

INSPECTION REPORT

ST TERESA'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stretford, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106355

Headteacher: Mrs C Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Öyen
7167

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd November 2000

Inspection number: 224318

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Teresa's Road, Firswood, Stretford, Manchester.
Postcode:	M16 0GQ
Telephone number:	0161 881 3163
Fax number:	0161 860 0673
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Fr. K. Griffin
Date of previous inspection:	3.11.1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Sonja Öyen	Registered inspector	English; Music; Equal opportunities.	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs Lillian Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the schools work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Diane Atkinson	Team inspector	Design and technology; Information and communication technology; The Foundation Stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr Michael Beale	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Physical education.	
Mr Michael Bowers	Team inspector	Science; Art and design; Special educational needs.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

Esprit Education Services
 "Woodview"
 2c Green Lane
 Standish
 Wigan
 WN6 0TS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN	

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Teresa's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Stretford, two miles south west of Manchester city centre. The school is about the same size as other primaries with 224 boys and girls aged three to eleven. Class sizes vary from 23 to 36 reflecting the numbers in each year group. The nursery has places for 26 children in both the morning and afternoon sessions and 17 children attend full-time. Although a few travel from other areas, most of the pupils live in the parish. Many come from families who have lived in the area for generations. Just under one in five pupils is eligible for free school meals which is average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies but is generally as expected for their age. There are 28 pupils (13 per cent) identified as having special educational needs which is below the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need and receive additional support in school. Fifteen pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and no pupil has English as an additional language. The school is in an Education Action Zone and receives funding for a part-time play leader and a part-time classroom assistant.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is a happy, friendly place where the pupils feel part of a family. The headteacher has taken a firm lead in making needed changes and successfully involved the school in local initiatives. In the last two years the school has been very effective in achieving high standards in the national tests but not as effective in raising standards overall. Standards could be higher in several subjects. Since the last inspection the rate of improvement has been satisfactory, although relatively slow in some aspects that remain as concerns. Changes in staffing have strengthened the quality of teaching especially at Key Stage 2 and contributed positively to the school's moves forward. Given its very limited budget, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils are well prepared for the national tests and achieve very good results in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards are good in physical education
- The nursery children get off to a good start due to good teaching.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and keen to learn. They behave well.
- Christian values are successfully fostered; the pupils care about one another, assume responsibility willingly and act maturely and sensibly.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and parishioners.
- The headteacher has successfully created a positive, shared approach to change.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, especially in expressing ideas accurately and fluently.
- Standards in science especially pupils' skills in conducting their own investigations.
- Standards in art and design, in design and technology and in geography.
- The quality of the teaching and learning, the provision and children's progress in the reception year.
- The systems and procedures to track and record pupils' personal and academic progress.
- The identification of what the school should do in the short term and the part played by governors and key staff in deciding how well the school is doing.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1996, the school has made satisfactory progress overall in dealing with the six key issues. The headteacher has provided a clear thrust and direction to move the school forward but the pace of change has been badly affected by staff absences and the length of time taken to get things up and running. Most improvement has occurred in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 and in the standards achieved in the national tests. Focused teaching and target setting are now key strategies used well. Progress in other aspects has been slower. There is still much to do to ensure that the critical evaluation of how well the school is doing is an integral part of the work of governors and all co-ordinators. Although much has been done to improve some parts of the school, such as the computer suite, library and outdoor play areas, the environment for Key Stage 1 pupils remains an area for improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	A*	A*
Mathematics	D	A	A	A
Science	E	C	A	A

Key	
Top 5% of schools	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards have risen at Key Stage 2 over the last four years and the latest results show the school to be well above the average both for all schools and for similar schools in English, mathematics and science. The school far exceeded its targets for 2000 in Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics. The very high percentage of pupils who did really well in English brought the school into the top five per cent of schools. However, within the overall English result pupils' reading skills are much better than their writing skills. The inspection found standards by eleven above average in mathematics and science and satisfactory overall in English. Pupils do not always express their ideas fluently or accurately enough to ensure work of a high standard.

Standards are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science. As at Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement in writing is not high enough. Children get off to a good start in the nursery in reading and writing but this is not developed well enough in the reception year and at Key Stage 1 to raise standards.

At Key Stages 1 and 2, although all pupils develop a good knowledge of science facts, they are not as skilled in conducting their own scientific enquiries and recording their findings.

In physical education standards are good at Key Stage 2 due to good teaching. Standards are currently satisfactory in information and communication technology but are rising as pupils use the computer suite and are taught specific skills. In music and history throughout the school, standards are satisfactory. Standards are below those expected for pupils' ages in art and geography at Key Stages 1 and 2, and in design and technology at Key Stage 2. This is due to weaknesses in teaching, the curriculum and resources. Religious education is to be inspected separately. Other standards are those expected for the age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils are polite and show respect for authority and school rules. They act sensibly and show good self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils get on extremely well together and show care and concern for one another.
Attendance	Very good; there are few unexplained absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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.

The teaching is at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons and ensures that pupils make steady progress. The good teaching in four lessons in ten and very good teaching in one in ten is spread across the school. The children in the nursery benefit from the good teaching and shared approach of both teachers. However, the quality of the teaching of the temporary teacher in the reception class is unsatisfactory and the children are not achieving well enough given the good start in the nursery. The good teaching of the temporary teacher in Year 1 is sustaining the pupils' progress. The strength in the teaching in all classes at Key Stage 2 has redressed the weaknesses found in the last inspection and is raising standards especially in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and physical education where there is some very good teaching.

In art and design, in design and technology and in geography, the teachers do not have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve at Key Stages 1 and 2, and the teaching is not strong enough to ensure good standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; appropriate emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy; the reception children are not experiencing the rich, challenging curriculum seen in the nursery; organised lunchtime play activities have enriched the provision overall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; a caring and supportive approach; pupils' needs are considered, although class teachers do not always take full account of the targets in pupils' individual programmes when planning work for the class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; in line with its mission statement, the school places high emphasis on pupils' awareness of Christian values and principles; pupils develop a good sense of community and individual responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of personal care. There are too few systems at Key Stages 1 and 2 to track and assess how well the pupils are developing subject skills and knowledge.

The school has a good partnership with parents and parishioners. Many regularly help in school and support events. The school benefits from participating in several projects and initiatives due to its location in an Education Action Zone.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a good working partnership with the deputy headteacher. As other staff assume responsibility and take the lead in curriculum and school initiatives, the rate of improvement is increasing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are relatively new to their role; the headteacher keeps them well informed but they have yet to take a more active and critical role in deciding the way forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Developing; the headteacher monitors test results and the Years 5 and 6 teachers keep a critical eye on how well their pupils are doing. There is some observation of lessons and monitoring of books. Governors are not using available information well enough to identify what needs to be done to raise standards and to ensure best value for money.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; the very limited budget is used prudently to support school development plans. However, there is not enough focus on ensuring high quality and on improving standards throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children really like and enjoy school • Their children are expected to do their best and they make good progress • The school is well led and managed • The school is a friendly place - the door is open and parents are welcome. • Their children behave well and from the nursery gain in confidence. • The strong community spirit. 	<p>A very small percentage of parents identified the following aspects of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like an even wider range of activities outside lessons. • Homework for the younger pupils

The inspection team agree with the parents' positive views and finds their concerns unwarranted. The headteacher and staff place high value on good relationships between school and the community. As a result the school benefits from a high level of support from parents and parishioners. From starting in the nursery, the pupils gain in self-confidence and behave sensibly and maturely. They generally try hard to do their best and make at least satisfactory progress. Although after-school activities are limited, the pupils enjoy a good range of trips out of school; there are well-organised play activities at lunchtimes and several clubs run by parents and helpers. As in most schools, the younger pupils take home reading books and learn spellings. Older pupils' homework is marked conscientiously and the pupils enjoy reading the teachers' comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Since the last inspection four years ago, the school has kept pace overall with the national upward trend in standards at Key Stage 2. Following a fall in 1998 in English, mathematics and science, standards rose in 1999 and again in 2000. This reflects the successful work of the school to address a key issue from the 1996 inspection and raise the quality of provision and standards by the age of eleven, especially in these three subjects. Standards are now good in mathematics and science and satisfactory overall in English with strengths in reading.
2. In 2000, the school's results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools that also have one in five pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were also well above average in all three subjects. Nearly all pupils reached Level 4 as expected for their age and the high percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 raised the school's results overall. In English, six out of ten pupils attained Level 5 and this brought the school into the top five per cent of both all schools nationally and of similar schools. The school far exceeded its targets in English and mathematics. The boys did very well compared with boys nationally.
3. Inspection evidence and the school's assessment of current Year 6 pupils' attainment shows that while standards in mathematics and science are good, standards in English are not as high as the 2000 test results indicate. This reflects the lower ability in this cohort and the lower targets set for 2001 by the Local Education Authority. Pupils' current attainment in writing is not high enough to sustain the good standards achieved in the tests this year without substantial improvement. Pupils make errors in spelling and punctuation and do not always express themselves clearly. Years 5 and 6 pupils are grouped according to attainment for English sessions and the teachers are using the results of periodic tests to identify aspects that require further teaching. Last year, the teachers' assessments of how well the pupils were doing matched very closely their test results.
4. The effectiveness of a commercial scheme to boost the progress of the lower attaining Year 6 pupils has yet to be evaluated but early indications are that it has increased pupils' interest in reading, their ability to infer and deduce information and their knowledge of words. The school intends also to operate a booster class in the spring term for Year 6 pupils. This lifted standards in 2000. While the Year 6 pupils with special educational needs are achieving well, their lower attainment is reflected in the lower, but still challenging target, set for Level 4 attainment in English in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that with continued focused teaching the school is on line to meet this target. Pupils' good attainment in mathematics indicates that the target in mathematics is realistic. Similarly, the good attainment of many of the current Year 5 pupils suggests that the higher targets for 2002 are achievable.
5. When pupils start in the nursery their attainment is similar to that expected for their age. Over their time at the school pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Compared with their attainment in the 1996 national tests for seven-year-olds, the high achievement of last year's Year 6 pupils showed that they had made good progress at Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that good teaching at Key Stage 2 is lifting standards.

6. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall and reflect national trends. Over the last four years, standards have been sustained in reading, writing and mathematics even though the school feels that the overall attainment level of pupils on entry to school has fallen. Standards in science have risen steeply in the last two years. Teacher assessments for the year 2000 place the school well above average with all pupils attaining Level 2 as expected for their age. None however did better than this and this was well below average for all and similar schools.
7. In the 2000 national tests nearly all the Year 2 pupils attained Level 2 as expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. On the face of it, standards are similar to those of all and similar schools, but there are areas of concern. Standards in writing, while satisfactory could be higher and the more able pupils are not achieving well enough, not only in writing, but also in mathematics and science. This is due to a lack of challenge and extension in the work set.
8. In the 2000 Key Stage 1 tests in writing, no pupil did better than expected for their age and two out of three pupils were still only in the early stages of writing in sentences. When this is taken into full account, standards in writing are well below the national average and well below that of similar schools. This is an area for improvement that the school has rightly identified as a key priority. Teacher assessment last year of the pupils' writing over-estimated their attainment and points to gaps in teachers' knowledge about writing development and how to gauge pupils' attainment.
9. There was similar over-estimation in mathematics of the pupils felt to be doing better than expected for their age. Although nine out of ten reached at least Level 2, only one in five attained Level 3. This is below the average for all and similar schools and is an area for improvement to raise standards overall.
10. By the end of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception year), the children have achieved the Early Learning Goals which set the expectations for five-year-olds in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. At present, the children are not making enough progress in the reception class to build on their good achievement in the nursery. Weaknesses in the teaching of their temporary teacher and in the curriculum are limiting their progress, especially in language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
11. In the nursery the children make sound progress in all six areas of learning. This is due to the good quality of teaching and the wide range of interesting activities that also set new challenges as the terms progress. The children make particularly good early progress in personal, social and emotional development. The staff place high value on the children being as independent as possible and are highly successful in developing the children's self-confidence and self-reliance. The children also get off to a good start in early reading, writing and number. The children who attend full-time benefit from the repetition of stories and letter and number games in the morning and afternoon sessions. Carefully planned activities, which make the most of the outdoor play equipment, also ensure the children achieve at least satisfactory progress in physical development.
12. As in most schools, the high focus on English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 ensures that most pupils reach the standard expected for their age and they achieve above average standards in mathematics by the age of eleven. Progress accelerates at Key Stage 2 due to strengths in teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and additional literacy support, booster classes and regular tests.

13. At both key stages, pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Pupils chat easily with others but the narrow vocabulary of many restricts their ability to explain clearly and fully. It also weakens the quality of their reading comprehension and their writing in all subjects. Most pupils get off to a good start at Key Stage 1 in reading and develop good skills in reading aloud with expression. They also develop an understanding of how to use information books. Year 2 pupils read confidently and fluently although a significant number still need considerable support in identifying new words. By the end of Year 6, pupils read fluently, often with good phrasing and characterisation. The more able readers cope well with challenging texts in all subjects.

14. Progress in writing is not as good. At Key Stage 1 this reflects the lack of early experience in writing and spelling words independently. Year 1 and 2 pupils are making good progress in getting their ideas down on paper but only the more able writers have well developed ideas or use good descriptive language. To some degree this reflects the way the pupils speak but it also reflects the lack of consistent teaching of how authors use language and how the pupils can develop and improve their own stories. This also restrains progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils make sound progress in learning spelling and grammatical rules but even in Year 6, pupils do not always use them in their writing so the level of accuracy varies. They have some experience of planning, drafting and editing their work but not enough to lift the quality of the content significantly. In other subjects, such as science and geography, pupils often copy what the teacher writes or complete exercises so opportunities are missed to apply the writing skills and strategies introduced in literacy hours.

15. In mathematics, the daily oral/mental number sessions are reinforcing all pupils' competence in handling number quickly and seeing relationships between numbers. They use their knowledge when solving problems and dealing with number in other subjects, such as Year 2 pupils' graphs of people's food preferences in science and Year 6 pupils' handling of data about the Victorians. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 but stronger teaching and a higher level of challenge at Key Stage 2 increases progress and lifts standards. Year 6 pupils have good recall of multiplication tables and show good computation skills.

16. Key Stage 1 pupils are making satisfactory progress in science. Current work shows they remember well facts about green plants. They carry out simple investigations but the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough and opportunities are missed to extend their thinking, especially in planning and conducting their own investigations. This is also a weakness at Key Stage 2 where too often the pupils are not given the freedom to try out their own hypotheses. As a result, although they achieve well overall by the age of eleven, this is largely due to good progress in scientific knowledge. Enquiry skills are not developed well enough. Year 6 pupils use relevant scientific terms such as "pollination" when talking about flower parts and their role in the flower's life cycle.

17. At both key stages, pupils do as well as expected for their age in history and music but standards could be higher. In physical education, because of good teaching at Key Stage 2 and challenging play activities at lunch times which promote good co-ordination and control, standards are higher than expected and show what pupils can achieve.

18. In geography and art and design, standards are lower than expected at both key stages. Both subjects have a low profile in the curriculum and for the older pupils, their achievement is lower due to the lack of experiences in previous years. They have limited knowledge and lower level of skill than expected. In design and technology, while standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1, they are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. This reflects the lack of resources in the school to provide pupils with the wide range of experiences needed to achieve the standard expected of their age. Although the work done by Year 6 pupils in the robotics project was more in line with that expected for their age, it showed areas of under-achievement in handling materials.

19. A common aspect of the weaknesses in these subjects is the low standard of subject skill development. This reflects gaps in the curriculum and in teacher's confidence and expertise. This was also identified in the last inspection in several subjects including information and communication technology. The co-ordinator has worked successfully in the last year to redress the weaknesses in information and communication technology. Standards are rising due to the regular use of the well-equipped computer suite, support for staff, the rigorous teaching of skills, systematic and cumulative planning, and the use of meaningful purposes for pupils to apply their skills. Pupils are learning quickly and growing in competence. For older pupils this is compensating rapidly for work not done in previous years. Pupils are learning to use the computer as part of work in other subjects. They are making good progress in using the Internet to find information, recording data and controlling information on screen.

20. There are 33 pupils recorded on the school's register of special educational need, mostly with difficulties in language development and general delay in learning. Twelve pupils receive additional support from outside agencies. All these pupils' attainment is lower than that expected for their age. Many have short concentration spans and make most progress in those sessions where there are changes in activity and when the tasks can be completed relatively quickly. They make good progress when the work is closely matched to the targets and content in their individual learning programmes, but teachers do not always take account of these targets. Those pupils who have clear, realistic targets achieve "small successes" and do well over time. When pupils are withdrawn from class, to work individually or in a small group with learning support assistants or the local authority advisory teacher, they achieve well. This is because they are given good support and guidance and consequently gain a lot of confidence. When they work in class their achievement varies. Many find it hard to work without adult support especially when they are expected to do the same work as others. Many of the pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress because caring staff form positive relationships with them. The adults work hard to help pupils change their attitudes and to adopt more acceptable behaviour.

21. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils.

22. Religious education was the subject of a separate report.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. As judged in the last inspection, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and contribute highly to the school's caring ethos. All parents who returned the questionnaire and all at the meeting with inspectors confirmed that their children enjoy school. This is very evident in the pupils' very good level of enthusiasm and self-motivation. The high quality of relationships between pupils and with adults in school reflects pupils' very good level of self-confidence and maturity.

24. The youngest children quickly develop good attitudes to work. Within the caring, secure and happy environment of the school and nursery, they gain confidence and quickly settle. They show curiosity and a general willingness to follow the routines. They take care of their own needs and at snack time, are generally patient and polite. At other times, they often sustain their concentration for long periods, share equipment responsibly with others and tidy up after themselves without too much fuss.

25. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They are keen and willing to learn. Years 5 and 6 pupils cheered when they heard they were to be “reading detectives” and Year 1 pupils were very disappointed when their singing lesson ended. During a Year 2 science lesson, pupils showed much enthusiasm in investigating what plants need to grow and rose to the challenge of deciding how to make a fair test. Pupils are interested in their work; they usually concentrate hard on what they are doing, pay attention to their teacher and try hard to do as they are asked. During class discussions, they volunteer questions and confidently offer suggestions. A good example of this was in a mathematics lesson when Year 4 pupils helped each other to explain the strategies used to double and halve numbers. A small group of Year 6 pupils however, find it hard to concentrate for long and take up a significant amount of their teacher’s time often limiting her opportunities to work intensively with others. Throughout the school, pupils applaud spontaneously each other’s achievements. When given the chance, pupils enjoy finding things out for themselves. Year 6 pupils were proud of their research on the Victorians and all showed a good level of application in presenting their information.

26. Behaviour is very good both in class and on the playground. The Positive Playtime Project, an initiative from the school’s involvement in the Education Action Zone, is proving to be a significant benefit in calming the pupils’ behaviour during playtime and lunchtime. The pupils are actively engaged in an interesting range of activities and the co-ordinator is continually looking for new ideas to capture their interest. During the inspection, older and younger pupils enjoyed playing bat and ball, walking on stilts and skipping games. Pupils enter classrooms quietly and are quickly ready for lessons. They take good care of equipment and resources and show respect for things in and around school. In a Year 1 physical education lesson, the pupils behaved very well and made good progress in following the teacher’s demonstrations to create a sequence of movements. Most pupils display very good self-discipline and work well when not directly supervised. They are also very tolerant of the occasional inappropriate behaviour of a few and try hard not to be distracted by it. Pupils know what their teachers expect of them and accept the sanctions and rewards as fair. There have been no exclusions in the last year reflecting the school’s strong emphasis on reconciliation, not retaliation.

27. Many of the pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes towards the school. They usually behave well in lessons and towards their classmates.

28. Pupils’ personal development is very good. The very good tone of relationships is a strength of the school. Pupils relate well to teachers and in turn feel valued by them. This accounts in large part for the “family feel” to the school. Pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds play and work together in harmony. They respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others in keeping with the Christian ethos of the school.

29. Pupils conscientiously undertake helpful duties in classrooms and older pupils help with younger ones. They formally apply for positions of responsibility in school, for example for that of head boy and head girl and library monitors. They carry out their roles sensibly. Library monitors were observed tidying bookshelves, organising the library and making posters to encourage others to use the library. Pupils care for their environment and encourage others to do so. Year 4 pupils designed award certificates for those who show good practice in environmental work.

30. The rate of pupils’ attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now well above the national average. During the previous academic year, thirteen per cent of pupils gained one hundred per cent attendance. Some of the authorised absence is due to parents taking children on holiday in term time. There is a very low amount of unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

31. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in at least 97 per cent of lessons which is an improvement on the 87 per cent in the last inspection. Teaching seen was good in 44 per cent of lessons and very good in eight per cent, an improvement on the one per cent in 1996. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved in the nursery, where it is now good, and at Key Stage 2. In 1996, there was considerable unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics. This is no longer the case. Changes in teaching staff have strengthened the teaching team and whilst there are still some areas of weakness in subjects including English, art and geography, the overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is now good and occasionally very good. This is having a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes, standards are rising and the school is moving forward.

32. The three per cent of unsatisfactory teaching seen was in the reception class where it accounted for forty per cent of the teaching of a temporary teacher. This unsatisfactory quality of teaching weakens the overall quality for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery. The two part-time teachers work extremely well together and form a strong team with the nursery nurse and students. They share a good understanding of how the young child learns and have used national guidance conscientiously to ensure that their teaching echoes "best practice". The nursery planning sets a good standard in its clarity and systematic approach to extending children's skills as the term progresses. The team's regular observations and assessments of children provide clear evidence of the children's good progress. This information is used well to inform the next steps in planning and to tutor students in suitable activities to build on the children's attainment.

