-ordinator does not see all teachers' planning and has only a limited overview of standards throughout the school. She is keen to develop the school's procedures for target setting to include shared targets for individuals as a way forward.
113. Resources for the literacy hour are satisfactory, although few books reflect the richness and diversity of our multi-cultural world. There is an inadequate supply of books within most classrooms, appropriately graded, attractively displayed and effectively encouraging reading for pleasure. There is no school library to meet the needs of the pupils in developing their capacity for independent study.

Mathematics

114. Standards, at the time of the previous report in October 1995, were judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
115. At the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 and above in mathematics in 1998, was close to the national average, but fewer than the national average attained the higher Level 3. In 1999, the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 and above remained close to the national average, and there was a rise in the percentage of those attaining Level 3, bringing overall results close to the national average.
116. At the end of Key Stage 2, the number of pupils who attained Level 4 and above in 1998 was close to the national average, as was the case for the number who attained Level 5. In 1999, the results were well above average, both for pupils who attained Level 4 and above, and for those who attained Level 5. The school explains this as a year of unusually high attaining

pupils. The school performs in line with similar schools at Key Stage 1, and performs very well when compared with similar schools at Key Stage 2.

117. Observations during the inspection confirm attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, to be in line with the national average. Pupils apply their knowledge of addition to work out the number of 'hours that pass between given times. They confidently recognise halves of quantities and shapes, place numbers in order to 100, and understand clearly which numbers are odd and which are even. They know the names of two and three dimensional shapes and classify them by properties such as the number of faces, edges and corners, each has. They collect information on the heights, and favourite food, of pupils in the class, and record it in block graphs. The numeracy project is having a satisfactory impact, but pupils are not yet having consistent practice in quick mental recall.
118. Observations confirm that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Pupils are confident to apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday situations and problems. They are secure in the four rules of number to 1000. They know their multiplication tables satisfactorily, and many are starting to acquire increasingly quick recall of number facts. They calculate correctly using long multiplication, follow multi-step operations and work competently within money, length, area, fractions, decimals and temperature, using positive and negative numbers. They handle data competently and construct line graphs and pie charts.
119. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Although good progress was observed in many lessons during the inspection, work samples indicate that progress is steady across the school. Pupils in parallel classes have broadly similar experiences, although where the quality of teaching was very good in lessons observed, pupils made better progress. Pupils with special educational needs, make sound progress. It is too early to judge the success of the National Numeracy Strategy, either on mental or recorded number, but in classes where mental agility is promoted, pupils are becoming accustomed to make increasingly complex mental calculations, although they are often still slow to find answers. All pupils respond well to the challenges demanded by the new syllabus. Highest, and average, ability pupils, make satisfactory progress in individual lessons. Sometimes progress is good, as, for example, when a Year 3 class discovered how to find simple fractions of a number. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in individual lessons, however, at present, general attainment for these pupils is below the levels expected for their ages.
120. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy the mental or oral sessions in those classes where strategies are carefully designed to involve them all. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers, are confident to answer questions and enjoy discussing the strategies they use to find answers. They are well motivated and sustain their concentration well. When given the opportunity, they co-operate sensibly with each other, and they demonstrate good work habits when asked to work independently. In a minority of lessons, when teacher explanations are lengthy, pupils become restless, and occasionally noise levels are high during the time that pupils are working.
121. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, was judged to be generally satisfactory and good in almost half the lessons observed. Planning is careful and detailed; teachers show secure subject knowledge and manage their pupils well. Where teaching is good, expectations of what pupils will achieve is high and appropriately targeted, with the pace of the lesson moving forward briskly. In the other lessons, despite careful planning, there is less clarity about the aims of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental, or oral, sessions do not systematically involve all pupils, explanations are sometimes lengthy, which limits the time for pupils to work on their tasks and to advance their own thinking and understanding. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, and pupils are set similar tasks rather than ones that challenge their particular ability levels immediately.

122. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is of a high quality. In one third of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good, and in one third it was very good. Teachers expect high levels of work and behaviour and most are successful in instilling enthusiasm in their pupils. There is secure subject knowledge, planning is thorough and the pace of lessons is brisk. There is often a link between the introductory mental session and the main task. However, in a few mental mathematics sessions, there is scope to increase the involvement of all the pupils, in order to encourage quick responses and further their mental agility. Group sessions are used effectively in the majority of lessons, in both key stages, to reinforce learning, but in a minority of lessons they are less effective because the focus is unclear. Throughout the school, good teaching is distinguished by well-focused questions that extend the pupils' thinking and learning. Due to outside circumstances, teachers' training in the strategies of the National Numeracy Project was delayed, and while the staff have embraced the new techniques, there is some fine tuning still to do in order to attain total understanding of the strategies. It is too early, therefore, to judge the impact of the strategy on standards. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. There were some discrepancies between the results of teachers' assessments and those of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, with teachers seriously underestimating the percentage of pupils working at expected levels and above. Assessment is used in most lessons and lesson plans annotated accordingly, although there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment to take account of the need to reinforce a particular topic. Some teachers assess the success of lessons, as well as the achievements of pupils, and respond effectively to the needs of their pupils as a result of this.
123. The subject is led by a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator. There is a comprehensive policy, and this year the school is following the guidelines that accompany the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject co-ordinator's training sessions are giving the staff increasing confidence in adapting to the National Numeracy Strategy and are helping to improve their planning. She has observed lessons throughout the school during the past few months, in order to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in delivery of the subject. Resources are sound and are used appropriately.

Science

124. Standards of attainment are average, at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils' performance in national assessments is improving year on year and the most recent tests at the end of Key Stage 2, indicate that pupil's attainment is well above average and this is a significant improvement on standards reported in the previous inspection. Although standards appear to have been higher in 1999, this reflects an exceptional year group rather than a rise in standards. Younger pupils distinguish living from non-living things. Year 2 pupils name and locate major body parts such as lungs and joints. Pupils are able to conduct simple experiments with some regard for 'fair testing' and make sensible predictions, for example, in making simple electrical circuits. Older pupils have a secure understanding of the principles of healthy eating and use terms such as vitamins, protein and carbohydrate, to describe what they eat. They have a sound understanding of friction, forces and levers. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well-developed understanding and skills in investigative techniques, particularly 'fair testing'. They make valid predictions, drawing attention to sources of error and the need for controls in experiments and investigations, for example, in investigating growth conditions for micro-organisms. The progress, made by most pupils, is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs, make sound progress in science in both key stages.
125. Pupils show a keen interest and enthusiasm for science. They concentrate well and have positive attitudes to lessons and activities that challenge them. Good relationships are a consistent feature of lessons and pupils cooperate well in shared tasks.
126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers have

good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour. Planning is detailed with lesson outcomes consistently set out in terms of what the teacher wants pupils to know, understand, or be able to do, by the end of the lesson. These intended lesson outcomes are often made clear to pupils. Lessons are generally well organised and managed with activities matched to the wide-ranging learning needs of most pupils. Good pace and challenge are common features of many lessons in Key Stage 2. Brighter pupils are adequately challenged in these lessons. A range of teaching strategies, including skilled use of open-ended questions, is used to motivate pupils. Teacher intervention in lessons is regular and often challenges pupils to think through any problems they encounter. This was clearly seen in a Year 6 lesson, where the teacher constantly challenged pupils to think through each of the different stages of an investigation into micro-organisms.

127. Science is very well organised and led by the co-ordinator, who is a skilled teacher and effective manager. The planning framework for science is detailed, and effectively enables teachers to plan for continuity, progression and depth. Assessment procedures are sound, but teachers' day-to-day use of assessment is less secure. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, teachers' assessments seriously under-estimated the percentage of pupils working at expected levels and above. Assessment is used in lessons to measure what pupils, know, understand and can do, but it is not used to monitor pupils' attainments and progress or inform teachers' planning. Resources for teaching science are well organised and sufficient. However, the arrangements for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning are limited and exclude reviewing pupils' work and observation of teaching. Temporary classrooms are cramped and without water. This makes it difficult to carry out some investigations. There is good use of information technology in teaching science, as seen when temperatures and pulse rates were recorded using computer software. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in recording the outcomes of their investigations.

