

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gosport

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116394

Headteacher: Margaret Fraher

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 November 2000

Inspection number: 224758

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

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Joy Godbold

Date of previous inspection: 13 January 1997

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		Special educational needs	Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Provision for personal development
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			Care, guidance and welfare
			Partnership with parents
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		English	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves five parishes, one of which is a naval chaplaincy. Pupils come from this extensive catchment area of mixed social and private housing and more than a third of pupils are from families where a parent is employed as services personnel. There are 244 girls and boys on roll between the ages of four and eleven, and the school is of average size. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals and most pupils come from homes that in social and economic terms reflect the national average, although towards the lower end of that range. In the main, children join the school aged four with attainment that is lower than normally expected at that age. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is above average, but the proportion of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is lower than average. A significantly higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at Reception or in Year 6. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds and at the time of the inspection there were no pupils learning English as an additional language.

The published mission of the school is to *'strive to be a joyful community centred on Christ where we grow and learn together. We will be united in Christ and support each other through prayer, love and mutual respect'*. Current improvement planning has the following priorities: achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark; improving the learning of pupils by better teaching and more effective grouping of pupils; improving provision for information and communication technology; increasing the pupils' expectations of the quality of their work and improving the management of play-times.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and standards continue to improve. Strong values and carefully selected aims provide clear direction and purpose to its life and work. The headteacher provides strong and expert leadership and she is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, governors and staff. Staff and governors are determined to achieve even higher standards, but realise there is work still to be done. Teaching is good overall. Pupils make an excellent start at the Foundation Stage, and continue to make good progress as they move through the school. By the time pupils are eleven, they attain standards that meet and often exceed levels expected at that age. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Strong leadership of the headteacher in raising standards, very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and governors
- Good provision for personal development, especially the very good provision for spiritual and moral development
- Very good assessment procedures that effectively guide good curriculum management, and very helpful marking
- Teaching overall, and especially at the Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2
- Very good specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Very expert and supportive work of administration staff

What could be improved

- Ensuring that teaching in all classes is equally effective
- Ensuring that relationships with all parents are equally effective
- Provision for information and communication technology

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

This is an effective school with the capacity and determination to become a very effective school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Under the leadership of the current headteacher, the school has become committed to improvement and consequently improvement since the previous inspection (January 1997) has been good. This secure foundation means the school is well placed to improve standards further. Attainment has improved steadily as the result of improved teaching. Teaching has become better because pupils are grouped more effectively, and planning is now good and guided by very good assessment. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school lead to productive staff development. The improved teaching has increased the progress made by pupils of all levels of ability and has significantly improved the quality and presentation of their work. The provision for information and communication technology has developed, but there has been insufficient improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Attainment as shown in national tests in all three subjects has steadily improved since the previous inspection. Attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 shows that these higher standards are being maintained and, overall, remain higher than the national average. In the table above, attainment is compared with schools with similar levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, and grades are a measure of progress made by the time pupils are eleven. Progress of pupils in Year 6 last summer was above the average for similar schools in English, well above this average in science and in line in mathematics. In the main, girls and boys make equally good progress, as do pupils at differing levels of ability. Very able pupils do well, but not quite well enough. The school's targets for future years are appropriate.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school and they work hard. They have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good, and pupils are very considerate of the feelings and values of others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop well and become caring, responsible, reflective and mature young people. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults are good.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

Pupils respond well to the ethos of the school. They are expected to care for each other, work hard and do their best, and they do. They show initiative and self-discipline, and willingly accept responsibility. There is a marked absence of bullying or threatening behaviour, and pupils go out of their way to care for others. There is room for development of more opportunities for pupils to learn to manage and evaluate their own work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good and this produces learning that is rich in variety and depth. Almost all teaching is at least sound, more than two thirds is good or better, and a third very good or excellent. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, are well supported and make at least sound, and usually good progress. However, teaching is not equally good in all years. When teaching is most effective, lessons have clear and challenging learning objectives and the pace of learning is rapid and secure. When teaching is sound, planning for lessons confuses objectives to be met with content to be covered and, consequently, the work does not match the needs of each level of ability equally well. This weakness holds back the learning of all pupils, but especially that of the most able. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, as are other subjects. However, in some lessons teachers give insufficient priority to promoting speaking and listening skills, and helping pupils manage and evaluate their own learning.

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils join the school with attainment that is lower than average and by the time they are eleven their attainment is broadly above average.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and provides well for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The support provided by specialist teachers and the learning support assistant is very good. Class teachers and teachers' assistants offer sound support in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is good, with very good provision for spiritual and moral development, good provision for social development and very sound provision for cultural development. This provision is enriched and empowered by the Christian ethos and mission of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The progress and personal development of each pupil is assessed and tracked with very great care, and this leads to positive guidance and support. Care for the welfare of pupils is good.

The curriculum is very well managed, and further enriched by varied visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. School productions and high quality assemblies add to this enrichment, and effective use of homework extends the opportunities for pupils to learn. However, the range of clubs at lunchtime and after school is limited. Provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory in some areas and does not meet statutory requirements in full; the school has good plans for improvement. Governors take care for the health and safety of staff and pupils very seriously, but realise that they would benefit from advice from outside experts. In the main, there are good relationships between the school and families and a sound working partnership. However, a few parents feel the partnership is not as good and mutually responsive as it could be. Inspectors agree and identify development in this aspect of the life and work of the school as an area for further improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong, clear and expert leadership and management, and she is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. Subject managers perform their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is extremely well led, and has become a very effective support and source of direction for the school. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Performance is monitored systematically and evaluated very rigorously by senior management and governors, and this leads to improvement. Self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement is increasingly becoming part of the practice of all staff.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used prudently, effectively and efficiently.

There are adequate qualified staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum and resources for learning are, in the main, of good quality and sufficient range and quantity. The buildings and green areas support good learning. Leadership and management are strengths of the school, and benefit from advice from others, for example local education authority advisors. Managers learn by comparing the school's performance with best practice elsewhere, and are willing to challenge present ways of working in their search for new and better ways.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress • The pupils behave well and become more mature • The teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard • They are kept well-informed and find it easy to raise concerns with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of the school • Homework • The partnership between home and school • The range of activities outside lessons • The consistency of teaching.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views of parents. They find that the school is well led and managed and that homework is used effectively. However, their evidence shows that the partnership with some parents requires improvement and that teaching needs to become more consistently effective. A wide range of activities outside lessons significantly enriches the pupils' learning, but the range of clubs after school and at lunchtime is very limited.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children join the school aged four their attainment is mostly below the national average. This is particularly true of their literacy, numeracy, and speaking and listening skills. Their personal and social skills are not well developed. They make a very good start at the Foundation Stage. By the end of this stage, although the attainment of most children is in line with attainment expected aged five, a small but significant number do not reach this standard. By the time pupils are seven, their attainment overall matches standards expected at that age, although few exceed this standard. By the time pupils are eleven, their attainment overall matches standards expected at that age, and at least a third exceed this standard. This shows that most pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
2. National test and assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science show an improving trend since the previous inspection. In 2000, results were well above the national average in science, above in reading, and in line for writing and mathematics. When compared with the average for similar schools results were well above the average standards for these schools in science, above in reading, in-line in writing but below average in mathematics.
3. National test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show a similar improving trend. In 2000, results were above the national average in English, about average in mathematics and well above average in science. Compared with similar schools, the same trends exist.
4. Attainment overall of current pupils reflects these higher standards. Taking the picture as a whole, these results show that achievement is good and that this is an effective school. Standards are rising and are well set to improve further.
5. At Key Stage 1, attainment of current pupils is above national expectations in English and physical education, and in line in mathematics and science. Attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history and music also meets national expectations. However, standards are below national expectations in information and communication technology. With the exception of information and communication technology these standards overall match the average for similar schools. This means that pupils make at least sound progress in all subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology where progress is unsatisfactory. Progress is best in reading and writing, but progress in speaking and listening tends to be slower, and this hinders learning in all subjects.
6. Although girls and boys of varying ability tend to make similar progress relative to their prior attainment, the more and less able tend to make sound rather than good progress. With the most able this is because some of the work is too easy, but when the work is very demanding they rise to the challenge. With the less able, because some lessons do not have clear learning objectives matched to their learning needs, their work loses point and purpose. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by specialist staff. However, in mainstream classes, the support for these pupils is sometimes not as effective because classroom assistants are not used fully effectively throughout a lesson. Where progress overall is slowest, teachers confuse

learning objectives with content to be covered, and in these lessons pupils think about completing a task rather than what they need to learn.

7. At Key Stage 2, attainment in English, mathematics, science, history and music is above national expectations, and in art, design and technology, geography, and physical education it matches these expectations. Again, attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations. Progress in all subjects is at least sound, with the exception of information and communication technology. However, progress at lower Key Stage 2 tends to be sound, whereas at upper Key Stage 2 it tends to be good and often very good. This relates directly to the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported at this key stage and most make good progress in line with challenging individual education plans. Pupils of high and low ability make good progress at the upper end of the key stage but significantly slower progress at the lower end. This relates to the better focusing on their needs in the upper years. Girls and boys of average ability make good progress as they move through the key stage.
8. At both key stages, the speed of progress relates to the quality of teaching, and in particular to clarity of objectives and challenge for each level of ability. However, a further factor is speaking and listening. There have been considerable improvements in literacy and numeracy, and these rising standards in reading, writing, computation and ability to use number have had a very positive impact on standards overall. However, speaking and listening are key weaknesses when children join the school, and these skills do not increase sufficiently unless the teachers use effective strategies to increase these skills. When they do, progress is very rapid and attainment high. Current targets for improved attainment are appropriate.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. When they join the reception class, children benefit from the school's well-structured induction arrangements. These enable them to settle quickly so that they are soon familiar with the school's routines and procedures, and they start to make good progress in their work and play. They feel safe and secure in their new surroundings and greet visitors openly and warmly.
10. Pupils' attitudes in all year groups are positive. Pupils like their lessons and say they particularly enjoy investigative work in a variety of subjects and the exercise they get in physical education lessons. With a few exceptions, they concentrate and pay attention well throughout most lessons. They value the contribution of their friends in feedback and plenary sessions, listen attentively and are determined to do their best.
11. Standards of behaviour are generally good in all classes throughout the school day and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Only when the content of lessons is mundane and unexciting or, on occasions, when some teachers find behaviour management difficult to effect, do a small number of pupils indulge in what is basically silly behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the school's history and this excellent situation continues. This is in part due to the way the school helps parents play a role in school when their child's behaviour poses significant problems.
12. Behaviour in the playground is good. The school is fortunate to have an attractive green-field site with wooded areas for pupils to enjoy stimulating and imaginative play. Pupils play and socialise well, either making up their own games or using the equipment available for them. No bullying was observed during the inspection and

pupils state firmly that this does not happen in their school and should it ever occur then staff would deal it with instantly and effectively.

