

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HAYDOCK ENGLISH MARTYRS RC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104818

Headteacher (Acting): Mrs Elizabeth Jones

Reporting inspector: Neil Tonge  
1157

Dates of inspection: 28 – 31 January

Inspection number: 243847

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Piele Road  
Haydock  
St Helens  
Merseyside

Postcode: W11 0JX

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Barr

Date of previous inspection: 9 – 12 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1157	N Tonge	Registered inspector	History Geography	What sort of school is it? School's results and their achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
12511	L Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11510	K Oglesby	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Special Educational Needs	
27545	A Scott	Team Inspector	English Music Equal Opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
21988	G Ulyatt	Team Inspector	Maths Physical Education English as an Additional Language	
30827	S Withnall	Team Inspector	Areas of Learning in the Foundation stage Art Design and Technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Haydock English Martyrs RC (VA) Primary School draws its pupils from a range of social backgrounds and a mixture of private and municipal housing. Pupils in the infants and juniors are taught in two separate buildings. Of the 330 pupils on roll, 220 are boys and 190 are girls. Sixty children attend the nursery part-time. Almost all full-time pupils, 284 are from white ethnic backgrounds. Three speak English as an additional language but are not at early stages of acquiring English. While the achievements of children on entering the school are mostly average in reading, writing and mathematics, the school admits up to four pupils with special developmental needs. Although few pupils join or leave the school part way through their education, the school is suffering a decline in numbers. As a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4 are taught in mixed-age classes. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is average at 20 per cent. Fewer pupils than nationally have special educational needs. Of the 52 pupils with special educational needs, 34 are at the earliest stages on the school's register for learning difficulties and 8 have statements of special educational needs for more serious problems to their learning.

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

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education and fosters good relationships between teachers, pupils and parents. Its strong Christian ethos provides pupils with a secure base for learning. The absence due to illness of the headteacher has resulted in instability to its leadership in recent years. However, the school is managed successfully and is making steady progress in maintaining and improving its provision. Teaching is mainly sound and the school gives satisfactory value for the funding it receives.

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

- Good teaching in the nursery provides a positive start to children's education.
- The school provides good support for the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils are keen and eager to learn. They get on well with one another and with the staff.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development maintains the positive, Christian ethos of the school.
- The acting head teacher and the deputy head teacher have maintained the management of the school in order to achieve satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
- Commitment of staff to take on new responsibilities and to work hard in the interests of the school has been instrumental in limiting the impact of a lack of stable leadership.

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

- Consistent, stable leadership to provide the school with a clear direction.
- The standards pupils in the juniors achieve in English.
- Ways of checking the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards.
- The use of assessment information to provide work appropriate to the abilities of all pupils.
- The challenge in the work provided for more able pupils.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Overall the rate of improvement has been satisfactory since 1997 when the school was last inspected. However, interruptions to the school's leadership leave some important issues to be resolved. The school has made good improvements in its provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are now satisfactory. The school day has been extended in Years 3 to 6 and complies with recommendations for pupils in the juniors. The curriculum is now based effectively on detailed programmes of work for every subject. Headteacher, staff and governors take a full and active part in planning for the school's development. The development plan contains suitable priorities to allow long-term improvements to take place. Governors have improved their understanding of the work of the school but still do not have effective systems for evaluating the effects of spending on pupils' learning. A satisfactory start has been made to developing the role of co-ordinators in checking the quality of pupils' work and teachers' planning. There is no clear view of standards in subjects other than English and mathematics. This must be set against a slight decline in standards in English in the juniors and a lack of effective systems for using information from assessment to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	D	E
Mathematics	B	B	D	E
Science	B	C	D	E

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

On entry to the nursery, children's early achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are typical for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are ready to work in the National Curriculum at the end of their reception year.

In 2001, standards in national tests in Year 6 declined in terms of national averages and comparisons with similar schools. The principal cause of this was that a third of all pupils in last year's Year 6 had special educational needs and their achievements were below the level expected for their age. Also, there were few more able pupils in the year group. Nonetheless, most pupils made sound progress from lower than average starting points. However, standards in English and science have declined over the last two years and remain low in English in this year's Year 6. In 2001, standards in Year 2 reached the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with those reached in similar schools. However, although more able pupils in Year 2 did well enough in mathematics, their achievements were well below average in reading and below average in writing and science. Over the three years 1999 to 2001, there was little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in either Year 2 or Year 6. While pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their learning, more able pupils do not do as well as they should in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in most other subjects are satisfactory, except in physical education, where they are high in the juniors.

The school was close to its target of 75 per cent in English in 2001. It failed to meet its target for attainment in mathematics by 5 per cent.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' sensible and positive behaviour makes the school a calm and pleasant place for learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities. They respond positively to guidance about moral and social matters. Relationships between pupils and teachers are usually very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. This results from high levels of illness in Years 1 and 2, where attendance falls below 90 per cent. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. A growing number of parents take holidays during term time and the school describes this absence as unauthorised in an effort to discourage it.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Good teaching in the nursery provides stimulating and interesting activities that ensure that children make good progress. The staff have a clear knowledge of the children's abilities and plan appropriate work to enable children to become competent learners. In reception, teaching is satisfactory overall, however, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for pupils, which then results in poor behaviour.

Teachers provide good support to improve the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers provide clear objectives for lessons, which help pupils to understand what is expected of them. Pupils usually respond well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. Teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes in English and mathematics. Teachers in the infants provide a sound grounding in the skills of literacy and numeracy. However, teachers sometimes fail to provide work that challenges the thinking of more able pupils. The use of assessment of pupils' attainment and learning are satisfactory in relation to guiding planning in English and mathematics but not in other subjects. The marking of pupils' work often does not focus on what the pupils need to do to improve, this is particularly the case in science and the foundation subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum with an emphasis on the key areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. A range of extra curricular activities contributes to the standards attained particularly in physical education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are well focused on specific needs for improvement; plans are regularly reviewed and monitored by all those concerned.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are included in all lessons and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. An effective programme of personal development helps pupils to understand issues to do with health, drugs misuse and citizenship. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and underpins the good relationships. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall satisfactory. The school looks after the welfare of its pupils effectively but the use of assessment is not effective enough to ensure that work is always matched to pupils' abilities. There are good liaison arrangements with the popular choice of secondary school. Parents have positive views about the care and welfare provided for their children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. In the absence of the headteacher, the acting head teacher and deputy headteacher have provided satisfactory leadership and stable management for the school. Although co-ordinators are starting to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, this initiative is too new to provide the information and strategies needed to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. There is a good range of expertise on the governing body; committees meet regularly and they are involved in the strategic direction of the school. However, methods for improving their evaluation of spending decisions need to be developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school lacks a systematic programme for checking the quality of teaching and learning in order to have a clear view of standards across the curriculum and to determine strategies for raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are sufficient to provide a full curriculum. The school makes good use of funding to provide extra support for pupils with special educational needs. Spending on resources reflects the school's priorities. The school makes satisfactory efforts to get best value from all its spending.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good quality of the teaching</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Their children behave well in school.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching teachers about their concerns.</li> <li>• The way the school helps their children to develop socially and morally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them and that they do not get enough information.</li> <li>• Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Some parents would like more homework for their children.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings confirm most of the positive views expressed by parents about the school. However, while there is some excellent, very good and good teaching, teaching is mainly satisfactory. Inspectors agree that while most pupils do their best, more able pupils are not provided with challenging enough work in some lessons. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall, though parents are right to have some concerns about a lack of information about organisation and staffing changes. The inspection team does not agree with parents' views about homework and the range of activities outside lessons. Both are satisfactory and similar to those provided by many primary schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