135. **Information technology**

128. During the previous inspection, pupils' achievements were judged to be below national expectations. Evidence taken from scrutiny of work, displays, teachers' planning, observations of pupils in classrooms, and discussions with both pupils and teachers, indicate that there has been an improvement in standards since then. Pupils' attainment is now in line with expectations at the end of both key stages.

129. Pupils in Key Stage 1, use the mouse and keyboard effectively and enter information related to their science work on a data-base. They talk confidently about programming a Roamer to change direction, record their writing using word-processing techniques and print out their work successfully. Some pupils use 'listening centres' to support their work in literacy.

130. As the pupils move through the school, they become noticeably more confident with information technology and their skills develop appropriately. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are very confident in using computer hardware and they talk, knowledgeably, about the use of information technology in the world around them. They use word processing to compliment many other areas of the curriculum, for example, drafting text for a newspaper article. Older pupils re-organise text, change fonts and are familiar with terms such as 'cut and paste'. They access a database to find information, to use in their own work plans for literacy and numeracy and to check their progress. Pupils design their own posters, use information technology to develop their understanding of the Ancient Greeks, and represent their findings in science and mathematics using bar-graphs and pie-charts.

131. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making at least satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of information technology and the appropriate skills. In classes, where every opportunity is used to allow pupils access to information technology, progress is often good. Information technology is not taught as a

discrete subject, as the school supports the view that it relates well to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 use the mouse to 'click and drag' letters when matching words to pictures in literacy, pupils in Year 4 input data on cooling and insulation, and, pupils in Year 5 use the CD-ROM to research information relating to their science topic. However, curricular coverage is sometimes inconsistent. For example, pupils in Year 2 were quite adamant that they had spent more time on the computer in Year 1. This has important implications for progress over time.

132. The pupils are very positive about information technology and, in discussions, spoke with pride about some of their achievements. Pupils in Year 6, were impressed by the amount of access they were allowed; particularly when they compared this with friends from other schools. A daily computer club, that runs before and after school, is very popular with the older pupils. The school has been a pilot for the local education authority's Open Integrated Learning program, where pupils are able to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and monitor their progress independently on the computer. The computer club allows extra time for this work. However, because most of the computers, available to Year 6, are situated in one classroom, pupils from the other class have concerns about equal access to these facilities.
133. In most classes pupils work well together and are able to get on with their activities independently. Equipment is used well and pupils maintain their concentration and remain involved.
134. No direct teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection. The previous inspection described the subject knowledge and expertise of staff as weak. There is now a different attitude to the subject and information technology has a high priority throughout the school. In a majority of classrooms the computer equipment is enhanced by displays that clearly indicate what the pupils will learn during the term. Pupils also feel that this allows them to focus and clearly understand what they are doing. However, not all classes have this approach and this is quite noticeable when walking around the school. The subject co-ordinator acknowledges that, although staff confidence and expertise have improved since the last inspection, the school is still not where it wants to be and she is doing her best to support teachers who are less confident. Lessons involving information technology are generally well organised and teachers carefully monitor pupils access to equipment and whether they are developing the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of information technology.
135. The subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and must take much of the credit for the improvement in information technology since the last inspection. Much of her time is used developing the subject and supporting other members of staff. The school has an appropriate subject policy and each half-term the subject co-ordinator produces a scheme of work, for each year group, that covers all of the different aspects of the subject and the necessary skills and knowledge. She suggests different activities, the resources available and advises on links with other areas of the curriculum. Although this is extremely time consuming for the co-ordinator, it does allow her to produce work that is clearly related to the different abilities of pupils and to provide support, information and ideas for teachers, particularly those who are not confident with the subject.
136. Good assessment procedures are in place, so that relevant information can be recorded to inform future planning and measure pupils' progress. The eventual aim is to produce a scheme of work, based on the national guidelines, that all staff will be able to manage independently. The current approach works well with the present circumstances in the school.
137. Resources are satisfactory at present and should improve significantly when the school receives its funding for the national initiative for information technology. There are also plans for a computer suite in the new building programme to allow more direct teaching of the subject.

