

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST LOUIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Frome

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 194152

Headteacher: Mr R Triggs

Reporting inspector: Harold Galley  
21313

Dates of inspection: February 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2002

Inspection number: 194152

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Welshmill Lane  
Frome  
Somerset

Postcode: BA11 3AP

Telephone number: 01373 463728

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Parsons

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21313	Harold Galley Registered inspector	Mathematics; Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; History; Geography; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9644	Mike Whitaker Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22942	Jackie Cousins Team inspector	English; Information and communication technology; Music; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18498	Denise Morris Team inspector	Science; Art and design; Design and technology; Special educational needs.	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Louis Catholic Primary is a voluntary aided school situated in Frome, Somerset. It was granted primary school status in 1994 and educates children between the ages of four and eleven, although maintained schools in the town operate a system of first, middle and high schools. There are 198 pupils on roll with an even mix of boys and girls. All but two pupils are white and only one pupil speaks English as an additional language. Just over eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, well below the national average. Nine per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is well below average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs under the terms of the DfES Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>. Attainment on entry to the school is average. An unusual feature of attainment on entry is the wide variation between different year groups: for example the attainment on entry of the present reception year group is slightly below average, although last year's intake (the pupils presently in Year 1) was above average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2000. Staff turnover has been high recently, with well over half the teachers joining the school in the last two years.

Religious education and the quality of collective acts of worship have been inspected by a representative of the Catholic Board of Education. This report appears under a separate cover.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, although there are many considerable strengths alongside two important weaknesses. By the end of Year 2, standards in the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments were above average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards were average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Compared to their prior attainment, pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout their time at the school. Attitudes to learning are very good and in every class pupils are extremely keen to learn. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in Years 1 and 2. The school is very well led by an effective headteacher who is well supported by the governing body. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in science and music.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and is well supported by an enthusiastic governing body.
- Pupils behave very well and are very keen to learn.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- The school has a strong Christian ethos.
- Parents' support for their children's learning is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The challenge for more able pupils.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT).

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

<sup>1</sup> The DfES Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in April 1997. Standards have risen in line with the national trend. Teaching has improved with more good and very good teaching, and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced to zero. Curriculum provision has improved through the more rigorous use of schemes of work. The headteacher, appointed in September 2000, has introduced several initiatives that are impacting positively on the quality of education, including more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, as well as much improved evaluations of the school's performance. However, two key weaknesses identified in the last report remain. More able pupils are still not challenged sufficiently, and provision for ICT remains unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores<sup>2</sup> in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar <sup>3</sup> schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	C	C
Mathematics	A	D	A	A
Science	A	E	B	B

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

The information shows the considerable variations in standards from year to year. This reflects the changes in attainment on entry between different year groups as well as the small number of pupils in each year group. In 2001, standards at the end of Year 6 were well above average in mathematics, above average in science, and average in English, both in terms of national and similar schools comparisons. Standards at the end of Year 2 show similar variations from year to year, but in 2001 were above average in writing, below average in reading, and well below average in mathematics. The relatively poor result in mathematics reflects the low proportion of pupils reaching the higher level for this age group (Level 3). Standards of work seen in Year 6 were similar in English and science but only above average in mathematics. The slight decline in mathematics reflects the reduction in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level for pupils of this age (Level 5). Compared to their prior attainment, most pupils have achieved well in English, mathematics and science. However, the achievement of more able pupils is unsatisfactory. Achievement overall is judged as satisfactory. Standards in other subjects are in line with national expectations, apart from music, where standards are above expectations, and in ICT, where standards are below expectations.

Standards for six year olds, at the end of the Foundation Stage<sup>4</sup> meet national expectations, but exceed these for personal and social development.

<sup>2</sup> Average points scores refers to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

<sup>3</sup> Schools with more than 8 per cent and up to 20 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

<sup>4</sup> The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are keen to learn throughout the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The vast majority of pupils behave very well and the occasional incidents of poor behaviour are handled effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, but there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to show initiative.
Attendance	Above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy. In Years 1 and 2 nearly half the lessons were good or better, with the best teaching being in Year 1. In this class, teaching is especially lively and interesting with good provision for pupils of all abilities. In Years 3 to 6, over half the teaching was satisfactory, with 36 per cent being good and eight per cent very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching throughout the school. Much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is well organised and lively, but a key weakness is the consistent lack of challenge for more able pupils. Teaching in music is good, but teaching in ICT is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, and the narrow range of software available to teachers. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, well supported by a good range of out of school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils achieve well because of the clear targets in their individual education plans and the effective co-operation between teachers and support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language and this pupil no longer receives any extra support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual, social and cultural development are good and moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring environment. The promotion of good behaviour is especially effective. Assessment is used well in English, mathematics and science but is not yet effectively developed in other subjects.

The school has developed very good working relationships with parents, who much appreciate the caring, Christian atmosphere throughout the school. Curriculum provision, which has improved since the last inspection, is enhanced through a wide range of good quality extracurricular activities which are well supported and much enjoyed by pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a very effective leader with a clear vision for the school's future development. However, management is only satisfactory because the role of the subject co-ordinators is not well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a wide range of skills that are used to the benefit of the school. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This has improved recently due to the detailed analyses of performance data by the headteacher.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is well managed and priorities are effectively supported through the school's financial planning.

Staffing and accommodation are satisfactory. Learning resources are sound in all subjects, apart from ICT, where there is too limited a range of software to support learning effectively across the curriculum. The school applies the principles of best value very well in all its major spending decisions and gives satisfactory value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like coming to school and are keen to learn.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and all staff are approachable</li> <li>• The school is well led by a dedicated headteacher.</li> <li>• The positive emphasis given to reading.</li> <li>• The strong Christian ethos of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of information provided about what children are going to learn.</li> <li>• The range of after school activities, especially with regard to sporting activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the many positive views of parents. The school does provide a reasonable range of regular newsletters, although it recognises that more information could be included about what children are going to learn. Inspectors are rather puzzled by parental concerns about out of school opportunities, as the school provides a wide range of sporting activities including football, cricket, cross country running, cycling awareness and country dancing.

### PART B: COMMENTARY

#### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

##### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is average overall, although there are considerable variations between the different year groups. The attainment on entry of the present reception class was slightly below average, especially in terms of their language skills, while last year's group (the pupils now in Year 1) was slightly above average. This unusual pattern has existed for some years and partly explains the considerable variations in the results achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

2. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in Year R and are on course to match the Early Learning Goals<sup>5</sup> in all the areas of learning recommended for this age group. There is a strong and effective emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and they achieve well in this area of learning. Parental confidence in the way the school encourages children to make a good start to their reading skills is fully justified. The teaching in communication, language and literacy is good and children achieve well.

3. The school's results in National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have to be treated with some caution because of the small number of pupils in each year group. In the 2001 Year 6 group, for example, there were only 14 pupils, with each pupil, therefore accounting for over seven per cent of the total.

4. Results of the 2001 tests show that, by the end of Year 2, standards were above the national average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, standards were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was around average in all three areas, but the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was

<sup>5</sup> QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

consistently below average. In mathematics, for example, only 13 per cent reached Level 3 compared to the national average of 28 per cent. In science standards were above average, both in terms of national and similar schools comparisons. Standards observed during the inspection were at the average level in reading, writing, and mathematics, and above average in science. The differences between these standards and the scores in last year's national tests is explained by the small number of pupils in each year group and by significant differences in pupils' attainment on entry to the school. In other subjects, standards are at the expected levels, apart from music, where standards are above expectations, and ICT, where standards are below.

5. The 2001 test results show that, by the end of Year 6, standards were well above the national average in mathematics, above average in science, and average in English. Comparisons with other similar schools show the same judgements. Standards in the present Year 6 are average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Given the pupils' attainment on entry it is clear the majority achieve well during their time at the school. However, more able pupils are not challenged enough and they do not achieve as well as they should. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) in mathematics was well above average in 2001, the numbers reaching the higher levels across the curriculum are generally well below the expected level, given pupils' earlier achievements. In other subjects, pupils attain the expected levels, apart from in music, where standards are above expectations, and ICT, where standards are below. A particular weakness in ICT is the limited use made of opportunities to support learning in other subjects.

6. Although the school's results do fluctuate considerably from year to year, overall attainment in Year 6 has risen since the last inspection, in line with the national trend.

7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school and are included in all activities. They benefit from detailed individual education plans that have clear targets that are well matched to their personal needs. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and their targets are updated appropriately.