- 1 On entry to the school, children's early achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. With good teaching in the nursery, children make a good start towards achieving the nationally recommended goals for their learning. By the time they are ready to leave the reception classes, most children are ready for work in the National Curriculum.
- 2 In national tests and assessments by teachers in 2001, pupils in Year 2 achieved the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with those reached in similar schools. However, the proportion of more able pupils reaching higher levels was well below the national average in reading and below average in writing and science but satisfactory in mathematics. When compared with the results of similar schools, more able pupils did well in mathematics and were above average. Their results were well below average in reading and below average in writing. In 2001, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. From 1999 to 2001 combined, there was no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Over the last three years, standards have improved at the same rate as nationally in reading and mathematics. They have shown a slight decline in writing over the last two years.
- 3 In National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. Standards in all three subjects were well below the average reached in similar schools. However, this was an exceptional year in that a third of all pupils in Year 6 had special educational needs and this depressed the school's results. These pupils made sound progress in their learning from lower than average starting points. There were also fewer more able pupils in the year group in 2001 and as a result, there was considerably less attainment at the higher level than nationally. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001, there was little difference between the achievements of boys and girls. The school was close to its target of 75 per cent in English in 2001. It failed to meet its target for attainment in mathematics by 5 per cent.
- 4 In the current Year 6, standards remain below average in English but are satisfactory and better than last year in mathematics and science. Many pupils in Year 6 have not improved their reading sufficiently, partly as a result of not reading widely enough. This represents a slight decline in standards in English since the last inspection. Although standards are satisfactory in science, weaknesses exist in pupils' investigative skills. This limits the standards reached by more able pupils. In Year 2, the school has maintained satisfactory standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science since the last inspection. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are not high enough in pupils' spoken language or in handwriting and the presentation of work. While aware of the need to punctuate their work, this is done inconsistently by less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. More able pupils in both year groups do well in reading and show agility in mental mathematics. With effective teaching, good support and monitoring of their learning, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same steady progress as most other pupils. Teachers ensure that they are well involved in all activities.

- Standards are satisfactory in most other subjects in Year 2 and Year 6. However, the school has maintained high standards for pupils in the juniors in physical education. This is because of the high status the school gives to the subject and the good quality of the teaching. Throughout the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were well below average. Improvement has been achieved through a significant increase in resources and the development of staff expertise. ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning in English, mathematics and art.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to school are good and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Their enthusiasm for school is very apparent as they talk about their favourite lessons and activities. For example a group of pupils in Year 5 explained that physical education is their favourite lesson. Their positive attitude to the subject is one of the reasons why standards in physical education are high in the juniors. In lessons where teachers' expectations are high and pupils are clear about what they have to do, pupils are eager to take part in all activities and work hard. They settle quickly to tasks and want to do well. In an excellent English lesson in Year 6, pupils were absorbed in combining their skills in English and ICT to edit, improve and develop a text entitled, "Should children be allowed to use the Internet?" Pupils are proud of their achievements and take great pleasure in sharing them with others. For example, one girl brought in a document produced at home that summarised and presented the thoughts of the class from a previous lesson. The teacher used this document effectively to introduce the next task to the whole group.
- Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning. This is as a result of the good support they receive and work that is pitched at the right level for their abilities. As a result they play a full and active part in all activities and make sound progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in most lessons. From their time in the nursery, pupils do as they are told without a fuss. This ensures that no time is wasted in lessons in establishing order. In some reception lessons, when teaching is unsatisfactory, there is insufficient challenge for pupils, which then results in poor behaviour. All pupils are clear about the school's rules and think that they are fair. At the start and end of each day, pupils move around the school and grounds sensibly. They usually get on well together in the playground. There were no incidents of bullying or racism during the inspection although school records show that they occasionally occur. Pupils think that most pupils behave well and are confident that staff will effectively deal with unsatisfactory behaviour. As a result they are happy to come to school where they feel safe and confident. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last academic year.
- Personal development is good. Pupils willingly take responsibility for routine jobs, such as keeping their classrooms tidy. They are particularly keen to be elected as house captains or members of the school council. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and show their maturity in the way that they look after one another. The respect they have for the feelings, values and beliefs of others was evident when pupils in Year 5 discussed what it feels like to be treated badly by others because of the way you look.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. In most lessons, pupils behave sensibly and know that teachers value their efforts. In a very good lesson in physical

education, pupils in Year 3 demonstrate their work in dance because they were confident that their teacher and other pupils would approve. Pupils are quick to ask for help knowing that they will be well supported. For example, in mathematics in Year 5, pupils showed their keenness to extend their learning when they accepted a challenging task set for more able pupils. They were confident that their teacher would provide them with the help they needed to progress with their learning. Pupils work in a co-operative way and share equipment sensibly.

- 11 Attendance is unsatisfactory and has fallen since the last inspection; it is now below the national average. Most absence is attributed to illness, especially in Years 1 and 2, where attendance is well below 90 per cent. This has a significant impact on standards in these year groups. A high amount of unauthorised absence is caused by the increasing number of parents who disrupt their children's education by taking them on holiday during term time. To discourage this practice and the way it detracts from pupils' progress, the school counts most of this absence as unauthorised.

