

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middlewich, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111340

Headteacher: Mr K Powell

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th November 2000

Inspection number: 224664

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manor Lane Middlewich Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J P A Williams
Date of previous inspection:	16 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D S Roberts OIN: 1743	Registered inspector	English Science Physical Education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed.
Mrs F Kennedy OIN: 19669	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr B Frost OIN: 17913	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication Technology Design and Technology Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs S Williams OIN:5682	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History	
Mr A Watson OIN: 7222	Team inspector	Music English as an additional language Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized primary school, which provides education for boys and girls from four to 11 years of age. The number on roll has grown significantly since the last inspection, and the school now provides full-time education for 242 pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals has also increased from two per cent, at the time of the last inspection, to over seven per cent, but remains below the national average. The attainment levels of children on entry to the reception class are broadly in line with those found nationally. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Currently, nearly 15 per cent of the pupils are included on the register, but none are at stages 3 to 5. This is broadly in line with national average. At present just under two per cent of pupils are from families belonging to ethnic minority groups, none of whom speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strong features. It provides a good curriculum and a very good level of care for its pupils. The provision made for pupils' personal development is outstanding. The standard of teaching is predominantly good and often of high quality. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to prior attainment in most subjects, but high attaining pupils are capable of making better progress in science. The headteacher, governors and staff work hard and successfully to create a welcoming and supportive ethos for learning where Catholic principles are strongly emphasised. The school is very well led and managed, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in extending their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The standard of teaching is mostly good and often of high quality.
- The school is highly successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Throughout the school, pupils show very positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is of a high standard.
- Outstanding provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- The standard of leadership and management is very good.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved by high attaining pupils in science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. The school now provides a much broader and more balanced curriculum. The production of well thought out schemes of work and better curriculum planning have contributed towards improved quality of provision and teaching in subjects outside the core areas of English, mathematics and science. Considerable improvements have been made to provision in information and communication technology, which was judged to be poor at the time of the last inspection. Consequently, standards have improved significantly and are now in line with national expectations. Steps taken to improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum have been successful, and this is reflected in the improvement in teaching. Since the last inspection, the proportion of lessons judged to be very good or better has increased from three per cent to 45 per cent.

National test results for the three years up to 1999 show the school's rate of improvement to be below that found nationally. The most recent national test results, for Year 2000, indicate that the school is beginning to reverse this trend. The school is well placed to continue improving by building on its strengths, implementing the priorities identified in the school development plan, and improving the

standards achieved by high attaining pupils in science.

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	B	C	B	C
Mathematics	B	A	B	C
Science	C	C	C	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that in Year 2000 the school's test results for English and mathematics were above the average for all schools, and in line with the average for similar schools. Results in science were in line with all schools, but well below the average for similar schools.

Inspection evidence indicates that children in the reception class, at the foundation stage, make good progress and the great majority achieve the early learning goals in all areas of curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, standards are above average in English and mathematics. In science, although overall standards are average, many high attainers are capable of better progress. Standards in information technology are in line with the national expectation, which represents considerable improvement since the last inspection. In other subjects, pupils work at levels which are at least appropriate for their ages, and work in some aspects of art and design, and design and technology, is of high quality. In addition, nearly all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils, throughout the school, demonstrate very good attitudes toward their school work. They show interest and enthusiasm, are eager to learn and generally give of their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a high standard throughout the school. This standard is apparent in classrooms, playground, dining hall and swimming baths.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Relationships are very strong throughout the school. Pupils work very effectively in pairs and groups. Older pupils show a capacity to lead and take the initiative. Pupils enjoy accepting responsibility, and carry out their tasks in a mature manner.
Attendance	Very good; above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection, all lessons were at least satisfactory. In 89 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good or better, 45 per cent was very good or better and six per cent of lessons were excellent. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning.

The teaching of children at the foundation stage is of high quality, enabling pupils to settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good and often very good. In other subjects, teaching is mostly good and of high quality in Years 3, 5 and 6. In many classes, the valuable and effective work of support staff and voluntary helpers has a very positive impact on the progress of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The teaching of information technology has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now of good quality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good, relevant curriculum for children at the foundation stage. At both key stages, the curriculum is broad and balanced, and the development of literacy and numeracy skills is appropriately emphasised. In science, not enough emphasis is placed on investigative and experimental work and the school's scheme of work for Key Stage 1 fails to extend higher attaining pupils. Excellent provision is made for pupils' personal and social development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision throughout the school. The work of support staff has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. Specific and measurable targets in individual education plans help to support pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All dimensions are promoted very successfully through assemblies and across the curriculum. Very good provision is made for moral and social development through formal and extra-curricular activities and residential visits. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and their academic progress. In addition, the provision of educational guidance and support for pupils is a very strong feature. Procedures in place for monitoring pupils' welfare and safety and for child protection are very good. Good use is made of assessment information to guide curricular planning.

A good partnership has been developed with parents, most of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Many parents provide valuable support in classrooms.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher and senior management team co-operate very effectively with the chair of governors to provide a strong sense of purpose and clear direction for the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate and set targets for improvement in English and mathematics which are appropriately challenging.
The strategic use of resources	Effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The governors successfully apply best value principles. The school is well staffed and resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • They would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>A relatively small minority feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children do not receive the right amount of homework; • they are not well informed about their children's progress; • the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find that good use is made of homework to support learning, particularly in English and mathematics. The arrangements for reporting on pupils' progress is similar to that in most other primary schools, and is satisfactory. The inspectors find the provision for extra-curricular activities to be good, although most opportunities are for older pupils. The headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue strengthening procedures and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The attainment levels of children on entry to the foundation stage are broadly in line with those found nationally. They make good progress in the reception class, and by the time they enter Key Stage 1, nearly all children meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The pupils continue to make good progress in most subjects, during their time at Key Stage 1 and 2. They successfully extend their literacy and numeracy skills, and by the time they reach Year 6, most achieve standards which are above those found nationally in English and mathematics.
- 2 Comparative information, based on the Year 2000 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of seven year old pupils in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics is generally above the national average, but below the performance of pupils in schools with similar characteristics.
- 3 Comparative information for pupils aged 11, based on the Year 2000 tests, indicates that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics is above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. In science, the pupils' performance is in line with the national average, but well below the average for similar schools.
- 4 Key Stage 2 national test results for the three years up to 1999 indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is below that found nationally. However, the improved national test results for Year 2000, confirm a reversal in this trend over the last two years. The relatively small size of year group cohorts accounts for some fluctuation in the performance of pupils from one year to the next.
- 5 Inspection evidence indicates a picture which is generally consistent with national test results and similar to those described in the last inspection report. By the time pupils reach the age of seven and 11, standards are above the national average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. In science, standards are broadly in line with the national average. At both key stages, pupils' achievements in relation to prior attainment are generally good in all aspects of English and mathematics. In science, although lower and average ability pupils achieve good standards in relation to prior attainment, many potentially high achieving pupils are capable of making better progress.

- 6 In English, pupils, at both key stages, make particularly good progress in speaking, listening and reading, and a substantial proportion are well on course to exceed the levels expected for their ages. Pupils in Year 6 talk and listen with confidence, and are able to adapt talk for various purposes. High attainers demonstrate a capacity to vary their vocabulary and expression to engage the listener. Pupils read confidently from an increasingly wide range of texts, and higher attainers convey a real love of reading as they talk enthusiastically about the key features, themes and characters from the books they have read. Although standards in writing are at least in line with the national expectations, they are not as good as those in other aspects of English. Many pupils in Year 6 work at levels which are above those expected for their age during fairly short writing activities in literacy lessons, but their progress in consolidating newly acquired skills is restricted by limited opportunities to engage in extended writing activities in English and other subjects.
- 7 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. Pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 have a good recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten and beyond. Most are able to order and compare numbers and show a good understanding of place value up to 100. High attaining pupils have a good grasp of place value and begin to solve problems using larger numbers. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their problem solving work. By the end of the key stage, pupils are quick to respond during rapid oral mental work, and use confidently a relevant range of strategies to arrive at the answers to problems. Most can explain their thinking clearly and use accurate mathematical language with growing confidence.
- 8 In science, pupils at both key stages make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge through a variety of relevant topics. Although pupils in some classes make good progress in the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject, many pupils, particularly high attainers, underachieve in this important aspect of the work. In addition, the progress of potentially high achieving pupils, at Key Stage 1, is currently restricted by the school's scheme of work, which makes insufficient provision for high ability pupils. The school has identified this issue as a priority to be addressed in the next cycle of planning.
- 9 In information and communication technology, standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below the national expectation. Throughout the school, pupils make particularly good progress in communicating and handling information. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils exchange information and communicate with each other in a variety of ways , including the confident use of electronic mail and the Internet.
- 10 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Good provision is made for all pupils, meeting their particular needs in terms of gender, race, background and ability. In all of these categories, pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