8. The structures of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented throughout the school and make a positive contribution to the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. Progress in reading is better than in writing because teachers have more confidence in this area of learning. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

9. The school has set challenging targets in order to raise attainment at the end of Year 6. The school has successfully met these targets and the present Year 6 is on course to meet its own targets. There have been recent improvements in the way in which test results are monitored and evaluated. The school does now track the progress of individual pupils carefully in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school, and this is leading to higher expectations of what should be achieved.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, which represents an improvement on the good attitudes reported at the time of the last inspection. The youngest children, in the reception class are confident, secure in the class daily routines and happy to be at school. Older pupils' attitudes to lessons are very positive. Pupils are keen and interested and respond well to challenge, and stimulating activities, as was seen, for example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, in which pupils were playing roles in a Roman story. Pupils take a pride in themselves, their school and their work, as is evidenced by the care with which they maintain their homework diaries. They are keen to take part in the wide range of after school activities.

11. Behaviour is very good, as was the case at the previous inspection. Behavioural standards are made clear to children from the outset and children respond well. In lessons, pupils are attentive and polite and treat school property and resources, such as musical instruments, with care. They are friendly and welcoming towards visitors, with whom older pupils will talk sensibly and maturely about their work. Lunch is cheerfully sociable and pupils readily comply with lunchtime supervisors' instructions. Behaviour in the playground is lively but good natured. It is noticeable, however, that play is largely divided on gender lines; boys rush about or play football whilst girls promenade around the periphery in gossipy huddles. There is little on the hard surfaced play area to stimulate creative play. There has been one fixed period exclusion over the preceding twelve months.

12. The school is an inclusive community. No oppressive behaviour towards any minority group was seen and there have been no incidents of a racial nature. Parents report that rare instances of bullying are swiftly dealt with.

13. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils accept responsibility willingly; most, even the youngest, have classroom duties which they carry out without fuss. Older pupils help around the school: for example in clearing up the hall after lunch. As part of literacy lessons, pupils in Years 5 and 6 read poems and stories to younger pupils. Pupils in Year 2, chosen daily, have the duty to ensure that no children are left with nobody to play with. Those 'on duty' wear readily recognisable hats. There is less evidence, however, of pupils acting on their own initiative.

14. Relationships at all levels are very good and a strength of the school. In lessons, there is a clear and positive rapport between pupils and staff. Teachers treat pupils with respect and value their contributions, thus reinforcing pupils' self esteem. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to relationships in the school; several have many years of service to the school and have provided continuity and stability at times of high teacher turnover. Pupils relate well to each other. They work well in pairs or groups. When left to their own devices, however, they tend to form single sex groups, and not enough is done to encourage boys and girls to work and play together. Pupils care for each other well; older pupils look after young children at play and comfort them when hurt or upset.

15. Attendance is good, as is pupils' punctuality.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage (Year R) is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. The teacher and support assistant work effectively together to provide a broad range of experiences for the children in their care. A strength of teaching is the calm, purposeful atmosphere that has been created that enables children to settle quickly into the routines of school life. A weakness is the lack of detailed records of children's achievements in areas other than literacy and numeracy, which means that work is not always well matched to children's differing needs.

17. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory with good features. There are a number of common features to teaching throughout the school. Lessons are well organised and learning intentions are made clear to pupils at the start of each session. Explanations are given clearly and slowly and teachers' speech is a good role model for all pupils. Teachers know pupils well and the very good relationships in every class underpin the calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout almost all lessons. All teachers make effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. However, a consistent weakness in teaching is the lack of challenge for more able pupils; too often, pupils in the average and above average groups do much the same work.

18. In Years 1 and 2, half the lessons were judged to be satisfactory with the remainder equally divided between good and very good. The best teaching occurs in Year 1 where lessons are presented in a very lively, upbeat fashion that engages the attention of all pupils. A characteristic of lessons in the Year 1 class is the cracking pace and the high level of interest that is generated by the teacher. In both classes, lessons are well organised and teachers use a good range of methods to ensure that pupils are kept busy and purposefully engaged.

19. In Years 3 to 6, just over half of lessons were judged to be satisfactory, a third were good and the rest very good. There is a consistent pattern to teaching in these years, with the best teaching being in Year 4, where all the lessons seen were at least good. A strength of teaching is the quality of teachers' questioning of pupils which skilfully engages all pupils and enables them to take a full part in the lesson. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the National Curriculum and a good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school gives a high priority to the teaching of reading and teachers are especially skilled at promoting skills in this area. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but teachers' knowledge in this area is less secure and there are not always enough opportunities to write extended reports in subjects such as history and geography. A strength of teaching in mathematics is the way pupils are encouraged to think about different strategies rather than just arriving at the right answer. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory, although teaching in music is good, in ICT it is unsatisfactory. These differences reflect the range of teachers' subject knowledge. In ICT, for example, teachers are unsure of how to make the best use of opportunities to develop ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum, and are hampered by the narrow range of software available.

20. A strength of teaching throughout the school is the positive and caring manner in which pupils are managed. Relationships are very good at all levels throughout the school and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning in all classes.

21. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. The school has developed a sound range of strategies for monitoring pupils' progress, but such records are not used consistently by teachers to provide work that is closely matched to pupils' differing needs. Pupils' work is marked regularly and effective use is made of praise and encouragement. However, marking rarely gives pupils a clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers work closely with the special needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants to promote the learning of these pupils. Pupils' detailed individual education plans have useful and appropriate learning objectives that are well matched to pupils' differing needs. Learning support assistants are skilled and well trained and support pupils effectively. Teachers work hard and effectively to ensure that the school's aim of including all pupils in every aspect of the school's life is fully met.

23. The quality of learning reflects the satisfactory and good teaching, and is positively enhanced by pupils' very good attitudes to work. All lessons have an industrious and purposeful atmosphere. Homework makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. Pupils' homework diaries are kept in a thorough and rigorous manner, constructively supported by teachers, pupils and family members.

24. There have been clear improvements in teaching since the last inspection, with an increase in good and very good teaching and an elimination of unsatisfactory teaching.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

25. The quality of the school's curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It is sufficiently broad and balanced with all subjects represented including personal, health and social provision on a regular basis. The main focus in literacy this year has been on developing writing. The National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented and there are many activities targeted to pupils' particular needs in reading. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and there are improvements in the development of mental and oral arithmetic. In most subjects nationally recommended schemes of work are used to complement school guidance, except in art and design. This is an improvement since the last inspection when few whole school plans were in place.

26. Teachers' weekly planning has been improved since the last inspection and now contains specific learning objectives. However, it is not clear which of the weekly objectives are being addressed in each lesson, or whether more able pupils are being set specific challenges. The national guidance for the Foundation Stage has been suitably implemented. However, there is no scheme of work for personal, health and social education, but the school has utilised group sessions to promote this area and raise pupils' self esteem. Displays are used effectively to promote pupils' work and to demonstrate how one subject effectively intermingles with another. For instance pupils in Year 1 have used their geography knowledge about the local area when they word processed achievements using their ICT skills.

27. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is appropriate and closely linked to their individual education plans. Such pupils are given access and included in the full curriculum. Teaching assistants give good quality support in literacy and numeracy lessons, but some sit just observing during the lesson introduction. The majority of pupils are suitably included in lessons due to effective use of teaching assistants. Work is set at a level closely matched to pupils' prior attainment and to any specific targets. Class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator carefully set and monitor progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall.

28. Extracurricular provision is good. During the last year pupils have enjoyed sporting activities such as, cross country running, netball, tag rugby, country dancing, cricket and football. Other school clubs included pupils in recorder, pantomime, 'stitch club', French, writers' club and cycling awareness sessions. There were many visitors who enriched the curriculum from poets to illustrators. School visits linked to curriculum studies took pupils to a variety of places such as Wick Court, Vallis Vale, Bristol Zoo and Wells Cathedral Music School. The residential school journey for Year 6 went to Mill on the Brue for a snowy and cold, but extremely worthwhile week. 'Book Week' included pupils in many enjoyable activities linked to storybooks.

29. The school's ethos is one of care and a high priority is placed on pupils' welfare. Pupils' opinions are sought whenever possible and opportunities are provided in lessons for them to ask and answer questions freely. There are social development sessions and through them the self esteem of pupils is thoughtfully enhanced. Pupils' personal, social and health education is well catered for. There are no formal personal development records, but the staff know their pupils well. A scheme of work for this area has yet to be developed. Citizenship was well developed when pupils' harvest gifts were auctioned to raise money for a local charity. Funds raised at Christmas celebrations were given to a charity, which was seeking to build a hydro pool for children. The school assists effectively with the teaching of sex education and pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs.