33. The quality of the teaching in the reception class does not currently reflect the same informed practices and this is hindering the children's progress. While there are sessions when the teaching is satisfactory, it is not challenging enough to ensure that the children's progress is good. The teacher's expectations of what the children can achieve are too low. This is compounded by the absence of a rich learning environment with little in the classroom to arouse the children's curiosity or to prompt them to use their developing reading, writing and number skills.

34. A common strength in the nursery and reception class is the teachers' and nursery nurses' high expectations of the children to follow the rules, behave well and make their own choices and decisions. In the nursery, equipment has been organised very effectively to promote the children's independence such as pockets with pictures and labels to help children replace their name cards after snack. As a result the children know what is expected of them and routines run smoothly. This is less evident in the reception class where the children are more dependent on the teacher to organise them.

35. A strength of the teaching in the nursery, is the sensitivity of the staff to know when to intervene in the children's activities. On several occasions this meant that children were helped to develop their ideas or allowed to work things out for themselves. The staff are skilled in distracting and diverting the children, especially when they are tired in the afternoons. The use of routines such as a clapping song to start story time and the suggestion of things to do, such as "Can you help him find the right number?" are very effective in keeping the children involved and attentive. The high level of questioning and comments also develops the children's confidence and skills in expressing their own opinions. Such practices are not as strong in the reception class. The nursery nurse tends to supervise rather than become involved and there is little interaction to develop children's ideas.

36. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the good teaching accounts for half of lessons. It is spread across subjects including mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Individual strengths and areas of expertise show in this profile and in the very good lessons in science, physical education and information and communication technology. In these very good lessons in Year 2 and all classes at Key Stage 2, the enthusiasm of the teacher arising from confidence and good subject knowledge rubbed off on the pupils. The lessons went at a brisk pace and the teachers used questioning effectively to check what pupils knew and thought. In a physical education lesson, the teachers' demonstrations and teaching of techniques ensured Year 5 pupils learnt what to do and went on to use their knowledge and skills in a team game. Year 4 pupils realised the link between what they observed happening to paper clips and the strengths of different magnets as a direct result of the teacher's "What did you see?" and "Why?" questions.

37. This questioning is less evident in literacy hours but is a common strength in the daily mathematics lesson. Most teachers ask the pupils to explain their reasoning and how they arrived at an answer. Pupils show confidence in their own judgements and in sharpening their awareness of number relationships. At Key Stage 1, the challenge for the more able pupils is not consistently high enough. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 where the strengths are promoting good progress. At both key stages, the teachers' confidence in teaching number ensures that pupils learn procedures and strategies to handle number. The teachers of Years 5 and 6 pupils regularly give number problems to investigate and this encourages pupils to apply what they know. While the teachers incorporate aspects of estimating, measuring and data handling into other subjects including design and technology, geography, history and science, these tend to be incidental rather than planned opportunities to highlight the application of pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills.

38. In English, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages with some weaknesses in the teaching of writing. The teachers teach well the basic skills in reading, writing, spelling and handwriting. As a result the pupils make at least satisfactory progress in these taught sessions. However, as they are often text book or isolated exercises the pupils do not always apply them in their independent writing. When the work is set within a meaningful context, such as Year 6 pupils concentrating on their handwriting to produce labels for their science reports, the teaching is more effective in that the pupils apply their skills. In too many literacy hours, the teacher tends to do most of the talking and explaining. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills in looking up words in dictionaries or using the computer thesaurus, and in using the pupils' knowledge to make strategies clear and explicit. Although most rooms have "Literacy boards" with relevant information, not enough reference is made to their content or to the targets for the week to focus the pupils' attention and self-help skills.

39. All the teachers have good relationships with the pupils. This adds considerably to the pupils' positive attitudes to work. At Key Stage 2, the teachers manage the pupils very well. They keep firm discipline and the pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

40. The teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils, especially the higher attaining ones. In subjects such as science, design and technology, geography and history, all the pupils are expected to do work at the same level of challenge. The lower attaining pupils, and those with specific learning needs, manage the tasks as the teacher often gives help. The higher attaining pupils tend to complete the task before others as they find it easy but the teachers often seem to lack the confidence to let the pupils develop and extend the task in their own way. In science, this curtails the development of pupils' enquiry skills and lowers the achievement of the higher attaining pupils especially at Key Stage 1.

41. One of the reasons why expectations are often too low is the limited use of day-to-day assessment to inform planning. While the teachers regularly mark the pupils' work, they do not use it consistently as a way of setting targets for improvement or to amend their plans especially in literacy and mathematics.

42. In line with agreed policy, the teachers set and mark homework which often continues or builds on work done in lessons. All pupils are expected to read at home, to learn spellings and multiplication tables, and to carry out occasional research such as that by Year 3 pupils on a chosen country.

43. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactorily guided and directed by the content and targets of their learning plans which are precisely written. Pupils with special educational needs are taught within their National Curriculum year classes. There is usually, but not always, a suitable lower level of work for these pupils and pupils receive extra support from learning support assistants. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive good support and others also benefit from this extra help. Good care is taken to ensure that the pupils with statements develop their independence. Support staff from external agencies provide helpful advice.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

44. The school has maintained the generally satisfactory curriculum noted in the last report. Good progress has been made in improving the curriculum for information and communication technology. The development of the computer suite, its effective use together with a well-designed scheme of work is beginning to have a positive effect on standards. Information and communication technology skills are also beginning to be used as part of pupils' learning in other subjects. However, in other areas of the curriculum there are still areas for development, several of which were highlighted in the last inspection.

45. The quality of the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception year is satisfactory overall. The good curriculum links between the nursery and reception class noted previously no longer apply as the richness of the nursery provision and the effectiveness of its organisation are not carried over into the reception class.

46. The quality of the curriculum planning for the nursery children is of a high standard and closely linked to the staff's close assessment of what the children need to learn next. The teachers take careful note of the national stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals and plan accordingly. Themes such as "The Post Office", are used effectively to integrate the six areas of learning and imaginative play experiences are carefully planned to ensure that the children make good progress in applying their skills and knowledge. Focus activities in one area of learning are also recognised as enhancing the children's understanding and progress in others, particularly the good development of personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, the children experience a wide range of purposeful activities and make good progress.

47. The curriculum experiences for children in the reception class are less stimulating and the use of themes to link areas of learning is far less evident. Curriculum planning does not relate closely enough to all the six areas of learning, especially creative development, or to the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills as identified in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is not building on the experiences of the children when they were in the nursery and the rate of progress has slowed.

48. At Key Stages 1 and 2, all National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught. The curriculum meets statutory requirements except in design and technology at Key Stage 2 – a weakness remaining from the last inspection. The compilation of policies and schemes of work for all subjects has satisfied a key issue from the last inspection. Although commercial material of good quality has been selected to structure the curriculum in several subjects, it is not always tailored to the needs of the pupils. This is most noticeable in art, design and technology, geography and history where not enough attention is given to the development of skills and their application. The lack of continuity and progression noted in a number of subjects in the previous inspection is still an issue and accounts for standards not being as high as they could be in these subjects.

49. In keeping with the school's mission statement, the curriculum promotes pupils' personal and social skills and their awareness of citizenship, but there is no formal policy or agreed content to be taught. The required sex education policy has still not been agreed.

50. The high allocation of teaching time and curriculum focus given to the teaching of English, mathematics and science is reflected in the good results achieved this year at Key Stage 2. The school follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is having a good effect particularly on pupils' confidence and ease in handling number. The school also follows the National Literacy Strategy and is trialling the use of a commercial English programme to boost the attainment of lower attaining Years 5 and 6 pupils. It is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. A small number of Year 5 pupils also benefit from taking modules of the Additional Literacy Support programme.

51. In weekly lessons in other subjects, the time is often too short to tackle things at depth or to consolidate pupils' learning. Similarly the weekly alternating of history and geography in some classes breaks the flow of topics and is reflected in pupils' fragmented understanding of what they have learnt. In contrast, the time allocation to physical education is used well to provide a wide curriculum with a focus on the development of skills.

52. Pupils with special educational needs receive the full curriculum offered by the school. They take part in all activities and take their turn in carrying out duties that help the school to operate efficiently. When planning the English and mathematics curriculum, the teachers usually modify their expectations to reflect the targets and objectives of pupils' individual learning plans.

53. The school makes very effective use of people, places and events in the community to supplement the work done in school. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils had a visit from "The bug man" to support their science work on mini-beasts and Year 6 pupils went to Quarry Bank Mill to find out more about Victorian life. Parents, staff and pupils acknowledge that the good quality and range of the Play Scheme, managed by the play-leader who structures and zones activities at playtimes, is reaping benefits in pupils' ability to occupy themselves as well as increasing their awareness of fair play. Other projects, such as "Robot challenge", arising from the school being in an Education Action Zone, have widened pupils' experience in design and technology and in information and communication technology. Extra-curricular activities are run by staff, highly committed parents and specialised personnel. Football for boys and girls, instrumental tuition and the library club have a high profile and are well attended.

54. The overall provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and sustains the strength indicated by the last inspection.

55. The school makes good provision for spiritual development. The requirement for a daily act of worship is fully met. Pupils' spiritual growth is enriched by the teaching of the traits of truthfulness, kindness, patience, love and reconciliation and through periods of reflection. During the inspection there were moments of awe and wonder when Year 4 pupils observed at close quarters exotic mini-beasts including stick insects and millipedes.

56. The provision for moral and social development is very good. This reflects the emphasis in the school's mission statement on these aspects, Pupils recognize the needs of others less fortunate than themselves both in the locality and in the wider community through their work to raise money for Catholic, community and national charities. Pupils play an active role in formulating rules to regulate what they do in classrooms and around the school. The school has an effective and successful policy of rewarding achievement and endeavour which promotes well social conscience and knowledge of right and wrong. The policy of engaging pupils of all ages in duties to assist in the day-to-day running of the school successfully develops their understanding of social responsibility and citizenship.

57. A range of experiences, especially related to history, music and dance helps to promote pupils' cultural awareness satisfactorily. Pupils gain a limited understanding of different cultures through art but benefit from hearing music from different cultures and seeing orchestras play, watching ballet and visiting places of local historical significance such as Styal Mill. Visitors to the school include people who remember the blitz of World War II. This adds an extra dimension to older pupils' notion of a 'sense of history'.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

58. As the parents commented, the school is a very caring community and staff show a high commitment to pupils' welfare and development. This sustains the judgement of the last inspection. The positive, caring ethos ensures that pupils have a strong sense of identity with their school and feel secure there. Parents of children in the nursery and the reception class commented that their children quickly settle into school. When pupils transfer to secondary education, they are helped by the arrangements for visits, contact with secondary teachers and the support given by the Marist Youth Centre.