13. Pupils' personal development in all year groups is good. They carry out a variety of responsible tasks around the school, for example taking registers from classrooms to the office, older pupils looking after younger ones and Year 6 pupils acting as library monitors. The school council consists of two elected representatives from each class and meets at least once a term. Discussion at council meetings is varied and mature and gives pupils a clear insight into representative and democratic processes as they develop their understanding of true citizenship in the school and outside community. Bearing in mind the maturity of the majority of pupils at St Mary's and their good behaviour, the school could provide more sophisticated responsibilities and opportunities to use initiative than at present.
14. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and adults are good, and based on mutual respect, trust, and the school's Christian ethos. Pupils value the friendships they make and are respectful of all adults in the school. They are polite to visitors and keen to talk about their school, their families and their interests. Their developing values lead them to care about and for those less fortunate than themselves.
15. Pupils' positive attitudes, generally good behaviour, good standards of personal development and warm relationships make a strong contribution to their attainment and continuing progress. In some lessons, too little opportunity is given for pupils to evaluate and plan their own learning, and this misses opportunities to build on the pupils' positive and mature attitudes. Similarly, pupils are keen to join in with activities on offer, but the very limited range of outside-lesson clubs restricts this important opportunity to develop.
16. The school achieves a rate of attendance that is good and above the national average for primary schools. Individual rates of attendance are frequently very high and illustrate pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm for coming to school. Punctuality is very good and there are very few 'late' entries in the attendance registers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is good with many very good features, and has much improved since the previous inspection. Almost all teaching is at least sound and almost two thirds is good or better. A third is very good or excellent. However, in the longer term, the positive impact of this teaching is restricted by varying quality between years, and to some extent by varying quality between teachers taking the same class. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is outstanding, and is almost always very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, teaching is always sound, usually good and often very good. Teaching at the lower end of Key Stage 2 is not as effective. Only a quarter of teaching is good, and it is seldom very good or excellent. Teaching in Year 5 is good, with almost a third of teaching being very good or excellent. In Year 6, the teaching is very good overall, almost always at least good, and in nearly half of lessons very good or excellent. The specialised teaching for pupils with special educational needs is consistently very good.
18. The previous work of pupils shows that teaching overall is usually of this high quality. Some parents considered that teaching is much better in some years than others, and that, when two teachers share the teaching of one class, one teacher is more effective than the other. This is the case, but the difference is between consistently sound teaching and consistently good or very good teaching.

19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is usually good and is improving. Teachers do not limit this teaching simply to literacy and numeracy lessons, but seek out effective ways to improve the skills through other subjects. The school's work towards achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark is playing an increasing role in improvement, but has yet to be fully understood by all staff.
20. The good or very good teaching helps pupils remain very focused on their learning. They enjoy the work, find it interesting and relevant, and work very hard to do their best. The school has very successfully introduced ways of improving the quality of pupils' work, setting clear standards to be achieved, and good work is very positively celebrated through displays and assemblies.
21. The best teaching is very carefully planned. There is a clear distinction between focused and challenging skills to be learned and the tasks through which they will be learned. Learning objectives and learning tasks are each matched very precisely to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities, based upon very frequent assessment and accurate tracking of each pupil's progress. The pace and energy of the lessons transmit the enthusiasm of the teacher to the pupils, and the pupils respond with equal enthusiasm and joy in achievement. The teachers use language that stimulates the pupils to think for themselves and to see ways of improving their work. These teachers pose such questions as 'I wonder why?', 'Can we think of a better way?', 'Is that the best answer we can come up with?' much more often than simply describing the correct solution. Consequently, the pupils' speaking and listening skills improve and operate at a much higher level. A feature of these lessons is the way the final full-class session helps both teacher and pupils check what has been learned and whether it has been learned securely. The most effective teachers evaluate their teaching in each lesson, and this leads to adaptation and improvement in the next lesson. In these very effective lessons pupils of all levels of ability make rapid progress, and the learning is rich in variety and depth.
22. When teaching is sound rather than good, the pupils' concentration tends to wander and behaviour deteriorates. The less effective teaching often does not make a clear distinction between what needs to be learned and the tasks that need completing. For this reason, teaching and also learning lose point and purpose, and the motivation of the pupils reduces. Similarly, the planning of the lesson is sometimes not well matched to the various levels of ability and, consequently, the most able pupils become bored because they find the work is too easy, and the least able find some of the work too difficult. In the less effective lessons, teachers tend to explain the content clearly but do not encourage pupils to think for themselves or evaluate their own work. Pupils, especially the very able, make progress in these lessons that is only satisfactory.
23. In all teaching, whether good or only sound, there are significant strengths. Overall, teachers mark work extremely well, adding helpful comments that enable pupils to understand why they succeed or meet problems, and what they need to learn next. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils, are warm and openly value the efforts and contributions of others. This comes from an active commitment to helping all pupils to succeed. Lessons are business-like, and pupils gain the skills and habits that underpin effective learning.
24. Teaching overall is good and learning overall is usually at least sound and often good. That the learning is not quite as good as the teaching would appear to warrant is because certain areas for development remain, over and above ensuring that teaching

is equally effective in all classes. Firstly, children join the school with low standards in speaking and listening. The school has yet to develop a clear policy for promoting speaking and listening skills and, therefore, only the most effective teachers build in ways to promote these skills as a component in every lesson. Secondly, classroom assistants are not utilised equally well in all classes. When they make a major contribution to the pupils' learning, the teacher and assistant plan the lessons together, they find ways to work as a teaching team during full class sessions, and they evaluate each lesson together, often using assessment information gathered by the assistant. Thirdly, the specialised teaching and management of pupils with special educational needs, pupils of very high ability and those with problems with behaviour, although very good in their various parts, have yet to be brought together as a fully effective programme and to be fully integrated with the day-by-day class teaching. Fourthly, planning for helping pupils to learn independently, evaluate their own work, record their achievements and set their own plans for improvement, is at an early stage of development, and this misses opportunities for pupils to generate self-motivation.

25. A major factor in the improved standards of teaching and, equally, a reason why standards are likely to continue to improve, is the very good management of staff development. This leads to confident teaching. The headteacher and, increasingly, other staff observe teaching and give clear guidance on what works and what requires improvement. The headteacher, and there are plans for helping subject managers to do the same, works alongside teachers to increase their skills and the effectiveness of their teaching. Overall, staff have worked hard and successfully to improve the quality of planning and assessment, the way pupils are grouped for learning and the effective use of homework; these factors have made major contributions to the improved effectiveness of teaching and, therefore, learning overall. In the main, teaching is of equally effective in all subjects.

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

26. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and relevant to the pupils' present and future lives. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those for religious education. It reflects effectively the stated aims, values and mission statement of the school. It provides an interesting and stimulating programme for pupils, which promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development. The school has a suitably designed whole-school curriculum framework, which takes account of the 20 per cent non-National Curriculum time in an appropriate way, with a particular and developing emphasis on personal, social, and health education. In most classes this is enhanced by skilful use of 'circle time'. The curriculum is organised and planned very effectively and this planning contributes very positively to the quality of learning. The governing body is well informed and very supportive of all aspects of curriculum development at the school. Individual governors have recently taken on responsibility for monitoring separate subjects.
27. Particular emphasis is given to English and mathematics. The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Both have been successfully initiated with good effect and are operating well to the obvious benefit of the pupils, and these strategies are beginning to have a positive effect on standards in both these subjects. All other subjects have reduced, but suitable, time allocations. The governors' policy for sex education states that it is taught as part of personal, social and health education, religious education and science, and this policy is effectively implemented. Health and drugs education is covered appropriately as part

of the school's personal, social and science programmes and through especially planned health promotions. The school is beginning to develop such areas as citizenship. The length of the teaching week at both key stages is in line with the Department for Education and Employment's recommended time.

28. Work is planned as separate subjects for the purpose of teaching but, where appropriate, there are effective links with other subjects through topic themes. This results in a good sense of meaning, purpose and relevance in the programmes of work. Within subjects there is generally an appropriate balance of aspects of the programmes of study, although some aspects of the programme of study for information and communication technology are insufficiently developed. In class lessons pupils are usually grouped by ability for English and mathematics, and this is also the case in some other subjects. However, teachers sometimes do not sufficiently plan work at different levels in such subjects as history, and consequently the most able find the work too easy and the least able find it too difficult. Staff take care to ensure appropriate curricular coverage for the different age groups in classes that contain two year groups, and this is a strength of the planning; for example, the school guarantees that each age group takes part in the appropriate visits for the topics they study. This shows significant improvement since the previous inspection. Most of the work is well matched to pupils' abilities, and pupils generally have equal access to the curriculum, although pupils of the highest attainment are insufficiently challenged during some lessons, particularly in mathematics and science.
29. All subjects have supportive policy statements and schemes of work; this represents a notable improvement since the previous inspection. They are helpful in assisting planning and provide a useful framework for ensuring steady progression and continuity in learning. These frameworks are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The medium-term plans are constructed to give a clear outline of subject coverage. The short-term plans are generally helpful and well completed but in some there is confusion between skills to be learned and content to be covered. They do not always show how the high attaining pupils will be extended or the least able suitably supported. Subject managers provide positive support and guidance but most have a limited role in the direct in-class monitoring of their subjects throughout the school.
30. Extra-curricular activities in the form of clubs are very limited; this concerns some of the parents. This term the school runs a netball and football club and there are competitive matches with local schools. The clubs that do take place are well attended, enhancing and extending the curriculum, and give pupils the opportunity to develop their social and sporting skills. A good number of visitors, including an Indian dance teacher, the fire service, and a theatre group, regularly come into school, extending and enriching the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum is much improved by the use of the local environment and outside visits to a wide range of places and events, including different cultural visits. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in an annual residential visit and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development. The performing arts have a positive impact on learning, and the school arranges full school productions that involve many pupils. These outside-lesson activities have a positive and beneficial effect on the quality of the curriculum provided.
31. The school's programme of homework is good and is followed up by work in lessons. The school has provided parents with information and guidance on the homework policy. In the early years, it mainly emphasises language development but also includes other subjects and it carefully takes account of the needs of individual pupils.