Religious education

138. Religious education was not part of this inspection. It is inspected separately, under Section 23 of the School Inspections Act.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art.

147. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. However, evidence from the limited work displayed on the classroom walls, and examination of teachers' planning suggest that progress across this key stage is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 2, are not given enough opportunities to develop their artistic skills, and the range of experiences is limited, making progress in this key stage unsatisfactory overall; although satisfactory progress was seen in some individual lessons.
148. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use pencil, crayon and pastel effectively to draw portraits of themselves. They draw, reasonably accurate, observational drawings of their hands, and of an apple on a plate. They are beginning to have an understanding of line and tone, and use pencils effectively to shade parts of their pictures. They use appropriately coloured paper to make a collage of the sea, illustrating a book they are reading. Pupils in Key Stage 2, continue to use pencil to draw portraits, with little extension of the skills learned in Key Stage 1. There is very little evidence of the use of paint, although Year 6 pupils use ready-mixed paint to colour in their Greek shields. Year 6 pupils use clay to make simple thumb pots, but need help when making a simple coil pot. Pupils with special educational needs do the same activities as their peers, and make similar progress.
149. Pupils generally respond positively to their lessons, and concentrate well on the task. They behave well, and clear away efficiently at the end of the lesson. They share equipment amicably, and use it sensibly. They are beginning to evaluate the work of others, and appreciate the efforts made.
150. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, but in Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory. In the best lesson, skills are clearly identified and tasks clearly explained, so that all pupils fully understand the task. Teacher expertise is good, and good individual help is given to pupils in need. However, the tasks set are very prescribed, and little opportunity given to pupils to use their imagination. For example, in Year 3, pupils were all given the same template to fill in with mosaic pieces. Year 6 pupils were given a template to draw round for their shields. Pupils in Year 4 discussed the use of colour in portrait paintings, and then used pencil only to draw their own pictures. Teachers do not make a clear distinction between art and design technology in their plans, and so skills become muddled. The planning of lessons does not identify specific skills to be taught, but rather the links made with other areas of the curriculum, such as history. For example, Year 3 pupils make Roman mosaics, Year 4 pupils draw Tudor portraits, and Year 6 pupils make Greek pots. Limited opportunities are given for three-dimensional work other than the simple use of clay, and there are no examples of large collaborative work. Similar activities, such as portrait paintings, are continually taught throughout the school with no real progression of skills. There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to express their own thoughts and feelings through art.
151. The scheme of work is out of date, and does not pay sufficient attention to the skills necessary for the development of art. Activities are dictated by the topics being studied, so that art services other areas of the curriculum, rather than being taught for its own sake. The work of other artists is explored, but the artists studied are all from a western culture. Painting is

underdeveloped, but the lack of running water in the mobile classrooms limits the opportunities for pupils to paint in Years 4 and 5. The use of ready-mixed paints also limits the opportunities for pupils to decide on their own colours. The subject does not have a high profile, and the lack of regular time allocated to the subject does not give pupils a continuous worthwhile experience. The co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching, or evaluate the provision, so no checks are made on the progress that pupils make. The subject has not improved since the last inspection.

146.

Design and technology

152. In both key stages, progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory. Younger pupils measure, cut and glue a limited range of materials. Older pupils have limited skills in the use of a range of materials, tools and techniques. Pupils are unable to design items with due consideration to function, materials, and the use of tools. Many pupils are also unable to evaluate their efforts to improve further design. Generally, pupils have a limited knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject. Pupils are not making satisfactory progress in their understanding of the design process and are not developing the necessary skills in using a range of tools and materials. Standards in design and technology have fallen since the last inspection.

153. The subject is largely absent from the timetable and is used to develop other subject topics such as 'The Tudors'. There is an inappropriate balance between development of practical skills and topic-based assignments as a focus for applying these skills.