30. Links with the local community are good and enrich the curriculum for pupils. A group of pupils sang to the elderly at the St Catherine's Catholic Church during their Christmas party. Visits are made to neighbouring environmental areas and plants are studied. However, pupils have not been able to use e-mail to contact other communities or countries. Close ties have been made with local playgroups and the local secondary schools. Last year the oldest

pupils made newspapers using laptop computers supplied by one of the nearby secondary schools.

31. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This maintains the level of provision since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is good and pupils are included in a wide range of experiences, which allow them to become more curious about life. School assemblies support spiritual awareness well. Uplifting presentations are made; pupils are inspired by comments such as 'many hearts make a school'. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and pupils are included in thoughtful periods of reflection. Prayer includes thoughts like 'let us do our best today!' The local parish priest visits regularly to celebrate mass. Pupils have visited the local place of worship. Singing in assemblies is uplifting, especially in hymns such as, 'Shine, Jesus Shine'. Some teachers allow pupils periods of reflection in music lessons for self assessment. A notable strength of the school, much commented on by parents, is the strong Christian ethos. There are achievement boards with photographs of pupils displaying their successes.

32. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good overall. Honesty is respected in this school and every opportunity is taken to ensure that all pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. All teachers provide very good role models in their relationships with the pupils that they teach. Support staff play an important part in encouraging respect and value for one another. School rules are clearly defined and are consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life because the school effectively teaches them the difference between right and wrong actions. Teachers place a great deal of emphasis on the discussions about the morals of Bible stories. Many pupils could explain the moral to tales such as 'The Prodigal Son' and Zacchaeus the Tax Collector'.

33. Social provision is good in the school. All pupils are appropriately included in many activities which aid them to develop socially. Staff in the school work hard to encourage positive social behaviour and consistently apply the behaviour policy. Pupils are encouraged to behave with courtesy to adults and each other. Staff work conscientiously to maintain the friendly family atmosphere throughout the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively in science, English and physical education lessons. For example they often work in groups when they practise their ball skills. Clubs during the lunch hour and after school offer a wide range of experiences for pupils to develop socially. Many pupils attend music and sports clubs. Strategies for handling bullying are effectively in place and all staff monitor this carefully. Pupils raise money for charities when they run stalls at the fete. Staff expect pupils to take on a variety of responsibilities. Older pupils read to younger ones in lessons. A friendship stop is used during break times; pupils take turns to take responsibility for anyone who feels in need of company. However, the playground is a rather barren environment and there are limited opportunities for boys and girls to play together at break times.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities associated with Western culture in the planned curriculum in geography, music and history. History projects allow pupils to explore past English periods when they learn about Tudors and the Romans in Britain. Pupils study local places of worship. However, they analyse few famous artists' work and opportunities are missed to explore the work of artists from a range of cultures. There are, however, appropriate opportunities to study a range of cultures in other subjects. In connection with studies on Ancient Greeks pupils design and make Greek vases. The study of other religions is part of the religious education scheme of work. An assembly based on the Chinese New Year allowed pupils to dance and sing songs from this very contrasting culture, as did a recent visit from an African drummer. In many classrooms there are opportunities to study tales and books from other cultures. Year 2 enjoyed reading an African tale about a snake. Visitors are well used in the school, including musicians, storytellers and authors.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good, as was the case at the last inspection. The headteacher is responsible for child protection matters. All staff are aware of the action to be taken in cases of concern and there is contact with other statutory agencies via the education social worker. All the necessary health and safety procedures are in place. There is a detailed policy, overseen by a member of the governing body who inspects the premises regularly. There are arrangements for regular safety inspections of physical education apparatus, electrical items and fire equipment. Fire drills are held regularly and efficiently and the bell tested. There are competent arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical needs. Pupils are alerted to health and safety hazards in practical lessons such as physical education and design and technology. In addition to its statutory duties regarding pupil safety, the school, as was said in the previous inspection report, provides a high standard of care. The strong Christian ethos of care permeates the whole school and it looks after pupils' physical well being assiduously, for example in the promotion of healthy eating – healthy snacks only are permitted during the morning break.

36. Procedures for promoting good attendance are good. Registration is carried out promptly and effectively; registers are properly maintained and examined. The headteacher reminds parents through newsletters of the detrimental effects of taking holidays in term time; such holidays are taken but not in such numbers as to cause the school problems. Good levels of attendance are, in part, the consequence of the school's creation of an atmosphere in which children are happy and an ethos which is supported by parents. In the rare event of an attendance problem, the school has recourse to the services of an education social worker.

37. The school's systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The high behavioural standards seen at the school are the product of clear standards, high expectations and a positive ethos. There are only four basic school rules which all pupils follow and understand; in addition, classes discuss and agree their own rules. Reward systems vary from class to class but all reward both individual and group effort. Staff's approach to behaviour management is consistent. High standards of behaviour are promoted through 'circle time'<sup>6</sup> in which pupils consider and discuss issues such as 'friendship' and the right way to behave. Success is celebrated at a weekly 'Merit' assembly. When pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour, parents are brought in at an early stage and a behaviour plan is agreed. Bullying is similarly dealt with. There are a small number of pupils at the school who pose behavioural problems. These pupils were the subject of pre-inspection comments by parents. However, pupils' needs are recognised and their behaviour is well managed by the school.

38. In the previous inspection report, assessment procedures were judged to be unsatisfactory, because of inconsistency of use. That criticism has been addressed. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good in English, mathematics and science. Test results in these subjects, including non statutory national tests, are analysed. The analysis identifies groups of pupils to be targeted, for example higher attaining pupils in mathematics, or all girls in mental mathematics. Group targets are produced. The use of assessment information is satisfactory, but largely confined to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Assessment in other subjects has not been effectively developed. Targets are set for individual pupils, but often they are insufficiently specific to be of use in helping all pupils to make sufficient progress.

39. Assessment information is used to inform curriculum planning to a satisfactory extent. In subjects other than the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the progress of groups of pupils is monitored through the various subjects' medium term planning.

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<sup>6</sup> In these lessons, pupils sit in a circle and through agreed rules, have the opportunity to speak and listen to each other talking about issues, which touch them all.

40. Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are good. Whilst class teachers keep notes of personal development – to inform pupils' annual reports – the process is largely informal and based upon the knowledge staff have of pupils and their backgrounds. The very good relationships between staff and pupils oil the wheels of the process and ensures that the personal development of all pupils is monitored.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. The school has created good, effective links with parents. Parents are welcome to attend school events such as school masses and Christmas events. An induction meeting is held for new parents and the school prospectus is detailed and helpful. Good quality information is provided for parents. The headteacher sends out monthly newsletters which give good notice of school events. Parents have formal opportunities to meet teachers every term; non attendance is followed up. Parents particularly appreciate the opportunity for a quick informal word with staff at the beginning or the end of the day. All parents seen, both before and during the inspection, commented favourably on the friendliness and accessibility of teachers. The school helps parents to understand the curriculum by arranging information evenings on subjects such as literacy and numeracy; meetings on information technology and science are planned. Parents would, however, appreciate advance information on the topics their children will be studying. Pupils' annual reports are good. They contain detail on the coverage of the subject, and on the child's response and attainment. For pupils in Years 3 to 6 there is, in addition, an assessment of effort and comment upon homework. All reports contain good comments upon the child's personal development. A list of clubs attended and visits made is included. Reports on Foundation Stage children are couched in terms of the six Early Learning Goals.

42. Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning. They support the school's homework policy and monitor their children's homework books. These, together with younger pupils' home-school reading diaries form useful vehicles for home-school dialogue. Parents are seen as a valuable resource and a number work in classrooms, hearing children read or helping with practical subjects such as art. They help supervise on school visits and with swimming. There is an active school association which organises social events and raises significant sums for pupils' benefit. The next objective is to fund interesting features for the rather barren tarmac play area. Parents are happy to be involved in the school; there was a high attendance at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and a very high (75 per cent) response to the questionnaire.