Homework is often used productively as a stimulus to the start of lessons. The manner in which teachers use homework to enrich the pupils' learning is much improved since the previous inspection. All pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education.

32. The school has a clear policy statement towards equal opportunities and in most respects, through practice and implementation, the school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school systematically monitors the performance of boys and girls, which shows no significant differences, and sports clubs are open to both. All teachers are very aware of the need to provide an appropriate education for all but there is inconsistency in their provision for the full range of abilities and needs of the pupils. All teaching and non-teaching staff offer excellent role models for equal opportunities and pupils reflect this in the way they support and encourage each other.
33. The school is committed to including all pupils in the curriculum and what it has to offer. Staff achieve this by active promotion of the school's values, and also by skilled implementation of procedures for the support of pupils with special educational needs, pupils of higher ability and those with behavioural difficulties. At present, there are insufficient procedures for the support of pupils with especial gifts and talents, for example in music.
34. Where possible, the school positively involves the wider community, which enhances pupils' learning and broadens their experience. At the time of the inspection, pupils were rehearsing for a major concert in partnership with other primary and secondary schools, and were gaining greatly from the experience. The school has regular visits from representatives of the parish church to take assemblies, and a governor has spoken to pupils about the Jewish faith. The school's liaison police officer contributes with good effect to the schools' health and safety education programme. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are particularly well informed and involved in their children's learning, although very occasionally communication breaks down. Links with other local primary schools and the secondary schools are productive and helpful. There are limited links with local business or industry, and this remains an area for further development.

Provision for personal development

35. The provision overall is good with many very good features. This high quality derives from the school's strong values and challenging Christian mission that enrich every aspect of the school's life and work. Staff provide fine examples for pupils to follow and seek to emulate, and the strong ethos of the school effectively promotes individual and corporate responsibility. The high standards found by the previous inspection continue and have been further developed.
36. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Essentially this is based upon the Christian life of the school. Assemblies are very effective at promoting a deeply reflective attitude to life. Along with the prayer life of the school, for example the prayers as a full school at the beginning of the week and class prayers during each day, pupils are led to consider the meanings, purposes and responsibilities in their own lives. Through liturgy they learn to enjoy corporate reflection and intercession, and through free prayer concern for everyday life, alone and with others. Through skilled introduction to symbols and signs, for example the cross, candles and water at baptism, and special places such as the intercession area in the hall and the local church, pupils are introduced to a belief and faith in a loving and creator God. The

school very effectively meets statutory requirements for collective worship. These foundations are built upon with pupils through expressive poetry, art and music, and highly reflective writing in, for example, religious education. Wider studies in science and geography introduce the pupils to feelings of awe and wonder, and history helps pupils understand the parts faith and belief play in human lives.

37. Provision for moral development is also very good. From the Foundation Stage, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and, more significantly, why actions are right or wrong. Most classes have agreed codes of conduct, and pupils say they consider the school's rules to be sensible and just. This overall approach is framed within clear consideration of the impact of the pupils' conduct on others, and firm but loving expectations of behaviour. When pupils do right it is recognised and celebrated, and when they do wrong, they are held to account and helped to put matters right. As pupils get older, they are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and guided perceptively as to how to exercise that responsibility.
38. Provision for social development is good. Staff help pupils understand how quality of life can be maintained for all within a caring and reflective community, in this case through the social way in which each class and the school as a whole, function. The ethos of the school is one of a purposeful and achieving community. Pupils are given many parts to play in this community from helping count those pupils present in a Year 1 class to being a member of the school council. The school productions and the residential visits made by older pupils have a very positive impact on pupils' social learning. Pupils are given opportunities to take greater social responsibility as they mature. Visits to other places and visitors to the school, such as the community police officer, help pupils understand the wider society. Rules, sanctions and rewards are used fairly and, therefore, pupils learn justice and how to act justly. Taking the other very good provision, there is potential for giving all pupils greater responsibility for their own learning, and further opportunities for taking social responsibility through outside-lessons clubs and activities.
39. Provision for cultural development is sound, although restricted because the school does not, as yet, sufficiently audit provision and seek ways to build upon present good practice. The ethos and teaching encourage pupils to appreciate faiths other than Christianity, for example Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, but this learning is not deep or broad enough to prepare pupils sufficiently for adult life in a multi-faith society. The creative arts, for example art, music, dance and literature, play an important part in the life of the school, and pupils gain an appreciation of a good range of cultural traditions. School productions bring this creativity together, and their clear success provides a pointer to what would be gained by increasing opportunities for further examples of these celebrations of cultural achievement. History and geography effectively develop pupils' awareness of the cultural life of people at different times and places. Cultural achievements in pupils' home communities are recognised and warmly celebrated, and this enhances the relevance of pupils' growing cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school offers a good standard of pastoral care to all its pupils. They work and play in a secure and comfortable environment. Realistic fire drills are undertaken regularly and there are sufficient numbers of staff trained in first aid and 'first response' care.
41. Procedures for child protection are securely in place. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and all staff in the school are fully aware of the adopted procedures.
42. Whilst staff and governors undertake regular internal health and safety risk assessments, they now recognise they would benefit from employing the expertise of health and safety consultants from outside the school.
43. Class teachers, in conjunction with the administrative staff and headteacher, promote and monitor attendance and punctuality very well and successfully.
44. Monitoring of pupils' behaviour and personal development is perceptively logged on detailed and individual 'page-a-child' sheets that are retained in each classroom. Consequently, teaching and support staff know pupils and their family circumstances well. This knowledge is effective in guiding and supporting pupils throughout their time in the school. The staff implement the behaviour policy consistently. Most do so firmly in a non-confrontational manner that ensures all pupils are aware of the high expectations in regard to their behaviour. The personal, social and health education programme is in its early stages of development but beginning to make an impact on pupils' behaviour and personal development. Effective 'circle time' sessions are also beginning to have a very positive impact on pupils' awareness of their individual responsibilities and individual personalities.
45. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by specialised staff and a variety of visiting professionals from outside agencies. However, the long-term absence of the outside speech therapist is to be regretted considering several children have joined the school with speech problems. The support provided by the specialist teachers and the specialised support assistant is highly skilled and very well managed. Pupils have very clear and very useful individual education plans and these are frequently reviewed. At present, the very good support procedures for pupils with behaviour problems or specific learning needs, including those of the most able, are not fully co-ordinated, and there is room for better co-ordination with class teachers, and in particular, classroom assistants. Even so, the present arrangements provide well for the inclusion of all pupils in the school curriculum and enable most pupils to make good progress.

Assessment

46. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when more formal assessment, particularly of foundation subjects, was needed, and when pupils needed to be made more aware of the meaning of their assessments. Baseline assessment is undertaken for all pupils at the appropriate time and leads to the identification of areas for further development. Pupils take the statutory National Curriculum tests and assessments at the ages of seven and eleven. Data from the tests for seven-year-olds is used effectively to inform future curriculum planning and to try to ensure that

the level of work is appropriate for each pupil, including those with special educational needs. Non-statutory assessments are also made in Years 3, 4, and 5 by using the optional National Curriculum test materials for English and mathematics.

47. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is increasingly effective. Teachers keep informal records of the progress of all children in all subjects. Subsequently, most but not all teachers use this information effectively to define in their short-term plans what they expect pupils of varying abilities to learn, understand and do. These plans also identify assessment opportunities, but they are not always sufficiently precise. Teachers' evaluation of the relative effectiveness of individual lessons affects their future planning and aids in the identification of objectives and tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. However, among the least effective teachers, this evaluation is not always carried out with sufficient rigour and regularity.
48. The school now analyses pupils' statutory results year by year in relation to national results, considering both national averages and those for similar schools. The progress of children who have remained in the school between the ages of seven and eleven is charted against national results. A system has now been introduced which will track individuals' progress from baseline assessment to Key Stage 1 results and Key Stage 2 results. This strategy is proving effective at identifying areas for improvement.
49. The school has recently implemented a more formal system of recording pupils' attainment in core and foundation subjects every half term. This system uses three criteria in each subject and allows the build-up of a cumulative picture of a child's performance during the course of a year. The record is kept in an assessment file and these procedures and records are playing a very significant part in improvement in standards.
50. All teachers now understand and are becoming more familiar with these assessment requirements. The assessments in English and mathematics facilitate the setting of individual targets for pupils, which lead on to class targets for the following term or year, and in some classes to enabling pupils of high and lower levels of attainment to be taught separately, for example for writing. This is an effective strategy. Training for teachers in assessment has taken place. Pupils' work is moderated by groups of teachers, and this results in the application of consistent criteria and a shared understanding of the level of progress expected at any time.
51. Pupils are aware of their current levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Teachers mark their work rigorously and use the results to identify targets for them. Written comments are extremely helpful, and aid pupils in understanding why they succeed or meet problems and what they need to learn next. These targets are reviewed with pupils as the year progresses and, when achieved, are replaced by others. Whilst effective, this good practice offers room for further development. The use of teachers' written comments on homework and other written work ensures that pupils are also aware of the standard of their achievements in the foundation subjects. They understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to achieve improvement. This very good foundation provides a supportive basis for further development of ways to help pupils manage their own learning in lessons.
52. The procedures in place for assessment are in advance of the school's written policy and guideline documentation. The school expects shortly to update its documentation to reflect its improved practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The positive relationship between parents and the school, as identified in the previous inspection report, has, in the main, been maintained. However, some parents and governors feel that the relationship needs to be improved. Even though the school has a useful home-school agreement, its development as an important way to raise standards does not have sufficiently high priority in school improvement planning.
54. Communication with parents and the quality of information they receive are satisfactory. Newsletters from the headteacher are sent every half-term and class teachers, also every half-term, communicate with parents informing them what aspects of the curriculum their children will be studying in the forthcoming weeks. Generally speaking, curriculum mornings and afternoons organised by the school have been well attended. Similarly, the occasions organised to inform parents about the 'literacy hour' were also well attended. However, there was not so much enthusiasm for sessions covering the 'numeracy hour' and, therefore, the school has sensibly kept parents informed through a series of helpful leaflets. Open evenings to discuss targets and progress are held in the autumn and spring terms, and in the summer term parents are invited to attend an open evening after the issue of pupils' annual reports if they so wish. These are positive events, and provide opportunities for further development of parent's involvement in their children's learning. Parents rightly regard communication between home and school as helpful, informal and immediate when it occurs.
55. Some parents feel communication and partnership is too often on the school's terms, and does not place sufficient emphasis on responding to parents' needs and concerns. Access to senior management and teachers is by pre-planned appointments and these are well managed. Inspectors find that there are less opportunities for the immediate, informal and productive conversations between staff and parents found in very effective schools.
56. Pupils' annual reports are of sound quality and contain some helpful features, for example notification to parents of which classes their children will be in at the start of the new school year and who their child's teacher will be. Whilst in the main parents are informed in these reports of what their children know, understand and can do, the reports do not contain specific targets to help parents maximise their input into their children's learning at home. However, the homework logbooks, which go home regularly, are informative and give parents the opportunity to take part in a dialogue about their children's work and progress if necessary. Even so, they remain an area for development.
57. A small number of parents are able to give of their time and energy to support work in the classrooms and do so regularly; they are highly valued by staff and pupils. There is a hardworking and committed Friends of the School Association that organises a variety of fund-raising and social events annually. The money raised by the Association is spent for the benefit of the school in consultation with the headteacher.

58. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were mainly positive, as were the majority of comments made at the pre-inspection meeting. A small number of negative comments indicates that the relationship with a small minority of parents offers an area for improvement in order that all parents feel equally valued and welcomed. Evidence from this inspection shows that the building of an equally good working relationship with all parents is a necessary area for improvement. A significant number of parents felt there needed to be better provision for outside-lessons activities, and as to clubs, inspectors agree. Inspectors find provision for homework satisfactory, although a concern for some parents. Some parents were concerned about the leadership and management of the school. On the evidence of this inspection, leadership and management are a strength of the school, although communication is occasionally not as good as both some parents and also the school would wish.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school are good, and much improved since the previous inspection. This improvement is well set to continue further. Over the last four years, the headteacher, governors and staff have worked with commitment and determination to make the planning for both the longer term and also the day-to-day more efficient and, more significantly, more effective. The headteacher has led this change with a clear vision of what the school needed to become. This has not been easy but it has been successful. There is now a strong team spirit among senior management, governors and staff. This team shares a commitment to continuous improvement by talked-through and agreed policy based upon rigorous self-evaluation; there is a willingness to share best practice. Staff and governors have a clear view of where they need to improve next, and this creates a secure foundation for further improvement in standards.
60. Consequently, this leadership allows the strong values of the school to colour and enrich every side of the life of the school, creating a fine ethos in which to teach and learn. The headteacher has not only strength and clarity of thought but also expertise that she is continually seeking to increase. The deputy headteacher very effectively supports her, bringing complementary skills and awareness to the leadership of the school. Other members of the senior management team ably and perceptively support them. Staff in their leadership and management roles are gaining increased management skills and perceptions and, overall, the management of subjects is good and in areas such as special educational needs very good, with clear plans and staff development in place to make it very good. This overall development has been aided by close support from local education authority advisers and other experts, and a willingness to evaluate both internally and also by comparing the school's performance and ways of working with other schools. There is a growing commitment to challenging ideas and to seeking new and better ways of achieving the school's objectives. Because this has not been easy, some staff have found and still do find changing long-held practices difficult. There remains a degree of inflexibility; for example, some teachers find rigorous self-evaluation of each lesson difficult and, as a school, some are concerned when considering the partnership with more critical parents. The school is gaining the confidence to respond to rather than mould differing views. Similarly, with such rapid development, some staff accept some changes more than others, and some separate initiatives, for example behaviour management, special educational needs, and staff development for learning support assistants, tend, even though plans are in place for better coherence, to operate separately rather than in fully and mutually beneficial collaboration. This is recognised,

especially by governors, and there is a clear view as to how further development might occur.

61. The governors are extremely well and expertly led, and have become an effective and efficient leading body for the school, with a very clear vision of where the school should go next. They meet their statutory responsibilities well, with the exception of provision for information and communication technology. They have a challenging plan for not only the school's development but also their own development as a strategic management team. They have worked out and are beginning to implement systematic ways of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school so that their decision-making is better informed and their identification of strengths and weaknesses can be better defined. However, they miss some opportunities to use outside experts to help them with this task, for example by having financial procedures audited and having external assessment of health and safety risks. There is a very effective partnership between governors and the school. The headteacher keeps the governors very well informed and they act as very supportive guides and counsellors. Consequently, school development planning is coherent, detailed and sets appropriate priorities, and is, in turn, closely related to sensible budgeting that seeks best value for money. Areas for development are well chosen, but fail, to some extent, to highlight the key areas that might now hinder further improvement in standards, for example the development of speaking and listening skills. The deputy headteacher is analysing the way that pupils succeed or make mistakes in national tests, as an effective way of addressing the need to focus development plans on learning and teaching. The school has set appropriate targets to meet in the future.

Staffing

62. There are enough qualified teachers and learning support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, and they are skilfully and flexibly deployed. The administration staff are very effective and efficient. At the root of the school's improvement is carefully considered staff development, and this has led to the school, in partnership with others, being validated as a context for the training of teachers. This very good provision for staff learning and development leads from regular observation of staff at work to helpful feedback on what works well and what needs to be improved. In turn this creates a careful and well-focused plan for full-school or individual training and support. Teachers are increasingly sharing planning and gaining skills and ideas from each other. This effective staff development is based upon the excellent professional leadership provided by senior managers, especially when teaching and leading assemblies.

Accommodation

63. The school building is spacious and has sufficient accommodation to deliver the National Curriculum. It has a good-sized hall, adequate classrooms, a large library and several resource and storage areas. Governors and staff have developed the use of the accommodation well and imaginatively. Even so, the computer room is too small, and there is inadequate provision for Foundation Stage pupils to learn through outside play. Displays in classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. Many of these displays are of high quality, for example the drawings and poetry on the walls of the Year 5/6 class. The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the accommodation in a fresh and well-maintained condition.
64. There are large and particularly attractive outside play areas for pupils at both key stages. The playgrounds are well marked out and wooded areas leading off the field

give pupils ample opportunity to run free and indulge in imaginative play and recreation. At the front of the building a new porch area adds space and light in addition to a welcoming environment as the visitor enters the school. At the front of the school is a large pond that is part of the school's environmental project area where pupils can study insect and other wild life.

Resources for learning

65. Resources for learning are of good quality and easily accessible to staff and, when appropriate, pupils. In the main, they are of good range, for example literature from other cultures, and quantity. The school library provides a very good source of books for pupils and actively promotes a joy in books and excitement in research. Similarly, the small but effective music area allows pupils to see the richness of musical instruments. The school grounds have been innovatively developed as an additional learning resource, for example the millennium sundial. Hardware and software for information and communication technology are, however, of insufficient quality, range and appropriateness. The school has this area of learning in the school development plan, but as yet there has been insufficient improvement.

Efficiency

66. The use of the school's finances is well planned and managed by the headteacher and the governing body. The budget is firmly related to educational priorities within the school development plan, and governors maintain a sensible balance to meet contingencies or take advantage of opportunities for development. Governors ensure they obtain best value when purchasing goods or services. Governors have a sound grasp of the school's finances and the finance committee plans strategically and prudently within the normal budget constraints. Professional development of staff is given a high priority and good use is made of the allocated funding for this purpose by organising regular training and staff development and responding to staff requests for their own individual training needs. Special educational needs funding and other specified grants are well used for the purpose for which they are intended, namely ensuring that pupils make good progress and standards improve.
67. Two relatively new members of the staff carry out the day-to-day administrative organisation of the school extremely efficiently and provide a strong, seamless and supportive service to the whole school.
68. Taking into consideration the good quality teaching, the very effective assessment procedures in place, the pupils' attainment and progress in relation to prior achievement and the good quality educational leadership and direction, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. Since the previous inspection, governors and staff have worked hard and with determination to improve standards, and their commitment remains undiminished. The main requirements for continued improvement are in place and effective, but there is now a need to focus on bringing these various initiatives together and ensuring all areas of the school's life and work are equally effective. The school's work towards the Basic Skills Quality Award offers a good basis for improved quality assurance. At this stage of development it is necessary to focus the school's planning on key priorities. Based upon the findings of this inspection, what follows is a drawing together not simply of what needs improvement, but also recognition of what staff

already do well, but want to do very well. Improvements in provision for information and communication technology already have priority in the school development plan.

70. To continue to improve standards, governors and staff should:

(1) Ensure the consistent effectiveness of teaching across years and across subjects within classes by:

- developing policies and teaching strategies for the more effective development of speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum; (Paragraphs 8, 24, 70)
- ensuring that lesson planning always has clear learning objectives that are separate from but related to the curriculum content to be covered; (Paragraph 24)
- ensuring that these objectives always provide sufficient challenge and are supported by appropriate teaching strategies for all levels of ability, especially the most able; (Paragraph 24)
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to learn independently and evaluate their own work; (Paragraphs 24, 51)
- developing further strategies for the full and effective use of classroom assistants throughout lessons, through joint planning and evaluation by all adults working with pupils in lessons; (Paragraph 24)
- managing more coherently the link between the provision for special educational needs, the most able pupils and support for pupils with behavioural problems, and the day-to-day work of class teachers and classroom assistants. (Paragraph 24)

(2) Ensure an equally constructive relationship with all parents and carers in support of their children's learning and the work of the school by:

- giving the effective implementation of the home-school agreement higher priority within the school's improvement planning;
- ensuring that both formal and informal communication between home and school always stresses and expresses the equal but different roles parents and teachers need to play in the partnership;
- developing more opportunities for informal access by parents and carers to senior management and staff.

(This section is best informed by reading paragraphs 53 – 58 in full)

- (3) Improve provision for information and communication technology by:
- providing better support for teaching and the pupils' learning by updating present hardware;
 - providing better support for learning in all subjects by improving the range and quality of software, and greater access to the Internet;
 - developing better assessment procedures so that teachers and pupils can track progress more accurately;
 - increasing the confidence of teachers and classroom assistants in this area of learning by increased and improved training.

