

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aston-le-Walls

Daventry, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122040

Headteacher: Mrs A Allison

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th November 2000

Inspection number: 224943

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Lt. Cdr. John Ford
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is set in the main street of the village Aston-le-Walls in the South West corner of Northamptonshire. It caters for children between 4 and 11 years of age. Because of its denominational status, it serves a scattered population of families in surrounding villages and small towns as well as in the more immediate environs of the school. Many children travel into school by bus or private car. Some come from neighbouring local education authorities. Eighty six children are on roll from Reception to Year 6 and the school is much smaller than most schools of its type. Most children have (generally part-time) pre-school experience before starting in the Reception class. On entering the Foundation Stage in September following their fourth birthday, children are assessed as broadly average for their age in baseline assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. They have above average speaking and listening, personal and social skills. Unlike most other schools of its kind, there are no pupils of minority ethnic origin. Approximately one per cent is eligible for free school meals – a figure well below the national average. Approximately 34 per cent have special educational needs, which is above the national average. The number of children with Statements of special educational need, representing approximately one per cent of the school population, is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is a very effective school where children are well taught. High standards frequently reached by seven and eleven-year-olds in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are owed to very good teaching. Music is also a strength. All children reach very high standards in singing because of the deputy headteacher's expertise and the school's commitment to music as being important to its life. A harmony evident in good relationship between members of the school community stems from its strong Christian ethos. The leadership and management of the school are very good. All staff members and governors share the headteacher's vision of excellence for all aspects of schooling. The deputy headteacher gives very good support to the head. Together, they provide the vital impetus for moving towards important educational goals. The school values its partnership with parents and sees this, too, as key towards achieving these goals. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils frequently reach high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of each key stage.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in all areas of learning and reach good standards.
- Teaching is very good, overall. A significant proportion is excellent.
- Music is a strength. Pupils reach very high standards in singing because of the expertise and enthusiasm of the deputy headteacher. Singing gives everyone pleasure.
- Most pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They like and have very good relationships with their teachers. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength. Spirituality is a notable feature of the school's life.
- The school cares for its pupils very well within a very safe and secure environment.
- The school now has very good links with parents. It values parents' views and welcomes them into school.
- Leadership and management of the school are very good under the headteacher's direction. Governors contribute substantially to school life. They are committed to its aims and work hard on its behalf.

What could be improved

- Provision for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for non-core subjects such as art, geography and history.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good strides since the previous inspection in March 1996. Its leadership and management were boosted by the appointment of a new headteacher. Positive working relationships between the head, all members of staff and the governing body are now well in evidence. All reach for the same aims and are committed to raising standards. A strong professional partnership between the headteacher and her deputy works very much to the school's advantage. School improvement planning is now of very good quality and set out realistically in relation to its time-span. Very good improvements have been made to curricular provision throughout the school, but most especially in the Foundation Stage, where children were previously not receiving

an appropriate curriculum and in Key Stage 2 where the National Curriculum was not in place. Most recently, the school has greatly improved provision for information and communication technology, having secured funding from the National Grid for Learning. Work on this continues (for example, via staff training and curriculum delivery). Core subject co-ordinators have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school views its capacity to appoint co-ordinators for non-core subjects pragmatically, given the number of teachers available. But all work closely together on decision-making about these subjects and they are a priority for further development. The school has strengthened its teaching about the wider world and the diversity of society to good effect. An effective Health and Safety policy contains clear procedures for Child Protection and matters relating to first aid and fire drills. Teaching is greatly improved as a result of staff changes and the school's commitment to a continuing programme of In-service work. Its partnership with parents has progressed markedly. Parents are kept well-informed of their children's progress and welcomed in to the school. Relationships at all levels are much better than before: the school is now an inclusive community, with all children's identified needs met appropriately. Staff members have received substantial training in behaviour management and issues of discipline are consistently dealt with. This has had a very good effect on children's behaviour and attitudes to school and on standards achieved.

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	A	N/a	A	B
Mathematics	B	N/a	A	A
Science	A	N/a	A*	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that eleven-year-olds attained well above the national average in English and mathematics at expected levels in the 2000 statutory tests. Their results in science were very high compared to this average. When compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils reached well above the average in mathematics and science and above this average in English. Except in mathematics, results appear similar to those for 1998 when compared with pupils in all schools. In fact, they are better than this, because a much higher proportion than previously succeeded at the higher Level 5 in 2000 in all subjects. The 1999 results are not shown because the cohort that year consisted of fewer than 10 pupils, invalidating statistical comparisons. Targets set for English in 2000 were met at the expected Level 4 and exceeded at the higher Level 5. In mathematics, targets set both at expected levels and the higher level were exceeded. Inspection findings uphold the good picture shown by the 2000 results, especially in mathematics and science where pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 gain good standards. In English, pupils are broadly in line with national expectations. However, the cohort is again small and there is an imbalance of boys, making comparisons with previous years difficult. Pupils have good reading skills. They can also think about and discuss demanding texts in their literacy lessons, because of pertinent, very good quality teaching. Pupils find it harder to record their ideas in writing, especially at length. This deficiency shows in other subjects where writing is called for (such as history). Girls write more readily than boys. The school rightly identifies boys' writing as needing development. It is evident from talking to the oldest pupils and observing them at work that they are most comfortable with practical tasks and with problems that do not need verbal expression. Hence, their greater success with mathematics and science and the good standards seen in practical activities such as design and technology. More generally, pupils across the school reach as good standards in English work as in mathematics and science, because of the consistently very good teaching in these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory, overall, and are improving rapidly now that provision for the subject is greatly improved. Pupils across both key stages achieve good standards in a range of subjects because of teachers' carefully planned structuring of activities. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced work better than might be expected in an art lesson when they painted 'after the style' of Seurat. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a good geographical knowledge of the effect of climate on people. No history lessons were seen, but, in discussion, Year 3 recalled their previous learning vividly and showed a good grasp of the life of a Roman soldier, gained through their history studies in Year 2. Older pupils in the upper Key Stage 2, however, were unsure of how artefacts tell us about past times. By eleven, pupils reach good standards in swimming - all confidently swim at least 25 metres. In a Key Stage 1

dance lesson, pupils reached satisfactory standards, overall. Children in the Foundation Stage reach good standards in almost all areas and do better than might be expected for their age, although standards in physical development are average because of limited access to outdoor play. Throughout the school, pupils across all levels of attainment are challenged by their work and by teachers' high expectations of their academic performance and behaviour.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils enjoy what they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, overall. Pupils are usually courteous towards one another and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well together in lessons and around the school. They like to share equipment and help one another.
Attendance	Good. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

Most pupils have very good attitudes to school and talk positively about the many things they enjoy each day. Behaviour is especially good in the Reception year where even very young children get on really well together and play with high levels of co-operation. In fact, co-operation between pupils is a pleasing feature of many lessons throughout the school. At times, a very small number of the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils behave inappropriately, responding poorly to adults' reminders to listen.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a strength. Throughout the school, it is most frequently good or better (96 per cent) and never less than satisfactory. In fact, 50 per cent of all teaching is very good with a further 25 per cent excellent. Strengths in teaching (owed to teachers' secure subject knowledge) directly affect standards, especially in all areas of the Foundation stage and in the three core subjects (English, mathematics and science) in both key stages. Teachers are skilled at teaching basic literacy and numeracy. They plan very well across the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with a Statement of special needs. Teachers have worked hard to improve their skills in information and communication technology via training. This has had a good spin-off for work in classrooms and standards seen in lessons. The deputy head's excellent skills in teaching music ensure that pupils win high standards in singing across the school and in her music lessons at both key stages.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is broad and balanced and well planned to match pupils' needs across the age-range.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Very good quality individual educational plans are used well by teachers to inform curricular planning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. It is a strength of the school. A very strong Christian ethos informs all curricular planning. All staff members provide excellent role models in teaching right from wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school gives a high level of care to its pupils and makes sure the learning environment is safe and secure.

The school has very good links with parents, valuing their views and making them feel welcomed. Curricular provision for the Foundation Stage is good, although outdoor play is restricted by a lack of an appropriate separate space. This affects planning for physical development and inhibits the linking of indoor to outdoor planning. Currently, time taken for Key Stage 2 swimming leads to an imbalance of provision in physical education. The subject is further restricted, especially for older pupils in the upper key stage, because of the

small sized hall and the hard surfaced playground, which makes lessons difficult. The school rightly identifies non-core subjects (such as art, geography, history) as in need of further review and development now that other priorities such as those for English and mathematics have been met. All adults unite in providing a safe, caring environment. There are very good child protection procedures.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives a firm educational direction, shared by all staff members. Her close working partnership with her deputy serves the school extremely well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are fully committed to the school's aims. They have a close partnership with all the staff and are knowledgeable about the school's daily life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school monitors all aspects of work through well-defined procedures, which all understand.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff is very well deployed and all funds are carefully targeted for a proper purpose.

Staffing is sufficient with good levels of relevant expertise. Accommodation is adequate, but some features are hard to manage. For example, the hall is small and hampers physical education, especially (though not solely) for the oldest pupils (likewise the hard-surfaced playground). Classrooms are just about adequate, but the headteacher's office is extremely small and cramped. Resources are sufficient for curricular demands. They are regularly supplemented by the schools' library loan service. The headteacher's strong leadership is evident, but she has many managerial and class-teacher responsibilities. Her very good working partnership with her deputy head helps relieve some of this pressure, but it makes heavy personal demands on both senior managers. The school consistently applies the principles of best value to its undertakings.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children make good progress and achieve good standards. • Children enjoy school very much. • Teaching is good and all staff care about the children. • Relationships between home and school are good. • Parents feel welcome in school. • Teachers are approachable and always ready to talk about children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework provision. • Activities available outside lessons.