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

- 12 Teaching is mainly satisfactory and frequently good or very good and on occasion excellent. In 3 per cent of lessons it was unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.
- 13 Overall, teaching in the foundation stage is satisfactory. It is good and sometimes very good in the nursery. It is mainly satisfactory in the reception classes. Teachers and support staff work well together and in most cases, support staff make a positive impact on children's learning. Teaching in the nursery provides a range of interesting activities that sustain children's interest and enables them to make good progress. High expectations of behaviour result in good relationships between teacher and children. As a consequence, children settle quickly into good routines. Teaching in the nursery builds activities on secure knowledge of pupils' abilities and accurate assessment enables children's progress to be tracked and planned. However, children's progress is not as strong in all the reception classes when activities are not demanding enough and children become inattentive. When teaching is very good, teachers are skilled at capturing children's attention through interesting and challenging activities. They use their voices and actions to maintain children's involvement and concentration. Teachers use praise effectively to create a positive climate for learning. Assessment is not always used effectively enough in the reception classes to target the learning of different groups of children.
- 14 In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is satisfactory. By explaining the objectives for learning clearly, teachers allow pupils throughout the school to grasp the purposes of lessons. Lessons are well structured, with opportunities for explanation, discussion and time for pupils to work independently or in co-operation with others. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and only in a few cases did pupils not respond appropriately. Teachers adapt lessons to meet changing circumstances or to harness pupils' interests. They insist on pupils getting on with their work and give them a sense of urgency by timing activities. In a few lessons, the teacher insisted that all pupils go through a procedure systematically even when they all understood the nature of the task. This reduced the rate of progress that pupils made. Teachers are not using the results of their assessment effectively enough to provide suitable work for more able pupils. As a result, these pupils are not working to full capacity. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

- 15 Teaching is satisfactory in the juniors. In the best lessons, teachers provide a brisk pace for learning and opportunities and interesting resources for pupils to develop their thinking. For example, in geography, teachers provided photographs that allowed pupils to analyse the features of a river. This gave pupils the chance to compile well-reasoned arguments for their choices and to explain them to the rest of the class. In physical education, pupils showed considerable concentration as a result of excellent planning. The teacher was insistent on high quality performances and the skilful evaluations from pupils about their own and others' work.
- 16 Although it is never less than satisfactory, teaching in English and science is variable. Lessons in English are well structured but are not always flexible enough to respond to pupils' needs. For example, teachers spend too much time explaining activities or working with one group of pupils. This reduces opportunities for extended writing and limits some pupils' progress through lack of intervention from a teacher. In science, while teachers provide a satisfactory grounding in scientific knowledge, they are not effective enough at developing pupils' investigative skills. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in Year 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English and mathematics. However, teachers in both the infants and the juniors are not paying enough attention to pupils' spoken language. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of mathematics successfully in subjects such as science, geography and ICT. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory in other subjects.
- 17 The way that teachers assess and record pupils' attainment is unsatisfactory and adds to the problem of pitching work at the right level for all pupils. Most teachers are good at questioning pupils to find out what they have remembered and use time at the start and end of lessons to do this. However there are no agreed systems of recording in subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT. As a result teachers' planning does not always say how they intend to assess what pupils have learned in lessons. Without a clear understanding of what pupils can do teachers cannot be certain that the work they set is pitched at the right level. As a result the most able pupils are not always challenged by their work and are too often set the same tasks as average attaining pupils. This is one of the reasons why the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could and why far fewer pupils than in most other schools achieve a higher level in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Day to day support of pupil progress is satisfactory. Marking in English, mathematics and ICT is thorough but in other areas of the curriculum, teachers' written comments usually refer to effort rather than specific points for improvement in that particular subject. Sometimes copied work is praised. Teachers have a clear view of what needs to be done in this respect and are keen to improve the linkage between their assessments and their planning.
- 18 Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are successful at identifying these pupils' needs at an early stage and follow the appropriate procedures to provide them with support. Teaching assistants are usually well informed and work in conjunction with the teachers to support pupils' progress. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons, the work is sharply focused on their needs. Support staff are almost always well-prepared and familiar with both pupils' personal targets and what is taught in the classroom. This improves pupils' progress and equips them with the understanding and confidence to contribute to class lessons. Withdrawal groups are arranged with the interests of the pupils in mind so they are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
- 19 Pupils who speak English as a second language do not require specialist teaching. Teachers have a sensitive, caring approach to these pupils and respond well to any

small problems of understanding that arise. Generally, these pupils are well integrated into the mainstream of class sessions.

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

- 20 The curriculum is balanced and well structured. The school has made good progress in improving the programmes of work for all subjects since the last inspection. As a result, teachers have clear frameworks for planning in different subjects, which ensure that most pupils gain access to a full curriculum and that their learning progresses at a satisfactory rate. However, in science, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop the investigative skills. Visitors to the school, such as 'Living History' actors, provide considerable stimulus for pupils' work in history. Teachers strive to interweave subjects to add extra relevance, and this is good practice.
- 21 The school provides a good programme for personal and social education. In science, for example, pupils explore the personal issues that surround growing up. Social issues are often discussed in religious education and are frequently the focus of school assemblies. Health education is good. It is an intrinsic part of science and features in subjects such as design and technology when, for instance, pupils in Year 1 made healthy kebabs out of assorted fruit. A health education caravan visits the school every other year for the benefit of pupils and parents alike. A school nurse works closely with teachers in Years 5 and 6 to make sure that older pupils receive suitable information about sex education. The local police alert pupils to the dangers of drug abuse.
- 22 Most pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils who do not have English as their first language rapidly learn the language. This means that they receive the same curriculum as other pupils and are actively included in all discussions and activities by their teachers. The school also makes sound provision for the learning of gifted pupils. It has enabled them to attend special courses at a nearby secondary school. However, teachers do not consistently provide work that is suitably challenging for more able pupils. Consequently, not enough of these pupils attain higher levels in national tests.
- 23 The school has good links with the local community. It is on good terms with a nearby nursing home and invites residents to school productions from time to time. Close ties with the church maintain the school's strong Catholic Christian ethos and provide effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral and social growth. Companies, such as British Telecom, give pupils talks about topics such as, the dangers of electricity. Small local businesses help to swell the school funds by donating raffle prizes. The local education authority has provided helpful support for the leadership of the school.
- 24 The school benefits from good relationships with other local schools. There is a particularly supportive link with a local secondary school. Secondary teachers visit English Martyrs to give junior pupils *taster* lessons in mathematics and science. While pupils sometimes use the secondary school's computers to extend their learning in ICT, more able pupils attended a summer school there to increase their achievements. The school's link with a primary school that has Beacon status helps it to generate new ideas. Subject co-ordinators meet colleagues from other schools to learn about new areas of common interest.