(This section is best informed by reading paragraphs 122 – 128)

When considering the above areas for development, governors and staff should also consider the following less central issues:

- improving the outdoor curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage;
(Paragraph 63)
- increasing the range of outside-lessons clubs, at lunchtime or after-school;
(Paragraph 30)
- using outside experts to support their risk assessment concerning health and safety.
(Paragraph 61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	27	34	29	2	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

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	244
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	15

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
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	13	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	90 (93)	90 (84)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	15	15	17
	Total	28	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (90)	93 (78)	100 (94)
	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	22	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	21
	Girls	14	11	14
	Total	33	30	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (88)	81 (79)	95 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (77)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	22
	Girls	14	11	14
	Total	31	30	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (75)	81 (83)	97 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	242
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	458930
Total expenditure	456828
Expenditure per pupil	1843
Balance brought forward from previous year	19847
Balance carried forward to next year	21949

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	244
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	57	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	29	14	2	2
The teaching is good.	45	47	4	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	39	8	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	25	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	29	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	51	29	16	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	33	12	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	4	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	24	18	22	18

Other issues raised by parents

- Some parents are concerned that some classes and lessons are taught less effectively than others.
- Some parents feel that the school's approach to parents wishing to discuss concerns is too inflexible.

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

71. The exceptionally high quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage provides a very good platform for their future learning. The school admits children into the reception class from the age of four and during the inspection there was one reception class with four and five year olds in their first year of schooling. Most children arrive in the reception class with experience of pre-school groups scattered across the various geographical areas from which children come to school. They arrive, therefore, happily and prepared to leave their parent or carer. They have sound physical skills. However, they are not confident speakers and this has an adverse effect upon all other aspects of their learning. Additionally, a significant minority of children have speech difficulties. The school offers a highly structured and full programme; however, it is the exceptionally high quality of teaching that mainly accounts for the clear majority but not all children attaining expected levels in the Areas of Learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Most children start school with a willingness to conform to sharing space and equipment in a large group. They have positive expectations of adults and refer to them for assistance and arbitration. The reception teacher is highly skilled at promoting children's level of independence. For example, she successfully introduces children to the routines and expectations of a daily 'planned play' session that requires them to select activities and plan the order in which they would complete them. The positive ethos of the class, supported by the consistently clear role models provided by adults, encourages children to treat each other kindly and respectfully. The teacher is also highly skilled at exploiting opportunities for children to empathise and use their experience and emotions to develop understanding of moral issues, such as feeling remorse at having upset a parent by being 'naughty'. Children quickly learn to sustain concentration at an activity when cutting and sticking a sentence and glittery decoration on to a 'crown', without direct adult intervention. If the high quality of teaching that promotes good levels of learning is maintained, most children will attain most elements of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, in spite of the impressive teaching a significant minority of children is likely to enter the National Curriculum with limited spontaneous and expressive language skills, and this constrains the quality of their relationships with peers. The lack of easy access to the outdoor environment means that staff do not plan a regular outdoor curriculum, with its particular strengths for personal, social and emotional development.

Communication, language and literacy

73. The teaching of this Area of Learning is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. It quickly fosters children's interest in books, in listening to stories and in enjoying making marks and developing writing skills. Children enjoy pointing out fine detail in the illustrations in books and take pride in sharing their knowledge of letters and the words that they recognise. In an excellent lesson during the inspection, children enjoy sharing a big book from the reading scheme that they are beginning. An exceptional quality of this teaching is the way in which the teacher harnesses children's imagination, for example to teach them letter sounds. Teaching also provides them with immediate, precise and celebratory feedback when they achieve a

new skill or level of understanding. This practice empowers children and enhances their self-esteem, ensuring their continued readiness for learning. Children respond to their teacher enthusiastically. They give her a tremendous level of concentration and will chorus a response to her deliberate mistakes as if in a pantomime audience. However, even when surrounded by extremely stimulating activities such as the 'messy tomato ketchup cake' replicated from the big book they have shared, their spontaneous expression is very limited. While the exceptional teaching means that most children will attain most elements of the Early Learning Goals for this Area of Learning by the end of the Foundation Stage, a significant minority of children will enter the National Curriculum not expressing themselves as fully as is expected for their age.

Mathematical development

74. The teaching of mathematical development is very good and during the inspection excellent teaching was seen. The strength of this lesson lies in the strategies used to empower children. For example, the class teacher role-played a character called 'Mrs Muddle', who could not order her numbers. Hence the children learn by gaining confidence as they correct and 'help' Mrs. Muddle. During this session the teacher adapted and modified questions to meet individual children's needs, demonstrating her very accurate assessment of each child and highly skilful teaching techniques. Staff regularly provide children with activities that support their mathematical understanding. For example, children sort materials according to their quality of softness or roughness; they make numerically repeating patterns and they enjoy number rhymes. Children seldom use the language of number and quantity spontaneously as they participate in their daily activities, and opportunities to promote mathematical understanding through outdoor activities are very limited. However, the quality of teaching promotes good levels of learning and if current standards are maintained most children will reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development by the time they begin the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Teaching promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world very well. However, children seldom ask questions. When they arrive in the reception class they do not demonstrate the level of curiosity expected for their age. Teaching provides a good range of interesting activities to support children's understanding of their own past and the world around them. For example, staff enlist the support of parents to provide information about the children as babies, and through discussion children gain a secure understanding that they have a 'past'. Activities are planned very well to foster children's observation and technical skills. For example, during one session a child used a computer mouse for the first time and made good gains in controlling the cursor on the screen. The high quality teaching communicates considerable enthusiasm and children are inspired to use touch to explore objects that they cannot see in a 'feely box', and to describe them. The skill and infectious excitement communicated by the teacher promote a greater willingness to try new experiences than is usually the case with children of this age. However, the lack of access to a planned outdoor curriculum inevitably limits opportunities for daily research into the natural world. The exceptional quality of teaching accounts for most children attaining expected levels in this Area of Learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

76. By the time children reach the end of the Foundation Stage they have the level of skill in holding pencils and paintbrushes, in applying glue, and in manipulating equipment, for example construction equipment, that is expected for their age. If current standards are maintained, children's skills in creating and performing co-ordinated large movements in the hall will exceed expectations for their age. Outstanding teaching harnesses children's imagination as they move and dance to represent the various movements that a balloon makes. During the inspection, excellent teaching, made dynamic by high expectations, challenged children across the attainment range to grow, shrink, bounce and float in a similar manner to the balloon that they could see in front of them. Children use the large space in the hall with impressive maturity and they move rhythmically to music, adjusting the speed with which they move as the music gathers pace.

Creative development

77. The particular strength of teaching in this Area of Learning lies in the extent to which it ensures that children use their imagination to learn very effectively throughout the day and through many of the activities. Additionally, children have regular access to role-play areas, for example a 'bear's cave' during the inspection period, supporting work on communication, literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. While children do not share and develop stories to the extent expected for their age when they start in reception, talented teaching and careful planning encourage them to develop stories as they create a 'journey' to the 'bears' cave' at the North Pole. Children also have regular access to 'small world' equipment, for example they discover hidden dinosaurs in wet sand, and they use 'fire station' equipment to create stories about 'Where's the fire?'. As a result of such activities, but most importantly in response to the high quality of teaching, children make good gains in using their imaginations as they respond to music, stories and other activities. Most children attain expected levels in creative development by the end of the Foundation Stage; however, a significant minority does not meet expected levels in the extent to which they express their imaginative ideas linguistically.

Summary

78. The strength of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage lies in, and is dependent upon, the exceptionally high quality teaching of the reception class teacher. Standards have been maintained and further developed since the previous inspection. Boys and girls of all levels of ability make equally good progress and those with special educational needs are very well supported by the school staff. The school is implementing the new guidance for the Foundation Stage very well.

ENGLISH

79. Most pupils begin their work on the National Curriculum with skills in reading and writing that are similar to those expected at their age. However, a significant minority of pupils do not speak with the level of confidence expected for their age. On the evidence of this inspection, standards in reading and writing are above average levels at the age of seven. In 2000, the standards achieved in National Curriculum tests at this age were in line with the national average but below the average for similar schools. There has been significant improvement since that time. At the age of

eleven, if current standards are maintained, test results will exceed average levels. This shows that standards shown in national tests in 2000 have been at least maintained and confirm continued improvement. In 2000 national tests, pupils' attainment was above the national average and above the average for similar schools. If present progress is maintained, most pupils will reach the expected level (Level 4) and a larger than usual percentage will reach higher levels. These standards represent a slight improvement in reading and good improvement in writing since the previous inspection, and a gradual upward trend in attainment over the last four years.

80. Standards seen during the inspection show that pupils make good progress in each year as they move through the school. By eleven, most pupils reach expected levels in speaking and listening, but this aspect of English is weaker than reading and writing throughout the school. The younger pupils do not question as much as is expected for their level of understanding and the oldest pupils do not easily engage in debate, nor extend their ideas to the extent of their capabilities.
81. The quality of learning for pupils aged five to seven and seven to eleven is good, and girls and boys make equally good progress. Teachers follow the National Literacy Framework carefully and use it to plan for the systematic development of pupils' skills and understanding. This enables pupils to build well on their early skills and learn to read and write for a range of purposes. They extend their reading, writing and spelling skills effectively across the curriculum. Teachers pay good attention to the quality of writing in subjects other than English, enabling writing in subjects such as history, geography and science to play an important part in developing literacy skills throughout the school. For example, younger pupils record 'fact-files' about Grace Darling and older pupils write newspaper reports for the 'Athens News' in history lessons. The learning environment is enhanced by carefully presented displays of pupils' work. This contributes to the school's successful encouragement of pupils' to take a pride in the presentation of their work. While teachers periodically provide good opportunities for pupils to express their ideas through discussion, this aspect of pupils' development is not systematically identified in planning nor considered fully when teachers plan their teaching strategies.
82. Support for pupils with special educational needs varies in its effectiveness in English. At the beginning of lessons based on the National Literacy Strategy, classroom assistants are not consistently used to support effectively pupils who have difficulties. During the lesson, when pupils work in smaller groups, assistants provide sensitive and helpful support, encouraging pupils to stay on task and persevere. When the higher-attaining pupils receive additional learning support, teaching is highly effective. In these lessons, for example in Year 2, teachers use probing questions to promote pupils' thinking, and to help pupils find ever increasingly interesting adjectives, for example when describing dragons.
83. Teachers of younger pupils are skilled at meeting pupils' needs and engaging their interest. They provide suitable reading matter and interesting activities to reinforce learning. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 1 appreciated the humour of interesting sounding words and rhymes in a book about dogs with names such as 'Bottomley Potts'. This ensures their sustained concentration on the location of full stops and capital letters and they are further inspired to write their own sentences about dogs. Pupils are interested in books and use a variety of techniques to help them tackle new vocabulary independently. They enjoy demonstrating their writing skills and re-tell the story of the 'Billy Goats Gruff' expressively. They begin to experiment with riddles, identify the key features of a letter and write personal responses to subjects that they have enjoyed.