43. Parents' views of the school are very positive and supportive. In particular, parents appreciate the fact that their children are happy at school. They regard the teaching as good and consider that the school is well led by a dedicated headteacher. They support the emphasis on reading and value the school's strong Christian ethos. Respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concern in two areas; parents did not feel that they were kept well informed about what their child was expected to study in the forthcoming term, and they did not regard the range of extracurricular activities as extensive – the lack of sport was mentioned specifically by several. As regards information, the inspection team accepts that more advance curriculum information could be provided, and the school recognises this. The information on pupil progress, however, is good. Inspection evidence does not support the criticisms regarding extracurricular activities. Several sporting activities are provided, including cross-country running, football, tag rugby, netball and cricket. Overall, the range of additional opportunities is extensive, with residential visits for Years 5 and 6 and a wide range of visits, and visitors to the school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. The school is very well led. There is a very good partnership between the headteacher and the governors and a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Clear educational direction has been established and effective systems implemented to ensure that improvements are well monitored and funded. The relatively new headteacher has made a very good start in moving the school forward. The school has a clear set of aims, and these are well reflected in its work. The very strong ethos and atmosphere in which pupils thrive is a real strength.

45. The governing body is very effective and supportive of the new initiatives that the headteacher has begun to put in place. It takes its responsibilities very seriously and fulfils its statutory duties very well. Governors have a clear role in monitoring and supporting developments. For example, each governor undertakes a role in overseeing a subject. This involves them in everyday school life, in which they meet and observe teachers and talk with pupils. This helps them to have high levels of knowledge about the way the school operates on a day-to-day basis, and to play a strategic role in shaping future developments.

46. The school is appropriately managed. A good quality development plan is helping to guide practice. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is not yet, however, a consistent part of co-ordinators' roles. Too little time has been allocated to this area of management, but plans have rightly been established for co-ordinators to begin monitoring next term. The headteacher monitors teaching as part of his overall strategic role, but the impact of teaching on the development of individual subjects and standards has not been evaluated. Satisfactory strategies are in place for appraisal and performance management, and this is beginning to have an impact on training needs. Induction procedures for new staff are adequate and support is provided by senior staff. Overall, management procedures are new and there has been too little time for them to have a major impact on standards. However, a very good start has been made on improving the monitoring and evaluation of provision across the school since the appointment of the new headteacher.

47. Overall the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. However, it recognises that more work in the two key issues of providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils and raising standards in ICT is necessary.

48. Financial planning is very good and the school makes very good use of the resources available to benefit its pupils. Educational priorities are very well supported through the planning process. For example, priorities to improve the accommodation have led to refurbishment and decoration of classrooms, which has resulted in an improved learning environment for many pupils. Specific grants, such as those for the support of pupils with special educational needs, are very well used for their designated purposes. A recent bid for technical support has improved the reliability of technology across the school and saved a great deal of teachers' time in sorting out minor technical difficulties. However, reliable access to e-mail is still not available. New technology is being very well used to monitor the budget and to inform about pupils' progress as they move through the school. Every effort is sought to ensure that the principles of best value are applied so that the budget is well used. A recent audit report commented on the very good financial control at the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money overall.

49. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. All teaching staff are appropriately qualified for teaching the National Curriculum in the primary phase. Teaching assistants contribute significantly towards pupils' positive experience of school. Teaching assistants are used effectively and are well briefed by the teachers they support. Several have many years of experience in the school and provide continuity when teacher turnover is above average.

50. Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are adequately sized, having regard to the numbers and ages of pupils. The hall is of a good size for activities such as physical education lessons and whole school assemblies. The school occupies several buildings on a

sharply sloping site. The hard surfaced play area is barely adequate for the number of pupils and rather stark in appearance; there is little to stimulate the imagination and promote creative play. There is a pleasant orchard area with trees to provide shade in the summer, and a small environmental area containing a pond teeming with amphibian life. The Foundation Stage has its own separate, well resourced play area. The premises are maintained to a high standard and enhanced by good displays of pupils' work.

51. Learning resources are unsatisfactory, because of the school's deficiencies in software to support learning in ICT. The provision of resources in all other subjects is satisfactory.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

52. To further improve standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- **Develop** strategies for providing more challenge for more able pupils by:
  - Improving lesson planning so that specific objectives are set to challenge pupils of all abilities;
  - Making better use of assessment information in order to produce individual pupil targets;

- Improving teachers' marking in order to give pupils a clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do next in order to improve further;
- Introducing a register that recognises those pupils who are gifted and talented and provide tasks that are well matched to their differing needs.

Paragraphs: 4, 8, 16, 17, 19, 21, 26, 38, 65, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 83, 86, 87, 89, 95, 96, 97, 116, 122, 126.

- **Raise** standards in ICT by:

- Improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- Developing the range of software available to teachers to support pupils' learning;
- Developing the range of opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects across the curriculum;
- Promoting the use of assessment information to develop individual pupil targets;
- Developing the role of the subject co-ordinator so that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored, and best practice is shared across the school.

Paragraphs: 4, 5, 48, 50, 67, 84, 95, 106, 112, 116, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 133.

The following minor issue should be considered in the governors' action plan:

- Improving the range of playground activities available to children at break times and encouraging activities on the playground that involve boys and girls playing together;

Paragraphs: 14, 33, 42, 50.

*(It is recognised that most of these aspects are already featured in the school's current improvement plan.)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

40

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	13	22	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12.5	32.5	55	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

198

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

17

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

2

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

20

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

8

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	12	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	11	11	9
	Total	22	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92(93)	96 (100)	88 (100)
	National	84(83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	10	8	11
	Total	19	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (97)	79 (100)	96 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year		Total
	2001		14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (78)	79 (67)	100 (78)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (74)	71 (93)	100 (70)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Actual numbers of boys and girls achieving Level 4 and above are omitted as a consequence of the small year group.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.43
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106.14

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	353,032
Total expenditure	353,189
Expenditure per pupil	1,920
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,182
Balance carried forward to next year	16,025

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	203
Number of questionnaires returned	150

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	39	5	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	45	8	3	1
The teaching is good.	54	43	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	46	16	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	52	5	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	41	13	4	8

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

53. Children in Year R make up the Foundation Stage. Currently there are 30 children in the class. All children started school full time in the first half term of the year, between the start of September and the end of October. The school has good links with local pre-school playgroups and almost all children become familiar with the school before their first day. Children are assessed shortly after they start school and results of these assessments show attainment on entry to be average overall. A notable feature of these annual assessments is the very wide variations from year to year. The attainments of the present group show standards to be below average in terms of language skills but average in all other areas of learning. However, other recent intakes have been above average, as is the case with last year's group, now in Year 1.

54. Provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy skills. The teaching is good in these areas and satisfactory in all other areas of learning. Planning ensures that the experiences children have are based on the recommended Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Children make a sound start to their education and make at least satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning.

55. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning, apart from personal, social and emotional development where most children are likely to exceed the goals. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily, although levels of achievement in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy are good. Although no children have been identified as having special educational needs, staff know the children well and make satisfactory provision for children of differing abilities.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

56. Teaching is good. Children are provided with a calm, caring and very orderly atmosphere so that by the time they leave Year R, many are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals. This shows good achievement and reflects the care that the teacher has taken to plan for this aspect of learning. The provision for a wide range of practical activities ensures that there are good opportunities for children to learn through play and develop their social skills. Children soon develop a sense of routine and learn to organise themselves independently. High expectations of their behaviour by all adults ensure that children know what is expected of them.

57. When working in groups, children help each other and concentrate well, always trying hard to achieve successful results. When playing together they are considerate to each other. When playing in the 'home corner' they take turns and help each other to take on different roles. Relationships with the teacher, support assistant and volunteer helpers are very good. All staff provide good role models for children.

58. Children have a range of opportunities that give them a chance to show a sense of responsibility and they undertake routine jobs with considerable enthusiasm and maturity.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

59. The majority of children are keen to express their ideas and speak with reasonable confidence. When discussing their news on Monday morning, several children talked with

interest about their weekend activities. Other children listen politely, but rarely respond to others' comments unless the subject matter is of special interest. For example, when one child spoke about a visit to the local swimming pool, many spoke with enthusiasm about their own visit, but generally children listened quietly and without much interest in the comments of others.

60. The teacher sometimes misses opportunities to draw out children's ideas and is too often satisfied with one word answers. As a result, children achieve well in terms of developing their listening skills, but only satisfactorily in terms of their speaking skills.