Inspectors support the positive views expressed. Related to the comment above about homework, parents may not be making the best use of homework diaries, since inspectors believe provision for homework is very good. Homework is kept in line with the school's policy and usefully extends pupils' learning beyond the classroom, but few parents sign their children's homework diaries. Provision for activities outside lessons is judged to be perfectly in order, especially in view of the fact that many pupils travel a distance and rely on transport arrangements for their journeys home. In the Spring and Summer months, as weather permits, a wider range of extra-curricular activities is arranged in keeping with the lighter evenings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Results of baseline assessment tests for children entering the Reception class in September show that pupils are broadly in line with expected levels for their age in reading and writing and mathematics. However, they are above expected levels in speaking and listening and in their personal and social skills. Inspection evidence shows that many pupils are also above average standards in their physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world at this early point in the school year. Children make good progress in all areas of learning with the exception of physical education, where progress in some aspects of development is more limited (for example related to climbing and balancing) because of the limited nature of provision for outdoor play. Indications are that all pupils will reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas apart from physical development by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1 and many will go beyond these.
2. In the statutory tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, pupils' attainment was very high at expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to pupils in all and similar schools. Attainment at the higher Level 3 was also well above the national average in these three tests and well above the average gained by pupils in similar schools in mathematics. In reading and writing, pupils attained above the average of peers at this higher level. Teacher assessments in science show that pupils gained very high standards compared to pupils in all schools both at expected levels and at the higher Level 3. Compared to pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment in science was also very high, at expected levels, and well above the average gained by these pupils at Level 3. Teachers assessed pupils' speaking and listening skills as broadly in line with the national average at expected levels but well above this at the higher Level 3. This picture represents an improvement on standards since the previous inspection with a much higher proportion of pupils now succeeding in the higher range of the expected Level 2 as well as at the higher Level 3 in all tests and assessments. Over a period of four years, pupils' results have fluctuated, although they have always remained significantly above the national average. These latest results show an upward trend in reading and mathematics from the previous year, with those in writing more closely following national trends. The school has identified weaknesses in pupils' experimental and investigative work in science and in their knowledge and understanding of how to use and apply their mathematical skills. Inspection evidence shows that measures to address these weaknesses are meeting with success. It supports the good picture presented, finding that pupils reach standards above what might be expected at this age in all three subjects, especially considering the early point in the school year when evidence was collected. No discernible differences were found in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. In the 2000 statutory tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' reached well above the national average at expected levels in English and mathematics. Their results in science were very high compared to this average. At the higher Level 5, pupils attained well above the national average in all three subjects. Compared to similar schools, at expected levels, pupils succeeded broadly in line with the average in English and above this average in mathematics. Their results in science were very high when a comparison is made. At the higher Level 5, pupils rose well above the average of their peers in similar schools in English and mathematics and above this in science. Over four years, results have fluctuated, especially in mathematics. However, these latest results show a marked upward trend in all three subjects. It has to be borne in mind that comparisons over time are difficult in both key stages because of the small size of some cohorts. This is especially the case in Key Stage 2, where cohorts have sometimes been too small for statistically reliable results to be published. This was so, for example, in 1999. Results over time highlight gender differences, particularly in English. Although such a difference follows national trends and is further complicated by the make up of cohorts (for example, the current Year 6 is small and is heavily weighted towards boys), the school recognises this difference and targets boys' achievements in writing as an area for improvement across the school. Inspection findings support the overall good picture of the 2000 results and show that pupils achieve high standards, especially in mathematics and science. In English, pupils are found to be in line with expectations, overall, at this point in the school year. Evidence shows that there are differences between the attainment of girls and boys in writing, although writing skills are not strong in either case for these oldest pupils. When they are engaged in practical work, where they can talk about what they do and benefit from activities well matched to their learning needs, they show a capacity to achieve well. For example, this was seen in literacy lessons when, having studied poems, pupils talked about the imagery created through the poets' choice of words.

4. The school sets targets in English and mathematics realistically, in line with data now gathered systematically from statutory tests and from national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils' test results are rigorously analysed for individuals as a guide to setting targets. The school exceeded the targets set for mathematics overall in the 2000 results and hit these overall targets in English. However, targets set for the higher Level 5 were exceeded in both subjects. Evidence shows that pupils made good gains in learning as they moved through Key Stage 2, building well on earlier foundations.
5. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. At times, they achieve better than this. The good support pupils receive both in classrooms and when taught for specific purposes outside the classroom serves to guarantee their participation in learning activities alongside their peers in lessons. Across the school, pupils of all levels of attainment are challenged by work and strive to fulfil teachers' high expectations. This is particularly noticeable in the upper Key Stage 2, where the oldest pupils are well stretched by their work in most subjects.
6. Pupils of all ages willingly converse with adults, frequently taking the initiative. They can explain what they do clearly and, when listening to others, can consider varying points of view. Even the youngest children in the Reception class want to engage adults in conversations. In both key stages, pupils most generally deploy good literacy skills. They build successfully on what is established. Pupils read demanding books fluently and with meaning. They can work out unknown words and enjoy talking about what they read. Generally, pupils express themselves well when writing and show a good grasp of writing for different purposes in their literacy lessons. In Key Stage 1, older pupils compose quite long, lively stories. They know that a varied vocabulary helps to engage a reader. Older pupils in Year 5 have very good writing skills and a sound grasp of how stories are constructed. Pupils have good number skills. In Key Stage 1, by the time they are seven, pupils can order numbers to 100 with a secure sense of place value. At the end of Key Stage 2, they can quickly divide and multiply numbers by 10 or 100. Across the school, pupils are competent at applying their knowledge of times-tables to number work and to help them make quick calculations. Pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about past science work. For example, they have very good recall of the life cycle of frogs. Pupils across Key Stage 2 build well on this earlier learning. By the end of the key stage, pupils can set up experiments and put forward their hypotheses. They understand a fair test and record and evaluate their findings efficiently.
7. Pupils develop good spelling skills and use a range of dictionaries and thesauri with increasing assurance as they move through the school. They learn to form a joined script from an early age and manage work of a high standard by the time they transfer to Key Stage 2. Pupils continue to develop such skills, especially in the lower key stage. Older pupils can also produce good quality work when required. At times, though, they prefer to experiment with their own personal styles, which can detract from the content of what is actually written.
8. Pupils are rapidly acquiring secure computing skills now that information and communication technology is established. In both key stages, they use paint programs as part of their art work. They create graphs for a number of purposes and are beginning to use research information from the Internet for their studies across the curriculum.
9. The standard of pupils' singing throughout the school is high, both within classes and a whole-school setting. The choir achieves very high standards, and, since it comprises a good proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils, the choir positively influences singing in school more generally. Good standards also show in art, design and technology, in history in Key Stage 1 and in swimming in the later key stage. All pupils swim a required 25 metres and many do much better than this. Standards in art and history are broadly in line with expected levels by the end of Key Stage 2; they are also broadly average in geography in both key stages. The oldest pupils see history, for example, as a sequence of events illumined by factual information, but have little grasp of how societies influence each other or how artefacts tell us about past times. Although the school has worked hard to implement the National Curriculum, fully, since the previous inspection, it recognises continuing weaknesses in its provision for non-core subjects. These weaknesses are not priorities in light of the more pressing demands from core subjects and government initiatives, but are now embedded in school improvement planning for further work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are very good as are their relationships with others. Pupils are well

behaved and courteous to one another and to adults. There has been a marked improvement in these matters since the previous inspection. Evidence shows that behaviour, in particular, has considerably improved – a fact on which both parents and staff commented. There have been no exclusions in the relevant period prior to the inspection, also signifying an advance since the previous inspection.

11. The youngest children in the Reception year enter their classroom eagerly, keen to discover what there is to do and happy to settle with an activity organized while the register is being taken. All pupils talk mostly about how they enjoy school. They are seen listening attentively to their teachers and frequently express pleasure at what they do. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 thoroughly enjoyed taking different parts in a play scene aimed at helping them to recognise how to use their voices in unusual ways in a literacy lesson. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were similarly engrossed in a 'Big Book' text, picking out different speech-forms, although they initially were dismayed at what they saw, mistakenly, as a 'young children's book'. Pupils frequently show high levels of co-operative behaviour. For example, they happily share resources in Years 1 and 2 when putting words through a language machine or listening to one another on chime bars ("It's not three beats, it's two!"). In the Reception class, children's behaviour during reading time, while their teachers help individuals some distance away, is exemplary. They share notes on their stories, talking about the pictures and telling each other what is happening. In Years 5 and 6, pupils sit companionably together at a computer and one boy keeps sewing his design while another researches into Diwali, to discover the origins of the designs they are making. Across the school, pupils have great respect for equipment and each other's belongings, as well as for the many displays.
12. In whole-school and key stage assemblies, pupils listen well to adults and make sensible contributions to discussions. They take good account of one another's points of view and show a very good sense of the special nature of occasions during moments of reflection. At such times, the sense of the school being a harmonious community with common values is strong.
13. In the dining room, pupils eat their sandwiches in a well-ordered, sociable, manner. They converse with interest and are courteous to adults who supervise them. During dinner break, younger pupils enjoy running around the hard surface of the additional space they have because older pupils are still in the dining room. They are boisterous, but mostly show good awareness of their personal space, and take care not to bump in to others. At times, however, the boys start 'play fights', which can become over enthusiastic, although one sees that pupils intend no harm. The playground is flat and featureless. The school suitably identifies it as a project for development and related plans are in hand. In the brief period when older pupils are also outside, the playground is very crowded and pupils have to be extra vigilant in watching how they interact with others. Considering the squashed space, they manage well. Whilst this problem disappears in fine weather (when pupils can spill over on to the adjacent small field), it is problematic at other times. Play times are, therefore, staggered with only one overlap towards the end of lunchtime. Pupils are very responsive to adults when a whistle signals the end of play. They stop instantly and listen carefully for their turn to go back to class. Sometimes they rush noisily indoors and take time settling.
14. Pupils enjoy being responsible for small jobs, although pupils in Year 6 know that they did not live up to expectations in this regard, explaining why their duties as milk monitors were given to others. They also accepted that sanctions were reasonable. Generally, pupils are happy to help and are efficient in tidying classrooms at the end of lessons. They like to give out books or equipment and make sure visitors know where to go. At the meeting prior to the inspection, parents spoke approvingly about how older pupils greet newcomers, ensuring they are cared for and know what to do. Such care and consideration feature strongly in pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their peers. Older pupils also enjoy having responsibilities as fund-raisers for different charities at times during the school year and are said to perform connected functions well.
15. Attendance is good and compares favourably with national averages. Registration is carried out quickly and effectively. Straightforward procedures record and report absences. Pupils arrive at school punctually in the mornings and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is a strength. It is always at least satisfactory, with 94 per cent judged of good or better quality. In fact, teaching is very good in half the lessons seen and excellent in a further quarter. This shows a great improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was judged mostly good but unsatisfactory in the upper Key Stage 2. The improvement has been brought about by substantial staffing changes, including the school's leadership and by matching classroom practices to curricular requirements for the

different age-ranges. Most recently, the school has appointed a new Reception Year teacher suitably meeting the needs of children in the Foundation Stage.