59. The school is totally committed to the view that the education of the whole child is at the centre of its ethos and foundation. All staff show interest in the pupils and their families. With the support of the school nurse and a range of external agencies such as the Catholic Rescue Society, pupils have access to good advice and support. Once pupils leave the Foundation Stage, their personal development is not formally recorded, except in cases of particular concern, but members of staff clearly know pupils very well and there is good communication about pupils' individual needs both amongst staff members and between school and parents. Whenever necessary, the school is quick to involve parents or outside agencies in order to help with individual problems.

60. Child protection procedures are good. The designated teacher updates her training regularly and ensures that all staff are aware of appropriate procedures. At the time of the last inspection, the school was said to be writing a policy for sex education but this is still not in place.

61. The headteacher has given much time and attention since the last inspection to improving the quality of the environment and ensuring that the detailed health and safety policy informs practice. Fire alarms work efficiently, as witnessed during the inspection, and teachers observe safe practices in classrooms. Regular inspections of the school by the headteacher and the chair of the governing body have identified areas for prime attention, such as the unacceptable state of the toilets used by the younger pupils. The loose cistern covers and seats are a potential health hazard and the rank odour makes the atmosphere extremely unpleasant.

62. The good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are reflected in the high standards throughout the school. The most significant factor is that teachers appeal to pupils' understanding of what is best for the community of the school. This promotes good self-discipline; pupils do not want to let their teachers or each other down. Ninety-three per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire commented that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

64. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good, particularly now that the school is using computerised attendance records. Absent pupils are identified quickly and the school makes good use of the education welfare service in contacting families.

65. In keeping with its mission statement, the school is highly committed to supporting each individual and especially those pupils who have special educational needs. The school works hard to secure the expertise and support of external specialists to meet each pupil's individual needs and to provide advice for members of staff. The teachers often give willingly of their time to talk to pupils and often provide extra help in and out of lesson time. Their reasoned explanations of why they are taking a particular line of action, such as giving a sanction, not only helps those pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties but also the others in the class to understand.

65. A key issue in the last inspection centred on the provision of "*a manageable, consistent way of recording the pupils' attainments in all subjects*". While the school has recently developed systems to track pupils' progress and to predict attainment, the overall quality of the procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory. Not all teachers are using agreed systems and there is inconsistency in how teachers use the information they have. Statutory requirements are met for assessing and reporting pupils' attainment on entry to school and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and the school conducts intermediate tests. However, there is little in place to help teachers to monitor pupils' progress in developing subject skills and acquiring knowledge and to apply this information when planning what the pupils are to learn next.

66. Assessment practices are at their best for the youngest and the oldest pupils in the school. The records kept by the nursery staff show clearly how the children are doing in all six areas of learning. The information is then used to decide what the children should do next and which children need additional support. Similar good practice is seen in the analysis of results from English and mathematics tests in Years 5 and 6. These are not only being used to track the rate of pupils' progress but also to group pupils of similar attainment and to identify weaker areas in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The Years 5 and 6 teachers have a clear view of the purpose and value of assessment but their meticulous and rigorous analysis of pupils' performance is not standard practice in all classes.

67. The teachers make brief but useful assessments of their planning and also note the frequency of hearing pupils read, correct spellings and knowledge of multiplication tables. While this provides information on what has been achieved, it does not give enough information to show pupils' strengths or areas for improvement. This weakens the quality of target setting and focussed teaching activities. The new school marking policy is clear but is not being closely followed in all classes. There is notable inconsistency in the use of comments to show pupils where they have performed well or what they need to do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. The school has a good partnership with parents. The headteacher has successfully strengthened the links with parents since the last inspection and those parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection praised the work of the school and the commitment of staff. Most parents confirm that they are made very welcome and any support they give is valued. Ninety- five per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire said they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or a problem. The school is keen to listen to parents' views and takes prompt action whenever possible on complaints and suggestions alike. Parents confirmed that the school has an open door policy and this was seen during the inspection when parents came in to discuss particular concerns. Parents view the school as "good, caring and one big family" (parent's comment) and central to the community. The good relationships with parents and good level of involvement in what their children do at school and at home have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

69. Overall, the quality of information for parents is good. The school communicates with parents on a frequent basis through newsletters and informal daily links as parents bring and collect their children. The prospectus and the annual report of the governing body are informative and written in clear and straightforward language. Parents receive regular information on events in the school and there are two opportunities during the year for them to meet the teachers formally to discuss their child's progress. These consultation evenings are well attended but parents also comment that staff are very ready to make alternative arrangements if parents wish it. The annual report to parents is satisfactory and the teachers' comments show that they know the pupils' characters and personalities well. Pupils' attainment and progress in subjects are summarised and some teachers indicate where further development is needed. All reports set targets for future learning, although some are more specific and helpful than others. Pupils and parents are invited to write their own views of the progress made.

70. There is good communication with parents of new children and the nursery provides detailed information about the progress of children when they leave the nursery to join the reception class. Parents of children who have a special educational need are invited to participate in meetings with school staff and outside agencies to review their children's progress in meeting the targets in their individual programme.

71. The involvement of parents in the work of the school is good. Some families have had a long association with the school and still offer their support after their children have moved on to secondary education. Most parents support their children at home with reading, homework and project work and value the opportunity to write their comments in the reading log. In some classes this develops into a good dialogue between school and home. During the inspection, parents, grandparents and parishioners were often in school. They escort pupils on visits and help in the nursery. Parents helped to create the wildlife garden and to paint the playhouse in the nursery garden. Grandparents help with reading and talk to children about their own experiences of childhood. "The Friends of St. Teresa's" offers good support to the school especially in raising funds for projects and initiatives in the school. For example, the decoration and setting up of the ICT suite would not have been completed without their help.

72. The school offers support to parents in workshops on literacy, numeracy and the testing of pupils at the age of eleven. Placements in the nursery and Key Stage 1 classes have been provided for parents who are training to become classroom assistants. Parents in turn have been supportive regarding the home/school agreement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

73. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Strengths in the headteacher's leadership outweigh weaknesses in the roles of governors and co-ordinators.

74. The headteacher has done much since the last inspection to foster a positive attitude to improvement, to initiate changes in the way things are done and to support others in carrying out their plans. She has a clear view of what she wants for the pupils and shares this with the staff, governors and parents. As a result, all have confidence in the headteacher and recognise that the school has a renewed sense of direction and purpose.

75. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Not all of the key issues have been addressed fully. The school has been most effective in dealing with the key issue related to raising standards at the end of Key Stage 2. New teachers have brought a fresh outlook and have strengthened the quality of teaching overall. The teachers of the Years 5 and 6 pupils have used information from the analysis of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science to identify weaker areas in pupils' performance. They have amended the focus of their work accordingly. This has not only helped to raise standards and meet the school's targets for Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics but also started a school process of monitoring, evaluation and target-setting in these subjects. This is in the early stages and not all staff are equally confident in evaluating critically how well pupils are doing or how well they are being taught. Consequently, aspects of the key issues relating to the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and the roles of co-ordinators, are continuing areas for improvement. In addition, the governors have still not agreed a policy for sex education.

76. The slower progress in dealing with these issues arises partly from the headteacher's need to deal with staff absence which has caused considerable instability, lack of continuity and hiatus in school and curriculum development. With the appointment of many new governors this term, the appointment of a permanent Key Stage 1 teacher from January and the impending return of the science co-ordinator, the school is poised to accelerate the rate of improvement.

77. Five of the nine teachers are new to the school since the last inspection. Following a recent organisation of responsibilities, many are still gathering information about their subject. Although they are monitoring teachers' subject planning and auditing resources, too few have a good awareness of the standards in all year groups, or of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching, to identify clearly what needs to be done to improve standards. The initiatives in music and information and communication technology shows what can be done in a short time. For example, the deputy headteacher has given a very clear lead in supporting other staff in using the new computer suite and teaching pupils specific computer skills. The music co-ordinator has likewise provided additional resources and ideas to help the teachers use the commercial music scheme to best advantage. In both cases, their work is strengthening teaching expertise where there was recognised weakness.

78. The quality of strategic planning is satisfactory. The school development plan provides a suitable framework for the next three years and identifies relevant priorities for this year including the introduction of performance management. As in the last inspection, the absence of specific and measurable targets and projected costs limits the ability of the governors to determine how well the school is doing as a result of the action taken. The governing body is relatively inexperienced with the majority of governors new this term. They are highly supportive of the school and aware of their responsibilities but too reliant on the headteacher to guide their work and provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This weakens their role in overseeing the pace of change and in holding the headteacher and other key staff to account.

79. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an effective working partnership that ensures that the school runs smoothly day-to-day. They are ably supported by the secretary who is very efficient and a good ambassador for the school. The deputy headteacher supports the staff well in her pastoral role. She has played a key role in establishing the good team spirit and in ensuring that all staff are kept well informed about school matters. As she has full-time teaching duties, her contribution to monitoring the work of the school is limited.

80. Weaknesses in the leadership and management of the provision for children under five have resulted in inconsistencies in practice between the nursery and the reception class. Not enough has been done to draw on national guidance and ensure continuity and challenge for children moving from the nursery to the reception class. Too little has been done to upgrade the resources in the reception classroom or to steer and monitor the work of the temporary teacher in the reception class. Consequently, weaknesses in the quality of teaching and provision have slowed the pace of progress for the reception year children.

81. The co-ordination and management of special educational needs is good. Documentation is well organised and kept up-to-date. The special educational needs register is an effective working document with all relevant information. Generally good communications are in place with outside agencies. Despite the school's best efforts, there are difficulties in establishing productive links with relevant agencies for nursery pupils with special needs. Learning support staff are managed well to provide for the particular needs of pupils with statements and also many pupils at Stage 3 of the register. The special needs co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision in helping pupils to achieve the targets in their individual learning programmes.

82. The quality of financial management and control is good. The systems to deal with everyday finance are efficient. The headteacher and finance committee of the governing body monitor spending closely. Given the extremely limited budget, they have been assiduous in keeping the school solvent. The need to cover staff costs incurred through absence has necessitated the use of reserves and restricted spending on learning resources. They have rightly considered the financial implications of projected fewer pupils on roll in the next few years. They have also worked well together to seek and use additional funding, such as that coming from Educational Action Zone grants, and from funds raised and contributed by parents and parishioners. Such monies have enabled the school to benefit from features such as playground equipment and new football strip which have increased the quality of the pupils' experience and the school profile. However, governors have few systems to evaluate the effectiveness of their spending in relation to school development priorities.

83. Staffing levels are adequate. Most teachers are experienced with areas of personal expertise and enthusiasm. The headteacher conducts annual review meetings with teaching staff and links professional development to school priorities as well as personal needs. Governors and staff have undergone training to ensure the smooth introduction of Performance Management.