61. Teaching is good. Children are prepared well for reading and writing through the good teaching of letter sounds to aid spelling and reading. More able children know all the alphabet by letter names and can write their names accurately from memory. There is a daily, modified literacy session and good use is made of the support assistant to provide appropriate work for children of differing ability. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at their own writing and encouraged to check spellings and letters from the resources provided. Displays around the class emphasise the importance of initial sounds, as in a display of pictures of items all beginning with the letter 'c'. A wide range of books, superbly displayed, further emphasises the importance of reading and encourages children to develop a love of literature. The teacher keeps detailed records of children's achievements in this area of learning and this data is used well to ensure that the work children undertake is well matched to their differing needs.

62. Almost all children understand that print conveys meaning. They handle books carefully. Many children can recognise a range of simple words and have embarked on reading books from the reading scheme. The more able children use expression in their reading and read with confidence. The good level of achievement in reading owes much to the very good, consistent support that parents give in terms of taking books home and encouraging their children with early reading skills.

### **Mathematical development**

63. There is a reasonable range of activities provided for children to develop mathematical awareness and levels of achievement are satisfactory.

64. Children enjoy playing several floor games that encourage them to order the numbers from one to ten. Children learn to sort and order shapes and colours and make repeated patterns with beads and counters. They learn about symmetrical patterns through making colourful butterfly prints and some more able children have learnt the names of basic two-dimensional shapes. Good use is made of the water and sand trays to develop children's early ideas of capacity and volume.

65. Teaching is satisfactory. A strength of teaching is the good range of suitable activities and the calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout mathematical sessions. However, from the scrutiny of children's work, there is evidence that the more able children are not always extended enough so that the tasks they are set are not always helping them develop their recording skills in line with their mathematical knowledge. The good emphasis on practical activities helps children to develop mathematical concepts, but many of them lack the mathematical language to express these ideas. The lack of adult interventions in play activities such as water and sand play means that vocabulary skills are not well developed, especially for the more able.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

66. Children enter Year R with a sound understanding of their world. The planned provision and satisfactory teaching broaden children's knowledge and understanding so that the majority are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. A particular strength is the opportunity that children are given to study nature. They plant bulbs and enjoy watching them grow and making observations about the changes that occur over time. This work is linked skilfully to a study of weather and seasons and children undertake simple scientific experiments where they test the strength of the wind. Children effectively develop their early ideas about religion and enjoy talking about the special nativity play presented at Christmas time. Their ideas about God are exemplified in a special prayer thanking God for all the fruit and vegetables.

67. A weakness of the provision is the limited use of computers. Children do have access to computers and learn to use the mouse and control the cursor, but many opportunities to use ICT in lessons are wasted. In the literacy sessions observed during the inspection, computers were not used, and in numeracy only limited use was made.

### **Physical development**

68. The inclement weather throughout the inspection meant children were unable to use the well resourced outdoor play area. Nevertheless, judged from a lesson in the school hall, provision in this area of learning is satisfactory.

69. In this lesson, children learnt to move in different ways, maintaining a safe space and being aware of others. Children develop their vocabulary as they learn to stretch high and low. More able children successfully put together a sequence of different movements. Children show good levels of imagination as they pretend to be different animals as well as being scarecrows.

70. Teaching is satisfactory. A strength of teaching is the wide range of activities that are planned in this area of learning, using a good number of wheeled toys available in the outdoor play space that is available exclusively for these children. A weakness of teaching in the one lesson observed was the lack of evaluations of children's performances so that few children were able to develop a clear idea of the quality of their own work and what they needed to do to improve further.

### **Creative development**

71. Teaching is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on providing a wide range of creative experiences so that most children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year.

72. Children play imaginatively in the role play area, and especially enjoy the opportunities for painting. They learn to mix primary colours in order to produce bold and confident paintings. They use a good range of three-dimensional materials such as play dough and clay. Children handle crayons and pencils well.

73. Children benefit from a good range of musical activities and a recent highlight was the visit of an African drummer who introduced children to music from a different culture. They clap and use simple percussion instruments to accompany their singing.

74. A weakness of teaching in this area is the lack of record keeping to track both the range of activities undertaken by individual children and their levels of achievement.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Standards in English are average. Standards in literacy are improving and were average in the 2001 national tests and assessments for pupils in Year 6, both when compared to all schools and to other similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that Year 6 pupils achieve satisfactorily. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was above average, but the numbers reaching the higher Level 5 were below average. Overall, standards were judged to be average.

76. The school's test results for last year show that writing standards for the Year 2 class were above average and average when compared to other similar schools. The present seven year old class is working at average levels. This difference is due to the very different make up of the present Year 2 class in comparison to last year. There are few pupils in the present Year 2 class who can write at above average levels. Last year, tests results for seven year olds in reading were below average compared to all schools and average when looked at in the context of similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that Year 2 pupils are again mostly reading at nationally expected levels with a reasonable number working at above average levels. The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards in reading are average.

77. There are slight differences in the attainment of boys and girls in Year 2, but there is no significant difference between them in Year 6. The school has few girls in Year 2 who work in the above average group. The majority of pupils are suitably included in all literacy lessons, but more able pupils are not fully extended. Gifted and talented pupils are not consistently identified in the school, although some gifted writers have been given opportunities to attend writers' workshops. Test results over the past four years demonstrate that standards have fluctuated considerably from year to year but have improved broadly in line with the national trend.

78. When pupils enter the school they have average speaking and listening skills. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop pupils' vocabulary. They achieve satisfactorily, increasing their skills steadily. In Years 2 and 6 pupils achieve average levels of oral skills. Year 2 pupils can explain the basic plot of books they have read and say why they like particular characters. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy working with partners and discussing how they could improve a narrative poem based on 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat'.

79. The literacy hour has been suitably used to develop reading skills and word recognition. Throughout the school pupils make suitable achievements in learning to read. Average pupils have a satisfactory grasp of reading and they use their skills to sound out unknown words. Year 2 pupils keenly answered questions about words that describe the character of a snake from the 'Big Book'. Reading skills of more able pupils in Year 2 enable them to scan index and contents pages. However they do not use these skills very quickly when scanning the computers for key words. The reading skills of those with special educational needs are below average, but they are making good achievements with their recall of basic high frequency words. Year 6 pupils know how to use a contents and index page and they know how to retrieve books efficiently from the library. Comprehension skills are suitably developed and pupils often record their answers to questions about texts, such as when they find out about the way words are used in 'The Railway Children'. Pupils' research skills are above average and they produce interesting projects in Year 5 about water and fish.

80. Standards in writing are average in Year 2. The school has recently planned more writing lessons for pupils to practise and develop their skills. The majority of pupils in Year 2 can write simple stories or factual accounts. They write interesting accounts of the Fire of London linking history and literacy skills well. Average pupils can write about holiday activities using capital letters and full stops accurately. More able pupils in Year 2 are beginning to add adjectives to their writing to make it more exciting, but do not have enough opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in writing and are able to write reasonable accounts of their holidays.

81. Writing standards in Year 6 are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in writing and the majority can write at nationally expected levels. This was seen when pupils wrote about whether cars should be banned. Average pupils can write autobiographies and play scripts about characters from 'The Hobbit' such as Gandalf and Bilbo. However, a greater number of more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 should be achieving higher standards. Teachers' planning rarely sets specific challenges for these pupils. Less able pupils can write satisfactory short newspaper reports about raising money for Frome Hospital. The best writing incorporates adventurous vocabulary, utilises grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. For example, a more able Year 6 pupil wrote the following description in her story:-

"A ripple of fear ran down her body, as she wheeled around a black figure strode towards her. Her eyes darting around, she seized a metal pole and hauled herself up."

82. Handwriting standards are satisfactory. Younger pupils regularly practise forming their letters correctly. Older pupils from Year 4 onwards are using joined up writing in their work effectively. Spelling is satisfactory and the school plans give emphasis to the systematic teaching of this area.

83. The teaching of English is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and one very good lesson was seen. Teachers throughout the school have a good understanding of how to promote reading skills which means that pupils learn to read expressively. However, teachers are less secure about how to develop writing. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the teaching of literacy. For instance, weekly planning now sets clear learning objectives ensuring that teachers are well focused on what pupils should be learning. However, specific challenges for the more able are not consistently present. The best teaching incorporates many of the following characteristics:

- Learning objectives are displayed and shared with the class at the beginning, as well as the end of lessons;
- Open ended questioning is used to make pupils think carefully about what it is they are learning;
- The last part of the lesson is used to evaluate the strengths of pupils' work and allow pupils to self evaluate their learning;
- Good behaviour management focuses on positive reinforcement and ensures that pupils concentrate on tasks carefully.