17. Teaching in the Reception class is never less than good and is very good overall (76 per cent). In Key Stage 1, teaching is most frequently excellent (55 per cent) and is seldom less than very good. In Key Stage 2, it is mostly very good or better (71 per cent) and is seldom less than good. Where teaching is very good or better, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and pupils frequently reach standards better than might be expected. Particular strengths show in the teaching of all areas in the Foundation Stage, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in music across the key stages. However, there are strengths in other National Curriculum subjects: information and communication technology, geography, art and design and technology. Because of time-tabling, no teaching was seen in history, so no judgement is made here. In those elements of physical education observed, members of staff teaching swimming were judged good. The teaching of dance in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory, overall.
18. Throughout the school, teachers very effectively teach basic literacy and numeracy. Good quality planning ensures that activities match different learning needs. Teachers are highly skilled at motivating pupils to participate fully in lessons. For example, in the Reception class, well-paced activities help children stay on task for long periods, even at this young age. Pupils enjoy learning the sounds and names of letters as they cut out pictures and stick down groups of those that belong together. Teachers know each pupil well and make sure that those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons (including those with a Statement of special need). They use pupils' individual education plans to good effect when planning tasks. Most frequently, pupils are taught in classrooms where planning makes sure they contribute to a maximum, alongside peers. Where specific needs are identified, pupils are taught in a separate space. For example, an excellent Key Stage 1 session was observed when two pupils tackled word recognition and some vowel sounds through multi-sensory work. The teacher's homing in on their particular needs meant they made discernible progress and thoroughly enjoyed the 'games' they played.
19. Excellent and very good teaching shows in teachers' enthusiasm for the content taught and the way pupils are inspired to succeed. This was evident in many lessons. In such lessons, teachers explain learning objectives very clearly and these are well linked to prior work. They monitor pupils' progress consistently, keeping learning objectives to the fore. They make effective judgements about when to push learning on or consolidate. For example, in a literacy lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher realised pupils were familiar with a play-reading task through working in groups of four, and so quickly chose paired work to widen their speaking skills. Very good provision and excellent organisation of self-initiated learning tasks in the Reception class release the teacher for intensive work with a group. So, some children dressed up for role-play while others were variously engrossed, as their teacher supported a small group making puppets. In the upper Key Stage 2, the teacher's organisation for design meaningfully connected art studies and design and technology to information and communication technology. Lesson structure allowed the teacher to give support where it was most needed, watching how pupils responded to the autonomy given to them. Support staff are well deployed by teachers both in classrooms and in supervising small computer groups in the computer suite. In an excellent lesson in design and technology in Key Stage 1, the teacher was a 'consultant' to pupils in need of support. This strategy pointed up the purpose of the work in hand and used a classroom assistant and a parent helper efficiently. All adults knew their different roles, which aided pupils' progress significantly.
20. Teachers diligently mark pupils' work. At times, marking very helpfully clarifies what pupils understand and where they have reached and how they might improve. At other times, though, marking is not informative, so it is not plain what comments mean. Some teachers consistently attend to presentation and, in response, pupils strive to improve this. Teachers give very regular and helpful feedback to pupils during lessons and frequently talk through what individuals and small groups might do to improve.
21. Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. It is well aimed at extending classroom learning or improving on pupils' identified needs as these are set out in learning targets (for example, in English and mathematics). Home/school work-books show that teachers mark homework and make pertinent comments. At the meeting prior to the inspection, some parents confirmed that teachers 'chase up' missing homework: inspection evidence supports them.

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

22. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned. It is well matched to learning needs and ensures

equal access for all. The school has taken good account of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance regarding Curriculum 2000 and the Foundation Stage to check out all curricular requirements. It is, though, still refining its curriculum, especially with regard to some non-core subjects. The school has made very good strides since the previous inspection when weaknesses were identified, most especially in providing for older pupils in Key Stage 2 and in information and communication technology. Inspection evidence shows that the National Curriculum was not then in place in Key Stage 2 so that subject coverage was patchy. Nor was an appropriate curriculum for children in the Reception class being delivered.

23. Since the previous inspection, the school has rightly prioritised what a small school with a small number of teachers can realistically achieve. It has concentrated on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together with the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning is kept in line with the Strategies, but is adapted well to suit the school's own needs. Because of the stress on these areas, standards generally are high. This fact also represents an improvement since the last inspection when a significant number in upper Key Stage 2 were thought to be underachieving. More recently, the school has used funding from the National Grid for Learning to implement coverage of the information and communication technology curriculum. Much work has been done and continues to be done in this area since funding came through.
24. The new Foundation Stage teacher has worked hard and with very good levels of success to improve provision. However, lack of a separate space impedes planning for outdoor play. For example, it limits access to wheeled toys and large-scale equipment such as a climbing frame, impairing opportunities for physical development. Consequently, too, planning does not easily encompass links between the indoor and outdoor curriculum in ways best suited to children's learning.
25. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Well qualified support staff give sensitive support to pupils both within class and when they are occasionally withdrawn for specific purposes. Teachers and support staff work hard to give these pupils effective help, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. Consequently, they make good progress in meeting targets set by their individual education plans.
26. Music provision, through lessons and extra curricular activities, is a strength. The school recognises that work needs to be done on other non-core subjects. For example, art and design is not yet mapped out to show how it is delivered over time and, whilst such mapping is complete for history, geography and physical education, the school rightly wishes to develop these subjects further. Currently, there is an imbalance in physical education due to time allocated for swimming in Key Stage 2. Provision for the subject is further restricted by a lack of indoor facilities, especially for older pupils, by the small size of hard surfaced playground - which again limits older pupils' use - and the outdoor field area being accessible only in good weather.
27. Although there is no formally planned programme for personal, health and social education many issues are discussed appropriately within structured circle time and through the school's religious education scheme, 'Here I am'. Governors have decided not to include sex education in the curriculum, although pupils' questions are honestly met as they arise. There is no policy on drugs' awareness, but a teacher has undergone training, subsequently disseminated to staff, and due consideration is given to this issue - for example when studying healthy living in science. To augment provision, the school invites visitors in to discuss relevant issues (for example, a school nurse and a member of the local police force).
28. Provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory, overall. Pupils' travel arrangements restrict after-school activities, as does the small number of staff able to assist. Football and netball training is given within season and the school takes part in matches against other schools. There is a lunch-time guitar club and the choir practises each week. Some pupils opt for additional instrumental lessons from a visiting teacher paid for through the local authority scheme. Some activities are seasonally organised. For example, in Spring terms (from January) children practise cross-country running during lunch times.
29. Links with the community are good. Pupils take part in village activities for example, the 'litter pick' and village fete where pupils in Key Stage 2 perform songs. The choir also visits local nursing homes at Christmas and older people come in to school in connection with classroom work. The school takes part in diocesan events such as a special Cathedral mass and the Walsingham jubilee pilgrimage. Links with other schools are developing. The school is part of a cluster and senior staff meet regularly. In addition, opportunities are sought to widen links for co-operative ventures involving pupils, as when the schools

joined together to rehearse and perform a musical event. Links with the Catholic secondary school are strong and the school is beginning to strengthen ties to local playgroups. Such links help launch pupils into a secure start to school and transfer at eleven.

30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
31. There is a very strong Christian ethos behind all provision. Every chance is taken to give pupils a sense of wonder and joy in learning. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson pupils found learning about fractions using cakes and oranges fun, and in a Year 1 and 2 lesson they were captivated by pictures on the computer screen. Assemblies are very well planned to involve pupils in occasions of spiritual depth. All staff are excellent role models in that they teach those principles distinguishing right from wrong. Assemblies and religious education lessons often have moral themes and moral issues are sometimes dealt with in circle time. The school has a very positive approach to behaviour management. Pupils discuss rules at the start of the school year, deciding how these should apply to their own classrooms. Teachers reward good work and behaviour, celebrating both during Friday assembly.
32. All staff members know pupils well and very good relationships provide a strong basis for pupils' social development. Within lessons, particularly numeracy and literacy, pupils are expected to work independently within groups, whilst class teachers focus on a particular group. Pupils rise to this challenge well. They take a very positive part in giving and fundraising, understanding the work of many of the local, national and international concerns they support. For example, pupils fill shoe boxes for Eastern Europe and raise money for a Catholic charity organisation through a variety of events. Personal and social skills benefit from visitors to the school and visits made, including residential visits by Years 5 and 6.
33. Provision for cultural development is now good. Since the last inspection, the school's resources have been improved and opportunities for greater awareness of the wider culture beyond the school strengthened as a means of remedying weaknesses identified. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use an Indian design associated with the festival of Diwali as a basis for their work in art and find out about its symbolism in the Hindu and Sikh faiths. Pupils from Year 2 upwards visit the theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon for young children's productions. Pupils have also been to the Royal Opera House in London to watch a ballet; Years 5 and 6 made a residential study-visit to France. Pupils take part in a wide range of musical events and visit museums and other places of interest. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 participated in a schools' festival of music in Birmingham and pupils in Key Stage 1 visited Lunt Fort when finding out about the Romans. Visitors to school also widen pupils' perspectives, as when local people come in to talk about the toys they had as children and their experiences in World War II. Email links with other schools are planned to give pupils greater cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. All adults who work in the school unite in providing a safe, caring environment. Pupils know teachers will always help them and so instinctively do their best. When asked what was the best thing about their school, a group of pupils in Key Stage 1 said emphatically "The teachers!" Standards in pupils' welfare, support and guidance noted by the last inspection report are improved. Parents speak highly of the way in which the school looks after children.
35. All staff members contribute to the school's caring ethos. They know pupils and families well and so speedily respond to individual needs. There are very good child protection procedures. Members of staff listen sensitively to pupils. Stimulated by the last inspection, the school has implemented an effective health and safety policy, very well monitored by the governing body. There are no outstanding health and safety issues. The school makes very good lunchtime provision, when supervisors' kindly concern makes for good relationships with pupils.
36. Teachers have a good picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, behaviour and personal development. Early procedures picking out pupils needing extra support are very good. The school follows all recommendations of the national Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. There is very good liaison between the special needs co-ordinator and support staff. Detailed information, together with high quality individual education plans, is up-dated and used well to target support in classrooms and smaller teaching groups. All adults working in school are patient and kind. They encourage pupils with a warm smile to volunteer answers and play a full part in lessons. Teachers take special care to acknowledge pupils' achievements in all areas, particularly when they have made efforts.