- 25 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their personal targets. This is because the school has efficient procedures for identifying their needs at an early stage. The school keeps very good records of progress made by pupils with special educational needs and all staff are brought into the process of developing an appropriate curriculum.
- 26 The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Daily worship provides opportunities for pupils to consider the needs of others in a calm and reflective atmosphere. Music is used effectively here. Candles were lit to remember people who are ill and pupils reflect on the life of a former pupil who died. Sensitive links are made to the healing power of water such as the spring water in Lourdes. Pupils are given time for a short prayer each morning, lunchtime and at the end of the school day. In religious education, pupils are given clear understanding of how beliefs affect individuals and communities. All pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils examine the wonders and beauty of nature as they smell hyacinths and examine the root structure of bulbs. They learn about gifts from the heart such as care, joy and love. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils encourage them, help them develop positive feelings and value their contributions in lessons.
- 27 Provision is good for pupils' moral development. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and promote moral values positively. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Teachers encourage pupils to be polite and courteous at all times and staff are very good role models in their relationships with pupils. In personal, social and health education, junior pupils are taught clear facts about the misuse of alcohol, drugs and medicines and how these impact on behaviour and moral values.
- 28 The school makes good provision for social development. Its programme for personal, social and health education aims to promote pupils' ability and motivation to work together amicably and co-operatively. Teachers make sure that pupils understand the safety issues in swimming pools, on the street and on the beach. They are taught to care for their bodies and to be aware of the importance of regular exercise. In physical education, teachers encourage teamwork at many different levels. The school works hard to develop pupils' sense of community. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and to be responsible for themselves. They help to raise funds for the charity CAFOD. All classes have monitors who are responsible for resources. When pupils are in Year 6 they take on further responsibilities. Pupils vote for a head boy, a head girl and house captains who lead a school council, which meets each month. One pupil in Year 5 plays the piano for hymn practice.
- 29 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about their own culture, but too little is done to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society. The curriculum provides relevant cultural experiences. In English in Year 2, for example, pupils were introduced to folk stories from countries such as Nigeria and Japan. Older pupils learn about the structure of the British Parliament and the positions of senior ministers. In history, younger pupils handle artefacts from the past and read stories from around the world. In geography, pupils in the juniors find out about African culture. Teachers introduce pupils to the work of a reasonable range of artists. They provide them with rich experiences of the work of different composers in music.

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

- 30 The school continues to have satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. Procedures with regard to fire safety are good and up-to-date records are maintained. However, other policies, particularly those for risk assessment, are outdated and need early attention. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and follow local education authority guidelines. The co-ordinator is trained and ensures that teachers are aware of all relevant procedures. However, this information has not been provided to all mid-day staff. Staff who have training in first-aid look after pupils who are unwell. A letter is sent to parents if a child receives a significant injury while at school. The health and safety co-ordinator keeps a close eye on the building and reports potential risks to health and safety to the senior management.
- 31 Good procedures are in place to ensure effective monitoring and the promotion of good behaviour. These are based on praise and rewards such as house points; with recognised and agreed sanctions for poor behaviour. Most teachers manage behaviour well and use the school's policy consistently. Any incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and monitored by the deputy headteacher, who involves parents when appropriate. Similarly, any incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with quickly and firmly. As a result, behaviour has improved and pupils are happy to come to school. However, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' learning are not effective. Information about pupils' learning is not used across the curriculum to set work that matches pupils' needs. This weakness is reflected in limitations to the progress of more able pupils when the work that teachers provide is too easy.
- 32 Satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have had little impact in reversing the downward trend in attendance over the last two years. A computerised system of registration is used effectively to alert the school about pupils with low or unexplained absence. Parents are reminded in newsletters of the importance of good attendance and pupils with 100 per cent attendance are rewarded. The education social worker works with the school to visit pupils with the worst records of attendance at home. Despite these measures, statistics for the current academic year indicate that attendance has not improved especially in Years 1 and 2.
- 33 The school gathers a lot of information on how well pupils achieve in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers use national and standardised tests to check and record pupils' progress. This is then used to identify where support is needed and to set targets for groups of pupils. However these targets are sometimes too general to be useful. Teachers do not always use the information fully to match work to ability, particularly for more able pupils.
- 34 In science, and most other foundation subjects, there are no agreed whole-school systems to record pupils' achievements. Teachers keep notes about attainment in all subjects in each year, often spending a great deal of time on this. They use these to group pupils, to check what is taught and as sources of information for parents. However, because records are personal to individual teachers and also inconsistent, they do not give a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses over time. They do not help teachers to match work to pupils' needs by building on their previous learning. Procedures for assessment in these subjects are unsatisfactory. In contrast, systems for recording progress in ICT are good. This is one of the reasons why standards are rising in this subject. Subject leaders have sought agreement on a

method that is useful and not time-consuming. When this consultation is completed it may provide a blueprint for other subjects.

- 35 Support for pupils' learning through marking is sometimes good, with comments, which make pupils feel that their work is valued. In most instances, marking is thorough but contains little to encourage further effort or tell pupils how to improve their learning. This is particularly the case in science and the foundation subjects. In some books there is inappropriate praise, for example, for work, which is copied from a teacher's notes. Weekly award assemblies reinforce support for pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils like these and think the rewards are fair and that everyone has a chance.
- 36 At the last inspection, the need for improvement to assessment in all subjects was highlighted to give continuity of experience and progression in learning. Assessment has improved in English, mathematics and ICT, but in other subjects remains unsatisfactory. The school has analysed the results of national tests in English and mathematics to fill gaps in its teaching. This has not happened in science but the school has identified this as a priority. For some subjects, co-ordinators are beginning to collect samples of work from pupils at different levels of attainment in each year group. These have the potential of providing teachers with useful guidance about the standards they should be aiming for and what is being done in other years.

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

- 37 Parents' views of the school are that it is generally satisfactory. Although most parents have very positive views of the school a small number of parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern as to whether all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. Inspection findings are that while most pupils do fulfil their potential, in some lessons more able pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. Most parents feel that their children are expected to work hard, behave well and make good progress and that teaching is good. Inspection findings confirm that most children work hard and behave well; however, while there is some good teaching in school, teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory.
- 38 Some parents have expressed concern about homework, the range of activities outside lessons and how well the school works with them and keeps them informed. Parents' concerns in these areas are, in general, unfounded. The range and consistency of homework and of activities outside lessons is satisfactory.
- 39 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall, though parents are right to have some concerns about a lack of information about organisation and staffing changes. As a result, the school's partnerships with parents are slightly less secure. Staff and governors are aware of this situation and are trying to meet parents' concerns. For example, the acting headteacher holds regular drop-in sessions where parents can express their views and receive up-to-date information about their children's education. Parents receive attractive and readable newsletters. While these provide information about events they lack information about the topics pupils study. This means that some parents feel they are less able to support their children at home.
- 40 Good information is provided for parents of children in the foundation stage and provides them with clear guidance about supporting their children's learning. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their

children's progress. They are invited to attend regular review meetings and are welcomed into the school to talk to teachers at any time.