154. There were insufficient lessons during the inspection to make a secure judgement on the quality or teaching, in either key stage. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence is weak, with some confusion between art and design and technology in teachers' planning. The planning framework is inadequate as a scheme of work. It does not adequately identify the elements in the design, plan, make and evaluate process, or the balance between them, for lesson planning purposes. There is no arrangement in place to monitor, record and evaluate pupils' attainments and progress, for example, by the use of individual diaries. The resources for learning are unsatisfactory, with insufficient materials and tools. Those that do exist, appear to be under used.

155. There is no action plan to raise standards of attainment and the quality of provision. The subject has a low profile in the school, and the co-ordinator acknowledges a need for improved resources, and more rigorous monitoring of standards, to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress.

146. **Geography**

156. There is insufficient evidence to form a secure judgement on pupils' progress, their responses or the quality of teaching as, due to the organisation of the school timetable, there were no lessons available for inspection. It was not possible to scrutinise pupils' work in geography, as none was available.

157. The geography co-ordinator is well qualified to manage the subject and has produced a school policy and a comprehensive scheme of work. However, it is very apparent, that the subject has not been a priority in the school recently, and subject coverage has been reduced due to the time pressures caused by the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The long-term plan for geography indicates appropriate coverage of the subject. The curriculum is divided into units of work that include key questions for teachers to consider, activities for the pupils, the geographical skills to be taught and the resources available. Scrutiny of the current term's planning demonstrates that very little geography has been taught during this term and this is acknowledged by the subject co-ordinator. On this evidence, it would appear unlikely that full coverage of the school's geography curriculum is possible. This will have implications

in the future, when the school will have to ensure full National Curriculum coverage. No monitoring of the subject has been undertaken and there are no formal procedures for assessment.

158. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Each class has their own set of atlases and a globe. Specialist resources, such as weather equipment and aerial photographs, are kept by the subject co-ordinator.

History

159. Only two lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. This was due to the place of history in the school timetable. The scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicate that the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is broadly satisfactory through both key stages, although the subject has a higher profile in Key Stage 2.
160. In Years 1 and 2, pupils start to distinguish between the past and the present. They learn about old toys and explore the development of lighthouses to the beacons of today. Pupils in Year 3, develop their understanding of chronology when comparing the Romans and Saxons as invaders.. Pupils in Year 4, widen their understanding of causes and consequences through learning about the Tudors and investigating the buildings, lives of people and major events at that time. Year 5 pupils have developed a clear understanding of primary and secondary sources of information. They show good knowledge of conditions for children working in Victorian mills and discuss how Lord Shaftsbury worked to help them. In Year 6, pupils extend their skills of historical enquiry through the study Ancient Greece when they select information from a variety of sources.
161. Pupils have positive attitudes to history. They enjoy looking at artefacts, listening to stories about the past and imagining how life was then. Behaviour was good in the lessons observed and pupils concentrated well on their tasks and showed high levels of interest.
162. No overall judgement on the standard of teaching can be made because of the small sample observed. Teachers show secure subject knowledge and give lively expositions to further their pupils' understanding and thinking. They involve pupils well, for instance, in one class two pupils spoke dramatically of the harshness of life in Victorian England. The pace of the lessons is sound or good, and teachers' expectations are realistic. Reference books are adequate, but pupils are not systematically encouraged to do their research independently.
163. The school has a sound curriculum, based on National Curriculum programmes of study. There is satisfactory coverage and continuity in the learning of skills. There are good curriculum links with English, for example, by using different forms of writing, such as diary and letter writing as a means of recording facets of people's lives. Occasionally, however, the appropriateness and quality of reproduced worksheets are not well matched to pupils' needs. Links with numeracy include understanding Roman numerals and Egyptian mathematical strategies. A varied range of visits to Lunt Fort, The Black Country Museum, Mary Arden's House at Stratford, and Blakesley House, all help to make history a vivid part of pupils' experience.
164. The co-ordinator is well qualified and experienced. In order to use the reduced time available for the subject to best advantage, she has encouraged teachers to incorporate history with literacy where possible, with good levels of success. There is a comprehensive outline scheme of work, which is developed into medium and short-term plans. The subject appears in the autumn and spring terms at Key Stage 1, and in every term at Key Stage 2. There are no opportunities to monitor lessons, but the co-ordinator sees both pupils' work and teachers' planning. There is a portfolio of pupils' work, but following advice, it has not been up-dated recently. Resources are satisfactory and are used well to promote pupils' learning.