84. Teachers are beginning to use marking effectively. Successful marking records the strengths or development areas enabling pupils to take the next steps in their learning. Oral feedback does not always tell pupils specifically what they are doing well, so pupils are not sure which aspects of their work they should utilise in future. Teachers do not explain to pupils about the National Curriculum levels and so pupils are not aware of how to achieve higher levels of attainment. Classroom assistants are not used to monitor pupils' input during lesson introductions, so teachers do not gain extra evidence of pupils' understanding. Information and communication technology is not well used to teach aspects of literacy. However, most pupils enjoy reading and are keen to volunteer their own ideas due to the teachers' enthusiasm. Homework is used very effectively to develop pupils' reading and research skills.

85. The co-ordinator sets a very good example by the high quality of her teaching of literacy. The English action plan guides the school effectively. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. Termly assessments of pupils' writing are carried out well in special books, but assessment is not consistently used. Pupils' reading skills are assessed annually using additional national tests. Resources are satisfactory although the school recognises the need to renew many library and classroom books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. Most pupils achieve well throughout the school in mathematics. However, more able pupils are not always challenged enough and their levels of achievement are unsatisfactory.

87. These differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils are best exemplified by the results attained in the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments by pupils in Year 2. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was only slightly below the national average, only 13 per cent reached the higher Level 3, compared to 28 per cent nationally. Overall, standards were well below the national average and well below those achieved by other similar schools.

88. In 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments for pupils in Year 6, standards were well above the national average and well above those achieved by other similar schools. The proportion reaching the expected Level 4 was above average, but the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was well above average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, although in Year 6 boys did less well than girls, whereas nationally boys do slightly better than girls. This is largely explained by the very small number of pupils in the 2001 year group and statistics are unreliable.

89. Standards observed during the inspection were considerably different. In Year 2, standards are average, a considerable improvement on last year's results. The proportion working at the expected level is above average, although, in line with last year's results, the number working at the higher level is below average. In Year 6, standards are above average. The proportion working at the expected level is well above average, but the lack of challenge for more able pupils means that standards overall are only above average. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on number work and standards in other areas of the subject, such as data handling and shape, space and measures are not as good as in number.

90. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They have detailed individual education plans, often with suitable targets to support their numeracy work, and are well supported by skilful learning support assistants. They are included in all activities.

91. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced throughout the school and has made a significant contribution to the improvement in pupils' ability to calculate mentally.

92. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have learnt the two, five and ten times tables. Pupils use a 100 square with confidence and most use their knowledge of place value to put a given number in the right place on the square. They have successfully learnt by heart the addition and subtraction facts to ten and some have gone beyond this to 20. Pupils are confident in counting forwards and backwards in tens. They are not as successful in using these skills to solve problems, especially those arising in everyday life.

93. By the end of Year 6 pupils confidently apply the four rules of computation to work out a variety of problems. Pupils' ability to calculate mentally is good and most pupils work out percentage problems in their heads with confidence. Most pupils can work out ten per cent of a given number and more able pupils successfully calculate 35 per cent of 400. As in Years 1 and 2 there is a heavy emphasis on number work, and standards in the other areas of mathematics lag behind those in number work. The eleven year olds are only average at solving problems. A significant cause of this is the teachers' over reliance on worksheets that give pupils plenty of opportunities to revise their number skills, but hinder the development of pupils' ability to think for themselves.

94. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. During the inspection, half the lessons observed were satisfactory and the

rest were good or better. There are no significant differences in teaching throughout the school. There are a number of strengths to teaching alongside two key weaknesses. All lessons are well organised and presented in a lively, interesting manner. The mental 'warm up' sessions at the start of each lesson are thought provoking and challenging for all pupils. In all lessons there is a positive and purposeful atmosphere and pupils respond by trying their best and sustaining concentration. A strength of teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to think about strategies and ways of approaching tasks and not merely working out the correct answer. A good example of this was in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were asked to find out the sum of all the numbers from one to ten. The focus was not just on arriving at the correct answer, but at thinking of the best way of working out the answer. More able pupils soon realised that the quickest way was to match pairs of numbers that made ten. They were then able to use this strategy to work out more difficult combination of numbers. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were challenged to work out 2.5 per cent of 600 and tackled this by calculating 10 per cent, then 5 per cent and finally 2.5 per cent.

95. The quality of pupils' thinking is a strength of mathematics work throughout the school. In oral sessions, teachers pitch their questions carefully to involve all pupils. However, when pupils move on to the group and individual work part of the lesson, the tasks are consistently not challenging enough for more able pupils. Indeed, a scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school year shows that often average and above average pupils do much the same work. In some, but not all cases, the only difference is that more able pupils do more work. The end result is that more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Another weakness in teaching is the way in which teachers use ICT to support pupils' learning. There are positive examples of pupils using ICT appropriately, as in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were practising their five and ten times table and used a software program that invited them to fill in a number square with the five and tens all clearly marked. Generally, though, opportunities to use ICT to support pupils' learning are few and far between.

96. Planning is satisfactory. Although teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment, this information is not used systematically to plan work for pupils of differing prior attainment. The work planned is well suited to pupils of average and below average attainment and results in these pupils achieving well, but is not challenging enough for pupils of above average attainment. Pupils' work is marked regularly and praise and encouragement are given appropriately. However, pupils' are not given specific targets to aspire to, nor does marking give pupils a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses. Homework is set regularly and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' quality of learning. Pupils satisfactorily develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology.

97. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is monitored and effective guidance is available to teachers to support their work in this subject. Teaching has been monitored by the headteacher and useful feedback given to help teachers improve. The evaluation of the school's performance has been much improved since the last inspection and has made staff aware that more challenge is needed to stretch the more able pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

98. Standards in science are above average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 at the age of seven, and the end of Year 6 at the age of eleven, they achieve higher standards than pupils in similar schools. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection, although standards have risen for eleven year olds. As pupils move through the school they make good progress in scientific skills.

99. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average. They benefit from good teaching as they develop good scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 2 were observed undertaking an in-depth study of

different animal habitats. They showed good understanding of the conditions required to keep creatures safe, and recognised that different creatures need different habitats linked to their needs. Pupils' scientific skills were extended through real experiences. For example, pupils had undertaken an investigation into their school environment to find out what creatures lived there. Simple charts were completed to show the range and number of creatures that they discovered. Observation skills in Years 1 and 2 are developing well. Pupils observe and compare different creatures and make valid suggestions about the kind of habitat they might require. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary as they describe the conditions necessary for life. A few higher attaining pupils can explain the purpose of camouflage in the animal world, and are very eager to share their knowledge with others. Pupils are excited by science, and keen to undertake the good range of tasks.

100. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build on prior knowledge and continue to make good progress in science. They attain high standards as they benefit from some exciting practical activities which help to extend and improve their skills. For example, in Year 3, pupils show clear understanding of basic life processes and the impact of diet on humans. They undertake simple research into their own diets to decide if they are eating healthy foods. During the inspection, pupils were observed learning about the different properties of materials. They showed good levels of maturity as they identified and categorised different materials in the classroom. They were able to sort materials into groups efficiently and accurately, using appropriate language to describe them, such as, "All of these are made of wood." In Year 4, pupils showed that they understood that the volume of water remained the same, whatever the shape of the container that they used. They showed high levels of enjoyment and maturity as they undertook an experiment to test their theory. Clear predictions were recorded, and they recognised the importance of collecting data to answer questions. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards higher than average and show that they have made good progress over time in scientific knowledge and skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate increasing awareness of physical processes. They have undertaken experiments linked to sound, using fair test procedures to find answers to how different materials absorb sound. They demonstrate their knowledge of changes through simple experimentation with candles, and explain carefully what happens to the wax as a candle burns.

101. The quality of teaching in science is good throughout the school. Teachers use good practical approaches to help pupils learn. Lessons generally contain good, clear introductions and effective demonstrations. Challenging questions are a feature of science lessons, particularly in the introductory part. However, sometimes there is too little challenge during investigations, when all pupils usually undertake the same task, but lessons are mostly well prepared and resources are well used to improve pupils' understanding. The focus on practical activities is a strength, and ensures that pupils enjoy science and are keen to learn. For example, in one lesson in Year 2, the practical approach to learning about habitats had a very positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and on standards, and pupils did not want the lesson to finish. They continued their discussion well after the end of the lesson, and at home time. Teachers organise lessons well, and focus careful attention on the importance of observation. This is helping pupils to achieve particularly high standards in this area of science.