- 41 Annual written reports to parents are good and contain detailed and informative comments on their children's learning in English, mathematics and science, and about their personal and social growth. The information includes clear targets for future development, which enables parents to help their children at home. However, comments on other subjects, while satisfactory, do not always contain sufficient detail about what their children have achieved.
- 42 The contribution of parents to their children's learning and the impact of their involvement on the work of the school are satisfactory. The parent and teacher association raises funds for the school, which are used effectively to support the raising of standards. For example, parents made a helpful contribution to the acquisition of new resources for ICT. Some parents have attended courses in school with regard to literacy and numeracy. Several of these now help out in school, particularly in the foundation stage. They are well briefed by staff and this provides them with the guidance needed to support children in the classrooms as well as their own children at home. A weakness in the school's partnerships with parents lies in the opportunities teachers miss to enable parents to support their children's reading at home. Reading books are not sent home regularly and there is no consistent or effective dialogue between home and school on this matter.

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

- 43 The school has been without its headteacher for over a year since November 2000 and the deputy head resigned in December 2000. In the meantime the school has been dogged by uncertainty. An acting headteacher was appointed on a four-day a week basis in May 2001 until her recent illness in January 2002 and a permanent deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2001. While a clear educational direction was developed with the staff and the governing body by the headteacher there has been no long-term established individual driving the plan forward and consistently monitoring progress in teaching and learning. The senior management of the school have made a determined effort to sustain improvements. They have met with some success in a limited amount of time in organising a clear overview of the curriculum supported by the adoption of new schemes of work to assist teachers' planning. New systems to track progress in English and mathematics enable teachers to assess the progress pupils are making and to raise standards. However, there are still important areas for development in the school, which time and coherent leadership need to achieve, for example in the use of assessment across the curriculum and the development of subject co-ordinators as managers for improving standards.
- 44 A start has been made in developing the role of co-ordinators as subject leaders. They scrutinise pupils' work, provide guidance for teachers and occasionally lead staff meetings. Apart from in English, mathematics and ICT, assessment is not consistent. While co-ordinators review samples of pupils' work they do not have a clear view of standards and are unable to guide teachers about the improvements needed in their subjects.
- 45 The governing body is supportive of the school's management and makes a satisfactory contribution to leadership. The Chair is particularly dedicated and is ably supported by a core of governors who provide appropriate expertise in finance and personnel. They meet regularly and have a range of committees that carry out

managerial functions. The absence of a committee for the curriculum means that inadequate connection is made between spending decisions and their impact on learning. This was not the case, however, when the school needed to install a computer suite that required considerable funding. The school is good at getting the best value from its spending. It makes good use of funding for pupils with special educational needs to provide effective support for their learning. The school meets statutory requirements for special educational needs. All staff know the procedures to be followed and what to do when things are not working well. Records of pupils' progress are kept carefully and used in planning work that meets pupils' needs.

- 46 There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the requirements of all subjects of the National Curriculum and to support children who have statements of special educational needs or English as an additional language. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff and the performance management of teachers meets statutory requirements. The professional development of staff is closely linked to the school's priorities for development. Over recent years these priorities have been numeracy, literacy and ICT. Teachers have not had the opportunity for several years to update their knowledge and skills in the other subjects. The efficiency of the office manager makes an effective contribution to the running of the school.
- 47 The accommodation, organised in three separate buildings, is good for children in the Foundation Stage and infant classes. It is satisfactory for pupils in the junior classes, where recent decoration and refurbishment have brightened classrooms. Displays of pupils' work are lively, colourful and well presented. They enhance the school environment, celebrate pupils' work and stimulate interest. Outdoors there is a large field in addition to hard surfaced play areas. To make it more beneficial to pupils' leisure activities the playground needs attention in some areas and the painted games are now quite faint. The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the school clean and in good order. There is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism.
- 48 The school has enough resources to meet the requirements of the range of pupils and the National Curriculum. There are libraries in the infant and junior buildings but both are very cramped. They have a very limited amount of fiction to encourage pupils to read widely for pleasure or non-fiction books to support independent enquiry. The recently developed computer suite is a valuable resource and there is a good level of resourcing for music. The storage of resources is organised well to ensure easy access by staff.

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

To develop the school further the governors should

1. Resolve uncertainties about the leadership of the school in order to provide the school with a clear direction in its drive to raise standards

*(Paragraphs 59, 60, and 80 of the main report)*

2. Improve standards in English for pupils in the juniors by
  - providing opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language
  - improving the quality of handwriting
  - increasing and extending the quality of reading books
  - ensuring that parents are well informed about their children's progress in reading and providing them with more opportunities to support their children's learning
  - providing more demanding tasks for more able pupils
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils

*(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 19, 24, 25, 58, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, and of the main report)*

3. Develop a systematic and rigorous programme to monitor and review teaching and learning in order to raise standards.

*(Paragraphs 79, 80, 102, 108, and 115 of the main report)*

4. Improve the use of assessment by
  - marking pupils' work with guidance to improve their learning
  - establishing the standards pupils achieve in different subjects so that co-ordinators have an informed starting point for raising standards

*(Paragraphs 21, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 49, 50, 52, 60, 79, 91, 92, and 98 of the main report)*

5. Increase the challenge in the work provided for more able pupils by
  - planning work to challenge their thinking and to extend their achievements to the levels of which they are capable

*(Paragraphs 2, 36, 38, 47, 53, 71, 78, 87, 90, and 94 of the main report)*

In the current school development plan, the school identified the development of literacy and assessment.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

74

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

26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	30	30	2	0	0
Percentage	1	15	41	41	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	330
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	52

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	21	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	39	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	93 (97)	93 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	20
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	36	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (97)	90 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	34	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	21
	Girls	28	21	28
	Total	44	39	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (73)	67 (80)	84 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	22
	Girls	29	25	29
	Total	44	42	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (75)	72 (73)	88 (83)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	284
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)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	27.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers(FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	698168
Total expenditure	656512
Expenditure per pupil	1789
Balance brought forward from previous year	28617
Balance carried forward to next year	41656

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

34.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out

360

Number of questionnaires returned

124

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	23	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	34	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	44	13	3	5
The teaching is good.	60	38	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	39	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	45	0	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	48	6	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	31	20	5	18

## **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**

50 Children in the foundation stage are taught in a nursery class and two reception classes. When children enter school their early achievements are similar to those of most children of the same age. All children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in most of the areas of learning. They make good progress in physical and creative development. By the end of the reception year, most children attain standards that are typical for their age in most areas of learning. Standards in physical and creative development are above average. Teaching in the nursery provides a good start to children's education.

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

51 In the nursery, children's personal, social and emotional skills are developed well through consistently good teaching. As a result, children's attitudes to learning are very good. They work and play with enthusiasm and enjoyment, select their own resources, use them carefully and steadily become independent. Supported by carefully structured activities, children learn to share and take turns. For example, when given clothing to dress up as snowmen, some children were given more than they needed, others were given less. The teacher's pretended dismay prompted children to give surplus garments to those who needed them and to swap odd gloves so that everyone had a matching pair. Most children listen carefully and usually levels of concentration are very good. They persevere for lengthy periods to complete a task. Children respond very well to the teacher and other adults in nursery and most are keen and confident to share their ideas, sometimes despite poorly developed speech and language skills. Behaviour in nursery is very good. However, the picture is less positive in the reception classes. Behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory and this restricts the progress children make.