146. **Music**

165. Evidence from inspection indicates that music is a strength of the school, which was the judgement of the last inspection. Pupils' skills, in the important aspect of listening and appraising, have improved.
166. Judgements are based on observations of lessons, hymn practice and weekly mass, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and teachers.
167. All pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, make good progress throughout both key stages. Pupils perform confidently and accurately. They have a good repertoire of songs and hymns that are sung, in many instances, from memory. Pupils have good sense of rhythm and there is a good awareness of phrase and appropriate diction, particularly amongst the older pupils. The weekly mass provides a wonderful opportunity for the pupils to show how accomplished they are.
168. Pupils in Year 1, listen carefully to identify, and distinguish, between loud and quiet sounds. They control the sound of percussion instruments well, when accompanying songs. Pupils in Year 3, adapt their voices as they use different voice combinations to sing different kinds of songs. They maintain group parts with a combination of vocals and untuned percussion.
169. The pupils' attitudes to music are at least good and, in many instances, very good. They show an obvious enjoyment of the subject and are extremely enthusiastic. They listen carefully to their teachers, each other, and taped music. For example, pupils in Year 3 listened intently to a carol, sung in a folk-style, at the end of a hardworking lesson which, in turn, followed the weekly Mass. A very small minority of younger pupils, does not participate in hymn practice but, on the whole, pupils are good at sustaining their concentration and remaining involved.
170. The subject co-ordinator, who is a peripatetic teacher employed by the local education authority, provides very good specialist teaching, for each class in the school, on a fortnightly basis. Class teachers, who observe her lessons very carefully, continue the work on alternate weeks. This provides very good opportunities for the professional development of staff. The specialist's lessons are very well organised and planned well to the National Curriculum. Reception pupils are taught all together. Lessons have tremendous pace and the co-ordinator's enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. This encourages the pupils' positive attitudes to music. Pupils make very good progress in these lessons. For example, Year 3 pupils started a lesson reciting A A Milne's poem, 'Happiness', in a rhythmic way and finished the session by maintaining group parts, accompanied by instruments.
171. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She has developed a subject policy and scheme of work that provide good continuity and progression. Scrutiny of previous work and teachers' planning, shows that pupils experience a good range of activities, which help maintain good progress, for example, graphic music scoring develops well across the key stages. Listening activities focus very clearly on important musical elements and good opportunities are provided for instrumental performance. However, although class teachers make informal assessments during lessons, there are no formal assessment procedures for music.
172. Resources for music are adequate, although the use of the school hall for music lessons does not provide an ideal learning environment because of the split play times for the different key stages, when lessons can be disturbed. Seasonal activities, for example, Christmas and Easter, weekly Mass and special Masses, including those for Confirmation, provide good opportunities for musical performance. A small group of pupils benefit from guitar lessons, offered by a local education authority peripatetic tutor. However, when the music co-ordinator

is not in school, opportunities are missed to develop musical appreciation through assemblies and collective worship.