84. The accommodation is adequate for present needs. Larger class sizes at Key Stage 2, especially in Year 5, mean that pupils have little space to move around their classrooms. Many sinks are out of use and this limits work in several subjects especially in art and design. The potential of the shared area outside the Years 1 and 2 classrooms has not been utilised to best effect. However, the unacceptable pungent smell from the open toilets makes the use of this area wholly undesirable and significantly lowers the quality of the environment for the pupils and staff. The headteacher and governors continue to lobby for new toilets and have been successful in gaining new toilet and cloakroom facilities for Key Stage 2 pupils.

85. In response to a key issue, the school has created a useful library in the area linking the hall and the Key Stage 1 rooms. The discarding of old books and purchase of good quality ones has provided a valuable resource but the smell from the Key Stage 1 toilets also pervades this area and makes the atmosphere unpleasant. The overall quality of cleanliness is satisfactory. While there are some attractive displays of pupils' work, much lacks vibrancy and does not reflect the high standards of quality that are part of the headteacher's vision for the school.

86. The development of the information and communication technology suite has been a good investment. The placement of the new computers in one room allows class teaching and greater access for all pupils. Time spent in training staff has improved the quality of teaching and learning. However, there are still many times when the room is unused. Similarly, computers in classrooms are not being used to best effect as learning tools.

87. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the quality of the school grounds. The development of the nursery's secure outdoor area has given a good range of surfaces and equipment such as a tunnel, play house, climbing frame and marked roadways. This has much improved the potential and provision for outdoor play experiences. Similarly, the adventure play area and the development of outdoor seating have enhanced the facilities for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Parents and staff comment on how this has improved the standard of behaviour. The sterling work of the playgroup leader in managing the activities has been crucial in this development.

88. The quantity and quality of resources is barely satisfactory across the curriculum. Recent purchases of equipment for information and communication technology and physical education, as well as items such as recorded music, improve the quality of the subject curriculum but in art and design and in design and technology the limited resources seriously limit what pupils can do. The narrow range of materials and tools means that pupils do not develop key skills and knowledge in design and technology and National Curriculum requirements are not met at Key Stage 2.

89. The school gives good value for money. It receives a low income per pupil. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time and this year the school achieved high standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has sustained its caring ethos and fosters very successfully pupils' positive attitudes to work. In line with its Catholic foundation, the school promotes very effectively moral and social development and meets its mission statement that centres on these aspects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

90. In order to raise standards further and continue the programme of school improvement the governing body, headteacher and staff should :

1. raise standards in writing by:
 - ◆ ensuring that pupils are taught explicitly what they need to know to improve the quality of their writing;
 - ◆ planning even more opportunities for pupils to apply and use in other subjects the reading and writing skills taught in literacy lessons;(paragraphs 3, 7, 8,14, 38, 110, 111, 118, 120, 121)
2. ensure that all pupils acquire the skills of planning, conducting and evaluating their own investigations in science;
(paragraphs 16, 40, 134,137, 138)
3. raise standards in art and design, in design and technology and in geography by:
 - ◆ ensuring that key skills and techniques are taught progressively through the school;
 - ◆ improving the quality and range of resources;
 - ◆ ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are met fully;(paragraphs 18, 19, 31, 40, 48, 51, 57, 88, 141, 143, 145, 147, 148, 150, 151, 154, 155)
4. ensure that all children achieve as well as they should in the reception year by:
 - ◆ drawing on national guidance on provision for children in the Foundation Stage to enrich the curriculum;
 - ◆ improving the quality of teaching for children in the reception year;
 - ◆ ensuring greater consistency and continuity of experience from the nursery to the reception year;
 - ◆ extending the good practice in the nursery to unify the assessment procedures in both years;(paragraphs 10, 32, 33, 45, 47, 80, 92, 94, 98, 101, 103, 109)
5. improve the quality and use of assessment by:
 - ◆ monitoring pupils' attainment and progress consistently from the nursery to Year 6;
 - ◆ ensuring that information from assessment is systematically used to inform the next step in teachers' planning;(paragraphs 41, 59, 65, 66, 67, 122, 140, 150, 154)
6. sharpen the quality of strategic planning by:
 - ◆ determining key priorities and targets for the short term;
 - ◆ ensuring that governors and staff with responsibilities play a more critical part in evaluating and determining the work of the school;(paragraphs 77-80, 82, 133)

In addition the school should consider the following points for inclusion in the action plan:

- ◆ the poor toilet conditions and rank toilet odour that badly affects the quality of the learning environment at Key Stage 1; (paragraphs 61, 84, 85)
- ◆ the blocked classroom sinks which restrict work particularly in art and design but also across the curriculum, (paragraphs 84, 144)
- ◆ the absence of a school policy and programme for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education and sex education. (paragraphs 49, 60, 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	44	44	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	198
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4%
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90% (80%)	87%	93%
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	28	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90% (86%)	93% (96%)	100% (82%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	14
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	27	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93% (73%)	90% (83%)	86% (80%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90% (73%)	90% (87%)	90% (80%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	183
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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	0	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
--------------------------------	------

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	381579
Total expenditure	395014
Expenditure per pupil	1,771
Balance brought forward from previous year	13442
Balance carried forward to next year	7

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	223
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	3	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	40	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	47	19	0	10
The teaching is good.	45	48	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	38	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	29	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	43	14	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	60	34	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	36	24	0	5

Because of rounding up not all rows add up to 100%

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

91. Currently the nursery has 17 full-time as well as nine part-time places in the morning and afternoon sessions. Two teachers share the teaching of the nursery class. The children move from the nursery to the reception class in September. This year the majority of the reception class children will not be five until the Spring and Summer terms. At the time of the inspection a temporary teacher had been working with the reception class children for several weeks.

92. Children enter the nursery with skills and understanding reflecting those of their age nationally. They make good progress due to the good quality of teaching in all six areas of learning and the high level of co-operation between the nursery team. When the children enter the reception year most are achieving better than expected for their age. The children achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development. Inspection evidence shows that given this good start the children do not achieve well enough in the reception class. They make slower progress due to weaker teaching and lower quality of provision. Although there are strengths in the teaching in the reception class, especially in the area of personal, social and emotional development, weaknesses in other areas make the teaching unsatisfactory overall.

Personal, social and emotional development.

93. By the end of the reception year the children have achieved the early learning goals in this area of learning. This reflects the good planning and skilful teaching especially in the nursery which sets the tone with consistent routines, high expectations of appropriate behaviour and a shared emphasis by all staff on the children becoming responsible for their actions and choices. As a result the children collaborate, share and show consideration towards each other. For example, children attending full time were encouraged to consider whether it would be fair for only them to be chosen as the 'Five Little speckled frogs'. The children are enthusiastic learners, concentrate hard and are often quick to help each other.

94. In the reception class, the good rate of progress is not sustained. The children are happy and at ease but are often noisy and restless. To a large degree this is due to a lack of challenge in what they are asked to do. While some children create their own work, such as drawing and colouring in shapes, others flit from activity to activity and show little perseverance even in self-selected tasks. Too much is left to chance and not enough attention is given to developing the children's attainment through increasingly challenging experiences.

95. All the adults working in the nursery provide good role models for the children. For example, by discussing together how they make choices they help children understand how to manage this for themselves. A common strength in the nursery and reception class is the way adults treat the children courteously, listen carefully to them and encourage them to think about the consequences of their actions.

Communication, language and literacy

96. The quality of provision and teaching is good in the nursery but there are weaknesses in the reception class which slow progress. However, by the end of the reception year most children are achieving the early learning goals.

97. In both the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and delight in sharing books with adults and each other. Many confidently tell their own stories to accompany the illustrations. The nursery children have made a good start in recognising their name, letters, alphabet sounds and in forming letters. This is being fostered very effectively through good teaching and through daily routines, such as selecting the day and weather cards, and also in short well-focused activities, such as writing a letter to thank a mother for bringing her baby to be bathed at school. The teacher, through scribing what the children wanted to write, helped them to understand both the purpose and the format of a letter. Many children then went on to write their own letters and to visit the role-play post office. This illustrates well the careful planning of the team, their clear understanding of the early learning goals in early writing and reading and how they can be promoted through practical and meaningful experiences.

98. This approach is far less developed in the reception class where the teaching lacks rigour and there is little variety in the activities. The classroom has few displays, activities or resources, such as an inviting book area to encourage the children to read and write as part of on-going classroom life. Many opportunities are lost to consolidate the children's knowledge and skills. Following a productive session looking at items beginning with the letter 'O', the potential of children repeating the same activity independently, or of sorting actual objects and words was missed in favour of a quickly completed worksheet. Not enough guidance is given to the children on the purpose of activities available and what they are expected to do. As a result, the reception children show little spontaneous interest in "having a go" at writing.

Mathematical development.

99. The children are making at least satisfactory progress in using number and in mathematical development overall. By the end of the reception year most children are achieving the early learning goals and a small number exceed them.

100. The nursery staff make good use of opportunities which arise naturally to engage the children in number work, such as counting the children as they line up to come in from outside. They also develop the children's recognition of number through action rhymes and the use of number cards in games and practical situations. The repetition and rehearsal of these rhymes and numbers is promoting progress. Nursery staff were delighted when one child pointed out that 3 should come after 2 when the numbers became jumbled. In the reception class, many children count confidently and accurately to 10 and beyond. More able children are beginning to think about how many more are needed and the difference between two numbers. In the nursery the children have explored circular, square and triangular shapes and photographic evidence shows the children exploring and looking for shapes in the environment. The reception children name different shapes and play games to match shapes as well as complete workbook pages.

101. Nursery children gain a sound awareness of space, capacity and volume through their play and experiments in the sand and water trays. A good feature of the teaching is the way all the adults conscientiously use relevant mathematical language and encourage the children to describe accurately the position, size and quantity of objects. They also provide stimulating and well-organised play situations to reinforce the children's knowledge. In the reception class, the range of resources and experiences is not as varied or challenging and there is limited evidence of mathematical ideas being developed effectively in imaginative play.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

102. At the end of the reception year, children are likely to have achieved most of the early learning goals. The nursery children benefit enormously from being in a stimulating and colourful environment and from good quality teaching. The nursery team plans carefully to ensure that the children's current level of understanding is used as a jumping off point for further development. They encourage the children to question, compare and find out how things work. Natural experiences such as bathing a baby, watching birds outside through binoculars and sending letters to people the children know all enhance the children's understanding of the wider world and how they and their family fit into it. The children are very interested in working the computer. They already show skill and proficiency with the mouse and are very aware of how mouse movements influence what happens on the screen. Tactile experiences with dough, sand and water further extend the children's understanding of many scientific concepts.

103. Although a very good start towards achieving the early learning goals is promoted in the nursery, the breadth, richness and variety of the provision are not carried through into the reception class. There is little on display to prompt the children's curiosity or to encourage them to ask questions, to look carefully and to record their observations. The children have very little experience of using water or different materials and tools, or the computer and tape recorder.