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

52 Skills in communication language and literacy are satisfactorily taught through purposeful and imaginative play, consistent routines, repeating rhymes and opportunities for children to talk in groups of different sizes. Many children in nursery know that print is different from pictures, that it, "tells the story", and is read from left to right. Many recognise their names and some letters of the alphabet. In the reception classes teachers introduce children to 45 high frequency words which support the early stages of reading. However, many children could be introduced much earlier to reading books where these words could be learned in context. Children learn how to use a book, they understand the terms 'front' and 'back' and they know where the story begins. Children clearly enjoy books and appreciate the humour in a text by looking at the pictures. However, they need prompting to look at the first letter of a new word to see if they can help themselves, instead of giving up and waiting for help. Speaking and listening are taught carefully, but many children in reception classes do not listen well or follow the turn-taking conventions of conversation. Children slowly develop writing skills. In the nursery the teacher provides opportunities for children to practise mark making and letters in most areas of learning. Here children select their name cards independently, when they need to copy their names on to their work. In reception a few more able children write their own words in weather books, for example "webesbay " (Wednesday) and "Snofs op on my hed" (Snowflakes drop on my head). Teachers use a phonics programme that

helps children to read, write and spell simultaneously. As a result, children learn to hear letter sounds and to blend them to write and spell simple words.

### **Mathematical development**

53 Teachers use everyday contexts successfully to generate children's interest in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In both the nursery and reception classes teachers provide practical tasks such as shopping, weighing, sorting and comparing. Children listen to stories and rhymes on mathematical themes, which involve actions that children enjoy. Teachers often link mathematical activities to other areas of learning so that children have opportunities to practise or extend their mathematical understanding. When playing in sand or with water, children demonstrate their understanding of 'full', 'half full', 'empty', 'heavy', 'light'. In practical tasks such as hanging socks on a washing line, or using computer programs, children in the reception classes learn to order objects by size and to understand the terms 'big', 'bigger', 'biggest'. They form numerals properly and know their value. As a class, children recite numbers up to 30. Some children count on from a given number and are beginning to subtract through action songs such as "Five Little Speckled Frogs" or "Ten Green Bottles".

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

54 Children learn to make sense of the world through well-planned and interesting activities. Teaching is at least satisfactory, often good. Children learn to join construction pieces to build and balance with a purpose in mind. In the nursery, two boys decided to make Captain Scarlet's car. They selected an assortment of balsa shapes, which they glued carefully, but assembled randomly until a bit fell off one model. Laughing and undeterred the boy reassembled his car, putting a long thin block on the top, which he used to push his car along. He learned from failure, amended and produced a more stable model. "If it crashes nothing will fall off", he said proudly. Teachers provide good opportunities to enhance and extend this area of learning through outdoor play. Children test kites, blow and observe the movement of bubbles and learn how to transport water by using guttering. They talk about the weather and record conditions over a week. Visitors, for example fire-fighters, mothers and babies or the dental health team, provide first hand information and allow children to ask questions which help them to make sense of their world. They also act as a stimulus for good quality activities in which children remain absorbed over an extended period of time. Children develop and practise their skills with computers through direct teaching and independent use. In nursery the computer is not sited well enough to encourage children to use it independently, or for staff to intervene when children encounter difficulty. In the reception classes children understand 'log on', 'exit', 'drag' and 'double click'. They click on to different icons to create interesting effects using "First Paint" program.

### **Physical Development**

55 Children's physical skills are developed well through good teaching and a range of imaginative, challenging experiences. Each day children manipulate small tools and equipment such as pencils, brushes, glue spreaders and scissors very well. They squeeze, squash, roll and manipulate malleable materials. They show increasing dexterity as they complete jigsaws and use a range of construction materials. Teachers make good use of the space available in the hall and the covered veranda area; they have worked hard to develop good quality provision for outdoor play. Through use of toys and equipment alongside chunky, everyday objects such as crates, planks and guttering, children's creative thinking is challenged as they strive to achieve and improve their ideas. They make a garage with ramps and inspection

area so that the “mechanics” can have a good look under the pedal cars. They create a carwash, or they change the role of the cars with a roof -cover and blue light. Children build bridges for the “Three Billy Goats Gruff” and make tunnels to drive or crawl through, by stretching cloth over two rows of stacked crates. This good quality provision is linked well to other areas of learning. It encourages creative thinking, co-operative play, develops children’s physical and language skills and extends their knowledge and understanding of the world.

## **Creative Development**

56 The teaching of creative development is good. It allows children to experience and enjoy a wide range of activities that include art, dance, music and imaginative play. As a result of frequent experiences, children draw, print, paint, model and use collage well to create colourful pieces of work. They make carefully observed drawings and use the techniques they learn in art to support their work in other subjects, For example, in mathematics, children print patterns or mix colours on circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. Children engage in imaginative role-play in a café, or in a large boat they have built with wooden blocks. Consistently good teaching in the nursery empowers children to select the items they need to extend their play. When a boat began to sink, a child brought a “drill” and “hammer”. Another brought masking tape to carry out repairs. Differing levels of children’s attainment were clearly demonstrated. One girl, oblivious of the others, carefully cut small pieces of masking tape, which she used to decorate the flag, flagpole and edge of the boat; another stood silent wearing glorious dressing up clothes and clutching her “baby”. Other children were very keen to share their ideas, giving instructions and leading co-operative play. The sensitive involvement of an adult enhanced this activity and her focused questions extended children’s creative thinking without imposing her own ideas. Children learn to move creatively to music, they learn to sing tunefully and keep a beat.

## **ENGLISH**

57 By the end of Year 2, pupils’ attainment is in line with national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils’ attainment is currently below what is expected of 11-year-olds. This shows a fall in standards since the last inspection. The slight decline is due in part to the unsettled situation of the leadership, which has resulted in too little effective monitoring and developing of teaching. Consequently, standards in teaching have not been maintained in recent years. In addition, the school has not sufficiently analysed and responded to areas of weakness in all pupils’ attainment, such as reading. As a result, teachers have not ensured that there are enough opportunities, and often resources, to develop pupils’ abilities fully. This is especially true for more able pupils.