84. Teachers of older pupils are very effective in teaching about the structure of writing and this informs pupils' analysis of their reading material in addition to their own writing. For example, one pupil in evaluating her own work writes, 'I chose the less important clause first, because if you wait for the excitement to bubble up...'. Pupils across the range of attainment express a preference for 'dialogue' at the beginning of fiction to grab their interest, or explain that the structure of a story is frustrating to the reader unless there is sufficient explanatory introduction. Pupils hold strong opinions about their reading preferences and express their judgements well when they write reading reviews. The emphasis upon correct spelling and punctuation is well established. Pupils understand the importance of interesting and varied vocabulary, with younger pupils describing, for example, 'bubbling pancakes' and older pupil describing the floor as, 'moving like a fierce earthquake'. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills through imaginative and creative work, with the exception of pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class who enrich their learning in history and geography with powerful poetry.
85. The majority of lessons are taught either well or very well. This consistent high quality teaching leads to effective learning. Occasionally teaching of English is excellent and very rarely it is unsatisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory or only sound when learning intentions are not sufficiently clear for each group of pupils and so their learning needs are not met. Usually, however, teachers use the structure of the National Literacy Framework well to identify learning intentions. They support this with interesting and worthwhile activities to ensure pupils' learning, based upon their very good understanding of individual pupils' learning needs. In excellent lessons, teaching is fuelled by high expectations, proceeds at a brisk pace, challenges all pupils according to their level of understanding, and promotes an ethos within the lesson of fun and excitement that enhances the quality of pupils' learning. Most teachers maintain very good records of pupils' reading and writing skills. Older pupils keep their own records of their reading habits and their response to books. However, in the middle of the school, reading records are not sufficiently accessible or in effective regular use.
86. The subject is led with enthusiasm and flair by a highly skilled practitioner. However, some very good ideas from the subject manager to enhance pupils' creativity are not used or consistently sustained by colleagues. There are sufficient resources for English. There is a spacious, well organised and furnished, and attractive library and the supply of books is gradually increasing. They are well audited for quality and use. Pupils use the library regularly and have a good understanding of how to find and use the appropriate books for their research. Pupils are beginning to use word-processing effectively to enhance their writing.

MATHEMATICS

87. Provision for mathematics is sound and attainment overall in the subject is also sound. The school's results in the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 2000 were close to the national average and at Key Stage 2 they were in line. At both key stages, they were close to the average for similar schools. Variations in the prior attainment of pupils in different years tend to hide an upward and improving trend in standards. The school introduced the new National Numeracy Strategy from the start of the last school year. With this initiative together with target-setting, the school is beginning to see a positive effect on standards. Pupils are provided with a balanced programme of work, which meets requirements of the National Curriculum and girls and boys make equally good progress.

88. Standards of numeracy are generally satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of number and its application across the curriculum is varied but mostly secure. Many younger pupils accurately carry out addition and simple subtraction, and older pupils are able to use standard units for measuring length and understand when to apply the four basic mathematical rules of number. Most pupils at Key Stage 1 are capable in and developing confidence with written and simple mental calculations. A growing number of the older Key Stage 2 pupils are showing a greater ability and confidence in the area of numeracy.
89. Standards of work in most other aspects of mathematics are sound and occasionally better. Most Key Stage 1 pupils can identify sequences and patterns, do simple calculations, make simple measurements, handle money and identify a number of two and some three dimensional shapes. Pupils in a Year 1 class were using clocks to tell hourly time and could confidently explain the principle of how the hands moved on the clock. Pupils are involved in practical work and there is an effective emphasis on the using and applying of mathematics to real situations. Most pupils at Key Stage 2 have a sound understanding of number concepts and are able to measure accurately. Pupils in Year 4 show a sound understanding of reflective symmetry. Years 5 and 6 pupils are well advanced in their use of co-ordinates and able to apply their knowledge when graphing negative numbers. Most can interpret mathematical information and are able to present it in appropriate forms, including graphs. The pace of work is generally sound or better; pupils achieve most in the lessons where the pace is brisk and the expectations are high. The progress made by pupils is generally good at Key Stage 1 and is often good at Key Stage 2 particularly as they reach the end of the key stage. In lessons where pupils' mathematical thinking was sufficiently challenged and extended pupils made greatest progress, as seen in a lesson on co-ordinates in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils can recall past knowledge and apply it to new situations. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is sound or good when given individual support. Support by specialised teachers of pupils with special educational needs focuses on numeracy as well as literacy, and does so effectively.
90. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good at both key stages. They react in a positive manner to their mathematics lessons and show an interest in the subject. Most talk confidently about their work and many are able to use the correct mathematical terms. Pupils ably and confidently use a suitable range of mathematics equipment to assist their learning. They co-operate well in group activities, and are well behaved. The great majority enjoy their mathematical tasks, but only towards the upper end of the school do pupils show significant independence in their thinking.
91. The quality of teaching is generally good at Key Stage 1. It is more varied at Key Stage 2 although it is never less than sound and on one occasion the teaching was outstanding. All teachers work hard and are committed to the improvement of standards. They have all successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and are planning accordingly. Teaching is best when all pupils are challenged appropriately by teachers' questioning, teachers' expectation is high, the pace of work is demanding and the learning objective of the lesson is clear to teachers and pupils alike. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and those of below, average and above average ability make good progress. However, the very high attaining pupils at both key stages are sometimes insufficiently challenged by work they find undemanding.
92. In lessons on reassembling arrays to form a multiplication sum in Year 2 and on the properties of two-dimensional figures in Year 6, effective use was made of an overhead projector. All lessons are fully planned, carefully prepared, well organised

and good use is made of both oral comment and written marking to help pupils understand why they succeed or meet problems. Assessment is usually used effectively to amend the weekly lesson plans. Appropriate teaching strategies are used and suitable use is made of pupil grouping. Helpful in-class encouragement and feedback is given to pupils. Calculators are generally available and used appropriately. Very little use is made of computers to reinforce and extend pupils' mathematical experience. The extensive school grounds provide excellent opportunities for mathematical investigations.

93. The policy for mathematics and the scheme of work, which is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, are used well to plan the mathematics curriculum effectively. The diligent subject manager has successfully led the implementation of the new numeracy strategy. Regular monitoring of the teaching of mathematics has taken place and has led to improvement. The subject is well resourced. Standards appear to show a decline since the previous inspection but there is now a strong upward trend in standards, and the school has put in place improvements in provision that should provide a secure basis for further improvement.

SCIENCE

94. Provision for science is sound. The percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, was very high compared with the national average. However, the number of pupils reaching higher levels was below the national average. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was close to the average, while the percentage achieving higher levels was below average. Standards in the tests in 2000 were higher than those in 1999. Inspection findings indicate that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is lower than the national average. Standards over the last four years at Key Stage 1 have shown significant variation since the previous inspection but are currently broadly similar to those at the time of that inspection. They are improving more rapidly than the national trend.
95. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected level in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 was well above the national average, but the percentage achieving higher levels was below the national average. Standards were well above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, but the proportions achieving higher levels was lower. The proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected standard in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 was close to that in 1999, but the percentage achieving higher levels increased significantly. Inspection findings indicate that attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is above the national average. All aspects of the subject are covered in depth and attainment is good in all areas. Standards at Key Stage 2 have shown significant variation since the previous inspection, but overall are improving at a rate that is broadly in line with the national trend.
96. The quality of teaching is sound at both key stages. Some teaching has good features, particularly where older pupils are involved. This is broadly similar to the standards at the previous inspection. Key features of the most successful lessons include clear planning of resources and use of time, good use of scientific vocabulary and an effective session at the end of the lesson to recap on the pupils' learning. This was seen to good effect in a lesson of pupils from Years 5 and 6 where a range of resources had been prepared to investigate what happens when certain materials are put into water. The teacher discussed the need to be precise about the quantities of

water and salt when conducting the investigation. Pupils were given ideas about recording results as they arose, but they chose individually the detailed way of recording results. A wide range of scientific vocabulary was incorporated in the learning, for example 'dissolve', 'particles', 'solution', 'mixture', and 'saturated'. At the end of the lesson the class discussed intelligently what they had learnt and considered whether the change was reversible and, if so, whether filtering (linked to an earlier experiment) or a different method might lead to regaining the original materials. Generally teachers sensibly refer back to work done in the previous lesson to reinforce learning. They usually pitch the work at achievable, and often challenging, levels. They mark work regularly and provide very helpful comments to pupils about the way their learning is progressing and what they need to do in order to improve their standards. They make good use of brainstorming sessions, which provide the opportunity for pupils to think quickly about what they know on the topic. There are occasions when some teachers allow children to talk too much to each other during lessons: this affects the quality of their learning. This is less the case when teachers use question-and-answer sessions in ways that oblige pupils to listen intently and express very clearly their oral contributions; in these lessons the quality of all speaking and listening increases and becomes focused on the learning.

97. Pupils make sound progress in their learning at Key Stage 1 and make good progress in their learning at Key Stage 2, especially in the last two years. The progress and attainment of boys and girls are broadly similar at both key stages and, in the main, pupils of different levels of ability make broadly similar progress. The better progress in the upper classes is often linked to the high level of challenge for the most and more able pupils. Pupils as a whole enjoy undertaking practical investigations, which extend their skills. This promotes pupils' ability to learn on their own, and this independence is more effectively promoted towards the end of Key Stage 2 than in lower classes. The example of very effective teaching offers ways to improve teaching and learning in younger classes. The discussion between teacher and pupils while an investigation is being carried out is very helpful in all classes.
98. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in both key stages, but would benefit from greater co-ordination between specialised teachers and the day-by-day work of class teachers and learning support assistants. When this occurs, in some individual cases the progress in their learning is good.
99. Progress towards pupils' literacy and numeracy targets helps pupils to understand numerical information in science and to record in writing the results of their work. The teachers offer a good balance between guidelines and independence at both key stages, and this extends pupils' confidence. Pupils pay attention to health and safety issues when conducting investigations.