104. In some sessions there are strengths in the teaching in the reception class. The children gained much from the story of 'Handra's surprise' as the teacher brought the fruit mentioned in the story for them to look at. The stone in the avocado was of particular interest and led to queries such as "Would it grow if they planted it?". The quality and potential of this work to record the children's ideas, to look in information books and to actually plant the stone, was lost when they moved on to unconnected activities.

Physical development.

105. The nursery and reception year children spend time outside most days using the wheeled toys, climbing equipment and play-house. This is a major factor in the children's good progress in developing coordination and physical skills. By the end of the reception year, the children have achieved the early learning goals. The nursery children already use the push, pull and ride-on toys with skill and confidence. They pedal, steer and manoeuvre competently and the staff are quick to pose new challenges. One boy hauled traffic cones and a plank to seal off a road and the teacher suggested using signs with "stop" and "go" to extend the play. As a result other children joined in and the children had to brake and steer even more carefully. The play-leader's work with the nursery children is developing their skills effectively and also encouraging them to solve problems. A good example was the way she created a challenge circuit around the climbing apparatus marked out with ribbons.

106. In both the reception and nursery classes, the children show developing control in handling tools such as scissors and brushes. They are beginning to understand aspects of healthy living as the staff discuss with them the value of eating fruit or sugar-free crackers at snack time.

Creative Development

107. The quality of the provision in the nursery is good but is unsatisfactory in the reception class. As a result the rate of progress is slower than in the nursery. However, most children are likely to achieve most of the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

108. The range of creative experiences is rich and varied in the nursery and the children are surrounded by aesthetically pleasing displays. The children have many daily opportunities to express themselves in music, play and through using different materials. They sing, listen to music and some show the ability to copy and follow a rhythmic pattern. They handle the musical instruments sensibly and are learning to read and respond to the 'stop' and 'go' signs when playing in unison. The nursery staff place a high priority on fostering children's imaginative response through working alongside them and talking about what they are doing and its effect. The children talk to one another in a similar fashion. Two children were keen to show what happened as they cut straws to make hedgehog quills. Several boys carefully constructed a railway with the bricks and explained that they had also 'built a shelter for the cars for people who were on the train'.

109. In the reception class, the range of activities is limited and there are few chances to use paint, different materials and tools.

ENGLISH

110. Standards have risen at Key Stage 2 over the last four years and the latest results show the school to be well above the average both for all schools and for similar schools in English, mathematics and science. The school far exceeded its targets for 2000 in Level 4 attainment in English and mathematics. The very high percentage of pupils who did really well in English brought the school into the top five per cent of schools. However, within the overall English result pupils' reading skills are much better than their writing skills. In the 2000 national tests nearly all the Year 2 pupils attained Level 2 as expected for their age in both reading and writing. However, in the writing test, no pupil did better than expected for their age and two out of three pupils were still only in the early stages of writing in sentences. Most pupils at both key stages are currently working at the level expected for their age in writing and a minority reach a higher standard. In Year 5, a significant number of pupils are already working at the level expected of Year 6 pupils. This is most apparent in reading but indicates the potential for higher attainment in writing.

111. The standards are weakened by many pupils' limited ability to express themselves fluently and accurately. Some of the areas for improvement included in the 1996 inspection report still remain. For example, the school has not yet adopted a common handwriting style and this is reflected in the varying quality of how pupils present their work and their fluency and speed in writing.

112. Having analysed test results, the school is aware of the need to improve standards in writing and the school development plan includes appropriate references to raising teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching writing. A programme of professional development is due to start in January. In Years 5 and 6, the teachers are making effective use of periodic tests and assessments to identify areas that need further teaching. This is preparing the pupils well for formal tests and ensuring that pupils acquire key skills and knowledge. Such focused teaching is less evident in other classes.

113. Given pupils' average attainment in language on entry to Key Stage 1, their overall progress in English is at least satisfactory during the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall but often good progress in lessons, particularly when they work with adults on tasks that build on the content of their individual learning programmes. Year 3 pupils make particularly good progress in meeting their literacy targets through the use of the class computer.

114. At the end of both key stages, speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Pupils make sound progress in listening attentively and appreciatively to others. All converse easily with adults and each other and willingly express their opinions but many use a narrow vocabulary and do not always find it easy to justify their views using specific terms. This shows in their writing and in the way they often gloss over words as they read. In all year groups there are several pupils whose easy facility with language shows in the good quality of their written ideas and in their deeper understanding of what they read. The focus on pupils using relevant terms such as “magnetic force” as they discuss what they have done in science, and on explaining their reasoning in mathematics is having a beneficial effect on pupils’ attainment in those subjects. There is less emphasis on pupils explaining or justifying their thinking as they read or write. Opportunities are also missed to develop pupils’ skills in speaking audibly and clearly to large audiences and to participate in a wide range of drama activities to support work across the curriculum.

115. Standards in reading are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. However, there is a noticeable gap between the attainment of the more able readers and the others in each year group. Pupils make sound initial progress in learning words and letter sounds. The more able are reading early and by the end of Year 2 are reading fluently, confidently and accurately. The school is conscious that not all pupils are reading regularly at home and provides classroom support so that pupils are heard to read in school. However, those who are in the early stages of reading are not reading regularly enough by teachers to help them to refine their skills and to learn new ones, especially in how to work out new words.

116. Pupils continue to make steady, sound progress at Key Stage 2 in reading fiction and non-fiction. Many read with good expression and characterisation. Their ability to read fluently and accurately often masks their lack of understanding of words and phrases. For example, a Year 6 pupil had no difficulty reading “sailed close to the wind” but was not aware of its meaning. The focus on developing pupils’ comprehension skills in Years 5 and 6 boosts their ability to infer and deduce and lifts the standards at the end of the key stage for all pupils. In both year groups there are pupils who are already reading as well as pupils years older and who set their own reading challenges, tackling complex poetry and classic texts.

117. A common element is the pupils’ enthusiasm for reading which shows in the way they discuss favourite stories and authors. One Year 2 pupil talked avidly about her growing book collection and visits to the local library. Year 4 pupils summarised succinctly the plot of stories read and one Year 6 pupil used examples from memory to explain why she liked Jacqueline Wilson’s way of using a key character as the narrator. Not all pupils however, are equally at home in reading information books or know how to find what they need in the library. Being “reading detectives” in Years 5 and 6, searching the Internet and using CD ROMs in Year 4 and compiling their own information files on countries in Year 3, is helping to refine skills in scanning and skimming, but pupils are less secure in considering arguments critically or collating and comparing different viewpoints. This partly reflects an emphasis on teaching pupils what they should know, such as rhyming features and the lower prevalence of teachers challenging the pupils to use and apply what they read. The library has been set up since the last inspection and has a good stock of quality books. Not enough use is made of them to develop pupils’ study skills.

118. Standards in writing are appropriate for the age group but not as high as they could be. The school is working to develop pupils’ skills in getting down their ideas and writing at length and most pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Year 2 pupils worked assiduously and showed exemplary attitudes and enthusiasm in writing their version of “Goldilocks and the three bears”. The more able writers showed much potential to achieve well as they included paragraphs, used good phrases and speech and used capital letters for effect as in “and IT BROKE!”. The use of correct punctuation and accurate spelling of simple words is not yet secure.

119. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. They learn about the features of different writing formats such as letters, poems, reports and stories. Occasionally this is done through work in other subjects. Year 4 pupils wrote interesting newspaper reports of the sinking of “The Mary Rose”

showing not only an awareness of ways to catch the reader's interest but also knowledge of Tudor times. By the end of Year 6 pupils are writing in a legible joined style, although this varies considerably in maturity. Many make errors in spelling and punctuation and do not always apply the work done in grammar and comprehension exercises to their own writing. Although the more able write expressively and use language for effect, the writing of others often lacks coherence and quality of vocabulary.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages. There are strengths in guided reading sessions and in the teaching of spelling, grammar and handwriting, but not all the teachers are secure in their knowledge of how to develop pupils' literacy skills especially in writing. Pupils are often told what to include in their writing without being shown how to achieve it. This weakens the quality of guided writing sessions. The teachers do not place enough emphasis on sharing strategies with the pupils or on using relevant terms and making explicit what pupils need to know. When the Year 5 teacher used his own account of a trip to Jodrell Bank, he was able to show how he drafted and revised his work to achieve the desired tone. Aspects of such good practice are present in other teachers' work but not strongly enough to raise standards in pupils' writing in each year group.

121. The National Literacy Strategy is now embedded in the school and teachers are following the guidance. However, many literacy hours lack vitality. Although they follow the recommended format, the teachers rely heavily on textbooks and worksheets and have not developed a range of book or topic-related resources to foster pupils' awareness of how language works. Big books are rarely used at Key Stage 2 and there are few occasions, even at Key Stage 1, when pupils use games, tape recorders or computers in literacy hours. Although they use a mix of questioning, explanation and discussion, many teachers tend to direct the pupils, so that there are lengthy periods when the pupils listen rather than take an active part. All teachers end their literacy hours with a plenary but do not always use what pupils have done to identify and clarify exactly what they have learnt or need to remember.

122. A common weakness is the limited use of assessment to guide planning. The school is using test results to determine what pupils have achieved, to set targets for groups and individuals and to identify gaps in learning. This is in its early stages and is strongest in Years 5 and 6. As there are no formal systems to track pupils' progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing from the nursery onwards, teachers' planning is not always specific enough to meet the pupils' needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. The better marking uses comments to tell pupils, especially the lower attaining, where they have made progress and what they can do to improve.

123. The co-ordinator has a good awareness of standards and action needed to improve the quality of provision. She has updated the policy and purchased suitable materials to support the teachers in their planning and to provide ideas for activities.

MATHEMATICS

124. Standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection standards have been sustained at Key Stage 1 and have risen markedly at Key Stage 2. In this year's national tests, the school exceeded its target for Level 4 attainment. As in 1999, the high percentage of pupils who did well for their age took the school's results well above the average for all schools and for similar schools.

125. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement fluctuates between classes due to variations in teaching quality. In Years 5 and 6, the challenge and pace of the lessons increases considerably leading to more rapid progress for all pupils. One of the aspects of high quality teaching in these classes is the constant emphasis on improving standards. The school is on line to meet its

realistic target for pupils achieving Level 4 or above in the 2001 national tests. Pupils' work already shows that a good number of pupils are working towards attaining the higher Level 5.

126. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make most progress in the acquisition of number but there are few opportunities for them to use and apply their knowledge and skills as part of classroom situations. Computers are rarely used to provide practice in solving number problems or in developing their mathematical awareness.

127. The younger pupils have good mental recall of number facts to 10 and the most able record numbers accurately to 1000. They know the difference between odd and even numbers and use this knowledge to help solve problems such as missing numbers in a pattern of multiples of two. The more able pupils have good mental recall of multiples of two, five and ten but less able pupils are uncertain and this slows their response during the oral/mental section of the daily mathematics lesson.