- 11 Pupils at both key stages work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age in all other subjects. Some produce work of particularly good quality in aspects of art and design and design and technology. In swimming, nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres or more before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 12 Standards of literacy and numeracy are generally above those expected for pupils' ages at the end of both key stages. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, at both key stages, is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- 13 The governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, which take full account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school is on course to achieve the targets set for the end of the current academic year.
- 14 Since the last inspection, the school has been able to maintain the good standards in English and mathematics described in the last inspection report. Very good progress has been made in raising standards in information and communication technology. Improvements are also apparent in the standards achieved in subjects outside the core areas of English, mathematics and science, particularly in art, design and technology and swimming. This reflects the increasing emphasis placed on providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Recent national test results in the core subjects indicate that the school is beginning to reverse the trend in the rate of improvement, which had fallen below that found nationally during the period between 1997 and 1999. The underachievement of high attaining pupils, contributes significantly towards the school's relatively weak performance in national tests for science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 15 The school has successfully maintained the high standards of behaviour which were apparent at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, the pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, in the dining room, in the playground and in assembly. It has not been necessary to exclude any pupil in the past year.
- 16 The pupils enjoy school. They approach their work and all school activities with real enthusiasm. The very good levels of attendance, apparent at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained. Attendance for the last reporting year was above the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence was below that found nationally. The pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

- 17 The pupils' very good attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. They contribute significantly to the standards they achieve and the quality of their learning. At both key stages, the pupils are attentive and hard working in lessons, responding with lively interest during class discussion and taking care with the presentation of their written work. The pupils sustain good concentration in English lessons and are quick to settle to the various activities which make up the literacy hour. Whether working with adult support or on their own, they show good levels of perseverance and an eagerness to succeed. They are keen and alert in mathematics, and respond positively to the brisk pace of the lessons and the wide range of tasks which constitute the numeracy hour. In practical lessons, such as science, art and design and design and technology, the pupils handle the tools and other equipment sensibly, mindful of their own and other people's safety. A very strong feature of the school is the way in which the pupils work collaboratively in groups and in pairs, always ready to share ideas and help each other. Respect for one another is a very notable quality in the pupils' learning across the whole curriculum. The pupils pay attention to what others are saying, showing patience and sensitivity when someone gives the wrong answer to a question or expresses a viewpoint which is different from their own. This is an important factor in promoting individuals' self esteem and giving them the confidence to try again.
- 18 Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils are well mannered, friendly and helpful. They have a clear understanding of how unkind words and actions can affect other people. At the pre-inspection meeting the parents and carers expressed their appreciation for the way in which older pupils show kindness and consideration for younger pupils and know their names. This was evident during the inspection, for example when older pupils were helping younger ones in the dining room.
- 19 An outstanding feature of the school is the way in which the pupils take responsibility for their own learning and for contributing to the school community. Key Stage 1 pupils help their teachers in a variety of ways, for example by tidying away resources at the end of the lesson. All the pupils take care of their school. Increasingly, as they grow older, the pupils demonstrate a capacity to lead and to take responsibility. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are given management roles, which involve responsibilities such as switching on the computers in the mornings, keeping the cloakroom areas neat and tidy and helping to care for the outdoor learning environment. The fact that they are referred to as managers, rather than monitors, helps to promote their self-esteem and sense of responsibility. The pupils are very eager to please. They carry out their duties with real enthusiasm and commitment. The school operates a house point system, and the Year 6 pupils are responsible for collating a weekly accumulative total for each house. House points are awarded for kindness, honesty, co-operation or any attitudes which reflect the way of Christ as described in the school's mission statement. The pupils carry out their tasks in a mature and efficient fashion, enabling the house system to operate efficiently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 20 The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good and often of high quality. During the inspection, all of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory. The teaching in 89 per cent of lessons observed was judged to be good or better, 45 per cent was very good or better and six per cent was excellent. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning.
- 21 The standard of teaching for children at the foundation stage, in the reception class, is generally of high quality. The highly effective co-operation between the class teacher, support and voluntary staff helps to create a strong sense of purpose. Teaching is particularly successful in promoting the children's personal and social development, helping them to settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Very good teaching is particularly effective in developing the children's speaking and listening skills. It enables children to contribute more confidently to discussions and take greater advantage of the range of learning opportunities provided for them.
- 22 The high standard of teaching at the foundation stage enables the great majority of children to meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Key Stage 1. They make good progress in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills and in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. They show a growing independence when working at computer work stations and confidence in using the keyboard and mouse to work through relevant computer programmes. Very good class management and lesson organisation contribute positively towards the children's good progress in the physical and creative areas of learning. The consistent emphasis placed on extending children's literacy and numeracy skills during work in all areas of learning is a very strong feature in lessons. Planning and assessment of work are completed very efficiently in all classes. The teaching makes good provision for all children. Care is taken to ensure that boys and girls are appropriately involved and extended by the work in all areas of learning. The very good use of support and voluntary staff helps pupils at all levels of ability to make good progress, and the teaching of children with special educational needs is of good quality throughout the foundation stage.
- 23 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally good and sometimes very good. Over 90 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and more than 25 per cent were very good. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is generally good, and often very good or better. Over 85 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better and half of those observed were in the very good to excellent category. In 15 per cent of lessons, the teaching was judged to be satisfactory.
- 24 The teaching of English is generally of good quality at both key stages and of high quality in Years 5 and 6. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. Lessons follow closely the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. These factors contribute greatly towards the good progress made by pupils throughout the school. Teachers are particularly effective in promoting very good progress by pupils at all levels of ability, in reading, and in developing their skills in speaking and listening. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of reading and their ability to listen carefully and express themselves confidently. Although teachers are also successful in enabling pupils to extend their skills in writing during literacy lessons, insufficient opportunities are created for them to consolidate and apply newly acquired skills in extended writing for different purposes.

- 25 The teaching of mathematics is generally good throughout both key stages, with some high quality teaching in classes at the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the expectations described in the National Numeracy Strategy. The content of work is usually well matched to the pupils' levels of attainment and a good balance is achieved between mental work, direct teaching, learning activities and the final plenary session. The care taken by teachers to set tasks at different levels, in order to cater for pupils of varying ability, including those with special educational needs, is a strong feature of teaching in the subject.
- 26 The teaching of science is generally good throughout the school and often very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which enables them to promote effectively the correct use of scientific vocabulary by the pupils. In the best lessons, high levels of challenge are consistently apparent. This is reflected in teachers' questioning which is always probing for ideas and understanding. However, at Key Stage 1, teachers are currently restricted by the school's scheme of work, which prevents them from challenging and extending fully, those pupils who are potentially high attainers. The school has recognised this as a priority for attention in the next cycle of school development planning. In some classes at both key stages, good opportunities are created for pupils to engage in investigative and experimental work, enabling pupils to develop good skills in making predictions, observing systematically, conducting fair tests, reaching conclusions, and recording their findings accurately in a variety of appropriate ways. However, this is not a consistent feature in the teaching. The analysis of pupils' work, completed previously, indicates that teachers generally create too few opportunities for pupils to engage in scientific enquiry. This restricts pupils' progress in this important aspect of science and contributes towards some underachievement, particularly by high attaining pupils.
- 27 The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is of good quality, and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The way in which teachers use ICT to enhance learning in many subjects is a very good feature in the pupils' learning. It enables pupils to recognise the value of information technology, and to use it very effectively to support their studies in many subjects. Teachers are increasingly confident and secure in their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is enabling them to set work which is appropriately challenging. Support and voluntary helpers are quick to offer help when difficulties arise. These are important factors in the good progress made by pupils at all levels of attainment.
- 28 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Highly effective co-operation between teachers, support staff and voluntary helpers is a strong feature which helps to promote good progress by pupils in this category. The care taken by teachers to provide work which is appropriately challenging, and clearly expressed targets in individual education plans, also help pupils to make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics.