37. The school monitors pupil progress efficiently. On entry to Reception, children are rigorously assessed in line with local authority Baseline procedures. Information feeds into teaching and learning activities in line with identified needs. In addition to written records, the teacher keeps a visual record of individual progress in photographs related to learning noted as significant. The school analyses assessment information carefully as pupils move through the key stages (including teachers' assessments across the year as well as data from national tests at the end of each key stage). In addition, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 take national tests for these age groups in English and mathematics to allow the school to set realistic targets in these subjects. Information collected informs individual targets as strengths and weaknesses are identified. Information from end-of-key-stage tests reveals well how standards are rising, especially with regard to pupils' attaining the higher Level 3 at seven and Level 5 at eleven.
38. In Key Stage 2, pupils evaluate their own performance and, using teachers' comments, set their own targets in English and mathematics each Monday. At the end of the week, they reflect on their week and record their thoughts on how well they have done. Targets for pupils in Key Stage 1 are discussed personally with pupils and set by the teacher in light of ongoing assessments made during the course of lessons. Targets are regularly monitored and pupils assess how well they have done and the standards they reach at a very early stage. Pupils have a 'best work' book, which they take through the school. They choose two pieces of work, representing their best efforts and of which they are proud, to put in the book each term. Parents welcome this initiative and believe it positively affects standards.
39. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour since the last inspection. Procedures promoting behaviour are now good and the school functions as a calm and well-ordered community. All parents who replied to the questionnaire supported this view. The school is developing effective approaches to personal, social and health education to persuade pupils to talk about anything that worries them. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection and pupils were in no doubt that they must report anything bothering them to an adult. All staff members have received substantial training as part of a diocesan programme for counselling pupils with particular needs.
40. Effective measures promote good attendance and parents know they must inform the school if their child is absent. A large majority of parents co-operate well and there are good systems in place to follow up absences and monitor attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school has very effective links with parents. The standards found by the last inspection have risen considerably and reflect commendable efforts made by the school. Information from the inspection questionnaires and the pre-inspection meeting indicates that parents are very supportive, greatly valuing the improvements made.
42. Quality of information for parents is good. New parents come to a meeting to learn about the school and to meet staff, governors and members of the Parent Teacher and Friends' Association. Letters and newsletters are couched in an accessible style and give a good picture of current themes of work and activities. The prospectus is equally revealing about school routines. There are regular consultation evenings where parents can discuss their children's performance. The homework diary links home and school well, although many parents do not make effective use of these. Annual reports sent out in the summer term are of high quality. Although these reports are not precise about standards, this information is readily available at a subsequent consultation evening. All staff members are very approachable. They will always find time to listen to parental concerns at the end of the school day.
43. Parents of children with special education needs are kept well informed of children's progress. They are as fully involved as practicable in identifying their children's needs and providing for these. They get copies of agreed individual educational plans. They are very appreciative of the school's work, as was evident at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection.
44. The school actively encourages parents to take part in school life and some commit themselves regularly to assist in classrooms, particularly at the Foundation Stage. The school greatly values the help parents give. During the inspection, for example, a parent was seen cooking with pupils in Key Stage 1. She kept them on task while also letting them discuss their cooking purposefully in a small group. Most parents have already signed the home/school partnership agreement and most co-operate readily (for example, by listening to their children read and by reporting absences promptly). Many parents show their interest by

attending open evenings and supporting school activities.

45. A very active Parent Teacher and Friends' Association contributes generously to school funds. It works closely with staff in arranging out-of-school activities such as football training and in organising transport to events for pupils further afield. Parents help by taking pupils to football and netball matches at other schools. They hold social events, which foster very good relationships between parents and staff. A noteworthy effort was the 'Old Time Music Hall' involving all staff which was greatly enjoyed by all. Pupils benefit from funds raised and by the ensuing home-school relationships. Parents appreciate the support given by staff to their Association's events and see this as genuinely revealing the school's commitment to a strong home/school partnership. Many parents and staff spoke warmly of the school's happy community spirit.
46. In questionnaires, some parents raised concerns about homework. In the view of the inspection team, parents may not be making the best use of the homework diaries, since levels of homework are judged to be very good. Homework is kept in line with the school's policy and serves well to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. It is evident, though, that few parents sign their children's homework diaries. Parents also expressed concern about the range of extra-curricular activities. Again, inspection evidence found provision to be perfectly in order, especially in view of the fact that many pupils travel a distance and rely on transport arrangements for their journeys home. In the Spring and Summer months, as weather permits, a wider range of extra-curricular activities is arranged in keeping with the lighter evenings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school are very good. As a result of effective delegation and the headteacher's very clear direction, all the staff and governors share a vision and a commitment to raising standards. This dimension of school life has noticeably guided progress since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a very good working relationship with governors and staff so that clear lines of duties and responsibilities are known to all. The school day runs like clockwork with pupils most frequently receiving high quality lessons and very good levels of pastoral care. In view of the headteacher's heavy responsibilities in relation to teaching as well as to management duties, this achievement is particularly noteworthy, but is clearly gained at some personal cost.
48. Statutory requirements are fully in place. All weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed.
49. The headteacher's aim is for the school to be a centre of educational excellence with a Catholic ethos and everyone connected with it has this aim in their sights. It is reflected in the school's everyday life where standards in academic work and behaviour are set. A clearly stated set of educational objectives is now agreed by all. The headteacher, governors, all teachers and other school staff co-operate very well to support the pupils and each other. In particular, the deputy headteacher and head work extremely well together. The deputy head's evident expertise in many curricular areas together with her management skills are highly valued by colleagues and governors.
50. The high standard of teaching in the school is a result partly of thorough monitoring by the headteacher and deputy and partly of a concentrated In-service programme, undertaken by all teachers and other staff. A new teacher has been very well supported through a thoughtful induction programme. All staff members are committed to improving their performance for the sake of pupils. A system for monitoring the headteacher's performance is already well in place and governors have been suitably trained for this. The role of the core subject co-ordinators is sharply defined. Currently, the headteacher or deputy headteacher take responsibility for subjects not co-ordinated by other teachers, but, in a small staff, pragmatism dictates that all teaching staff share in the process of developing subjects.
51. The governors provide a very good level of support. They are very aware of how the school operates and actively promote it to the Catholic community within travelling distance. The school is not full and governors are adamant that the good education provided should be more widely known. They have some concern over funding levels and do everything they can to support parents and school in efforts to raise money to augment the allocated budget. Some budget difficulties are reflected in the low number of classroom support staff. However, many parents support teachers in school and their help is invaluable. There is sufficient support targeted for pupils who have special educational needs.
52. The school successfully put together a bid for money from the National Grid for learning. As a result, it is

now equipped with a small computer suite and sufficient money for staff training. The school improvement plan is very good. It is well targeted and extremely well monitored, with realistic priorities. For example, non-core subjects are now properly identified for further development. School resources are adequate to ensure curriculum coverage and are well supplemented by the schools' library loan service. Some resources are very good, such as equipment for teaching science.

53. In the meeting prior to the inspection, parents stated that the building has improved since the previous inspection 'out of all recognition' in the way available space is used and in its décor. A very able caretaker and cleaning staff lovingly maintain the school. They feel part of the school community. They are unfailingly helpful to everyone and respected by all in return. However, the building continues to present a problem. The hall space is really too small for physical education as is the outdoor hard surface. Lack of outside space for sole use of children in the Foundation Stage limits provision. Classroom space is just about adequate for pupil-numbers, but the headteacher's room is small, cramped and inadequate. Funds are now available to improve the playground's surface and funds from the parents and friends' association are earmarked for improving playground facilities.
54. The office computer is used efficiently for all finances. The school has good financial procedures, clearly based on best value principles. In addition, quotations for all work undertaken and supplies purchased are scrutinised for cost effectiveness. The governors actively monitor spending.
55. Improvements made to the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection significantly impact on school life. All-round improvement is very good and the school is now very effective. It gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- Provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage is improved so that:
 - suitable outdoor play space can be used as part of a planned curriculum, allowing (for example) children to use equipment such as wheeled toys and climbing apparatus; and
 - curricular planning attends more to outdoor space as an adjunct to classroom teaching.

(Paragraphs 1, 24, 53, 71)

- The non-core subjects are further developed in line with school improvement planning so that:
 - teachers' expertise regarding these subjects is given attention to bring teaching and learning in line with the school's best practice;
 - planning across all subjects consistently shows how curricular elements will be delivered; and
 - imbalances in the physical educational curriculum are addressed.

(Paragraphs 9, 22, 26, 52, 94, 98, 103, 104, 125, 128)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. This is indicated in paragraph 13.

- In line with planning, ensure that the playground is a more stimulating place for pupils at break times.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

36

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

29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
25	50	19	6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	86
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR– Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
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	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (93)	100 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	100 (93)	100 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

NB: the number of boys and girls taking each test is not entered because there were fewer than 10 in either group.

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	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (n/a)	89 (n/a)	100 (n/a)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (n/a)	89 (n/a)	84 (n/a)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

NB: the number of boys and girls taking each test is not entered because there were fewer than 10 in either group. The statistics for 1999 (in brackets) are not given because there were fewer than 10 pupils in the cohort..

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	68
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)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	179010
Total expenditure	171469
Expenditure per pupil	1768
Balance brought forward from previous year	1150
Balance carried forward to next year	8691

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	15	2	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	31	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	44	19	0	0
The teaching is good.	64	36	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	37	10	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	51	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	46	20	3	5

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

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Children make good progress in developing co-operative social skills due to very good teaching and family support. By the time of the inspection, nearly all had more highly polished personal skills than would be expected for their age. They make very good relationships with other children and with adults met during their school day. They freely discuss what they are doing. Because activities are carefully structured, children's assured day-to-day self-management matches up to their teachers' very high expectations. For example, they put on their own outdoor coats, change themselves for physical education, wash their hands after going to the toilet and generally behave in a very sensible and mature way. On the very rare occasion when there is a dispute (as when two boys wanted the same jacket for dressing up), children listen carefully to what a teacher says. Their ability to tell 'right' from 'wrong' shows in their actions and behaviour towards others.
57. Children readily approach adults. Their teacher has devised an excellent strategy for facilitating children's independent choices for learning. Sets of labelled pictures linked to particular activities, which children can wear around their necks, are hung on hooks. When a hook is empty, the activity is no longer open to other pupils. This strategy keeps down numbers at an activity in ways the children grasp. It supports classroom organisation effectively while nurturing children's independence and sense of responsibility. The children show good concentration, especially when persisting at an activity they have chosen. For example, three boys worked in a sand tray talking about the 'wedding cake' they were making. They patiently kept up their conversation while waiting for the 'milk' being 'made' by a boy and a girl in the adjacent water tray ("Is it ready yet?"). Children take care not to bump into each other when moving about and are habitually kind, helpful and considerate. They already meet some criteria for the Early Learning Goals and are set to exceed these by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Children build well on good speaking and listening skills evident at the start of their schooling. They have a wide vocabulary for their age and listen well both to each other and to the teacher. They follow quite detailed instructions and are not afraid to question if they do not understand (as they did, for example, during a music and movement lesson based on Jack and the Beanstalk). They are confident in offering opinions during class discussions and will offer their own special prayers quietly and carefully when asked to reflect and pray at the end of sessions. They are sensitive to the special nature of such occasions. Children can relate to what others are saying and follow the theme behind a discussion. For example, when talking about a story, one pupil said a character's sister did not get an invitation to the party "because she lives in the (same) house."
59. Children make rapid progress in reading skills partly as a result of the home/school diary. Parents use it to support their children at home and both teachers and parents can record achievements. Children have a lively interest in books and many are keen to begin to read. Each day a period of time is devoted to book skills and the pupils enjoy this time very much. It is well organized so children can get on independently while the teacher focuses on individuals. All children handle books properly and can tell a story, using pictures, showing a good appreciation of how books 'work'. For example, two boys can be heard saying "Once upon a time ..." to each other, as each begins telling their story. A girl takes on a teacher's role extremely well, insisting that two pupils (boys) look at the pictures and listen to what she says as she points to them. They must not touch the book! All children can sequence a story correctly, using pictures with captions underneath. They know the initial sounds of words and learn common words as part of their sight vocabulary. They enjoy showing what they know. Literacy lessons are very well thought out to match children's learning needs, being well paced. This helps children enjoy their learning and acquire many early literacy skills with relative ease.
60. At the beginning of each day, children settle immediately and apply themselves to a work sheet aimed at both reading and writing skills. Whilst this task is carefully presented as a voluntary activity, all children take it up. Their teacher makes the activity sound very exciting, which makes the children want to

participate and persevere. They love doing the sheets and apply themselves well to completing them. Most write their name correctly unaided (as when they write their names on their paintings) and like forming letters in the sand.