128. By Year 6, the pupils multiply easily by 10 and 100 and have a generally good recall of multiplication tables to ten. Their good understanding of numbers to one thousand and proficiency in adding and subtracting larger numbers allows them to deal confidently with mathematical investigations. These are neatly recorded and well presented by the pupils showing through their calculations an awareness of how to handle data to explore a range of mathematical possibilities and to draw conclusions from them. This is a strong feature of mathematics teaching for older pupils and helps them to achieve well.

129. At both key stages, the pupils make satisfactory progress in appreciating shape, space and measures. Younger pupils recognise coins to £2 and are aware of the relationship between them. They measure in centimetres and know the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes. Older pupils calculate areas and perimeters of regular shapes and readily solve problems involving percentages.

130. Many pupils say that their favourite subject is mathematics. They enjoy the introductory sessions when most answer questions confidently and enthusiastically. Most concentrate well on their set tasks and persevere even when they find them difficult.

131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The teachers show confidence in teaching mathematics, especially number. At Key Stage 1 however, the tasks are not always challenging enough for the most able pupils. All the teachers use questions effectively to assess and extend the pupils' understanding and to help them remember what they learnt in previous lessons. A common strength is the way they provide frequent opportunities for pupils to talk about and explain how they have arrived at their answers. This is boosting pupils' confidence in using a range of problem-solving strategies and sharpening their mathematical reasoning. By encouraging Year 4 pupils to explain how they knew the answers when doubling and halving numbers, the teacher helped them to realise how they might decide the most efficient way to gain a quick and accurate result.

132. In the better lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, teachers show great enthusiasm that rubs off on the pupils. They maintain a brisk pace and constantly challenge the pupils. The usual format of initial quick-fire mental arithmetic, followed by group work at a challenging level and then a final session to sort out any problems and to consolidate and assess the progress made follows the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers make effective use of practical items such as number lines and hundred squares to focus the pupils' attention on number relationships. Year 1 pupils enjoyed giving clues using "more than" and "less than" for numbers pinned on the back of a jumper. Such activities catch pupils' interest and often promote a good working atmosphere.

133. The mathematics co-ordinator is monitoring what happens in lessons but his observations have yet to be used as fully as they might be to identify how the quality of teaching and learning might be strengthened throughout the school.

SCIENCE

134. Standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In this year's teacher assessment of Year 2 pupils' attainment all reached the level expected for their age but none did better than this. This reflects satisfactory progress overall. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are good and have improved since the previous inspection. In the national tests, half of the Year 6 pupils attained Level 5, the level higher than expected for their age. Pupils' good progress and achievement at Key Stage 2 is largely due to focused teaching and an emphasis on developing pupils' scientific knowledge which prepares pupils well for the national tests. Inspection evidence shows that standards in investigative skills are not as good throughout the school. Standards are also not as high this year in Year 6. Many pupils, although achieving well, are not attaining higher levels than expected for their age. The progress of those with special educational needs reflects that of other pupils in the year groups.

135. An analysis of Key Stage 1 teachers' planning and the pupils' work shows that the curriculum is planned to enable pupils to attain the level expected for their age. There is little to challenge or extend the more able pupils. Year 2 pupils remember well information such as the names of parts of a plant and the different types of food eaten by humans. More able pupils produce more detailed work but opportunities are missed to encourage them to come up with their own ideas in carrying out investigations. Although there are good links between science and mathematics, these are not developed well enough to ensure pupils reap the benefits. Year 2 pupils were confused about what the graphs of their favourite foods actually told them. This is because their mathematical skills in interpreting data are not secure.

136. In Year 3 scientific investigation is used very effectively to promote the acquisition of scientific knowledge. The pupils are making good progress in understanding the importance of close observation, the elements of a fair test and the analysis of findings. Year 3 pupils made very good progress in determining whether all metals are magnetic through testing. Their discussion about what they had noticed led to the discovery that magnets differ in force and a very productive talk about how paper clips were held in line by the magnetic force.

137. Year 5 pupils have made good progress and are already meeting the standard expected of Year 6 pupils in respect of the programme of study concerning "The Earth and beyond". They have investigated how shadows are formed and ably explain how and why they change in length and direction. Their knowledge of solids, liquids and gases also meets the expected level. Year 6 pupils are also working at the national level although their research into the functions of the organs of flowers is more typical of secondary age pupils. Pupils use keys accurately to identify mini-beasts and they write accurate reports about their investigations into the factors affecting plant growth. However, as in other classes, the quality of pupils' scientific reports is limited as they tend to copy what the teacher writes. This ensures that pupils learn to use correct scientific terms, diagrams and tables but do not develop the skills of writing up findings independently.

138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Many lessons seen during the inspection were based on good subject knowledge. However, occasionally the teachers seemed to lack confidence in allowing the pupils to take their investigations further or to try out their own ideas. For example, Year 2 pupils noticed that the anthers of a flower swelled when put into water but were not encouraged to suggest how this might happen. In comparison, the teacher built on the Year 3 pupils' predictions to guide their investigations and to raise new questions about the magnetic qualities of materials. During the end discussion, the teacher sensitively intervened, using questioning to help pupils clarify their thoughts and showing how their findings led into the next lesson to investigate the strength of magnetic force. Good use was made of information and communication technology in Year 6 when pupils were taught to surf relevant web sites to retrieve information about micro-organisms.

139. Pupils enjoy science. Year 4 pupils were highly motivated by the visit of a botanist with his collection of exotic insects and molluscs. The pupils were fascinated by the movements of millipedes and stick insects. The commentary given by the 'expert' was carefully structured to build on and consolidate the work in class and ensured that pupils remembered key information.

140. Formal assessments show the gains in pupils' knowledge at the end of each scientific topic but the teachers have less to show how pupils are making progress in all aspects of science, especially in scientific enquiry. The newly appointed co-ordinator has used her time effectively to audit and reorganise resources and to introduce the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance to structure teachers' planning.

ART AND DESIGN

141. Pupils' attainment at both key stages is below that expected for their age. Standards have fallen since the last inspection reflecting the low profile given to art and design in the school while national initiatives have been introduced in English and mathematics. Although the overall curriculum plan for art and design is underpinned by national guidance, teachers' planning is not detailed enough to ensure that skills are taught systematically and progress is unsatisfactory overall at Key Stages 1 and 2.

142. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in sketching and drawing. By Year 2, pupils' drawings include good detail. At Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with line drawing and shading and Year 5 pupils produced well detailed sketches of green peppers, using shading and lining techniques to capture the texture of the skin and the three-dimensional qualities of the vegetable. Pupils' skills and knowledge of how to use a range of techniques and other media, such as paint, are less well developed. The school fails to build on the skills and practices of the nursery where the children mix colours, choose their own media and paint with confidence. Year 2 pupils' work lacks the quality and detail that could be achieved from helping pupils to use appropriately sized paintbrushes to give precise detail in butterflies' wings or to differentiate the cascading colours and shapes escaping from a firework. The vividness of Year 3 pupils' recognisable portraits of Tudor monarchs is missing in other work throughout the school and there is little on display that celebrates good achievement. Pupils enjoy art and design and many like looking at paintings and examples of art. Many older pupils have sound general knowledge of famous artists but rarely paint in their style, although they can discuss the techniques the artists used. Occasionally good use is made of computer software to develop pupils' skills in creating patterns.

143. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although there are strengths in some lessons. The teacher's enthusiastic style, good explanation of the task and discussion of ideas enabled Year 6 pupils to plan a backdrop landscape, carefully identifying the media they intended to use to build up the scene. However, the work in many pupils' sketchbooks is of unsatisfactory quality and shows a lack of systematic teaching of skills and techniques.

144. Key Stage 2 classrooms have little space to set up permanent art and design areas. Many sinks are not in use and make it difficult for teachers to organise painting activities for the whole class. Alternative

organisational strategies have not been considered. Resources are adequate. The co-ordinator has completed outline subject planning but the school has yet to respond to the teachers' requests for training.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

145. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages at Key Stage 1 but lower at Key stage 2. They are similar to those of 1996 when the school was last inspected. The issue raised then of limited resources to underpin the progression in skills across a sufficiently broad range of experiences is still a key factor.

146. The co-ordinator is new to the role but has rightly identified an urgent need for resources and professional development for staff. As a midway solution, the school has adopted published units to guide the curriculum and to fit with the current resources. This continues to limit the pupils' experiences to a narrow range of materials and tools and does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils benefited enormously from working with pupils from other schools taking part in a robotics project, an Education Action Zone initiative. This gave them access to other resources and experience in using electrical and mechanical components.

147. At both key stages, the pupils learn to plan and carry out their own projects through a series of guided activities. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. They develop a good understanding of the need to consider the audience, the purpose of the finished product and the importance of evaluating and refining the original design. Having looked at the chassis and wheel units of vehicles, Year 2 pupils shared ideas before launching into their own designs. They used a range of commercial construction materials to build and evaluate wheeled "vehicles" and went on to fit wheels to a cardboard chassis. They were happy to modify their design, changing the position of the axle or size of wheel. Such activities and products show pupils gain a good understanding of the design brief and the need to evaluate their product. Pupils are making some progress in their cutting skills but are less skilled joining materials in different ways. Over time, these skills remain under-developed, because pupils have a fairly limited experience of measuring, cutting and joining a range of materials.

148. At Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. There are gaps in their knowledge of how to assemble and modify a range of materials and components and they lack familiarity with an appropriate range of tools. They have not had the systematic practice needed to enable them to produce and refine well-drawn designs or improve their skills. For example, when Year 3 pupils explored packaging they were amazed that boxes were made from a single piece of card. They used ready drawn nets to assemble ones for themselves, but although introduced to the ideas of 'scoring' revealed limited tool management, cutting and sticking skills. Increasing use is being made of appropriate information and communication technology equipment. Year 4 pupils have used clip art, a word-processing package and prepared paper springs to make animated illustrations.

149. Pupils enjoy designing and making things. They become quite absorbed. Year 1 pupils were delighted with the effect they achieved with a simple sliding mechanism to make books with moveable illustrations. Year 6 pupils were thrilled with their robots and commented on the excitement of using sophisticated tools, working with wood and thin sheets of metal and the novelty of making and incorporating a simple electrical circuit into the product.

150. The quality of teaching is often good in lessons at both key stages but at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory over time as the teachers' expectations are too low regarding the standard the pupils can achieve. Strengths in lessons include the emphasis on discussion in both the planning and evaluation stage of the design cycle, shared enthusiasm and a good focus on collaboration. They use questions effectively so that pupils reflect on and justify their ideas. Good use is made of published material to guide project planning and lesson structure but there are no systematic procedures to assess the development of pupils' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

151. Standards are lower than those expected for pupils' ages at Key Stages 1 and 2. This shows a fall in standards over the last four years. Little geography has been completed in most classes during this term. Geography has an insecure place in the school curriculum and much is done at a superficial level. Pupils experience a very narrow coverage of skills, places or thematic studies and make unsatisfactory progress at both key stages. There is little to show the extent of pupils' work in geography in their books and what is recorded is often poorly presented and unfinished.