146. **Physical education**

173. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, and good progress throughout Key Stage 2. The good progress in Key Stage 2, is as a result of good teacher subject knowledge, and good, well focussed, teaching of skills.
174. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate increasing control of their bodies and can move rhythmically to music. They move around the room with an awareness of space, and of each other. They change direction, speed and level, appropriately and promptly, to the teacher's commands. They adjust their movements in a dance lesson in response to the music effectively. For example, they run quickly on their toes, pretending to be mice, and use stiff regimented movements in response to marching music. Pupils are beginning to work co-operatively in pairs. For example, they alternate up and down movements in the manner of a seesaw. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well-developed games' skills, and play a number of team games effectively, with due regard to the rules. In their gymnastics lessons, pupils in Year 4 perform an effective sequence of rolls with good control, and a good understanding of the way weight is transferred from different parts of the body. Pupils in Year 6 swim well, and most of the pupils achieve at least the national standard by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs do the same activities as their peers, and make similar progress.
175. Pupils respond positively to their lessons, and enjoy physical activity. They generally listen attentively to instructions, and obey commands promptly. They co-operate well in pairs and small groups, working hard to improve their performance. They access their own equipment with due attention to health and safety, and put it away safely at the end of the lesson.
176. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. Teachers generally have good subject expertise, and plan their lessons well. They use appropriate resources, and provide balanced lessons with appropriate activities to develop pupils' skills. Where teaching is less successful, relationships are strained, and time is lost because of the need to discipline pupils. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships are good, and control and discipline are good. Teachers become very involved in the lesson, and give clear instructions, using useful demonstrations to show exactly what is required. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with sufficient time given for pupils to perfect their movements and improve their skills. During lessons, good, individual help is given to pupils to ensure that all in the class make good progress.
177. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject, and has considerable personal skill. She has provided the staff with a very comprehensive scheme of work that clearly identifies the skills to be taught, in all areas of the subject. Teachers use the lesson plans effectively, and this ensures that the skills are systematically developed. This has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. There are no formal assessment procedures, but teachers continually assess their pupils in lesson, to ensure that they progress. The curriculum is well balanced, and all the elements are taught with a wide variety of team games offered, which help to develop contact skills, ball skills and racquet skills. As was found at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum is further enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities, including: volleyball, netball, football, badminton, football and cross-country running. The school takes part in a number of competitive sporting activities, with a considerable degree of success, which enhances the technical skills, and the personal and social development of those pupils who take part. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory as the hall is small, and there are no fields for the pupils to use. The playground space is limited, but, in spite of this, pupils make good progress.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

178. The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors, all of whom were in school for 4 days. A total of 24 days was spent gathering first-hand evidence.

- Before the inspection twenty-seven parents attended a meeting, at which the registered inspector heard parents' views on aspects of the school. 364 questionnaires were circulated to all parents, and 199 were returned. A table, analysing the results of these is given at the end of this report. The points raised at the parents' meeting, and those made in the parents' questionnaires, were considered during the inspection. Meetings were also held prior to the inspection with the headteacher, the chair of governors, the governing body, and members of the teaching staff, in order to discuss the nature and conduct of the inspection.
- Before inspecting the school, inspectors studied a wide range of documentation and information supplied by the school, which included the previous OFSTED report, the OFSTED action plan and reviews, policy documents, teachers' planning, the school development plan, governors annual reports, newsletters, budgetary information and minutes of meetings.
- In the course of the inspection, 80 lessons, or part lessons, were observed, covering work in all subjects of the National Curriculum. All teachers were observed teaching English and mathematics, as well as a cross-section of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, all staff and various members of the governing body. Assemblies, acts of collective worship, pupils' arrival at, and departure from, school. Registration and break times were also observed. Attendance records, teachers' planning documents, and the records kept on individual pupils were examined.
- Informal interviews were held with a representative sample of pupils from each key stage. Other groups of pupils were interviewed to find out what work they had covered in certain subjects.
- A representative sample of pupils from each year group, was heard reading and these pupils discussed their books with the inspectors. In addition, there were many informal conversations with pupils about their work and about the life of the school. These conversations took place in classrooms and at break times.
- Inspectors scrutinised the current, and past, work of a representative sample of pupils in each year group, and, during visits to the classrooms, inspectors looked at the work of other pupils. Classroom displays and teachers' assessment records were examined.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	364	3	101	99

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	110

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	178

Average class size:	26
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	626,791
Total Expenditure	626,529
Expenditure per pupil	1,712.5
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,767
Balance carried forward to next year	4,029

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
 Number of questionnaires returned:
 Percentage returned

364
199
55

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	46	49	5	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	54	39	5	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	28	51	20	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	41	53	5	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	31	55	11	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	40	55	6	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	47	15	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	35	56	7	2	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	53	42	6	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	47	43	9	9	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	57	39	3	1	0