- 29 In other subjects, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils, and opportunities are effectively taken to extend literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the work set by some teachers in science and design and technology requires accurate measurement. Work in history and geography often leads to discussion and research, which helps pupils to extend their communication skills as well as the reading skills required to find and access information. Work in art and design and technology, enables pupils to extend their imagination and creative skills. In physical education, the teaching of swimming is particularly effective, enabling nearly all pupils to achieve good standards during their time in the school.
- 30 The school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has remained at 100 per cent, but the proportion judged to be very good or better has increased from 3 per cent to 45 per cent. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on the teaching of English and mathematics. In science, the teaching observed was better than that reported by the last inspection. However, the need to ensure that potentially high attainers are fully extended in all classes, remains a priority for the school. Significant improvements in the guidance provided by schemes of work has resulted in better teaching in lessons outside the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Improved resources and inservice training have contributed to considerable improvement in the quality of teaching in information and communication technology.

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

- 31 The school provides a good curriculum, which is broad, balanced and relevant. It successfully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, pupils in some classes do not have enough opportunities to engage in scientific enquiry. The curriculum for the children at the foundation stage, is based appropriately on the nationally agreed programme for their learning. In the reception class, the programme is planned carefully to support the children's progress towards the early learning goals for each area of the curriculum. At Key Stage 1 and 2, the school has worked hard to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It also provides a good broad curriculum which presents the pupils with a range of interesting experiences that are generally matched appropriately to their needs.
- 32 Effective strategies are in place to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection the school, with the help of valuable assistance from parents, has improved provision for information and communication technology. This is particularly apparent in its use within the wider curriculum, where pupils have the opportunity to use the Internet and e-mail facilities at Key Stage 2.

- 33 The school organises a varied programme of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended by boys and girls. Staff members give of their own free time to provide a variety of aesthetic, creative, cultural, intellectual and sporting activities which enhance the statutory curriculum. In addition, Key Stage 2 pupils are able to take advantage of well-planned residential experiences which do much to promote their personal, social and emotional development. For example, Year 3 make an overnight visit to the Beeston Outdoor Education Centre. Year 5 are taken to the Kingswood residential centre, in the Midlands, and Year 6 spend three nights in the Lake District, studying Wordsworth, as part of their literacy work.
- 34 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their spiritual development is very successfully promoted throughout the school. Christian values pervade the school and Catholic traditions are upheld. The requirements for collective worship are met fully and whole school and class assemblies are reverent occasions in which the pupils are given opportunities for singing and prayer. The school's mission statement, written by the pupils, is prominently displayed in each classroom. This, and the policy statement for collective worship, emphasise the importance of spiritual development. These aims are effectively addressed through collective worship, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. For example, the work from a mathematics lesson, where pupils considered patterns, was used very effectively in an assembly to reflect upon the order and shape within the created world. Tasteful wall displays and the imaginative use of an attractive water feature near the school entrance, together with prayer areas within classrooms, help to create a supportive context for pupils' spiritual development. Support for a range of charitable organisations helps pupils to develop a caring attitude towards those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- 35 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. Pupils are well behaved, courteous and polite. The school's mission statement and code of conduct uphold high standards of care, respect and positive relationships. All the pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and to consider how their actions and behaviour might affect other pupils and adults in the school community. They are encouraged to accept responsibilities, and this helps to raise pupils' self-worth and enables them to contribute in a mature manner towards the school community. The pupils are presented with many opportunities which enable them to understand each other's point of view and to respect opinions which are different from their own. They are helped in many ways, particularly through assemblies and stories, to be aware of the needs of other people. The development of pupils' appreciation and concern for the environment is supported by educational visits.
- 36 Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal and social development. In lessons they work sensibly as individuals, in small groups and whole class situations.

- 37 The good quality of relationships within the school is a major factor which contributes to the pupils' social development. Such extra-curricular activities as gymnastics, netball, soccer, kwik cricket, rounders and choir contribute significantly to the development of the pupils' social skills. Pupils relate very well to the adults who work in or visit the school.
- 38 The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' cultural development. In subjects such as art, history, English and music the pupils develop a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions and the rich diversity of other cultures. For example, a recently observed world faith week helped to broaden the pupils' appreciation of other religions. In addition, Year 4 pupils visit the Jewish museum in Manchester. Educational visits and visits to the school by guest speakers do much to extend pupils' awareness of their own culture. For example, older pupils visit the Kingswood information and communication technology study centre in Wolverhampton and the Wordsworth memorial in Grasmere. Visits to the school by travelling theatre groups helps to foster older pupils' interest in the study of Shakespeare. Pupils also benefit from participation in school productions and concerts. In addition, high quality wall-displays in teaching areas and corridors, which celebrate a broad range of cultural activities, help to extend pupils' awareness of other peoples and their traditions.
- 39 The governing body's policy for equality of opportunity is implemented very successfully. Care is taken by staff to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or religion, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. For example, teachers' questions during the introduction to lessons, takes care to include and involve all pupils. Provision for pupils at different levels of ability is a strong feature. Teachers' planning provides appropriately challenging work, and the close co-operation between teachers, support staff and voluntary helpers, provides a good level of support during learning activities. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and religions through constructive texts, selected for literacy hour for example, and through studies in geography, history and art.
- 40 At both key stages, the school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Well-developed links with providers of pre-school education make an important contribution to early identification of and planning for the pupils in this category. Once identified, the co-ordinator works effectively with teachers to provide well-focused individual education plans, with realistic and achievable targets for the pupils who are on Stage 1 or above of the Code of Practice. These plans have been improved significantly since the last inspection, are of good quality and kept under regular review. Teachers use them in lessons to provide work at a suitable level for the pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' files are well maintained with thorough and regular updating of records of all aspects of work. Reviews of progress and meetings with parents are clearly documented. An effective range of support is provided through small teaching groups, withdrawal from some lessons and in-class support.

- 41 The school is highly successful in promoting the pupils' personal and social development. An effective health education programme is taught in all classes and includes appropriate attention to drug misuse and sex education. The pupils are given essential facts and the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions now and in the future.
- 42 The pupils' learning is also supported by well-organised outside visits, fieldwork and by specialist visiting speakers, such as the school nurse. In addition, strong parish links are well-established and serve to broaden the experiences offered to the pupils. The school has strong links with the secondary high school to which the Year 6 pupils transfer. A smooth system is in place for the transfer of relevant records and attainment data. Good induction procedures help pupils to feel confident about the transfer. For example, as part of the process, Year 6 pupils take part in a science project which is continued in Year 7 when they start their new school. They also have the opportunity to spend three days at the high school during the spring and summer terms prior to entry.
- 43 Since the last inspection, the improvement in curriculum guidance has had a positive effect on pupils' progress, particularly in subjects outside the core areas of English, mathematics and science. In addition, the pupils now receive a considerably improved curriculum in information and communication technology, which is used very effectively to support their learning in most subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 44 The school takes very good care of its pupils. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare, health and safety are defined clearly and implemented consistently. Since the last inspection, the school has documented its child protection procedures precisely with clear lines of responsibility for teachers and governors. The local education authority's manual of procedures is available to staff, and appropriate training ensures that teachers are kept up to date with changes in these arrangements. The school nurse continues to provide very strong support for the work of the school.
- 45 The school's mission statement underpins all of its policies and procedures. Every child and adult in the school community is valued and encouraged to grow to their full potential. Relationships and behaviour throughout the school are very good and the school has a happy and relaxed atmosphere which is conducive to enjoyment of school and good progress.
- 46 Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements in assessing pupils' progress. Procedures are now good and the results are used effectively to plan future work. The information which is gained from the formal systems now established for assessing and monitoring the attainment of the pupils in the core subjects, is analysed carefully and used effectively to improve provision and to identify areas for improvement. Good systems have been established for recording each pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy.