58 Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory listening skills. They sustain good levels of concentration in lessons and mostly have good understanding of new ideas. Pupils in Year 2 quickly appreciated how to form compound words by juggling with words like ‘drain, flake, pipe and corn’. They understand instructions clearly, which enables them to make a brisk start to their work. Some pupils in Year 2 do not speak with the same confidence. Many speak clearly enough, using suitable vocabulary. However, a significant number, including pupils with special educational needs, are often reluctant to talk openly in lessons. When they do speak, they are brief and can be indistinct. More able pupils explain things well. One pupil described war as ‘when people fight each other.’ It is a similar picture in Year 6. Pupils’ enjoyment of lessons ensures good concentration and competent understanding. In one lesson, for example, pupils realised the importance of different points of view in a balanced

discussion. However, not all pupils volunteer information readily. They have difficulty in speaking clearly or audibly and often lack the vocabulary to express their thoughts fully.

- 59 By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory skills in reading. Pupils read many words from memory and often use pictures as a guide. For example, pupils can remember how to read words like 'dustbin' and 'outside', but cannot decipher them for themselves. Only more able pupils have this skill. One such pupil read 'recommended' and 'Victorian' with consummate ease. Less able pupils show less confidence but are reasonably competent readers. By Year 6, pupils' skills have not developed fully enough. Pupils do not read a wide enough range of books to talk knowledgeably about them and struggle to name writers, other than Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. As a result, their vocabulary is not as good as it should be and this restricts their comprehension. Pupils have reasonable skills when dealing with new words like 'bewildered'. However, they are not wholly confident and this restricts their fluency. Less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs do not read with enough expression. More able pupils are expressive readers and have a good understanding of texts.
- 60 Pupils have satisfactory skills in writing by the end of Year 2. They sequence simple sentences to make a short story or a list of instructions such as rules for a game of snakes and ladders. Pupils know how to punctuate sentences with capital letters and full stops, but do not always use them. Their spelling is generally sound, although less able pupils have weaker spelling. However, handwriting is not as good. Pupils mostly form letters correctly but the sizes are too variable and some pupils still confuse capital and ordinary letters. This is especially true of less able pupils and those with special educational needs. More able pupils are mostly consistent in spelling and punctuation. By Year 6, pupils write in a range of styles, yet lack richness of vocabulary and quality of expression. Stories often feature zombies, dragons and computers. Biographies by Year 6 pupils were just lists of features; only more able pupils added interesting opinions.
- 61 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils that produce good behaviour and a keen and positive attitude to learning. Mutual trust means that even younger pupils work without supervision. Teachers structure lessons carefully and make their aims clear. As a result, pupils usually know what is expected of them. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class readily understood that they were using instructional language when programming a robot. Teachers make good use of whiteboards and other visual aids to help pupils understand new issues. One teacher used a computer *smartboard* very effectively to emphasise the pros and cons of an argument. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and this develops pupils' basic skills. They use word games successfully to promote pupils' spelling. Teachers are adept at checking how well pupils learn. They provide useful advice but do not always give enough extra work to spur pupils into faster learning.
- 62 Teachers plan lessons well but do not always cater enough for the different needs of pupils. Far too often, they provide similar work for all the pupils in a class. Teachers are good at providing suitable work for less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. However, more able pupils do not usually benefit in the same way. As a result, they do not make good enough progress.
- 63 The school has not responded sufficiently to the needs of the subject recently. There has been some helpful staff training over the past year, and the school has flagged up some sensible priorities such as the quality of pupils' writing and the refurbishment of the library. The school keeps a check on pupils' progress through periodic tests.

However, the school has not had a full picture of the subject. It was only with the publication of the National Curriculum test results last year that the school realised that some more able pupils were not doing as well as they could. Formal assessments help teachers to place pupils into relevant ability groups. However, these are not comprehensive enough to check how well pupils are progressing.

- 64 Uncertain leadership in the school has affected standards in English. The co-ordinator is keen and competent, and has a good overview of the subject and its priorities. However, there has not been any systematic and effective monitoring of lessons for over a year, to strengthen the quality of teaching. There has been too little spending on vital resources, such as good quality fiction and non-fiction books for pupils in the juniors. There has not been a whole school approach to planning and assessment to ensure consistency. For example, there is a wide variety in teachers' marking. Some is very good, with clear guidelines for improvement and clear praise for effort. Often, however, marking is cursory and does little to help pupils develop. Overall, there is a readiness among staff to improve standards in English. Teachers work very hard and want the best for their pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 65 Standards in mathematics match the national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Test results for pupils in Year 2 have remained steady for the past three years. In National Curriculum tests in 2001 pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were in line with both national averages and those of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of more able pupils reaching higher levels was satisfactory and when compared with the results of similar schools, more able pupils did well and were above average. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good overall because teachers provide lively, interesting lessons, have good subject knowledge and plan work to match pupils' ability. Teaching in the juniors is satisfactory overall, although some good lessons were seen in Years 5 and 6. In Year 6, test results dipped last year. This was mainly due to a significant group of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. However, some more able 11-year-olds do not achieve as well as they could. As a result in National Curriculum tests in 2001 far fewer more able pupils in Year 6 attained at the higher level than pupils in other schools. Two factors are largely responsible for this. The results of assessments are not used well enough in planning activities that challenge pupils of higher ability; the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not regular enough to ensure that teaching continues to improve and develop.
- 66 A good feature of teaching is that lessons build well on pupils' previous learning. Teachers are confident in using the new approaches and the structured curriculum of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, there is a good balance between whole-class teaching, practical activities and discussion. The introductory and closing parts of lessons are good because teachers explain what pupils are going to learn in very clear terms. At the end of lessons, teachers ask pupils whether they are sure about the learning objective or whether they would like to revisit it. This gives pupils a good understanding of what the class, as a whole, is learning. Teachers concentrate on developing pupils' skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division during mental mathematics, although sometimes questions are not demanding enough for more able pupils. Teachers are good at asking pupils to explain their methods. This was evident in a good lesson in Year 6 when pupils were asked to explain how they found 75 per cent of 360. As they described their methods, the teacher emphasised the importance of using what you already knew to solve problems and explained that no one way is the correct way to work out an answer. However, work in other classes

is not as well structured to meet the needs of the more able groups, so their achievement is less evident.