102. Science is well led. The co-ordinator has recently completed an audit to improve provision. Some exciting additional science activities have been organised and these are a real strength. For example, several classes have visited an environmental science park and taken part in a range of activities to increase pupils' awareness. A recent science week, in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs, undertook investigations and experiments and raised the profile of the subject. Plans are in place to make this an annual event. There is a slight weakness in the provision for monitoring standards and teaching across the school. The lack of opportunity to do this inhibits the development of a clear overview of the provision, and understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

## ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards in art and design are in line with those expected of pupils of a similar age throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in all activities. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection.

104. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use an appropriate range of media to express their own ideas and increase their skills in art and design. They have enjoyed making Chinese lanterns and kites, as well as a Chinese dragon for the New Year festival recently. Pupils communicated their ideas well through colour, texture and shape. They show appropriate awareness of visual and tactile aspects of the subject to convey effect. In Year 2, pupils have painted self portraits with good evidence of colour mixing to create visual similarities. They have undertaken simple research on colour shades and how to make paint lighter or darker. They work from prior sketches as they create a collage, and enjoy three-dimensional work with clay. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were learning about weaving. They showed high levels of interest in the way a loom works, and were able to weave a simple pattern with plastic. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design as they move through Years 1 and 2, although creative skills are weak, and work is often the same for all pupils. Pupils enjoy art and design, and standards of behaviour are always good.

105. In Years 3 to 6, pupils undertake a broad range of art and design activities, many of which are linked to other subjects, particularly history and design and technology. For example, in Year 3, pupils have decorated effective Roman shields using cardboard and foil, developing their knowledge and skills of history and design and technology through art. In Year 4, Tudor portraits show evidence of good observational skills, both in terms of historical realism and artistic approaches. Pupils have adapted their work appropriately to represent the Tudor period. Pupils in Year 5 have linked some of their art and design work to history. They have made epergnes and decorated them with a range of different materials, investigating and combining visual and tactile qualities. In Year 6, there is evidence of good painting skills as pupils paint pictures of a river valley they visited as part of geography. Pupils have made first hand observations of the river, sketching different views and taking photographs. They show confidence in the range of approaches used, including colour washing and Impressionist techniques. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made good progress in their understanding of working with clay as they developed and decorated pots in the style of the Ancient Greeks. Across Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in the exploration and development of art skills. However, too little evidence of the study of the work of other famous and contemporary artists is available, particularly from other countries. Levels of creativity are satisfactory. However, pupils often work from a model and there is too little evidence that they design and create pictures from their own experiences. They show significant enjoyment of the subject and behave well in lessons.

106. The quality of teaching in art and design is satisfactory overall, although there are some weaknesses. Teachers manage lessons well and provide a good range of resources to enable pupils to try out different effects. Lessons are well prepared, so that maximum use is made of the available time, and approaches are often varied and supportive. Art and design is well used by teachers to support other subjects. However, subject knowledge is limited and the lack of assessment of individual pupils' skills means that their progress in the subject is only satisfactory. The use of ICT to support art and design is weak. Pupils are sometimes encouraged to develop their art work from a model, hence creative skills are not always systematically developed.

107. The subject co-ordinator for art and design is new, and has not yet had an impact on provision or standards. The lack of a planned range of activities to inform teaching is a weakness, but plans are rightly in place to improve this. There has been little monitoring of the subject, either to improve provision or inform about standards, and this is a weakness.

Displays of pupils' art work are appropriate around the school, but there is a lack of focus on art from other contemporary cultures to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with those expected of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were weak. Progress in the subject as pupils move through the school is satisfactory. All pupils are included in design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

109. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop their investigative skills by exploring a range of materials and making simple models. They have used simple tools to create a very large Chinese dragon and cut and paste paper with ease. Some very good 'pop-up' books, which pupils made for their literacy lesson, show that they have understood how to use the working characteristics of paper to make it stiffer, and how they can join materials together. Pupils have used split pins to make moveable joints in models and they show that they have enjoyed their model making as they talk animatedly about it to adults.

110. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their designing and making skills and achieve satisfactory standards. There is a small range of evidence of completed work that shows that pupils are beginning to apply their knowledge of materials when developing and planning their products. As they move through Years 3 to 6, pupils become involved in using tools to measure, mark, cut, shape and decorate their work. For example, in Year 4, pupils have designed simple bags with paper and made them using materials. They have used sewing techniques to finish their products. In Year 5, pupils have investigated packaging and made suitable evaluations on different products. They begin to work with wood and show understanding of how to join wood to make a frame. Towards the end of Year 6, pupils begin to generate their own ideas. For example, they have made and designed slippers, using a paper prototype to test for necessary improvements. Step-by-step plans are produced and these show good accuracy in planning. Skills in the use of ICT to design products are not well developed, and this is a weakness in the standards pupils achieve. Pupils enjoy the subject and show pride in finished products.

111. The quality of teaching in design and technology is satisfactory across the school. Teachers use good, effective demonstrations and modelling to ensure that pupils understand the tasks. They discuss possible improvements, and provide an appropriate range of resources. However, sometimes not enough attention is paid to enabling pupils to develop ideas for themselves. At these times, the finished products are all very similar and there is little evidence of individual creativity in design, or use of materials. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory but not enough use is made of this knowledge to guide individual skills.

112. The subject co-ordinator of design and technology is new, and there has been too little time for an impact on provision and standards. An audit has recently been started, and this is helping to inform about resources across the school. The lack of opportunity to monitor the provision is a weakness and leads to a lack of a clear overview of how well pupils are doing. The lack of use of ICT is another a weakness, and has an impact, particularly on design presentation. Too little evidence of past work is available to enable the co-ordinator to assess standards or to monitor progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. Standards of pupils' work in geography at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. The satisfactory standards seen in the previous inspection have been maintained. Teachers plan for a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the required

elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily throughout the school.

114. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 and 2 learn about their immediate environment through discussing and recording what they do at the weekends as well as considering preferences. In Year 1 they develop their writing and mathematical skills by completing sentences such as, "I like going to the swimming pool because....." and illustrating their findings with a block graph. They learn about their locality by identifying where they live in Frome on a large map of the town. In Year 2 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world by studying the story of Katie Morag who lives on a remote Scottish island. Pupils contrast this environment with their own and notice differences in transport, buildings as well as the type of jobs that are available. Again, they are encouraged to express preferences and pupils are able to explain why they would prefer to live in Frome.

115. Pupils of all abilities in Years 3 to 6 develop a good understanding of maps. Pupils learn in detail about the weather and the importance of water to life throughout the world. They learn about the local environment through a stimulating water walk and through a visit to a local sewage works. Good use is made of the Internet to enable pupils to learn about the importance of water in Third World countries. In Years 3 to 6 the amount of recorded work is less than that normally seen and literacy skills are not effectively developed. An exception to this was a superb project in Year 5 where pupils developed their own presentations to support their studies of water with well written, detailed and neatly presented pieces of work.

116. Only one (very good) lesson in Year 1 was observed during the inspection. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the school year indicates that teaching over time is satisfactory throughout the school. The school is well organised and teachers' planning ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered. Numeracy skills are effectively developed through the presentation of line and block graphs. Although there are some good examples of the use of ICT to support geography work, such occasions are not frequent enough. A weakness in teaching is the lack of assessment information that is kept to track the progress of pupils of differing prior attainment. As a result, lessons tend to proceed regardless of the achievements of pupils in recent lessons. A strength of teaching is the regular use of visits and visitors that helps bring the subject alive for pupils of all ages.

117. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the role, but has undertaken a useful review of work and compared present provision with that described in the last inspection report. The weaknesses in assessment procedures are recognised and form part of the action plan for this subject. Resources are satisfactory and well used. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

118. The school has maintained the average levels of attainment in history throughout since the last inspection. The inclusion of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in the curriculum is appropriately achieved.

119. By the age of seven, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. For example, they have learnt about the Great Fire of London and can explain that it was the close proximity of the houses, and the fact they were made of wood, that led to the fire spreading so rapidly. Pupils' writing skills are developed well through their detailed descriptions of the fire and their reports on the cause of the fire and its impact on life in London at that time.