- 47 Improved assessment strategies in areas outside the core subjects enable teachers to plan work more effectively. In addition, improvements have been made to the school's marking policy, giving pupils a clearer idea of their strengths and areas for improvement. Written annual reports keep parents well informed. They indicate the pupils' strengths and identify areas for improvement.
- 48 Arrangements for monitoring and promoting the pupils' personal development are very good. A carefully planned and very detailed programme of study for personal and social education ensures good continuity and progression from reception to Year 6. The needs and priorities for each year group are clearly identified, and are met through collective worship, the curriculum, circle time, educational visits, play times, lunch times and preparing for secondary school. For example, reception children are introduced to the meaning and value of friendship. Year 1 pupils build on this and become aware of team spirit and learn to value other people's achievements. In Year 2, pupils learn what trust and reliability mean and why bullying is unacceptable. By Year 6, the pupils have learned how to deal with difficulties which arise between friends, and understand that there are many different patterns of friendship. Issues such as personal hygiene, healthy eating, personal safety and caring for the environment are covered in a very systematic way.
- 49 The school has a consistent and positive approach to behaviour management. The pupils themselves were involved in drawing up the 'golden rules' for good behaviour. They are rewarded consistently for hard work, caring attitudes and sensible behaviour. Rewards include written comments on pieces of work, house points, written or verbal communication with parents, a courtesy badge, and visit to headteacher or deputy headteacher for commendation. A well thought out system of sanctions is in place for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and parents are appropriately involved at an early stage, when pupils do not respond to sanctions or on the very rare occasions when serious misdemeanours give cause for concern.
- 50 Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school makes it clear to parents and pupils that regular attendance and punctuality are important and valued. Any unexplained absence is followed up promptly, wherever possible on the first day of absence. The school works in close partnership with the educational welfare service to ensure early and effective intervention when an individual's attendance record is causing concern.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 51 The school has established a good partnership with parents. Since the last inspection, a parental involvement policy, drawn up in consultation with parents, has been fully implemented. A copy of the policy statement, which includes a very comprehensive summary of ways in which parents and carers can become involved in their children's education, is given to all parents.

- 52 The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that parents and carers feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. They consider the school to be well led and managed and are of the view that teaching is good. Almost all the parents feel that the school expects its pupils to work hard and achieve of their best. The vast majority are happy with standards of behaviour and consider that their children are making good progress. They feel their children like school and are helped to become mature and responsible. The inspection findings support all these positive views. Some parents are of the view that their children do not receive the right amount of homework. Inspection evidence indicates that good use is made of homework to support learning, particularly in English and mathematics. A detailed homework policy has been developed since the last inspection and all parents receive a copy of the policy statement as part of the home school agreement. Some parents feel that the school does not keep them well informed in relation to their children's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the school's arrangements for reporting on pupils' progress are satisfactory, and similar to those in most other primary schools. A more significant minority of parents are of the opinion that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. The inspection finds the provision of extra curricular activities to be good, although most opportunities are for older pupils. The headteacher and governors are anxious to continue strengthening links with parents and will take the parents' and carers' views into account when reviewing current procedures.
- 53 The quality of the information provided for parents and carers by the school is good. Weekly newsletters help to keep parents fully informed about school events. Through the prospectus and the governing body's annual report, parents are kept well informed about the aims of the school and its performance. They have opportunities to discuss their children's progress formally with class teachers at the parents' evenings which are held in the autumn and summer terms. In addition, an open evening is held in the spring term, when parents are invited to view the pupils' work and receive their children's individual targets for literacy and numeracy. A meeting is arranged for new parents in the summer term, prior to their children's admission to reception. This meeting gives parents a good opportunity to meet the headteacher and staff. A useful booklet "Starting School" is provided for parents, and this is a good feature in the provision for children at the foundation stage. The quality of pupils' annual written reports has improved since the last inspection. They now give parents and carers clear and relevant information about their children's attainment and progress.
- 54 Parents make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning in school and at home. Many help in classrooms on a regular basis, and provide valuable help for small groups of pupils. Parent helpers are provided with very detailed lesson guidance notes which greatly enhance the support they give to the pupils. These state the aims and objectives of the lessons and make useful suggestions as to questions parent helpers might ask the pupils in relation to the set tasks.

- 55 All parents are now given advance information by class teachers, about the work planned for each term. This is a very good feature of home-school communications, and helps parents to support their children's learning in various topics by visits to places of interest, retrieving information from the Internet and borrowing books from the public library. Parents make a significant contribution to their children's reading development through effective use of the home-school reading scheme. The pupils' reading record books are a good means of communication, not only in terms of reading but also for other important day-to-day issues. The individual education plans for pupils on the register of special educational needs include a very helpful section on how parents and carers can support their children's learning.
- 56 The parents' appreciation of the school's very strong Christian ethos is reflected in their good support for school celebrations such as masses and assemblies. Once a month, the school leads a mass in the parish church to which all parents and carers are invited. This is always very much enjoyed by the pupils, the parents and the parishioners. The Parent Teacher Association contributes a great deal to the school, both financially and in terms of strengthening parish links and arranging for families and staff to meet socially. Since the last inspection, the association has made very generous donations which have helped to improve the level of resourcing in information and communication technology and financed improvements to the outdoor play area.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 57 The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide very effective leadership and work closely with the chair of governors to provide clear sense of direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by the whole staff and by members of the governing body.
- 58 The governing body's increasingly purposeful involvement in the work of the school is an important factor in the improvement in provision since the last inspection. The accommodation has been extended, without detracting from the attractive appearance of the school. In addition, significant improvements have been made to resources and facilities through the development of a new central library area and introduction of up to date information and communication technology facilities. Appropriate governing body committees have been established, and they work effectively and successfully to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are proud of their school, and make a strong contribution towards the positive ethos for learning which currently exists.
- 59 The mission statement and main aims are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. The school sets out to create a community where each child and adult is cherished, valued and enabled to grow in confidence to their full potential. It aims to provide a secure setting in which children are encouraged to live the gospel values and to reach levels of personal development, creative and academic achievement in line with their capabilities. These aims are consistently reflected in all of the school's work.
- 60 The good work of curriculum co-ordinators contributes strongly towards the good quality of teaching which now exists. Co-ordinators play an important part in producing and updating subject policies and schemes of work which provide effective guidance for teachers.

- 61 Good leadership provided by the co-ordinators for English and mathematics has been an important factor in the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy throughout the school. The school is now well placed to continue to improve by building on existing strengths and addressing weaknesses.
- 62 The school makes good provision for all pupils including those with special educational needs and those from different cultural backgrounds. The governing body ensures that the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are successfully addressed and that the school provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. These policies are implemented consistently by class teachers who ensure that all pupils are included and involved in all aspects of formal and extra-curricular activities.
- 63 Good procedures have been established for monitoring teaching and the curriculum. The school has focused in particular on the teaching of literacy and numeracy in recent years. The headteacher and relevant co-ordinators visit classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of curricular provision. Criteria for evaluation are shared with class teachers and feedback is provided following the lesson observations. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by the headteacher, senior management and relevant staff.
- 64 Responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of the curriculum are shared appropriately. Medium and short-term planning is monitored by relevant co-ordinators in order to check provision in their subjects. These arrangements help to ensure appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and are successful in maintaining a broad and relevant curriculum.
- 65 Well-conceived school development planning procedures enable the school to move steadily towards the targets identified. The consultation process ensures that the views of all staff and governors are considered before priorities for inclusion in the plan are agreed. Targets for improvements are listed clearly and appropriate information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. This includes deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible, and criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives. The effective use of the plan to inform spending ensures that money is used appropriately to address relevant educational priorities. The development plan is currently set out over a two-year period, but the governing body intends to extend this to three years, in order to support financial planning.
- 66 Staff appraisal is supported by annual personal interviews. The introduction of personal targets for teachers is envisaged in the next cycle of school development planning. Strong emphasis is placed on staff development. Teachers, support staff, governors and voluntary helpers are given opportunities to attend relevant in-service training. There are appropriate procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school.

- 67 All funding available to the school is used very effectively. Grants for specific purposes and donations from The Parent Teacher Association are used appropriately, and good use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. There are two main reasons for the relatively large amount of money carried forward from the last financial year. Firstly to meet the financial implications of the new accommodation extension, and secondly to maintain an acceptable level of support, avoiding the disruptive effect of change in income caused by fluctuation in the number of pupils on roll.
- 68 The governors' finance committee, headteacher and highly efficient school administrator co-operate very effectively to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Administrative staff are appropriately trained and make good use of information technology to support financial management. A very recent audit of finance by the local authority found the financial systems at the school to be operating effectively. Many of the audit's relatively minor recommendations have already been addressed and the remainder will be completed during the current academic year.
- 69 The increasing attention given to monitoring school performance is a good feature in the work of the governing body. The headteacher provides comprehensive information to enable governors and senior management to compare the school's performance with similar schools as well as the national picture. Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- 70 The governing body also seeks to secure best quality and value when purchasing resources and arranging for work to be completed. The successful completion of recent building extensions initiated by the headteacher and governors provides a good illustration of the application of best value principles. The quality of provision was improved and good value for money was secured.
- 71 The strategic management of all resources is very good. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are deployed very effectively.
- 72 Very good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation and school grounds. Recent extensions to the accommodation mean that classrooms are appropriately spacious. In addition, the central library and open areas provide valuable additional space. All areas of the curriculum are appropriately resourced. Since the last inspection, considerable improvements have been achieved in resourcing for information and communication technology.
- 73 Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the quality of the internal environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work which are of a very good standard. They are used very effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements, support their learning, and promote enquiry.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74 In order to raise standards and quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1) improve the standards achieved by high attaining pupils in science by:

a) adjusting the scheme of work for pupils at Key Stage 1, to ensure that high attaining pupils are appropriately challenged, so that those in Year 2 are able to work towards and achieve Level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1;

b) ensuring that all classes create appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in scientific enquiry through regular investigative and experimental work;

c) monitoring science teaching and learning closely to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment are challenged appropriately;

d) providing relevant inservice training for teachers who lack confidence in this aspect of science.