61. Teaching is consistently of very good quality. The teacher takes every opportunity to promote skills, knowledge and understanding in this key area. There is a very good balance of teacher-initiated and child-chosen activities. At this point in the school year, children already manage some aspects of the Early Learning Goals, especially as these relate to the development of speaking and listening skills. They are thus judged likely to exceed some goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1 and indications are that they will achieve, if not exceed, expectations for their age in the remaining goals by then.

Mathematical development

62. Although attainment on entry to school in mathematics is assessed as average, inspection findings show that children reach above average standards, overall. Children's good progress in this area of learning is owed to the consistently very good teaching, well aimed at matching work closely to need. Planning takes good account of the need to develop key skills through structured teaching, as well as in the everyday course of events. For example, children count how many work with play dough to check against picture cards available for this activity when a girl wants to join in.
63. Many children have a good knowledge of number. Analysis of work completed this term shows that they already sequence, count and record numbers to ten and can write numbers correctly. They have practised this a lot and many can count beyond ten. They know the value of coins, show that they understand the words 'heavy' and 'light' and can draw a block graph about things they have investigated. The teacher's introduction to work on shapes and repeating patterns presented children with a good level of challenge. For example, she organized them according to the colour of their hair and eyes and used repeating patterns in music to stimulate discussion. Although some found the work hard, many rose to the task and a good focus kept all fully involved and moving forward. They went on to make their own pattern strips, including long patterns on the carpet, with large and small plastic shapes. They also made colour patterns with small cubes, copying these on to squared paper. They showed full understanding of repeating patterns by the end of the lesson and very good progress was made. The classroom is set out deliberately to nurture children's mathematical understanding effectively. For example, there are large figures made of different shapes, collections of articles to count and red footsteps on the floor numbered one to ten. Children are well in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1 and the indications are that most are likely to exceed these goals.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is already good in relation to the expected attainment of children at the end of the Foundation Stage. Indications are that they will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. Many bring with them a wealth of experience (for example, they may have their own gardens and go on holiday each year to a variety of places). A good proportion attend a local Church and many visit each other to play and for parties. Children talk knowledgeably about their experiences beyond school and show a lively interest in the world around them. Planning takes good account of what can be gained by building on such learning and aims to expand children's knowledge through carefully structured activities, including all relevant aspects of the curriculum. For example, themes of work have included learning about 'Ourselves', emphasising names for parts of the body and eating healthily. Children have investigated 'push and pull' in relation to forces in science. Children show very good skills in sewing together the two parts of a glove puppet. They choose materials for its hair and think how to arrange its features to achieve a desired effect. Finally, they glue 'buttons' down its front. Before starting, children plan their puppets by drawing them on the computer. They make a variety of cakes and biscuits with play dough, explaining the precise nature of these, setting out the finished products carefully for watchers to see and choose which they like best ("they are iced cakes and these are biscuits"). Children making 'milk' in the water tray pour water down funnels and tubes, shake up the resulting mixture and talk about whether they need more liquid or whether they have sufficient ("it isn't finished yet, it needs some bubbles"). A girl spends a long time experimenting with the sounds of different instruments, comparing one with another. She finally arranges a line of these to play.
65. There is a puppet theatre (hence designing and making glove puppets), well equipped sand and water trays and good opportunities to use the computer aided by a parent helper. Since there is currently no computer in the classroom, children cannot have access without such supervision. However, they listen to taped

music and stories on the classroom tape recorder and can be heard singing along with familiar rhymes and songs as they play during the day. The role-play area changes its function suitably in line with themes of work and this term has already been a fruit and vegetable shop and a hospital. Visitors to school stimulate planning, as when a local nurse came in to talk to the children and launch the hospital area. Currently, opportunities for children to extend their exploration of the world to the outside of their school as an integral part of their learning, are limited. The school is aware of this limitation.

66. Teaching is not less than very good and is sometimes excellent. This is reflected in the organisation of activities, whereby children work independently on self-chosen tasks they find absorbing, releasing their teacher to work for sustained periods with small groups. Children make good gains from interactions with their teacher (as when they discuss how to complete their puppets).

Creative development

67. Children make good progress in their creative development, reaching good standards. They are well in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1 and indications are that many will exceed these. Teaching is very good. Planning incorporates a wide range of activities well suited to children in this age-range. Activities are carefully aimed at extending children in meaningful ways, through cross-curricular links. For example, children undertake role-play in the 'hospital' as an outcome of learning the names of bones and their function.
68. Children's capacity to listen carefully and ask pertinent questions helps them to think creatively about what they do. The teacher capitalises effectively on related skills while she supports individuals and small groups. For example, she helps children realise how to select materials for their puppets whilst discussing how the puppets will be used in the puppet-theatre's plays. Children make good use of musical instruments freely accessible for self-chosen tasks. Sometimes, three or four join to form a 'band', working collaboratively at sounds that please them. Children think carefully about the sounds they want to produce when choosing instruments. Many have a good repertoire of traditional rhymes and songs by heart and join in taped music when this accompanies their activities. They carefully paint unique pictures of special events in their lives, such as a visit to Banbury Fair and to a local park. They confidently print patterns arising from their mathematics work. They cautiously dip cotton reels into paint, arranging a pattern to suit their own purposes. Children can name colours they use, including those formed by mixing two together (such as purple). There is a good collection of dressing-up clothes for imaginative play and children dress up enthusiastically. They have a good sense of how to take on another role, as when two boys were seen wearing police hats while they directed 'traffic' during an outside play time.

Physical development

69. Children move peacefully and happily around classroom, school and playground with good levels of awareness about their personal space. They do not jostle or bump others. Outside, they play well with a limited number of wheeled vehicles and can manoeuvre them adeptly. They persevere at trying to hit a ball with a bat until they finally succeed. Their aim is good. Children move well in music and movement lessons, listening attentively both to the instructions and the music. They move in time to the music and put maximum effort into each body movement. There are sighs of relief when they reach a period of rest. In class, they control small tools and equipment well. A majority (more than two thirds) hold crayons, paintbrushes and pencils correctly. They can all write their names reasonably clearly and make marks suggesting a word-pattern for play purposes. They make recognisable patterns or images in their paintings, placing paint cautiously, as when they make cotton reel patterns with poster paints. They mould materials such as play dough dexterously and can roll it out quite thinly to cut desired shapes. They pick up their play dough 'biscuits' with some care, aware that these will easily break if not held properly. They use scissors correctly and pick up small objects precisely.
70. Although outdoor play is limited and opportunities to develop important skills such as climbing and balancing are constrained, children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals in physical development by the end of the current school year. Teaching is very good. Clear instructions and demonstrations in the use of tools and equipment are well pitched at children's levels. Their teacher is a good role model in movement lessons, demonstrating the proper enthusiastic response to a programme's instructions. At times, she gives well judged support to an individual who becomes discouraged because of a difficulty (for example, when handling scissors).

ENGLISH

71. Standards overall have improved on the good standards identified in the previous inspection. Statutory test results for 2000 were well above the average for pupils in all and similar schools for both seven and eleven-year-olds at expected levels. In addition, seven-year-olds achieved well above the national average in reading and writing at the higher Level 3 and above the average reached by pupils in similar schools, at this level. Eleven-year-olds achieved well above the average at the higher Level 5 compared to both national and similar schools' results. These latest figures show a marked upward trend from previous years, especially in Key Stage 2, although caution is needed in interpreting results over time since some cohorts had fewer than 10 pupils (meaning that statistics lose their reliability). Although boys in the school performed better than boys nationally, girls have mostly out-performed boys in the school, in line with national trends. Targets are set realistically and the 2000 results show that the targets set for the expected Level 4 have been achieved, while results are better than predicted at the higher Level 5.
72. Inspection findings support this positive picture, especially at Key Stage 1, where pupils reach consistently good standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils are judged to succeed broadly in line with expectations for their age in speaking and listening and in writing. They achieve better than this, reaching good standards in reading where they can read demanding texts. Consistently very good teaching challenges pupils to do better than might otherwise be the case, throughout the curriculum. This is noticeable when pupils discuss class texts and in the way they apply themselves to writing. Whilst there is no discernible difference in the contributions made by boys or girls to discussions, girls are better at writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through good quality support. Tasks are well matched to these pupils' needs, so that they achieve at least in line with their prior attainment.
73. In Key Stage 1, pupils build on well-established skills. By seven, they can tell the number of sounds in words said aloud by the teacher for spelling. They can spell words with double letter combinations such as 'oa', 'ow' and 'oo' (as in 'spoon') and know that these combinations count as one sound. Across the full range, pupils read with good fluency and meaning. High attaining pupils and those of average attainment see how to present the point of view of a character in a story. For example, they can imagine being a bear conjecturing on what it might be like to live in a boy's house. They describe how it might feel to leave ("I felt sorry I'd upset William"). Younger pupils in Year 1 make very good progress in understanding story conventions through the many opportunities they have to recall a story and re-tell it in their own words. So, by the end of a whole-class discussion, they are sufficiently confident to write out their own ideas about a bear's point of view rather than complete the task set for them. Higher attaining younger pupils compose simple sentences quite quickly and show a good grasp of spelling conventions. Although lower attaining pupils need more support, they can also formulate sentences by the end of the lesson.
74. At the end of Key Stage 2, whilst pupils in Year 6 are initially reluctant, they soon show themselves ready to discuss 'direct' and 'reported' speech as used by an author when looking at a passage from "The Railway Children". Through their teacher's persistent questioning, they grow in interest as they increasingly contribute to discussion. They quickly realise the nature of reported speech ("someone tells you about something but not in the exact words") and can pick out examples from the passage selected. Later, in their own writing, pupils show how well they grasp speech marks and those aspects of grammar and punctuation they have studied. Higher attaining pupils are also growing in skills of recording reported speech. However, these oldest pupils do not, yet, write at length and find it hard to sustain ideas, although a scrutiny of last year's work reveals that the school has relevant high expectations. In group reading, three Year 6 pupils tackle a demanding short novel with insight. All alter their voices to register different characters, especially one boy who creates good dramatic effect. Pupils discuss word meanings sensibly and make good use of context and story to work these out (for example, "damning evidence"). Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can differentiate between a play script they study and prose pieces and poems they have read in previous lessons, via a teacher's skilled probing of these differences. On recalling the school's visit to a theatre last year, they show their good grasp of how the plots of plays are constructed through a play's characters. They understand how punctuation in a script (such as exclamation marks) gives emphasis and speak parts convincingly, taking good account of such punctuation.
75. Pupils have good 'secretarial' skills across the school. They have very competent strategies for spelling and can use simple dictionaries by the time they are seven. Handwriting is well formed in a joined script and work is pleasingly presented. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop these skills and frequently use pen and ink for written work. By the end of the key stage, older pupils similarly apply such skills to good effect. They are beginning to experiment with individual styles of writing (though