120. By the age of eleven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the key dates, periods and events in British history. Pupils' knowledge is underpinned by an effective scheme of work that ensures that, as pupils move through Years 3 to 6, they study a wide range of

historical topics in reasonable depth. In Year 4, for example, pupils learn about the life of Henry VIII and his lifestyle and develop an understanding of the problems he faced in terms of wanting a son and heir. Pupils make useful comparisons between lifestyles in different periods and their own experiences, such as in their study of the Victorians in Year 5, where they compare the typical jobs undertaken by men and women then and now.

121. Pupils make reasonable use of ICT to support their studies. Apart from using CD ROMs to find out information, the Internet is well used, as in a Year 6 lesson on the Ancient Greeks, where pupils used a popular site to develop their knowledge of the Olympic Games.

122. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. However, teaching, at times, is too focused on key dates and events and not enough on some of the underlying reasons why events took place. This apart, teaching is effective. Pupils certainly enjoy lessons and talked to inspectors enthusiastically about their work. They particularly enjoy the trips that are arranged and the artefacts that are used to bring the subject to life. A weakness of teaching is the lack of assessment information that is gathered in order to match work to the differing needs of pupils.

123. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection and this is used effectively to ensure all aspects of the subject are covered as pupils move through the school. Displays in classrooms are of a high quality and indicate that history is given a reasonable priority throughout the school. Although the subject co-ordinator does monitor teachers' plans there are no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

124. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below the nationally expected levels. This is a similar judgement to one given at the last inspection. Too few opportunities are taken to involve children in the subject and this has resulted in pupils' achievements being rather limited. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and in over three quarters of all lessons computers were not used. Further evidence was taken from teachers' planning, talking to pupils and an analysis of work. Few classes had an ICT folder which contained more than two pieces of work.

125. In Year 2 the standards are below those expected. This is mainly due to too little time being allocated to the teaching of basic skills and weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. Most pupils can word process their name, write lists, and change the size of letters. The majority of pupils could draw a picture of a house adding a roof and windows. Pupils in Year 1 can use a mouse to select a weather image. Pupils could recall adding information into the computer about how they spend their leisure time and created a bar graph. However, they could not recall having programmed a remote control device. A considerable number of pupils were unclear about how they save and retrieve their work.

126. The standards of pupils in Year 6 are below those expected for their age. Last year the pupils of 11 years of age used a desktop publishing programme to create a newspaper. Year 5 pupils have had similar experiences where a digital camera was used to add images to their newspaper articles. Year 6 pupils can use the Internet to research facts about the Olympic Games. The present Year 6 pupils do not recall adding data into the computer to create a graph in recent years. None could remember having used spreadsheets or sensors. Year 5 had an ICT folder. These pupils have used spreadsheets to produce a graph showing how much water their families utilised in two days. They have not used a program that explores living in the past or future, nor e-mailed other people. Pupils with special educational needs and the more able are not fully included in all aspects of the ICT curriculum and so their achievements are underdeveloped.

127. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory due to the fact that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their ICT skills. Only one lesson was observed where pupils were taught rather basic skills. For example, Year 4 pupils learnt how to edit and save. In the one lesson seen resources were used well when key words were displayed so that Year 3 and 4 pupils learnt the meaning of subject specific vocabulary, such as edit and cursor. Effective learning methods were utilised when the computer screen was projected onto a large white screen. This ensured that pupils could learn in which order certain functions had to be clicked on. The use of ICT is underused at present in other subjects. Pupils' achievements are not consistently well represented in the displays around the school. Teachers have not established effective teaching methods to ensure pupils develop basic skills in all areas of the subject. They do not monitor the opportunities that pupils have to use the computers and so many pupils are not included in weekly ICT activities. Teachers have started to assess pupils' work in ICT record booklets but do not have the expertise they need to utilise all the programs which the school has, and therefore have too limited expectations of pupils. Pupils enjoy using computers due to the enthusiasm of some teachers. They work sensibly and independently, overcoming problems as a result of teachers' effective behaviour management skills.

128. The co-ordinator has been responsible for some improvements in ICT, but the high costs and lack of technical support have held the school back considerably. Although teachers have received some useful training, the school still needs to develop teachers' expertise further so that they are confident to use resources. There are two computers in every classroom, but there is not sufficient software to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum. Furthermore the school has not been able to get e-mailing to work effectively from classrooms. Improvements made include, a scheme of work, assessment booklets, up dating computers and new software. However improvements since the last inspection are not sufficient. The co-ordinator has a detailed action plan, which recognises most of the present weaknesses and has the potential to improve the provision considerably.

## **MUSIC**

129. Pupils achieve well and work above nationally expected levels in music. The school places a high emphasis on the teaching of music and there are many opportunities to appreciate and create music in collective worship and lessons. The tuition provided by teachers and specialist teachers is effective in developing pupils' achievements in all aspects of the subject. The 'Ensemble Group' enables more able pupils to achieve well. These pupils learn to play a variety of pieces using recorders, flutes, xylophones and percussion instruments. The group performs regularly in whole school assemblies and so involves everyone in rich musical experiences.

130. Older pupils composed well using tuned instruments and clapped rhythms accurately. Year 5 compositions demonstrated thoughtful use of marching and melodic rhythms. These pupils played a good variety of tuned instruments well. However, pupils did not record their tunes onto tapes or put the notes used on to paper. The majority of pupils sung 'Ave Maria' in tune and with expression. A reasonable number of Year 5 pupils could suggest improvements to others' musical pieces. However, many pupils in other classes were unused to evaluating their own and others' work.

131. Younger pupils used sound effectively in a variety of ways. Year 1 pupils could tell a story and add sounds to the story, such as 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'. They used percussion instruments and their voices to add sound effects. At Christmas, pupils performed to families and the whole school, singing songs such as 'Silent Night' and 'Away in a Manger'. In a Chinese New Year assembly, pupils played tunes using percussion instruments, for instance claves and shakers. Pupils played basic musical notes on xylophones and made beautiful tunes.

132. The standards seen indicate that the quality of music teaching is good. In the two lessons seen, many effective teaching methods were observed. Teachers used warm up activities to develop pupils' understanding of rhythm and timing. Effective links were made with previous lessons so that pupils learnt to use their knowledge in other situations. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that pupils learn musical vocabulary such as beat and rhythm. A wide range of instruments was used ensuring that pupils achieved well and made considerable gains in learning to play keyboards and tuned instruments. The high expectations of teachers and their use of open ended questioning mean that all pupils, regardless of ability, are fully included in lessons. However, teachers do not consistently give pupils specific comments about what they are doing well and so pupils do not know what they have used well in their work. Therefore, pupils will not understand which aspects of their work they should repeat in the future. Pupils enjoy all aspects of music tuition due to the positive approach of teachers. Pupils concentrate well and co-operate effectively because of teachers' good behaviour management.

133. The co-ordinator has planned a rich range of music for pupils to listen to in collective worship sessions. She is aware that ICT is underused in the school to develop music and ICT skills, but she has already purchased a program to rectify this. The action plan for this subject has been effectively drawn up and many items have already been achieved since September. The co-ordinator plans to develop recorder playing further within the school soon. Resources are well organised and easily accessible to pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection week to make secure judgements about the quality of provision in physical education. This was partly due to the fact that several lessons are timetabled to take place on Friday, after the end of the inspection, but largely because the school organised a range of special literacy activities that took place throughout the week in the school hall. These events, arranged before the date of the inspection was announced, meant that some physical education lessons had to be postponed as the hall was not available.

135. As a result, it was only possible to observe two lessons, one in Year 3 and the other in Year 5. On the basis of this limited amount of evidence, standards in gymnastic and games are broadly in line with national expectations. The school uses a detailed scheme of work that ensures a broad coverage of the subject and a good progression of activities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard at improving skills. Although there were no swimming lessons during the inspection week, all pupils benefit from lessons at a local, public pool and school records show that the vast majority of pupils reach the expected standards by the end of Year 6.

136. In the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory. Lessons were well organised and pupils were well managed. Teachers use pupil demonstrations effectively to illustrate a good performance but rarely evaluate pupils' work so that pupils develop a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work constructively in pairs and small groups.

137. Work in physical education is effectively supported by a good range of extracurricular activities. These include football, cricket, cross country running and country dancing. The latter was observed during the inspection and the pupils involved, from Year 3, thoroughly enjoyed a very lively, well led session in which they showed considerable skill.

138. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The school has introduced a new scheme of work that effectively supports teachers in their planning of the subject. Resources are satisfactory and well used. The subject co-ordinator monitors

teachers' plans and is available to give guidance to colleagues, but does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.