(Paragraph reference: 8, 26, 31, 102, 104, 106, 107)

In addition to the key issues above, the following recommendation arising from an area of relative weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

* Improve further the quality and standard of pupils' writing by creating more frequent opportunities for them to apply the skills acquired during literacy lessons in extended writing tasks for various purposes.

(Paragraph reference: 6, 24, 88)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	39	44	11	0	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)		242
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		33

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	29	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (97)	97 (97)	100 (94)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	29	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	94 (90)	91 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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	15	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (78)	84 (91)	87 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	10
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	25	28	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (78)	90 (87)	81 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	206
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	360,908
Total expenditure	341,748
Expenditure per pupil	1,492
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,404
Balance carried forward to next year	33,564

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	169
Number of questionnaires returned	99

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	40	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	42	4	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	50	16	2	3
The teaching is good.	51	41	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	46	19	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	35	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	29	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	45	14	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	42	20	3	7

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

75 The school makes good provision for children in the reception class. The quality of current planning and lesson preparation is good and demonstrates much improvement since the last inspection. Assessment information indicates that the children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that found nationally. The great majority, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time at the foundation stage.

76 The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent, and makes a significant contribution to the children's learning. As a consequence, the large majority of children are on course to attain, and a significant minority to exceed, the nationally agreed early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, in their mathematical development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development.

Personal, social and emotional development

77 The children thrive in the secure and stimulating learning environment created by their teachers. They are happy and confident, and demonstrate a willingness to take turns, share equipment when necessary and treat materials and resources with due care. The teaching successfully encourages the children to talk about their experiences in ways which value their contributions and enhance their self-esteem. For example, during a lesson on the past and present, they enjoyed explaining the things they could do now compared to that which their baby brothers and sisters were capable of doing. The teachers and support staff provide good role models which help the children to show respect for each other, to co-operate productively and to show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. A typical example occurred when one child at the computer station offered his seat to another child who had been waiting patiently. The organisation of accessible resources does much to encourage the children's independent learning. It allows them to take a measure of responsibility and to make choices in ways which promote effectively their personal development.

Communication, language and literacy

78 The children's speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively in the reception class. The teachers frame questions carefully and allow the children time to reply. They do so confidently, using their growing vocabulary to good effect. The children enjoy listening to stories. They remember the sequence of events in stories such as "The Gingerbread Man" and take delight in making predictions. They are proud of their personal reading bag which they are encouraged to take home regularly. Many children can read an increasing number of familiar words, and high attainers have a growing knowledge of letter sounds, which they use effectively to decode unfamiliar words. The teaching makes good use of the recommended lesson format of the National Literacy Strategy to introduce the children to an appropriate programme of phonics, word, sentence and text level work. Many of the children can already write their own names, using upper and lower case letters correctly. Some high attainers can communicate with growing accuracy in writing phrases and sentences. For example, one child wrote, "Goldilocks saw the house of the three bears and she walked inside".

- Mathematical development
- 79 The children respond well to very good quality of teaching which places much emphasis on developing their numeracy skills. They can count to 10 and beyond, and are able to sort and place objects in sets according to given criteria. They use basic comparative language correctly when looking at differences in real objects. When using three dimensional shapes, high attainers recognise properties such as corners, edges and faces. Many children recognise and write numbers as a natural part of their activities.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- 80 The children have a good knowledge of their environment and can talk with interest about themselves and their families. Well-planned learning opportunities help the children to develop an early awareness of chronology. For example, they placed items on a string time-line to show some of the events that have happened to them since they were babies. Well-organised small group tasks enabled them to consolidate their understanding of past, present and future. Parental help in the classroom is an important factor which supports the development of the children's skills in using the computer. They use the mouse confidently to control events on the screen. When using construction materials, the children have a good knowledge of how to join things together and show good imaginative ideas in making a variety of buildings for different purposes.
- Physical development
- 81 In aspects of their physical development the children demonstrate increasing control of their bodily movements. The teachers make good use of language to encourage their physical response. In the hall, the children find space effectively and respect the space of others. They are well co-ordinated and respond eagerly to the challenges set when jumping and landing safely in different ways. Inside the classroom, they show good physical control in a range of activities. Their manipulative skills are well developed, and they control the tools and equipment they use with growing skill and confidence.
- Creative development
- 82 In the creative area of their learning, the children can produce imaginative and thoughtful drawings, models, paintings and print work. They are taught to mix and use appropriate colours. When they use paint, they know how to load and use their brush correctly. Well planned experiences, often using the school environment, give the children the chance to observe the detail in the changing seasons. For example, after looking at autumn leaves, the children were able to produce paintings which reflected the complex autumn colours they had observed.
- 83 The children bring much imagination to their role-play activities and their learning is supported effectively by the expert intervention of adults. For example, in the hospital, a child playing the part of a doctor sought guidance from a pamphlet before instructing the child playing the role of the nurse to wheel round the treatment trolley. A diagnosis was made on the classroom assistant's injured hand. The prescribed treatment involved methodical bandaging and the advice to spend three weeks in Florida in order to recover properly.

- 84 In all aspects of children's learning, the close co-operation between the class teacher, support staff and parental helpers has a very positive impact on children's learning. A strong feature of the teaching in the reception class is the good use made of assessment opportunities to help inform future planning of the children's learning experiences. Early identification procedures are particularly helpful in informing the programme of support for the children with special educational needs.

ENGLISH

- 85 Standards in English for seven and 11 year olds, are above those found nationally and in line with the standards apparent at the time of the last inspection. Having entered the school with generally average attainment levels, pupils make good progress during their time in the school. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment, and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The great majority of pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet, and a substantial minority to exceed, the levels expected for their age. This is consistent with the Year 2000 national test results, which showed the school's performance to be above the average for all schools and in line with that of similar schools. During the three years up to 1999, the rate of improvement in test results was below that found nationally. The most recent results indicate that the school has been successful in reversing this trend. There is no significant variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender.
- 86 Pupils make good progress in extending their speaking and listening skills, and most achieve standards which are above average for their age at both key stages. The increasing skills of younger pupils are particularly apparent during literacy lessons, when they respond quickly to questions arising from the text being studied. They demonstrate an ability to explain their ideas clearly, using a growing vocabulary. Older pupils show an increasing sense of audience, varying the use of vocabulary and the amount of detail in their contributions to discussion. The ability of older pupils to talk in detail about their work is a very strong feature. In a Year 5 science lesson, for example, pupils talked enthusiastically about their work. They were able to provide detailed explanations about their investigations, making very good use of newly acquired vocabulary relating to their tasks. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, they are able to talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts, which include whole school assemblies, whole-class and group settings. Their ability to vary expression and vocabulary, in order to engage the interest of the listener, is a very strong feature in their learning, as is their willingness to pay close attention to what others say.