inconsistently). Little evidence for the use of computers for word processing purposes was seen during the inspection, but pupils have suitable opportunities for such work across the year. In addition, they make good use of information and communication technology for research purposes. For example, in Years 5 and 6, a group of girls researched the poet Thomas Hood during a lunch time break following a lesson where they studied one of his poems.

76. Teaching is never less than very good and is frequently excellent (44 per cent). Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. The National Literacy Strategy is securely in place and teachers plan in line with it, adapting its content very well to pupils' needs. Even pupils with special educational needs are included in lessons in ways allowing them to participate fully alongside their peers. For example, all pupils in Years 3 and 4 took part enthusiastically in small group and paired work when a play script was being studied. Through these structured tasks, pupils' skills in reading the voices of different characters grew in a relatively short time. Teachers are imaginative in how they keep mixed-age pupils motivated. For example, in Years 1 and 2, all pupils liked setting out small plastic counters representing separate sounds as they listened hard to words being spelt. This practical approach meant that the youngest could identify the number of sounds they heard as well as initial letters and some 'double letter' sounds. Older pupils correctly spelled all words with double vowel sounds.
77. Teachers' very high expectations of work and behaviour keep a sharp focus in lessons. Such consistency works especially well at the end of Key Stage 2 where the behaviour of a very small number is challenging at times, threatening to disrupt proceedings. Teachers also consistently refer pupils to their own personal targets (such as in connection with particular spellings), especially in Key Stage 2, stressing the need to check work for accuracy before deciding it is finished. Resources cover all aspects of the curriculum and are well deployed. For example, a 'language machine' in Years 1 and 2 reinforces and widens pupils' vocabulary across the curriculum, with the aim of encouraging its use in their written work. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is somewhat inconsistent, most notably in the later key stage. At times, marking is helpful and gives pupils a clear idea of how to put right weaknesses. This is especially true for lower attaining pupils.
78. An excellent file of examples of work is kept across each level of attainment, illustrating different kinds of writing from the Reception class to Year 6. These represent samples collected over the last two years and have been 'levelled' in line with national criteria for attainment. The file gives a graphic picture of standards aimed at by the school. It shows good progress in the development of pupils' literacy skills.
79. The co-ordinator gains an excellent overview of the subject through a range of monitoring activities. She works in close co-operation with the headteacher in monitoring standards and pinpointing strengths and weaknesses for setting targets. To this end, she also liaises regularly with the governor responsible for literacy. Her own exemplary classroom practice sets high standards. Currently, the school rightly focuses on pupils' extended writing skills and wishes to address differences in the attainment of boys and girls, especially as these are evident in writing. Resources are thus evaluated for their effect on boys' perceptions of the subject (particularly in the upper Key Stage 2). Cross-curricular links are also being considered for their potential in stimulating purposeful writing.

MATHEMATICS

80. Results of national tests at the end of both key stages in 2000 show that pupils attained well above the average of pupils in all and similar schools at expected levels for seven and eleven year olds. A much higher proportion of seven-year-olds also succeeded at the higher Level 3, as did a higher proportion of eleven-year-olds at the higher Level 5, than was the case both nationally and in similar schools. Over four years, standards in both key stages have fluctuated, although they have kept above the national average in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, fluctuations are more marked with some dips towards the national average. However, the latest results rise dramatically above this, marking the best the school has achieved during this time-span. It should be noted that past cohorts of pupils have sometimes numbered below 10, making results related to them statistically unreliable. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy together with the school's actions in analysing test results and stress on identified weaknesses through its target setting, has clearly worked. Inspection findings show pupils of seven and eleven reaching good standards, frequently better than expected at this age. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs is at least in line with their prior attainment. All pupils are challenged appropriately by work well matched to their different learning needs. This fact signifies a real improvement since the previous inspection, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 where higher attaining pupils were stated, then, to be underachieving. The school sets targets rigorously in line with data it now collects systematically.

These latest results show that it has exceeded its targets for this year.

81. By eleven, pupils grasp place value and can multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100 quickly. They add, subtract, multiply and divide. These oldest pupils know all the symmetries of two-dimensional shapes, the names of different triangles and the sum of their angles. They collect information and interpret it accurately, using bar and line graphs. In Years 3 and 4, they are beginning to make sense of equivalent fractions and the significance of the denominator. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 reduce fractions to their simplest terms and check their calculations by applying their knowledge of inverse operations (for example, multiplication and division) or by making approximate estimates. They devise simple formulae for working out area and perimeter, using brackets appropriately. In Years 3 and 4, pupils already know about negative numbers and can make simple calculations with these. They multiply larger numbers by partitioning them, then adding up the sum of each part.
82. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils order numbers up to 100 and beyond with a good grasp of place value. They round numbers to the nearest ten and have a good recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20. They classify two and three-dimensional shapes by properties and see how graphs display information and answer questions. In mental work, pupils can articulate their thinking – explaining, for example, their strategies for adding three numbers. They understand and can use symbols for less and greater than.
83. Teaching is consistently very good. Teachers' planning provides pupils with very good and, at times, excellent learning opportunities. Planning follows the National Numeracy Strategy, suitably adapted to the range of pupils' attainment in each class. Although planning necessarily has to take account of two age groups in each class, it suitably challenges all pupils. This reveals teachers' very good subject knowledge and teaching skills. Lessons start with a brisk mental session, setting the pace for what follows. Very good methods capture pupils' enthusiasm and make learning fun as well. For example, in a lesson for Years 1 and 2, a crocodile, Greedy Gertie, was used to demonstrate the sign 'less than'. A stimulating question and answer session led to many pupils using the signs for 'less than' and 'greater than' with growing assurance. In Years 3 and 4, a teacher got instant attention in a demonstration about fractions with a bar of chocolate. Previous learning was well extended as pupils went on to cut up a small cake each and segment oranges. This practical activity helped pupils handle the mathematical language of fractions in meaningful ways. Pupils are frequently allowed to reason for themselves and further their understanding of concepts, as in Years 5 and 6 where they calculated perimeters and areas of shapes after being given minimum figures for the dimensions required.
84. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate well and work hard. They accept teachers' high expectations. Teachers assess pupils fairly precisely against the learning objectives of the Numeracy Strategy. They set personalised targets, checking consistently that these are referred to in lessons (for example, during a quick recall of times-table facts to support calculations). Targets are suitably adjusted as pupils progress. Information and communication technology well supports learning in mathematics, as when pupils use different types of graphs. Regular homework suitably extends or reinforces classroom work.
85. The subject is well led by its co-ordinator. She has effectively overseen the introduction and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, keeping a good overview of the subject through a range of monitoring activities. Pupils' progress is tracked throughout the school, informing target-setting on an individual and school basis. The results of end of year tests are carefully analysed. Well-used resources are sufficient for curricular demands.

SCIENCE

86. Since the previous inspection, when standards were stated to be above national expectations in both key stages, the attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds has risen markedly. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 show the attainment of seven-year-olds as very high compared with pupils in all and similar schools at expected levels. It was also very high compared to the national average at the higher Level 3 and well above the average of pupils in similar schools at this level. There has been a steady improvement in results over recent years, especially in the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards attained in 2000 statutory tests were very high at expected levels when compared to results for pupils in all and similar schools. At the higher Level 5, pupils' reached well above the national average and above the average won by peers in similar schools. The most significant improvement is in the proportion of pupils reaching this higher level. Over a four-year period, results have fluctuated, although they have stayed above national averages. These latest results

show a steep rise in trends, overall. However, it is recalled that comparisons across years are not easily made in Key Stage 2 because some past cohorts have been too small for results to be compared reliably. In its analysis of results, the school rightly points to weaknesses in pupils' investigation and enquiry skills in Key Stage 1, in spite of the very good results. It is taking appropriate action to improve its result further by addressing this issue.