152. At both key stages, pupils learn about their own locality and develop simple mapping skills. They conduct geographical enquiries in walks around the area and in looking at other locations, their climate and people's lifestyles. Year 2 pupils follow the world travels of Barnaby Bear, find the routes to places and study different journeys. However, they remember very few facts about the local environment and show little appreciation of ways that it could be improved.

153. In Key Stage 2, pupils study their own area and how it contracts with localities in the Middle East and others in and around Manchester. Year 4 pupils look at environmental issues such as the problem of litter. This work makes good links with mathematics and information and communication technology as the pupils carry out surveys and compile posters to display in school. Nevertheless, they show little familiarity with geographical terms and some misunderstandings when answering geographical questions. Likewise, discussions with Year 6 pupils showed they had little knowledge of the overall geographical structure of Britain or Europe. They are unfamiliar with the main features of maps and struggle to locate key places. Their level of understanding of geographical concepts, such as co-ordinates, is insecure.

154. The teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory at Key Stage 2. However evidence from pupils' books and teachers' planning indicates that over the school year the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory at both key stages. The level of challenge is often too low and reflects the absence of procedures to record what pupils know and can do. Much work at Key Stage 2 consists of copied notes and there is little evidence of themes that promote real geographical enquiry. Year 3 pupils show very positive attitudes in using information at home to compile their own fact-files on a chosen country but not enough is then done in school to ensure pupils deepen their understanding of why places are similar, different or why they are like they are. In most classes, all pupils irrespective of age and prior attainment, do the same work. Too little emphasis has been given to field-work and the application of knowledge and skills gained in class lessons.

155. The scheme of work based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines provides some guidance for teachers but needs to be adapted to the school situation. Work done this year does not reflect fully the content of the scheme. There are too few resources to support current themes and the range of reference books is limited. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is weak.

HISTORY

156. Standards are satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. There is no evidence of the higher standards found in Key Stage 1 at the time of the last inspection.

157. Pupils of all abilities at both key stages make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of key periods in history and in their skills of gathering historical evidence and information. Their understanding and knowledge are most secure when they talk about what they know from looking at objects, such as old toys, or from visits to museums and places of interest which are a good feature of the overall provision and curriculum. Pupils enjoy such sessions. Year 1 pupils read closely and carefully the labels attached to teddy bears and used evidence such as worn out patches of fur to suggest how old they might be. Following their visit to Quarry Bank Mill, Year 6 pupils talked knowledgeably and confidently about the difficulties of life for Victorian children in the Apprentice House. They also remembered details of the mummification process, burial rites and the special treatment afforded to cats in Ancient Egypt learnt during a visit to a Manchester Museum. Although they recall significant features of life in Tudor times and in Ancient Greece, they are less secure in interpreting historical evidence or in their understanding of chronology.

158. While pupils can explain in detail how an historian or archaeologist might conduct an investigation into a past society, this good knowledge and understanding is not reflected in the quality of their written work. This is due to the high use of tasks which record information rather than invite pupils to grapple with a key historical question. Standards are not as high as they could be and opportunities are missed to develop reading and writing skills through history. Year 6 pupils research an aspect of Victorian life and many produce detailed and attractive files. However, too many merely copy out information uncritically and do not always understand the content. The school now intends to focus this work by asking pupils to pose their own initial questions and identify specific lines of enquiry.

159. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory overall based on a scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. In the one lesson seen, the teaching of the temporary teacher was good. Her anecdotes about family teddy bears kept the Year 1 pupils very attentive and keen to look for "clues" which helped them to include much detail in their observational drawings. In many classes, the marking of pupils' work occasionally lacks attention to detail and too many pieces of work are accepted uncritically.

160. The new co-ordinator has a clear, appropriate development plan which she has begun to implement. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum particularly the lack of time to cover themes in depth.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

161. Standards are satisfactory. All pupils now have the understanding and confidence to use basic computer skills independently and attain the level expected for their age. Pupils who have access to computers at home often show more advanced skills.

162. The school has addressed the shortcomings noted in the previous inspection. The subject is well managed and led. The new co-ordinator has developed an effective scheme of work melding together ideas from a range of published sources and organising these so that the end-product fits the needs of the school. An efficient and easy to use assessment profile will be implemented from January to track the development of pupils' skills. Monies from the National Grid for Learning initiative together with Education Action Zone support have come together in the setting up of the information and communication technology suite. The co-ordinator and all staff have benefited from appropriate training that has boosted teacher confidence in using the equipment. As a result, the now regular use of the equipment and focused teaching of skills is accelerating all pupils' progress and raising standards.

163. Key Stage 1 pupils are making satisfactory progress and acquiring skills in word processing and desktop publishing. Year 1 pupils log on and load programs independently. The big screen with computer link-up enables the teacher to introduce essential routines step-by-step and provide an instant opportunity for pupils, working in pairs at their own machine, to practise and consolidate what they have just heard and seen. Year 2 pupils' keyboard skills are variable and some still find it difficult to place and drag the mouse when highlighting. Most are confident in selecting items from the toolbar, particularly the feature for changing the font size.

164. Older Key Stage 2 pupils are having to familiarise themselves with a wide range of programmes in order to address the deficit from previous years. They learn quickly as they are enthusiastic and ready to try things out. They are quick to appreciate the possibility of short cuts and the power of the computer as a tool for modifying and improving information. Year 6 pupils are making good progress as they are benefiting from the good teaching of the co-ordinator. They are quickly acquiring the skills, the understanding and the facility with keyboard and mouse that will enable them to use information and communication technology in a more challenging way. They are beginning a careful study of the use of the Internet and ways of searching efficiently for information. By the end of the year they will have explored spreadsheets, further applications of the Internet and e-mail use, and the use of control programmes such as Logo. They are also using information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects such as using spreadsheets to explore data collected in history.

165. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator provides a good model of teaching. She has good subject knowledge, makes efficient use of time and organises the pupils to support each other. As a result, the pace is fast and the learning purposeful. In the better lessons, the teachers focus the pupils' learning on clearly identified skills and ensure that they practise them in sensibly devised contexts. For example, Year 4 pupils learnt how to use the Internet by searching for information on specific organisms and then compared the effectiveness of this by repeating the process using CD ROMs and also books. Year 5 pupils reorganised text, changing the layout to columns and importing photographs taken by an adult with the digital camera. A good feature of the teaching is the way teachers question the pupils so that they usually find their own solutions to problems. In lessons judged as satisfactory overall, the shortcomings came from the use of too complex texts and tasks. The pupils were thus distracted from the information and communication technology skills to be learnt.

166. Across the school, lesson plans and classroom organisation have not been adapted to make full and regular use of the free-standing computers. Similarly the potential use by the pupils of the cameras, tape-recorders, musical keyboards and the scanner has not been fully explored or included as part of curriculum experiences. The school does not possess a programmable toy, such as the Roamer, to explore programming especially with the younger pupils.

MUSIC

167. Pupils' attainment is generally as expected for their age and the pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stages 1 and 2. The high emphasis on singing ensures good standards when pupils sing both accompanied and unaccompanied. However, standards are not as high as they could be in other aspects of music. In all year groups, especially at Key Stage 2, the pupils have not had the experiences in performing and composing music using a wide range of instruments to ensure they do well. Those pupils who learn to play an instrument, such as keyboard, guitar and recorder, benefit from more regular opportunities to read and perform music.

168. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have received attention. Since taking on the role this year, the coordinator has used a commercial scheme as the basis of a balanced and systematic programme that reflects the National Curriculum programmes of study for music. She has advised staff and also arranged for the Local Education Authority music adviser to come and work with classes to boost teachers' confidence in creating and appreciating music. Good quality purchases have widened the range of recorded music from different cultures but the range of instruments and information and communication technology software remains limited.

169. The pupils really enjoy music and show a very positive attitude. Years 1 and 2 pupils were quick to learn the words and tune of new songs. The equal enthusiasm of boys and girls and of pupils with special educational needs is also evident at Key Stage 2, particularly when playing instruments and working together to compose musical phrases. Although still in the very early stages of learning to play instruments, pupils played their pieces assuredly to an audience of parents and staff.

170. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. The co-ordinator provides a good model of teaching and this is lifting the standards of the pupils in her Year 4 class. Her comments and questions enabled pupils to evaluate the effect of their interpretation of "Stormy weather" and to improve their performance. All the teachers use the commercial plans to guide their lessons but the expectation of what pupils can achieve is too low. This is linked to the teachers' low level of confidence in setting challenges that allow the pupils to show what they can do. The lack of an agreed system to record pupils' achievement compounds this situation.

171. Pupils' musical experiences are enhanced by visits to concerts and from visitors to school, such as a professional jazz musician. Opportunities are missed as part of on-going school life and routines, such as assemblies, to develop this further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

172. The previous inspection indicated that pupils' attainment was often above national expectations. Standards have improved further and many pupils do better than expected for their age. There are particular strengths in gymnastics, swimming and games largely due to good teaching and coaching. Almost all pupils swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Individual pupils and school teams have done well in local competitions. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, experience a very well balanced range of physical activities in lessons and in the playground. In addition to the "trim trail" the school has developed an impressive range of play activities. The play leader shows a good ability to enthuse pupils, praising and encouraging their efforts when they use balls, bats and ropes. Such activities are making a significant contribution to pupils' co-ordination skills.

173. Key Stage 1 pupils make at least satisfactory progress in developing different ways of moving on the floor and on apparatus. Year 1 pupils used well the limited space in the hall as they moved in straight and zigzag pathways to create different symmetrical shapes. Year 2 pupils climbed, balanced, jumped and landed safely when using gymnastics apparatus. They know the importance of warming-up exercises to ensure muscles and joints are ready before beginning physical activities. At Key Stage 2, the pupils achieve well. By Year 5, pupils' abilities in games are high and for some individuals, are exceptional. All demonstrate very good co-ordination in ball games and in routines to improve their passing skills. When playing team games, pupils' ball passing is consistently accurate and levels of sporting behaviour are high.

174. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 where teachers' good knowledge and skills increase pupils' rate of learning and foster strong, positive attitudes to health and fitness. In a Year 3 gymnastics lesson, the teacher used brief rest periods very effectively to set new challenges. As a result, the pupils were extremely energetic, fully engaged and highly motivated. In a games lesson, the teacher used Year 5 pupils' demonstrations to model specific coaching points that were quickly followed and used by the pupils in team situations.

175. Teachers understand the importance of teaching skills in a systematic way. They plan lessons carefully and expect the pupils to take responsibility for getting out and returning equipment. In most lessons, the pupils are encouraged to sustain high levels of effort, to co-operate well in pairs and groups and to comment appreciatively on the performances of others. This contributes much to their personal and social development and their ability to talk confidently about what they have to do to improve their skills.