- 87 Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in reading. They benefit greatly from the good partnership between the school and their parents. Many parents provide valuable support by reading with their children at home and helping them to develop a love of books. In addition, the generous voluntary help in classrooms, provided by parents, is enabling teachers to increase the level of attention provided for pupils during group activities. This is proving to be particularly beneficial in improving reading standards in classes for younger pupils. The regular attention given to work on phonics, during literacy lessons, and additional periods timetabled specifically for reading, are contributing positively towards the good progress made by pupils up to the age of seven. Most have a good knowledge of phonics, and use appropriate strategies to help them read unfamiliar and increasingly challenging texts. High attainers read fluently, showing a good understanding of what they read, and talk enthusiastically about their preferences. Older pupils build successfully on this good start. Many read widely and demonstrate increasing fluency and accuracy. They read expressively a range of stories, plays and poems, and show growing competence in using the school library, the Internet and CD-ROM facilities to locate and access information. By the time they are eleven, many pupils achieve standards in reading which are well above those expected for their age. They read challenging novels of their own choice, and are able to discuss confidently the plot, characters and style of books. For example, one pupil explained how a book she had recently read had moved her to tears as she empathised with one of the characters in the story.
- 88 Pupils make generally good progress in writing and most achieve appropriate standards by the age of seven and 11. However, standards are not as high as those in speaking and listening and reading, and this is particularly apparent by the time pupils reach Year 6. Younger pupils benefit greatly from the literacy hour, and by the time they are seven, most are able to write in a sequence of sentences, making appropriate use of capital letters and full stops, and generally spelling simple words correctly. Some high attainers write with growing imagination, showing good skills in spelling more complex words. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, their writing is generally lively and thoughtful. Most use an appropriate range of punctuation with accuracy, and understand how to construct paragraphs. They benefit greatly from good quality teaching during the literacy hour, which challenges those at all levels of attainment. This enables pupils with special educational needs, as well as low, average and high attainers, to make consistently good progress in acquiring and understanding new skills in writing. This is reflected in the good quality of relatively short pieces of written work produced during literacy lessons. Some high attainers, use an increasingly adventurous vocabulary and make accurate use of complex sentences. However, the same quality is not so apparent when pupils produce more extended writing in work across the curriculum. Insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes. This prevents them from extending their skills further, by developing a capacity to sustain ideas and organise their writing in different ways to engage the reader.

- 89 The increasing use of information and communication technology is serving to stimulate pupils who enjoy seeing their work presented in good quality print. In addition, the use of the spell-check facility on word-processors is helping pupils to identify and improve weaknesses in their spelling. Although there are some good examples of extended writing skills being enhanced through work in other subjects, this is not a consistent feature. Standards of handwriting in work completed in English and other subjects are generally good, but there is some variation caused by the inconsistent implementation of the handwriting policy.
- 90 Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is generally good, and it is of high quality in Years 5 and 6. In 90 per cent of lessons observed, the teaching was at least good, 20 per cent was very good and 10 per cent excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Careful preparation helps teachers to be secure in their subject knowledge. This enables them to plan work which is appropriately challenging to extend pupils at all levels of attainment. In most classes, the purpose of the lesson is explained to the pupils, so that they understand what is expected of them. Literacy lessons are well organised, following the guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy. Texts are carefully selected and "big books" or overhead projectors are used effectively to display shared reading texts. Careful explanation and good questioning skills help to capture the pupils' interest. These are outstanding features in Years 5 and 6, where teachers convey a strong sense of their own enjoyment, and use humour very effectively to stimulate, encourage and introduce a sense of fun into pupils' learning. Teachers, support and voluntary staff work together very effectively. This is of particular benefit during the group work, because it secures a high level of interaction between pupils and adults, and consequently helps the pupils to work productively. Information and communication technology is used imaginatively to support learning, with tasks being tightly related to the main themes of lessons. Most teachers achieve an appropriate balance between whole-class, group and independent activities, with each element being organised effectively. However, in a small minority of lessons, there is not enough intervention in pupils' learning, which results in a lack of pace and productivity. Teachers have expectations of their pupils which are generally high. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, and is reflected in the teachers' use of a rich and wide vocabulary when explaining or questioning the pupils. This is promoting pupils' interest in new words, which they often incorporate into their writing about particular tasks. Class management is usually very good, contributing significantly towards the high standard of behaviour in nearly all lessons. Pupils listen attentively during whole-class text work and plenary sessions, and generally show very good attitudes towards their work. During all aspects of the work, teachers take care to include and involve all pupils. Their questioning takes care not to favour either gender, and activities set appropriate challenges for pupils at different levels of attainment.
- 91 Work in English is very well co-ordinated and meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to make good progress. Since the last inspection, the school has produced a scheme of work, based appropriately on the National Literacy Strategy, and procedures for assessing pupils' work have been improved. The new library is a valuable asset and work is currently being undertaken to introduce computer facilities to scan bar codes, as part of the system for monitoring the borrowing and return of books.

MATHEMATICS

- 92 Standards in mathematics are above those found nationally at both key stages, and in line with those reported by the last inspection. National test results reflect a similar picture, and show that standards are comparable with similar schools. During the three years up to 1999, the rate of improvement in mathematics was broadly in line with the national picture. There is no significant variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of ability, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
- 93 By Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of basic number work. They can read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond. Year 1 pupils make good use of a range of counting apparatus, and by Year 2 many have the confidence to move away from using apparatus to support their work. They understand how to recognise number sequences, including odd and even numbers, and can round two digit numbers up or down to the nearest 10. The good quality of the teaching motivates the pupils and presents them with varied and interesting tasks which challenge their thinking. For example, some of the high attaining pupils engaged in a counting task realised that repeated addition could be written as multiplication. Skilful intervention by the teacher also helped them to realise that subtraction is the inverse of addition and that halving is the inverse of doubling. They were able to use their knowledge to solve related problems. By the time they are seven, pupils have good recall of basic addition and subtraction facts to 10. High attainers are confident to 20 and demonstrate good mental recall. By Year 2, pupils have a good sense of the size of a number and where it fits into the number system, and they are beginning to grasp the concept of place value.
- 94 At Key Stage 2, pupils build successfully upon their earlier achievements because teachers' planning is effective in helping them to build progressively on previous learning. Pupils make increasing progress in understanding place value and demonstrate a high level of accuracy using the four rules of number. They demonstrate good skills in mental work, and are helped by the perceptive teaching, which encourages them to explain the strategies they use in solving problems, and to consider more than one approach. Teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 is often of high quality, promoting very good progress by the pupils. By the end of the key stage, the pupils have a good knowledge of negative numbers, and of the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages. They apply their increasing mathematical knowledge to solve a range of problems. For example, in Year 5, they were able to adjust accurately the new price of goods, taking into account the different percentage discounts, before calculating the cost of their purchases while keeping to a set budget.
- 95 Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in their work related to shape, space and measures. They know how to use related mathematical language because their teachers make a point of requiring precision when they question the pupils. The youngest pupils are able to use correct terminology when describing the properties of three and two dimensional shapes. As they progress, pupils are increasingly confident and proficient when using a range of measures. They know how to measure angles to the nearest degree and can classify correctly different types of angles. The oldest pupils know how to calculate the angle sum of triangles through calculation. In calculating perimeters and areas of basic shapes they use simple formulae correctly.

- 96 The teaching, at both key stages, takes account of the relevant programmes of study and provides the pupils with appropriate challenges. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are introduced to handling data and make good progress in collecting data, recording their results and interpreting their findings. They use an appropriate range of graphs, charts, diagrams and frequency tables.
- 97 Throughout the school pupils make good progress in using and applying their mathematical skills. They make commendable efforts to overcome minor difficulties that arise when they are trying to solve problems. They organise their work very well and usually present information and results in a clear and logical way.
- 98 The school is successful in using the lesson format described in the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental work is lively and is enjoyed by the pupils. Their learning is particularly helped by the very good quality of questioning, which establishes their level of understanding and probes their thinking. This helps them to achieve good overall standards. However, in some lessons not enough is made of the final plenary to extend pupils' mathematical thinking. Nevertheless, the teachers are successful in assisting the pupils to develop good attitudes towards mathematics. Lessons are interesting so that the pupils listen attentively, respond well to questioning and co-operate very well in group or paired work. The pupils are well managed and very well behaved.
- 99 Since the last inspection, the teaching has improved in mathematics because the work is now matched closely to the needs of pupils of different ability levels. Better use is made of assessment information to plan future work and teachers, pupils and their parents now work to agreed individual targets. Close co-operation between teachers, support staff and voluntary helpers has a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly that made by those with special educational needs.
- 100 Mathematics is well co-ordinated and monitored, and the programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. Information and communication technology now forms a regular part of the work in mathematics. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to the school's aims. It also helps to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through projects undertaken inside school and also through mathematical work completed during field studies in other locations.

SCIENCE

- 101 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are generally in line with those expected for the pupils' ages, and consistent with the standards reported by the previous inspection. The large majority of pupils at both key stages are on course to reach national standards, and a significant minority, at Key Stage 2, are likely to exceed these levels.