87. Inspection findings support this very positive picture. They show how all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and frequently do much better than might be expected. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and very good quality planning expand pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding through practical work.
88. Teaching and learning are very good, overall, in both key stages. Although it was not possible to observe a lesson in Key Stage 1 because of time-tabling arrangements, evidence suggests there are strengths here. This possibility was highlighted in a scrutiny of work and in a discussion with a group of pupils in Year 2, which suggested that they are well taught. Pupils are enthusiastic about science lessons. They talk knowledgeably about a remarkable amount of information they can recall. For example, they know what a body needs to keep healthy ("don't forget we need lots of water," one pupil said). They know about the life cycles of frogs and birds and can name ten birds very quickly. They realise how objects made from different materials may float or sink and are very keen to differentiate between paper and cardboard that is dry or soggy. They know how bones join each other in the skeleton and how electricity works in their homes.
89. In Key Stage 2, lessons are carefully planned and well organized with necessary materials to hand. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 eagerly and efficiently set out a series of eight experiments before a lesson began. Their teacher's objective in assessing previous learning about sound as the culmination of the work covered was well realised through these experiments and pupils liked being timed for each one. They had relevant vocabulary (such as vacuum and vibrate), knew how to set up and test a hypothesis and to record findings accurately. Assessments conducted in this way at the end of topics are a good basis for planning as well as a useful record of progress. In Years 3 and 4, pupils enjoyed talking about skeletons. While preparing practical work later in the week, they considered why bones are important and the possible reasons for differences in bone size between people. Most pupils could name the major bones of the body and made sensible suggestions about why a person might have large feet ("you need big feet to balance a big body"). They set down their ideas and worked out hypotheses for further investigation, stringing their ideas together logically. Lessons move along at a very good pace, keeping pupils on task, building well on previous learning to assimilate the new knowledge. Lively class debates keep a clear sight of content to be taught. Pupils have a good scientific vocabulary, which the school extends through vocabulary lists linked to work across the key stage, which each teacher has.
90. Pupils' questions and answers are always pertinent to what they are studying and to learning objectives. Pupils are attracted by the displays in classrooms and learn from them. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 can't wait to remove labels from a real skeleton then put them back in the right place. They co-operate whenever they can. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 pursued their eight experiments rather boisterously, but this signalled high levels of involvement with practical tasks as they strove to keep within set time limits.
91. Good assessment procedures are followed throughout the school. In addition to assessments at the end of each topic, more formal assessments are made at the end of Years 2, 4 and 6. These usefully point to strengths and weaknesses. Informative records are kept on individuals to enable teachers to track each pupil's progress throughout the school.
92. As the science co-ordinator is new to the school, discussions were held with established staff, including the Deputy Head, who has a very good overview of the science curriculum. These showed that staff as a whole are secure in how to teach scientific thinking. Their expertise grew as an outcome of the school's participation in a very thorough science course backed by the local education authority, although mounted by a national company. As a result, teachers' ability to deliver the science curriculum effectively has grown sharply and the school has been able to equip itself very well with apparatus and books. These are proving to be valuable resources. There are suitable plans in place to support the new co-ordinator in developing her role.

ART

93. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with those to be expected for pupils' ages, overall. At times, standards are better than this. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above average. This latter finding is similar to that of the previous inspection. No judgement was then made about attainment for eleven-year-olds. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked with a large measure of success to address weaknesses of provision across the school but most especially in Key Stage 2. It still, rightly, prioritises the need to improve planning so that pupils can more consistently apply art and design skills across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment.
94. In Years 5 and 6, pupils take good account of picture space when positioning a sitter for portrait painting. They have handled water-based paints with good attention to keeping colours clean. Features in most paintings are well observed and correctly placed with skin tones mixed so as to be realistic, although these are somewhat stereotypically 'pink and white' in a few, with features echoing younger pupils' work. Pupils design patterns after the style of Indian Rangoli patterns, deploying mathematical skills appropriately to rule their paper into a symmetrical grid. They choose colours aptly and manage good hand control when applying these, striving for the effects of the patterns they study, where bright colours mean happiness and joy in Hindu symbolism. When working on parts of a large class painting after the style of Seurat, pupils in Years 1 and 2 select specially stiff brushes to gain effects similar to Seurat's 'dots' within lines drawn previously. By the end of the lesson, good progress towards the finished painting has been made, with children playing games in a park and adults walking about. In preparation for this work, pupils drew lively, small-scale sketches of children on swings or playing ball games, from observations made in a visit to a local park.
95. Sketch book work is taken seriously by most pupils as a means for exploring different media or for trying out ideas before beginning a larger piece of work. So, pupils in Key Stage 1 experiment with different tones and quality of line when using pencils. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 work on drawing a clenched fist, persisting at well-observed details to simulate a three-dimensional effect.
96. Teaching seen was very good. Teachers structure lessons well, matching a range of tasks to pupils' learning needs, keeping an eye on each lesson's purpose. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated towards good standards and completing tasks. For example, in addition to contributing to a class painting, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make their own, small, 'dotty' pictures of personal things, proudly showing that they, too, can form a border 'after the style of Seurat'. Using different felt tip pens for this work greatly adds to pupils' success. The teacher's skilled questioning elicits a lot of information about Seurat and his methods of working. Pupils explain how Seurat based studio work on *his* sketches, using their subject vocabulary confidently. In Years 5 and 6, some symbolism from Diwali used in designs links very well with Religious Education in addition to drawing on pupils' mathematical know-how. Pupils also effectively research information about Diwali on the Internet. Across the school, pupils use paint programs knowledgeably in connection with their art work.
97. There is, presently, no co-ordinator for the subject and staff work closely together on how National Curriculum programmes will be delivered. The latest guidelines for Curriculum 2000 have been reviewed, but the school wishes to devise its own schemes to meet curricular requirements in ways best suiting its own needs. It is concerned to link art to themes in other subjects in so far as this is practicable. Resources are sufficient for curricular demands and there is a good awareness of the importance of a range of tools and materials being matched to the planned content of lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Pupils reach standards at least in line with expected levels by the end of each key stage at this early point in the school year, with some work judged to reach higher standards. In the previous inspection, standards were reported to be above national expectations at both key stages. Time-tabling arrangements meant that no design and technology lessons had been planned in the lower Key Stage 2 for the half-term of the inspection. However, work completed earlier in the term shows that pupils in Years 3 and 4 comprehend the design and make process.
99. Pupils apply well-developed skills correctly, as when they use pencils and rulers. They can cut well from an early age, using tools safely. In both key stages, pupils design their products first before assembling them. They use correct headings of 'design,' 'plan' and 'make' confidently by the time they are in Key Stage 2. Some very detailed and well thought out work is achieved in Years 5 and 6. For example, a classroom display contains extraordinarily imaginative musical instruments made from a variety of

materials. There are wooden guitars, a kind of wooden harp, an assortment of drums and shakers - all quite unique. The designs accompanying the display illustrate how it was begun and pupils have added written accounts, including evaluations of their finished products. During the observed lesson, older pupils designed and sewed a 'buta' from the Diwali symbol used in Indian designs, incorporating aspects of their own lives into the central motif. In this, they showed a good insight into how to set about and achieve the task. Pupils took care in the execution of their work, matching colours to their initial ideas and forming stitches that followed shapes required to achieve the desired effect. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made their own mobiles to their own specifications. Plans carefully listed the materials to be used, which pupils had collected in readiness for the making process. They worked hard for their intended result, making decisions about how to stick chosen materials together appropriately. Results were all pleasingly different; some were very attractive. A small group of pupils made biscuits, guided by a parent helper. They followed instructions set out on a card, showing that they know how to weigh, mix, roll and cut biscuits ready for the oven.

100. All pupils make good progress as a result of teachers' secure subject knowledge and their thoughtful structuring of activities. Excellent teaching showed in the Key Stage 1 lesson. Planning took very good account of additional support, which included a parent helper. Pupils, therefore, were able to concentrate on their mobiles or on making biscuits. Their teacher's good pace made optimum use of time available so pupils were spurred on to do their best. In the good lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils were highly motivated by the range of activities available and the way the teacher connected these skilfully to other subjects. For example, pupils enjoyed researching the Hindu symbol of Diwali on the computer, which linked to their religious studies as well as to their design work. Earlier work on musical instruments was very well integrated with music and science.
101. Pupils say they 'love' design and technology lessons. They behave well and pay close attention to their teachers. They work very hard on task and are proud of what they achieve. They show off their sewing, biscuits and models with pride, recounting how these were made in some detail.
102. Currently, there is no co-ordinator to take overall responsibility for the subject or the monitoring of teaching and learning. However, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for design technology have been reviewed by staff together. As outlined above, the school makes cross-curricular links where practicable, so that pupils can consolidate skills and concepts regularly. The school identifies the further development of non-core subjects in line with Curriculum 2000 requirements as a priority in its school improvement planning, now that core subjects are properly covered and government initiatives are in place.

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

103. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in history are above those normally seen at this age. They are broadly in line with what can be expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. In geography, standards are broadly in line with expectations at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both subjects in Key Stage 1. Their progress in the later key stage is good in geography and satisfactory, overall, in history, in line with that of their peers. The picture of standards presented, here, is more varied than at the previous inspection when standards were stated to be above expected levels at the end of each key stage. However, inspection findings reveal that the National Curriculum was not, then, in place in Key Stage 2 for either subject. Since then, the school has worked to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are fully met, although it has had to give priority to more pressing curricular matters, including the implementation of national initiatives. School improvement planning suitably identifies history and geography as ripe for development as part of its work in developing non-core subjects further. To this end, the school has reviewed the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance for both subjects and mapped out how the elements of each will be taught over a two-year cycle. This overview now informs teachers' planning appropriately. It ensures proper coverage of all the units to be taught.
104. Because of time-tabling arrangements, only one geography lesson was observed in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Judgement on standards are thus based mainly on an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and interviews with pupils.
105. At Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of aspects of British history. Through their studies of ancient Greece they have learned about past society, although they do not have a clear grasp of changes within that society which affected societies succeeding it. At the time of the inspection, there was little to show of pupils' understanding about how historical sources can be used to

give information of past times. Through their studies of the Vikings, however, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have come to a sound position on the reasons for invasion and settlement. They know, for example, that such objects as shards of pottery and post-holes can tell us something of life in the past.