100. The subject manager is an effective leader who organises and leads the subject well. He has developed the overall planning for the teaching, which forms a sound basis for pupils' learning. Regular opportunities for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding are included in the planning. He monitors the pupils' achievement and standards in science well and is very committed to improving standards. The subject benefits from a sound level of resources. However, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in science. The school is aiming to make more time available for evaluating teaching in the future. National Curriculum requirements are met.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Provision is sound and standards have improved since the previous inspection. Standards in art are sound overall, although only a minority of pupils attain good standards in observational work throughout the school. The subject manager works hard and successfully to ensure that the subject is maintained with a suitable breadth and an appropriate balance of techniques and styles in two and three-dimensional work. Although little teaching could be observed, on the evidence of pupils' previous and current work, teaching is at least sound throughout the school, and often good. The work of pupils and the teachers' planning shows that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, and teach in ways that engage the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils. For example, younger pupils use clay, chalk, charcoal, pencil, crayon, pastels and paint with skill and confidence. They produce good charcoal representations of hedgehogs on marbled backgrounds. By the age of seven, pupils begin to refine their collage skills reasonably and, consequently, layer pieces of tissue paper to represent depth purposefully and increasing aesthetic awareness. They also use with increasing artistic awareness the work of artists such as Raoul Dufy to influence their own composition and use of colour appropriately when they are concentrating on the theme of water. When they use wax-resist techniques, pupils remark with good understanding on the 'magic' of colour appearing. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils were inspired by Matisse's 'The Snail' to explore maturely pattern, shape, shadow, texture and colour.
102. In the middle classes of the school, pupils produce lively paper and paste sculptures of nativity figures. Older pupils support their Tudor topic with paint and collage work in the style of Tudor portraits, effectively using their artwork to deepen their understanding of an historical period. Pupils successfully increase their skills at blending colours to depict shades and tones. By eleven pupils focus on line, shape and tone appropriately while producing pencil sketches of historical artefacts such as bowls and dishes. They begin to grapple with the challenge of depicting depth through careful pencil shading. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 offer each other constructive and sensitive evaluation, demonstrating that they understand the requirements of good representational sketches. They are extremely critical of their own efforts. However, they willingly accept the challenge of producing a quick observational sketch of a teapot from memory, acknowledging the different features from their differing perspectives. Older pupils also work suitably with fabric, for example when they 'tie-dye' tee-shirts. In the main girls and boys of all levels of ability make equally good progress, although in a minority of lessons the more able are insufficiently challenged and the least able find the work too demanding.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Provision is sound. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. This is in line with standards seen at the previous inspection. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly comparable.
104. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress at Key Stage 1. Only one lesson at Key Stage 1 was observed during the inspection, but the standards of previous work seen, including work in the school from last year, are in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 1 critically consider the merits and demerits of a wide range of bags when evaluating the kind of bag that would hold their most treasured possession. They rigorously think through whether bags are strong, whether they are made from a suitable material, and whether they have an attractive design. They perceptively think about security (does it fasten?), size, colour and appropriateness. They come to a clear decision about the bag they prefer, but young children find it difficult to articulate a reason for their choice. They then go on to make a well-considered design for a bag they wish to make. They draw an effective design and explain orally and by writing words their reasons for choice of material, shape and size. They talk about other pupils' designs and make sensible comments about them.
105. At Key Stage 2, pupils at each level of ability, including those with special educational needs, make sound and sometimes good progress. The progress overall is best when the teaching provides increased challenge for pupils of high ability. Standards of work are in line with national expectations. Year 3 pupils make a photograph frame from card. They use clearly labelled sketches to communicate the detail of their designs and select materials sensibly when deciding carefully how to decorate them. They understand that they need to record changes in their design as the 'design and make' processes evolve. Pupils in Year 5 make musical instruments linked to their work in music, using a range of readily available materials. They generate their own ideas for the design, clarifying and amending their ideas as the design stage progresses. They cut and shape materials, card, paper, plastic and skilfully put together components; some pupils use wood which they saw safely using bench-hooks. They cut the materials with accuracy.
106. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. This is an improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. Key features of the good teaching include a clear demonstration to pupils of the process involved, discussion of any variable factors and a review at the end of the lesson about success or about difficulties encountered. Teachers encourage pupils to consider a range of aspects and to develop their own ideas. This encouragement for independent work and solving their own problems leads to greater confidence in pupils' work and effective learning, and contributes well to the development of their speaking and listening skills. When setting the musical instrument task for Year 5, the teacher asked pupils to consider what material would be suitable for a scraper, to investigate the tautness of string for pluckers and the number and shape of blocks in the shakers. Consequently, the pupils conducted their own investigation independently. This lesson formed a very good example of how very effective teachers use development of pupils' speaking and listening skills to underpin the development of pupils' ability to learn on their own. In the Year 3 frame-making class, the teacher provided a general framework, but encouraged children independently to solve problems of joining material, and of devising a suitable system to make the picture frame stand up. Teachers have good regard for safety in the classroom when using tools of any kind.

107. Learning is less effective in those lessons where a review does not take place at the end because pupils do not benefit from hearing of ways in which other pupils solved design or construction problems, and so evaluate their own work.
108. The subject manager has only recently taken over design and technology and provides sound leadership. The curriculum is being planned well and teachers have clear ideas about what pupils should learn. Resources are varied and adequate for teaching the subject. Some teachers bring in their own possessions to supplement school resources where this is of particular help to the pupils. Some use of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection, for example in designing a pop-up card; Year 2 pupils investigated different types of fonts for printing the message. However, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in design and technology. National Curriculum requirements are met.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Provision for geography is sound overall, with some good features. No observation of geography was made at Key Stage 1 due to timetable arrangements. Judging by scrutiny of pupils' previous work, geographical work in other subjects and teachers' plans, attainment in geography is at least satisfactory at this key stage and provision sound. At Key Stage 2 provision is sound with good features and most pupils achieve in line with national expectations. Standards are equivalent to the average in other schools, and the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
110. Good links are made with other subjects, for example with history within the study of the local and a contrasting area. Pupils show a good understanding of the main geographical features of the surrounding area in Year 3, during a consideration and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed introduction of a light railway system to the region. Year 6 pupils show a mature understanding of the effects of the recent flooding across the country. Throughout the school, pupils are generally progressing appropriately and have gained a range of geographical skills to explore questions of location and physical features both locally and worldwide.
111. The quality of learning is generally good and sometimes very good. As they move through the school, girls and boys of all levels of ability make good and often very good progress, especially in senior classes. Pupils with special educational needs are making sound progress and achieve appropriate standards for their abilities. Pupils listen to their teachers and are keen to produce their best work. Most work fast yet carefully, co-operating and collaborating with others.
112. The learning benefits from and contributes to pupils' improving literacy and numeracy skills, although some teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills. At present there are insufficient opportunities provided in this subject to use and develop information and communication technology skills.
113. Usually behaviour is satisfactory and pupils generally concentrate on their work. Older pupils are able to make natural and effective links between geographical concepts and other subjects, and are conscious of environmental issues and the need to care for the natural world. This aspect of their learning contributes positively to their personal development. Pupils have positive and constructive attitudes to the subject.

114. The quality of teaching at both key stages is usually good. Teachers plan appropriately; the best lessons were those where the learning objective was clear and was the definite focus for the lesson. They organise efficiently and make available appropriate resources, including visiting areas of a contrasting physical environment. Homework is given in the subject and this was used to good effect as an introduction to work on local transport in Year 3. The school's grounds offer good opportunities for geographical investigation, and are used well.
115. There is an appropriate subject policy and clear scheme of work. Resources are adequate, progress is well recorded and the subject is well managed. Teaching shows an improvement since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

116. The provision for history is good, and there has been improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 meets national expectations and is broadly in line with the average standards in other schools. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is above standards expected when pupils are eleven, and better than average for other schools. This shows that pupils make good progress as they move through the school, especially at Key Stage 2. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
117. Pupils make steady progress at Key Stage 1 and learning is sound. In Year 1, pupils learn about the passing of time by careful consideration of the way people change as they get older and the way one generation leads to the next. They learn to represent generations and links within a family as a family tree, and show a good understanding of what they draw and arrange. This leads naturally to an in-depth study of life in Victorian times. The most able pupils understand that this period was a long time ago, but that they can still see evidence today, for example houses. They can suggest why life was different, and compare life then with life now accurately. Pupils of average ability show similar understanding but are slightly more confused, and find it more difficult to put their understanding into words. Pupils of lower ability gain from the learning but still have a confused idea of time, even though they have a detailed understanding of what Victorian life was like. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, but at times, opportunities are missed for classroom assistants to support these pupils in full-class sessions. Learning at all levels of ability is enriched by displays of artefacts in the classrooms, and visits to local museums.
118. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress and learning is good, and this is securely founded upon learning at Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 5, through visits, class teaching and individual research have a very good understanding of Roman Britain. They can view this period from many aspects, for example housing, art, food, customs, technology and military strategy and tactics. They have a good understanding of events and the reasons why Celtic and Roman cultures clashed and yet eventually learned from each other. Pupils can understand what it was like to be a person at that time, and this learning is enriched through writing poetry and dramatising events. Scrutiny of previous work shows that pupils learn equally well when studying other periods such as ancient Greece and Egypt.
119. Girls and boys of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make at least sound and often good progress. Because the work is insufficiently challenging, the most able pupils make less good progress at Key Stage 1, as compared with very good progress at Key Stage 2. This is related to the way teachers at Key Stage 2 are more effective at promoting in particular speaking and listening skills. As a whole, too little use is made in history of information and

communication technology, even though good links are made with other subjects, for example geography. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, helping them empathise with and understand others, learn how different cultures affect the way people choose to live, and to discriminate between different human motivations and societies.