- 102 Throughout the school, most low and average ability pupils achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment. However, a significant number of high ability pupils are capable of achieving better standards. National test results for the last three years show the school's performance to be in line with the national average, but below that of similar schools. The rate of improvement in science during this same period is below the national trend. Inspection evidence indicates two main reasons for the underachievement of high attaining pupils. The scheme of work currently used at Key Stage 1 fails to extend high achievers, and the inconsistent emphasis placed on developing pupils skills in scientific enquiry restricts their progress in this important aspect of the work.
- 103 Younger pupils make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. In Year 1, for example, when pupils investigated light and shadows, most were able to identify various objects correctly from their shadows. High attaining pupils were able to explain how shadows are formed when objects block out the light. In Year 2, pupils investigating simple electrical circuits were able to explain that electricity travels from the battery to the bulb and some showed a good understanding of why the bulb fails to light when the circuit is broken.
- 104 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving standards which are at least in line with those expected for their age. However, the analysis of pupils' work and examination of long-term planning indicate that insufficient opportunities are created to extend high achievers and enable them to reach their potential. The school has recognised this weakness, and included it as a priority for attention in the school development plan.
- 105 Older pupils successfully extend their scientific knowledge. Many show a very good understanding of work covered during lessons on topics such as the function of the skeleton and muscles in the human body, and the study of the earth and beyond. Pupils in some classes extend significantly their skills in scientific enquiry through well-planned activities, such as the investigation of forces in Year 5. In this lesson, very good teaching enabled the pupils to plan their investigation carefully and organise appropriate resources. After making predictions, they carried out their experiments, observing carefully what happened. They recorded their findings neatly in an appropriate manner, noting how the outcomes of their experiments compared with their initial predictions.
- 106 The analysis of pupils' work completed previously, indicates appropriate coverage of most aspects of science. However, despite good investigative and experimental work in some classes, work in this area is not a consistent feature throughout the school. Too often insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. This means that many pupils, particularly high attainers, do not make sufficient progress in this aspect of the subject, and do not systematically develop the skills required to carry out experiments and investigations in a disciplined way.

- 107 The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was generally good, and often very good at Key Stage 2. All of the lessons at Key Stage 1 were good, and 75 per cent of Key Stage 2 lessons were very good. Lessons are generally planned effectively, and achieve a good balance between explanation by the teacher and opportunities for pupils to engage in well thought out activities. Careful preparation enables teachers to be secure in their knowledge and understanding of the various topics being studied. However, some are less confident in organising and managing investigative and experimental work. Class management is a very strong feature in most lessons, and this promotes good relationships and behaviour of a high standard. In the best lessons high calibre explanation and questioning by teachers captures pupils' interest and motivates them to work at a good pace. The very good organisation of resources is a particularly good feature in these lessons. In a good proportion of lessons, information and communication technology is used in a relevant way to support pupils' learning.
- 108 In all classes, teachers take care to make appropriate provision for all pupils in terms of gender. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and voluntary assistants, enabling them to make good progress in most lessons. Provision for high attainers is less consistent. Teachers at Key Stage 1 are limited by the school's scheme of work, which fails to extend high attaining pupils.
- 109 Science is effectively co-ordinated and the programme of work generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, systems for recording pupils' work and a scheme of work have been introduced. The school recognises the need to adjust the programme of work to provide tasks which are appropriately challenging at Key Stage 1.

ART AND DESIGN

- 110 The previous inspection reported that standards of attainment in art were barely average at Key Stage 1 but improved at Key Stage 2. Since then, the levels of attainment have improved significantly. They are now consistent with the expectations for pupils' age at both key stages, and sometimes exceed this level at Key Stage 2.
- 111 Throughout the school, pupils develop their skills using a range of media in two and three dimension. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to use a variety of materials and processes, drawing from things remembered or imagined as well as from direct experience; they explore texture, colour and pattern through painting, printing and the use of textiles.
- 112 At Key Stage 2, the younger pupils are able to explore and investigate visual and tactile qualities in materials and processes, designing and making images and artefacts for different purposes. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils were successfully engaged in developing two-dimensional images to three-dimensions by the addition of textured collage, developing skills of overlapping and overlaying and awareness of contrasts in texture and colour. Many pupils produced work of a high quality. Older Key Stage 2 pupils extend their skills by exploring the effects of light, colour, texture and tone on natural and man made objects. They develop their understanding of the work of established artists. For example, Year 6 pupils studied the work of L S Lowry, drawing on photographs from visits to the local area to stimulate ideas. They applied their knowledge of the artist's style to their own work, considering the effects of colour, shape and tone.

- 113 The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. This promotes a good response by pupils. At both key stages pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They express their ideas confidently, displaying increasing control of a variety of techniques. New skills are used imaginatively by the pupils who show a good ability to draw well on previous learning. The fact that teachers use the work of artists from the pupils' own and other cultures is important in promoting pupils' awareness of other traditions as well as their aesthetic development. The good co-operation between teachers and parental helpers helps to provide a good level of support. This is particularly valuable when pupils engage in activities. It ensures prompt intervention when difficulties arise, and helps to maintain a good rate of productivity. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has produced a comprehensive scheme of work. There is now consistency in the approach to the teaching of art at both key stages.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 114 By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with the standards expected nationally. In some aspects of the subject, towards the end of Key Stage 2, some of the pupils produce work of a particularly high quality. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 115 At Key Stage 1, sound teaching develops appropriately the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately in designing and making products and artefacts. For example, in one class, the pupils generated their own ideas in order to make a frame for a photograph of themselves. They were able to select, from a range of materials, those they felt would make the best finish, including stiff card and pasta shells. They used non-standard measuring devices, such as string, to work out the frame dimensions. The finished product demonstrated their growing skills in marking out, cutting, shaping and joining materials.
- 116 At Key Stage 2, the pupils respond keenly to good quality teaching which helps them to build progressively on their earlier skills. They develop increasing skills in communicating their ideas using well drawn and labelled plans, sketches and models. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a good subject knowledge. The pupils' learning is enhanced by the way in which they are introduced to new ideas and techniques. Teaching is particularly effective in helping the pupils to develop their skills in assembling and organising materials, and in evaluating the effectiveness of their designs and products. For example, in a Year 5 class, science was linked interestingly to work in design and technology, and some of the work produced was of high quality. The pupils were helped to see the connection between the principles of pneumatics when producing working models. They designed and made a model tank with the facility to propel an object from its gun.

- 117 The pupils enjoy learning new skills and work co-operatively and productively during group tasks. Lessons have clear objectives and are well managed. Appropriate emphasis is placed on health and safety. The pupils are well supervised and frequently helped by well-briefed adult helpers, who make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. The overall quality of teaching is good. Some of the teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2 is very good and introduces aspects of information and communication technology to good effect. For example, the Year 6 pupils were taught to use a spreadsheet to record their on-going costs in constructing a bridge to meet agreed criteria. All items used and the time spent generating their designs were costed from a given price list so that the final cost was below a million pounds. The pupils were able to alter figures and totals on their group's spreadsheet as they evaluated, tested and amended their models in order to seek improvements. Although the pupils work conscientiously to produce finished models and artefacts, the teaching in some classes does not always encourage the pupils to use simple finishing techniques to improve the appearance of their product.
- 118 Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and is working with the staff to see what modifications are needed to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The subject makes a good contribution towards the aims of the school. In addition, design and technology is effective in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension of the pupils' learning. They are helped to work with care and to show sensitivity towards the views and feelings of others. They are encouraged to reflect upon their own contributions and to share and work harmoniously together.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 119 Standards in both subjects and at both key stages are at least in line with the national expectations for pupils' ages, and most pupils make good progress in relation to prior attainment. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection, which reported that standards of attainment could be better in both subjects at both key stages.
- 120 In geography, the quality of teaching is generally very good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils are introduced to plans and maps of the school and its locality. Year 1 pupils are able to recognise and make observations about physical and human features and show an awareness of places beyond their own locality. In the early stages of Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils are able to use their knowledge of different types of settlement to describe and compare physical and human features of differing localities and to offer reasons for their observations, using appropriate geographical vocabulary. Older Key Stage 2 pupils display evidence of their developing understanding of geographical patterns in their studies of a range of places and environments at more than one scale and in different parts of the world. They demonstrate a growing understanding of how people can both improve and damage the environment. They use maps at a variety of scales and draw effectively on information from CD-ROMs and the Internet to support their work.