106. Through their geography studies, Year 6 pupils can locate features, using simple co-ordinates on a map. They have a good knowledge of the British Isles and can locate each country on its map without boundaries, naming major cities in Scotland, for example. They name the continents of the world and countries within them. They are aware of some of the changes that have affected village life and have a reasonable understanding of local and world-wide environmental issues. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show a sound knowledge of weather and climate and its effect on the decisions people make during a lesson. For example, through a series of rigorous tasks, they research travel guides and brochures, atlases, maps and information about different climate zones to plan a holiday according to information they are given about a family's requirements.
107. Across the key stage, pupils talk articulately about their studies in both subjects, applying secure (sometimes good) understanding of previously completed work. However, this understanding is not always reflected in their written accounts, especially at the end of the key stage where some pupils have difficulty recording their work.
108. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a good historical grasp of past societies through topics such as the Romans and the Olympic games. They compare the past with the present, sensibly realising that changes occur throughout history. Work on the life of a Roman soldier shows a good sense of how life was different then from today. Pupils study the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, putting events in chronological order. They grasp something of the influence such people have on life today. In geography, these younger pupils have a solid knowledge of the countries of the United Kingdom. They can find out about other countries from books and other source material and locate them on a globe (for example, through the travels of Barnaby bear). Pupils have a satisfactory grasp of features of village life and can compare these with related features of town life.
109. An overall judgement on teaching and learning is not possible, since only one lesson was observed. This was a very good geography lesson where the careful planning and choice of interesting resources enabled pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make good progress and achieve well in judging how climates affect what people do. Pupils - including those with special educational needs, well supported by the class teacher – cooperated enthusiastically in groups. More generally, well-planned lessons have well-defined learning objectives. Assessment sheets record targets met by pupils in their study units (as in Years 1 and 2 when following the unit on Florence Nightingale). These usefully feed into planning.
110. Visits are organised to support history and geography. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made a day visit to a Roman fort for their history studies and pupils in the upper Key Stage 2 made a residential visit to a field study-centre for geography. Visitors also contribute in ways that fire pupils' imaginations, as when an archaeologist from a local museum came in to school and older, local people talked about toys from the past and their World War 2 experiences. Pupils also research CD ROMS and the Internet now that information and communication technology is established as a general tool for learning.
111. Currently, the subjects do not have designated co-ordinators and staff plan decisions together, as when curricular strands were mapped out via Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The school makes very good use of its resources and the schools' library loan service to supplement materials. Pupils willingly bring artefacts and materials from home.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. At the last Inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be below national expectations at both key stages in all strands of the curriculum. Standards are now rising rapidly as a result of radical improvements made to provision. In consequence, standards, overall, reach expected levels for pupils of seven and eleven years of age and are good in some aspects of the planned work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and attain expected standards in line with prior attainment. Latest guidance for the Curriculum 2000 have been reviewed as a means of ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are met.
113. Year 6 pupils make good use of the Internet while co-operating in pairs to research the topic 'Diwali' for their design and technology studies. They can access appropriate fields for required information before

narrowing down their chosen sources wisely. Year 2 pupils listen attentively while a teacher introduces a paint program helping them make a 'dotty' picture after the style of Seurat, whose work they are studying. They pertinently suggest how to use a mouse and access the program as the teacher demonstrates and asks questions. When working independently, they choose colours and brush size with a good hold on the effect these will achieve. Pupils guide a brush skilfully, using the mouse. Two pupils reach a very high level of sophistication, drawing an orange octopus swimming in a blue sea.

114. Pupils really enjoy using computers and work at a good pace. In Years 1 and 2, they are amazed at effects gained by the paint program. Most pupils have some access to a computer at home and this accelerates their progress now that the school is moving forward in this area. Throughout the school, each pupil efficiently saves his/ her work on a personal disk. They are highly motivated by activities that teachers gear to specific skills and by being able to apply skills to other subjects. For example, some Year 5 and 6 pupils searched the Internet for information about the poet Thomas Hood as part of their literacy studies during their lunch break. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 proficiently use listening posts and a language machine. For example, two boys listened on headphones to a piece of music by Vivaldi, while two others chose words from a range of studies to put through the language machine.
115. Teaching in Key Stage 1, where particular expertise is evident, is excellent, overall. It is good in Key Stage 2. Teachers now have confident subject knowledge as a result of weekly, substantial In-service training. This training will be enhanced now that a successful bid for funding from the National Grid for Learning has very recently become available. Very good teaching with some excellent features was observed in Years 1 and 2, both in an information and communication technology lesson and as a part of a literacy lesson. Pupils encountered the role of the Internet in researching information about grizzly bears in connection with a story they were studying. The teacher held everyone's attention expertly while she demonstrated what to do and assured them they would all practise the necessary skills during the week, helped by a classroom assistant.
116. Currently, there is little evidence of word-processing skills being developed to support pupils' writing across the curriculum, although pupils of all ages are confident in using a keyboard. Although computers are not available in classrooms, pupils have ready access to the suite since it is positioned in a central area. Key Stage 2 teachers, therefore, can oversee pupils' use of machines when they work outside the classroom during their allocated time. Pupils across the school are also well supported by a classroom assistant with very good expertise, who helps them in small groups and individually during some afternoons.
117. Since funding from the school's successful bid was received only three months ago, it has worked hard to improve all aspects of its provision. Chiefly, the school aims at ensuring that pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum as required and become proficient in the use of computers across the curriculum. Planning to achieve these aims is detailed. It is monitored and reviewed regularly to make sure that objectives are being met.
118. The co-ordinator is confident in the subject. She monitors teaching and learning effectively in all classes to check the quality and extent of work covered. The school has a clear policy on pupils' use of the Internet. It has the backing of all parents in relation to the rules for responsible Internet use, which pupils must follow. There is sufficient software covering a range of curriculum subjects and an adequate number of machines, which, on the whole, are well used. In a short period of time, the school has achieved much in establishing computers as a tool for learning for all pupils. It is now in a good position to move forward.

MUSIC

119. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be good in Key Stage 1 and in line with expectations in Key Stage 2. Standards in singing are now judged very good and to be well above expected levels for all pupils. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 are members of the choir and very high standards reached affect all pupils' motivation and performance in singing. A CD ROM made in the Summer term 2000 illustrates this well. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 sing in their classes and in the choir. Only one lesson was seen in composing and performance in Key Stage 2. However, evidence of instrumental work on the CD ROM shows that pupils in the key stage reach high standards when accompanying a song on tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils across the key stage also reach good standards in recorder playing. Those with special educational needs make good progress and participate alongside their peers in all musical activities. The expertise and commitment of the music co-ordinator show strongly in the standards reached. She has set her sights on raising these. The school prizes its work in music highly, not least for the pleasure it gives to all involved.

120. Pupils in each class sing many songs by heart. They have exceptionally clear diction, keep time to instrumental accompaniments and follow a conductor well. They modulate their voices with loud and soft tones and come in on time crisply. In Years 1 and 2, pupils recite the names of musical characters on an even pulse, matching these to the number of syllables in characters' names. For example, they know that 'Hen -ri- e-tta' has a beat of 4 while 'Os-car' pulses twice. They grasp simple notation for this quickly and can then follow a beat accurately by clapping a rhythm as a teacher holds up cards. Pupils' learning is effectively reinforced as they practise their new skills throughout the week at odd moments in the day, on chime bars set out alongside the notation and accompanying picture name-cards.
121. In Key Stage 2, pupils work in three groups across Years 3 to 6, according to assessments in relation to their ability to read music for instrumental purposes. This approach is being trialled by the school as a result of staff discussion on the best use of resources (including staff and time). Planning ensures that all groups work on each element of the music curriculum for half a term, so that skills, knowledge and understanding are suitably built on through the year. It includes pupils learning to play the recorder or improving established skills for half-term periods. In a composing and performance lesson, pupils in an intermediate group quickly grasped a 'question and response' poem, responding with appropriate body percussion sounds, such as tapping a leg or arm with a flat palm. A boy can explain that a triangle will not ring if it is held tightly because it can't vibrate. Pupil pairs establish the 'question/response' rhythm to improve their performance as the lesson progresses, both when using body percussion and an untuned instrument. A higher attaining group plays the recorder with good levels of competence. Pupils can copy phrases learned from a new tune, played by the teacher, quickly and accurately. They find it helpful to practise clapping a rhythm first. They can tell notes by ear (for example, F sharp) and can read scores for such Christmas songs as "Away in a manger" very well. Some pupils can play a two-part round, as when they finish the lesson with "London's burning".
122. Pupils' enjoyment is evident in their levels of concentration and in improvements made as they practise skills. At times, however, good progress is impeded by the silly behaviour of one or two, as seen in the lesson on composing and performing when a few of the oldest chose to persist with inappropriate behaviour, despite a teacher's warnings. Teachers' subject confidence varies but teachers are well supported by planning set out by the music co-ordinator and the support she gives in practical ways. Most frequently, teaching is of good quality. At times, it is excellent, as in the lesson in Key Stage 1 given by the co-ordinator where subject expertise lay behind her good assessments of pupils' understanding, prior to adjusting lesson content.
123. The choir is popular and just over two thirds of pupils from Years 3 to 6 belong, although younger pupils can also join if they are determined! Pupils learn a wide repertoire of songs, some with quite demanding two-part roles. They maintain a musical line well against one another. Recently, the choir reached the regional finals of a "Young Musicians" competition and won the ensemble singing category. It enjoys a well-earned local reputation, regularly performing at nearby venues such as a Nursing Home. More generally, pupils across Key Stage 2 take part in events beyond the school, joining with 5000 children for a schools' concert in Birmingham and, on another occasion, rehearsing and performing a mass with local schools. They take part, too, in local events such as the Village Fete. Pupils have a chance to learn an instrument through a local authority scheme. Currently, some are being taught violin by a visiting teacher. Professional musicians are invited in to school as a means of further extending pupils' experiences from the Reception year upwards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. During the inspection, Key Stage 2 pupils' allocated time was taken up with swimming. Only one lesson in dance could be observed in Key Stage 1 because of time-tabling arrangements. It is, therefore, not possible to make overall judgements on standards and on the quality of teaching and learning. For swimming, however, standards are above those expected of eleven year-olds, with all pupils achieving the expected 25 metres, and many making further progress, improving strokes and distance. All pupils in Key Stage 2 take part in the 'Star Awards' scheme.
125. During the swimming session, the class teacher and assistant provided good tuition in skills for an 'improvers' (middle) group and beginners group respectively. A swimming instructor worked with more advanced swimmers. All pupils applied themselves during the session, with a high level of activity. They demonstrably grew in skills. For example, those in the 'beginners' group persisted at swimming across the pool's breadth without putting a foot on the bottom. Those in the 'middle' group made good progress in

performing arm movement for the front crawl while swimming the length of the pool (25 metres), practising with the aid of floats. A good proportion could discard the float by the end of the lesson.

126. In a dance lesson observed in Years 1 and 2, teaching was satisfactory. A good introduction set the scene for a Chinese theme. The teacher showed pupils a wok and some chopsticks and they talked with interest about how Chinese food is cooked. A pupil commented on the "hot, sizzling wok". Most pupils followed instructions on the taped broadcast, helped by the teacher stopping the tape at intervals to reinforce a movement vocabulary. For example, pupils mimed 'chop', 'sprinkle' 'toss' and 'stir' movements. However, because they didn't watch each other's performances to offer improvements, overall progress was impeded. So, the lesson lost its initial impact and some boys became inattentive and did not always try their best.
127. The school has reviewed guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, introducing those for games and dance as a basis for planning. A commercial scheme is considered more suited to the school's needs for gymnastics. Strands of the physical education curriculum are included over time, in line with requirements. However, in Key Stage 2, there is currently an imbalance in planning because of the time allocated to swimming. The school knows it has to review its practice regarding this. Its hard-core playground is small and insufficient to cater for Key Stage 2 pupils' outdoor games (especially for older pupils). Although there is an adequately sized field adjacent to the playground, this is used only when weather permits. During the inspection, it was waterlogged. Since the hall is also small and inadequate for pupils in Key Stage 2 (again, most especially for older pupils), delivery of the full curriculum is problematic. The school's football and netball teams play against other schools.