120. This learning is enhanced by the pupils' good attitudes not only to the subject, but also to their teachers and each other. Pupils at both key stages are keen to learn and do their best work with determination and pace, and a growing and enthusiastic curiosity for the subject.
121. Teaching is sound at Key Stage 1 and good, often very good, at Key Stage 2. All lessons show that teachers treat the subject seriously and plan conscientiously. They have the confidence that comes from secure subject knowledge and expertise. The differences between sound and very good teaching are clear. In the very effective lessons, the teacher makes a clear distinction between historical skills and understanding to be gained, and the curriculum to be covered. This allows them to pitch the learning at levels that are appropriate to each level of ability. When this is not the case, all pupils do the same work, and too many find it either too easy or too difficult. Again, in the very effective lessons teachers use skilful questioning to make the pupils think for themselves and clearly express their probing questions and increasingly complex understandings. In these lessons, the teachers seek ways of enhancing the learning, using such techniques as drama and poetry. Most teachers use homework effectively and mark work very well, adding comments that help pupils understand why they succeed or fail, and what they need to learn next so as to improve. Assessment is good but teachers do not use it equally well to adapt future teaching or learning.
122. The subject is soundly managed. There is a helpful policy and the curriculum is planned very effectively so that the appropriate topics and aspects of the subject are covered in a deep and balanced way, and in a sensible order. The subject manager checks the planning and offers helpful guidance to colleagues, but has too little opportunity to work alongside colleagues in classrooms. The resources for learning are very satisfactory, and offer adequate range. Very effective use is made of visit to museums and places of historical interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Provision is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment is below the level expected nationally by the ends of both key stages. This is in line with the standards seen at the previous inspection. Individuals' attainment is variable: this variation is due to the individual pupil's varied experiences outside school and is not related to gender issues.
124. There were no opportunities to observe whole-class teaching of information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 during the inspection. One whole-class lesson was observed at Key Stage 2. On a few other occasions, small groups in a class were observed using information and communication technology to support work in other subjects. Examples of pupils' work from last year and the early part of this year suggest that information and communication technology is not widely used in the school to support other subjects, and that pupils' skills are not sufficiently and progressively developed well in the subject.
125. Discussion with pupils at Key Stage 1 and observation of their work indicate that they familiarise themselves with the keyboard and the mouse. They begin to word-process

small elements of language and use the space bar with some confidence. Some use the backspace key to delete letters. Some Year 1 pupils use the computer to work with sound. The amount of work seen was small, especially at Key Stage 1, and less than seen in schools where attainment and progress are satisfactory.

126. Pupils in Year 5 are learning to use a database. They are developing their knowledge and skills of spreadsheet work. They are not confident in this work. In a Years 5/6 class pupils learn to understand the Internet and use a search engine to locate information they want, but this skill is insufficiently developed. Pupils' previous experiences, knowledge and skills have not been developed satisfactorily for them to make adequate progress at Key Stage 2. Very few pupils have a level of knowledge and skills to equip them to conduct data-handling, problem-solving, control technology and research strategies successfully. Their word-processing skills, whilst unsatisfactory, are slightly more developed.
127. Little teaching was observed during the inspection, but that seen was of good quality. Teachers give very clear demonstrations and explanations of tasks. They use appropriate information and communication technology language. Some teachers have developed their own knowledge and skills well and provide a good model within the constraints of the technology available. The school recognises this position and plans to increase the skills of all teachers so that they can deliver the programme of study confidently and effectively to all classes. Teachers, especially at Key Stage 2, make very effective use of information and communication technology to support their classroom and corridor displays in other areas of the curriculum. When very young pupils are being screened for dyslexia, the use of information and communication technology for the tasks helps to increase their competence in use of the mouse and develop their information and communication technology skills.
128. A clear policy and guidelines exist. A computer suite has been created since the last inspection. This is an improvement in provision. However, the suite is not large enough to accommodate whole-class teaching. Many of the machines in the computer suite have become unreliable. During the inspection, the suite was used at times by one or two pupils who went in to do their work individually and confidently and increase their numeracy and literacy skills; they showed strong independent learning and when finished returned to their class. A computer is available in every classroom and an up-to-date computer has been installed in each of the Key Stage 2 classrooms. Access to the Internet is currently very restricted although the school has immediate plans to improve this facility. The present level of resources and age of machines are the main factor in the low attainment levels in the school.
129. The subject manager is clearly committed to improving provision and standards. He is knowledgeable and is a sound leader within the constraints of the resources. Assessment procedures are insufficient to enable teachers and pupils to recognise step-by-step progress. The subject is one of the priorities for school improvement in the school development plan. This plan provides for significant training of teachers, better provision for the steady development of pupils' skills, improved assessment procedures and improved pupil standards, but development has yet to move forward with sufficient speed. The school is considering the potential of a fully operational computer suite and is keen to keep the flexibility of computers in each classroom. This is a sensible strategy for future development. The provision of software is currently not satisfactory for the support of other subjects in the curriculum. National Curriculum requirements are not met at present. Although the school development plan includes planning for enhanced provision and raised standards by 2003, the school has immediate plans for improvement, many of which are already in-hand.

These include improvements in hardware and software, increased training for all staff, and improvements in assessment procedures so that progress towards improvement goals can be evaluated.

MUSIC

130. Provision for music is good and standards have improved since the previous inspection. The subject is well managed and taught, and pupils make good progress at both key stages. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 matches national expectations, and it exceeds national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are above average by the time pupils are eleven. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Music enriches many aspects of the life of the school.
131. Teaching is consistently at least good and usually very good or excellent. This is because teachers treat the subject as important and plan lessons carefully and with clear objectives. They often link work in music to learning in other subjects, helping pupils understand that music helps express feelings and enrich understanding. Subject expertise varies, but when teachers lack expertise, the subject manager ensures they have effective support resources, for example well structured tapes used in a Year 5 singing lesson. Teachers transfer their own interest and enthusiasm to the pupils, and lessons bowl along with pace, excitement, sense of purpose and pride in creative achievement. Teachers challenge pupils to ever higher standards, and, especially at Key Stage 2, encourage them to evaluate their own work, and provide helpful advice for others, for example in a Year 5 lesson composing for untuned instruments.
132. This effective teaching leads to very effective learning. In the main, pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They enjoy making music and show their excitement without losing self-discipline. Even the younger pupils listen intently to the teacher, the music and each other, showing determination to 'get it right', for example beating in different tempos. These qualities were especially evident when pupils were working with a specialist teacher from outside the school. As pupils rehearsed for a concert when they would sing with pupils from other schools, the outstanding skills of the teacher joined with the intense concentration of the pupils to reach a quality of performance that showed excellent sense of ensemble and musicality. Pupils do not reserve this quality of learning for just the special occasion, and in lessons at both key stages pupils showed the same intense commitment when working towards performance. As they move through the school, pupils gain a good understanding of the structures of music, its expressive nature, and the way tempo, pulse and dynamics contribute to the final piece. This intense listening becomes a critical awareness that aids both listening to the music of major composers and music from other cultures, as well as the music they produce themselves, alone or in collaboration with others. The quality of singing is very high by the time pupils are eleven, and they can sing in harmony and rounds without losing musicality and ensemble beauty. They can achieve this in a range of musical styles, ranging from 'swing' to music from South Africa. Steadily, as they progress through the school, pupils gain a sound ability to use both formal and graphical notation.
133. The subject is led with clear enthusiasm for the subject and expert knowledge underpins good management. Clear policy guides teachers, and detailed planning ensures that the National Curriculum is covered. The pupils are given a rich and varied programme of learning, with a good balance of performing, composing and listening. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use information and

communication technology in support of their musical learning. The subject manager provides support for others but has insufficient opportunity to monitor standards and work alongside colleagues. Resources for learning are good, including tapes, untuned and tuned instruments and keyboards. Instruments include a selection from other cultures. A small specialised area has been created and this is used effectively. Music enhances many other areas of the school's life, for example assemblies and dance. In the former, music is given a very important place in aiding reflection and response, but in dance the physical activity at times devalues the music to which the pupils move. Opportunities are missed to help pupils talk about the music and listen to the views of others. Past provision for pupils to learn an instrument and take part in a recorder group ended for financial reasons and, although the school has high quality productions that involve music, there is not a school choir or school orchestra. This means that the school does not provide sufficient opportunities to extend pupils' musical learning and experience outside lessons, and this reduces opportunities for all pupils, but particularly those with especial talents and those with restricted opportunities at home.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Provision for physical education is sound and standards of attainment at both key stages are generally in line with national expectations and averages although standards in dance at Key Stage 1 are higher. During the inspection, the aspects of physical education observed were gymnastics, games and dance.
135. The quality of learning is mainly good, and pupils of all levels of ability generally make good progress. In games activities, pupils control their movements well and are able to handle a range of equipment and demonstrate an appropriate range of skills. The pupils are able to move and arrange apparatus sensibly and safely. In small-group games, many pupils achieve a good standard. They use the small equipment in a controlled way and develop a range of ball-handling and throwing skills. Most are able to catch, control and ball pass at a standard appropriate to their age. Pupils of all ages are developing an understanding of the demands, rules and complexities of competitive activities, as seen in a rugby skills lesson in Year 5. Most pupils make sound progress, building on previous experiences to better their performance and skills. Most pupils perform well in dance and respond appropriately to music. A dance lesson with Year 1 pupils was of a very high standard, and pupils created imaginary and sensitive dance movement to suggest the gentle fall of a leaf on the wind. Dance at Key Stage 1 is a strength of the school.
136. Physical education makes a significant contribution to the social development of pupils. It introduces pupils to the necessity for rules and purposes, but also helps pupils to balance competing with playing as a team. Dance aids personal expression. In a very effective assembly, senior pupils demonstrated their achievements in dance and gymnastics with skills and pride, showing that physical education makes a major contribution to the pupils' determination to succeed as team and as an individual, gaining significant satisfaction in their achievements.
137. Pupils have very good attitudes to their physical education activities; pupils at Key Stage 1 are very enthusiastic yet still very self-controlled. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the lessons and concentrate well on their learning. They are responsive to instructions and try hard to improve their performance. Most pupils practise sensibly and are able to work well on their own and in co-operation with others, including some teamwork in games and competitions. They make appropriate use of equipment and apparatus for the tasks they are asked to perform. In some lessons

pupils are able to evaluate others' performances constructively and advise on improvement. They are well aware of safety aspects related to physical education and apply them during lessons.

138. The quality of teaching is mainly sound with some good features, particularly in Key Stage 1. Lessons are planned and prepared well and there are usually clear learning objectives. Teachers provide a good range of resources and give clear directions and make appropriate teaching points throughout the lesson. In the best lessons, constructive use is made of pupils' demonstration to illustrate good practice. Insufficient opportunities are provided in some lessons for pupils to evaluate their own performance to help encourage improvement, and develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers constantly offer encouragement and feedback to individual pupils to extend their learning. The pace of lessons is brisk and in most lessons suitable attention is given to warm-up and cool-down activities. In all lessons, teachers demonstrate good class management and control and show confidence in the subject.
139. The subject is well managed and led. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to learn to swim and the school grounds provide many opportunities to extend physical education. There is a well-developed scheme of work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This planned provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for both key stages. The school is involved in competitive sport and after-school club activities, which gives the older pupils opportunities to extend their sporting skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Religious education is inspected by section 23 inspectors. The provision meets statutory requirements.