- 121 In history, pupils progressively develop their sense of chronology as they move through the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, they recognise ways in which their own lives are different from the lives of people in the past and are beginning to understand that there are reasons why people in the past acted as they did. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils are increasingly able to show knowledge and understanding of the main events, people and changes they study, and appreciate that aspects of the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways.
- 122 In both history and geography, field work and visits to places of interest in the locality and further afield make an important contribution to pupils' growing understanding of the nature of historical and geographical evidence. They use primary and secondary sources of evidence effectively, learning to evaluate sources of information and identify what is useful for particular tasks.
- 123 The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. The teaching successfully motivates the pupils, who work with enthusiasm and interest. This was well illustrated in a Year 5 history lesson where the teacher had arranged for two residents of the area to visit the class to talk about their experiences during the second world war. The pupils were very well prepared through their previous work on this period, they listened intently, asked relevant questions and recorded their own notes for future reference. All pupils were fully involved in the lesson, eager to ask questions and to understand the effects of war on the lives of ordinary people. This session also illustrates how the pupils' work in geography and history contributes to their moral, social and cultural awareness. Throughout the school, class management is very effective in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved in all aspects of the curriculum. This results in good relationships and very good behaviour.
- 124 Since the last inspection, new arrangements have been introduced for the co-ordination of work in history and geography, and schemes of work have been produced for both subjects. These provide a framework for a balanced curriculum in each subject, helping pupils to make more consistent progress. Teachers' planning and lesson preparation are now well supported by the new documentation, and the identification of more specific learning objectives has resulted in improvement in the monitoring and recording of pupils' progress and attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 125 Standards, at both key stages, are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection report. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school.
- 126 The youngest pupils know how to create and save text they generate. They understand how to print out their work and can recognise that text and pictures convey information. By Year 2, the pupils make further progress in adding graphics to their text. They are helped by precise teaching which demonstrates good subject knowledge and expertise. This was apparent, for example, when pupils in Year 2 were taught how to 'click and drag', to position an illustration of a lion to the exact location they required on their text page. The planning for all lessons includes the key language to be introduced. This helps the pupils to make good use of their developing skills to talk with precision and confidence when describing their experiences in using information and communication technology inside and outside school.

- 127 Older pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2, where well planned lessons enable them to build progressively upon their previous learning. They know how to retrieve and refine their work and can make adjustments to size and layout to enhance their presentation. They develop increasing skills in exchanging information. For example, one class communicated with a nearby class by sending them an e-mail which required a reply. The school has recently introduced the facility for accessing the Internet. This has the effect of providing the pupils with greater access to a wealth of information. The teachers make good use of this facility in their planning so that pupils are able to sharpen their independent research skills. For example, in a Year 6 class, investigating the geographical growth of their town, some of the pupils knew how to log-on to the Internet, frame their search questions with precision and retrieve the information they required on the local salt mines and the canals.
- 128 The variety of opportunities created by teachers for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills throughout work in other areas of the curriculum is a strong feature of the provision. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 6, the pupils devised and used a spreadsheet to calculate the overall running costs when working on a bridge design project. They were able to alter the number and length of columns when required, and knew how to amend cost totals when they needed to change their original ideas to keep within budget.
- 129 Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching and teacher expertise have improved greatly. Teachers now approach the subject confidently. The enthusiasm and skills of the co-ordinator have been significant in this respect. Highly effective co-ordination has resulted in improved planning and better teaching resources. A detailed scheme of work has been produced, which contains appropriate objectives for each year group. Assessment has improved greatly, and each pupil now has an individual disk which allows careful monitoring of progress in the subject. The content of the work now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

- 130 Standards at both key stages are broadly in line with the national expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in school.
- 131 Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in exploring how sounds are made. They are able to identify simple repeated patterns and follow musical instructions. For example, Year 1 pupils explore the pitch of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and make effective use of the variations in pitch to describe characters in stories such as 'The Three Bears'. They recognise that short keys on the glockenspiel represent high sounds and longer keys lower sounds. They sing well and are able to hold a melody line in such hymns as 'Follow Me'.

- 132 Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2. Younger pupils are able to compose a simple melody using high and low notes. They effectively progress from playing two high and two low notes to playing high and low using up to five notes. Pupils in Year 3 use hand movements effectively to indicate when the music is high and low and are able to draw their own graphic scores. Older pupils are able to name a range of instruments including tambourine, maracas, scraper and cymbals. They make significant progress in moving from a graphic score to one which uses letter names. High attaining pupils confidently use such technical words as rhythm, pitch, score and conductor. Fifteen pupils benefit from musical tuition, and five pupils have achieved Grade 1 and two pupils Grade 2 in the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations. Music makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development, particularly through the use of singing during collective worship.
- 133 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Planning is detailed and in line with National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and how pupils learn. Teaching is most effective when a variety of teaching methods are used. This adds pace to lessons and helps to sustain the pupils' interest. In some classes, however, pupils are not given enough time to perform and appraise their own contributions. A good range of instruments is used well to support pupils' learning. The pupils' work is effectively assessed as the lesson proceeds and the information is used to inform future curriculum planning.
- 134 The pupils are well motivated and enjoy music lessons. They work well as a class and in small group activities. They collaborate well, and relationships are mature and productive. The pupils handle the instruments and resources with care and they respect each other's contributions. Five visiting specialist teachers enhance the learning opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2.
- 135 Since the last inspection, the planning of the music curriculum has improved significantly, and this helps to develop the pupils' musical skills and knowledge in a systematic way. A music policy document is in place and the subject is well co-ordinated and managed. Extra-curricular music, such as participation in Youth 2000 at the Manchester Evening News Centre in Manchester, and concerts at Little Moreton Hall and Newton Court Eventide Home, serve to capture the pupils' interest and extend their skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 136 Standards achieved by pupils aged 7 and 11 are generally in line with the national expectations and consistent with standards apparent at the time of the last inspection. Some achieve particularly good standards in swimming. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment make generally good progress in all aspects of physical education.

- 137 In dance and gymnastics, pupils make good use of space to travel in different directions, varying their speed and the levels at which they work in response to teacher guidance and music. In gymnastics, they plan and perform different ways of balancing, using various parts of the body. As they progress, they link actions together to form sequences of movements. In dance, younger pupils show good imagination and bodily control. A class of mainly Year 1 pupils, for example, produced a response of high standard when pretending to be different types of fireworks exploding in various ways. They were able to vary their actions in response to music, and drew well on advice provided by their teacher to improve their performance. Older pupils build effectively on these earlier skills. They demonstrate increasing bodily control, working imaginatively and with growing confidence to develop more demanding and sophisticated routines.
- 138 In games, pupils develop their skills through practice and learn to apply them in small sided competitive games. Opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities enable many of the older pupils to enhance their skills. School teams for boys and girls compete in five-a-side football competitions against other schools. Players from the local Crewe Alexandra Football Club have visited to provide coaching. The girls compete in friendly netball matches, and teams are also entered in various rugby and cricket competitions. Younger pupils are sometimes able to take part in a lacrosse club at certain times during the year.
- 139 Athletics is taught in classes at Key Stage 2 during the summer term, and pupils have the opportunity to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during the annual residential visit to Kingswood in Staffordshire. The school meets the requirement to provide swimming lessons for pupils at Key Stage 2. Almost all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6, and a significant number of pupils achieve particularly good standards.
- 140 The quality of teaching is generally good. Lesson planning and organisation generally achieve a good balance between teacher direction and demonstration and activities which present an appropriate challenge to the pupils. In some gymnastics lessons, however, insufficient use is made of apparatus to support pupils' learning. Class management is generally good, promoting good behaviour and enabling pupils to develop good attitudes towards the subject. Pupils respond enthusiastically in all aspects of physical education. They change into appropriate dress and move to and from the hall without fuss. They show a good ability to plan and perform, particularly in dance, and are able to improve their performance through evaluation. Teaching makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and ensures that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or background, are appropriately included in all aspects of the programme of work.
- 141 The subject is effectively co-ordinated, and generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Progress since the last inspection has been generally satisfactory, although increasing the use of apparatus in gymnastics remains a priority to be addressed. Work to improve provision in the subject was delayed by the relaxation of requirements in subjects including physical education, in order to accommodate the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The school is currently in the first term of implementing the requirements of the revised National Curriculum.