- 67 Most teachers use their understanding of mathematics to explain ideas simply to pupils. However, in one lesson, the teacher confused the ordering of fractions with the size of the fraction. A good feature of teaching is that all teachers use mathematical language in lessons so pupils in the juniors talk about *numerators* and *denominators*. In a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class the teacher made good use of solid shapes found in homes to teach the properties of objects such as cuboids, circular and triangular prisms. This helped pupils to realise that mathematics plays a role in everyday life. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher made good use of resources to reinforce pupils' understanding. She used a large number line, which helped pupils to see numbers as they counted forwards and backwards and to find the number that is one more or one less than a given number. Work in this class is well matched to pupils' individual ability and so all are being stretched. Teachers make good use of ICT to make mathematics relevant to everyday life. In a Year 5, for example, pupils were given £20 to buy food for a party and used data spreadsheets in their calculations. This work was both interesting and mathematically challenging.
- 68 Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this helps create a pleasant, co-operative atmosphere. They expect pupils to behave well and to do their best and there is a clear sense of purpose during lessons. Teachers praise pupils for their efforts and this encourages them to *have a go* without fear of making mistakes. These open, business-like relationships are a key factor in helping the pupils to make steady progress. In a good lesson in Year 6, the teacher recorded pupils' first thoughts towards solving problems, even though their initial solutions were often incorrect. However, pupils felt their ideas were valued and confidently entered into discussions where their initial mistakes were corrected.
- 69 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The individual educational plans contain practical and achievable targets that teachers use effectively. They are given additional help from support assistants who ensure that they concentrate and understand their work. Pupils who do not speak English at home are given additional support and their progress in mathematics is satisfactory. The school has taken some initiatives to improve the standards reached by more able pupils. Once a month, A small group of these pupils are taught mathematics at a local secondary school. A daily booster class improves the learning of another group of pupils.
- 70 While teachers check pupils' progress regularly and have satisfactory understanding of their achievements, they do not use this information consistently to plan the next stage of learning. This means that tasks are not always matched to each pupil's ability. Average and more able pupils generally have the same work. When this happens, the work is too easy and fails to extend the thinking of more able pupils. Marking is not consistent. Teachers offer praise and encouragement with comments such as *well done* or *good*, but in some year groups, do not say why the work was good, or explain how it could be better.
- 71 The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator gave teachers effective support as they implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and ensured that there were sufficient resources to teach mathematics. Assessment systems are in place and a new policy has been written. There is data to support pupils' learning and targets have been set for the current Year 5 pupils. The co-ordinator undertook a worthwhile project identifying the most common mistakes pupils make in tests and teachers use some of this information in planning. Procedures for monitoring the

quality of teaching and learning in lessons and analysing pupils' work have not been maintained. This is because staff absences entail the co-ordinator taking on additional responsibilities. The role of the shadow co-ordinator is a recent, positive development to help overcome current difficulties. This initiative should help the school to improve standards.

## SCIENCE

- 72 Pupils' knowledge of science is satisfactory and standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. This is because teachers teach scientific facts thoroughly and pupils work hard and want to learn. This has been just enough for most pupils to reach the level expected. However, pupils do not have sufficient experience in carrying out investigations. This is because teachers do not challenge pupils' thinking often enough with questions and tasks that extend their learning. As a result, too few pupils work at a high level and this depresses the school's results when compared with other schools.
- 73 This picture of attainment is similar to that at the last inspection. In most years since then, standards in Year 6 have remained in line with or just above, national averages, although there was a dip last year. This is because there was a high number of pupils with special educational needs in last year's Year 6 so that the percentage of pupils reaching a high level of attainment was less than half of that reached in most other schools. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that pupils are in line with what is expected of them.
- 74 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a reasonable knowledge of living things. They know what animals and plants need to stay alive, and plan healthy meals for themselves. They know the names of common types of materials, which they sort into groups and talk about what they are used for. Pupils know whether a test is fair, for example when they plant seeds in different conditions and measure and record the results.
- 75 By Year 6, most pupils have built up a sound fund of scientific knowledge. They use scientific vocabulary correctly, using such terms as 'photosynthesis' and name the parts of a flower. All pupils have sound knowledge of physical processes, living things and materials, although there are a few gaps and misunderstandings in their knowledge. An example of this is when they confuse 'force' with 'weight', or do not remember which measuring instruments they used. When investigating, pupils carry out tests planned by a teacher, such as on exercise and the rate of a pulse. Their work shows that teachers have guided them through setting up experiments, recording results and making conclusions. While this helps them set out experiments in a logical order, it prevents them from obtaining and presenting evidence in their own way. As a result, most pupils in Year 6 cannot devise tests without help. In the few experiments they do, pupils often remember what they did but not what they were trying to find out. Their investigative skills do not match their knowledge of facts. For example, pupils in Year 6 could not work out how to compare and measure the grips of a sample of shoes.
- 76 Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers plan together from a good scheme of work, prepare lessons well and make sure that less able pupils are included and understand. Pupils listen carefully and work well together. However, teachers do not always take advantage of pupils' enthusiasm. Weaknesses in planning and the use of assessment prevent pupils from making the progress of which they are capable.

- 77 Teachers' planning lacks detail about what pupils of different ages and abilities will do. In most lessons, pupils are given the same work. Pupils of widely different abilities complete the same tasks and record their findings in the same way. In some work in Years 5 and 6, every pupil records the same data. The scheme of work for science is fairly new, and the school has not yet adapted it to pupils' needs. For example, some units of theoretical knowledge, such as those about the Sun, Moon and Earth, could be dealt with in fewer lessons, giving extra time for pupils to extend other investigations. Although teachers record what pupils learn each year, no system is in place to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result, some more able pupils spend time copying notes on teachers' experiments when they are capable of much more exciting and independent work.
- 78 An area missing from some of the teaching is the collection and use of data from experiments. For example, when Year 6 pupils study plant growth they are provided with a completed chart for an imaginary plant. This does not develop observational or recording skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 collect measurements of body parts at different ages. However the only conclusion reached is that an adult's head is larger than a child's. More able pupils in another class used the same data with much more satisfying mathematics when they calculated a pattern from the rate of growth over several years. However, in most classes, the use of a few tables and charts do not reflect what pupils learn in numeracy or ICT.
- 79 The school is aware of the need to raise standards in scientific enquiry. Some training has been provided and more is planned. However, science has not been prioritised for development in recent years. The main weakness in leadership is that no one is monitoring the quality of teaching or checking teachers' planning and pupils' work. Until this is done, the school is unlikely to improve pupil's investigative skills or increase the number of pupils working at the higher levels.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 80 Standards in art and design are broadly in line with those in other schools by Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to the findings in the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The many criticisms of art in the previous inspection have been satisfactorily resolved.
- 81 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 experiment with a range of materials, tools and techniques to develop their knowledge and skills and to support their work in other subjects. For example, self-portraits build on work in about "Ourselves" by exploring textures and patterns in buildings. This work links with learning in history about homes. Pupils steadily develop their observational skills to produce sensitive drawings of plants and flowers. They explore colour and print with natural and man-made materials. Pupils weave on small and large scales, and use sketchbooks to develop their designs. However, there is little evidence of pupils working in three dimensions. Pupils in the juniors study the work of famous artists and work in the style of Picasso and Mondrian, using wax crayons, paint and pastels. Pupils in Year 5 develop the techniques of drawing and painting by introducing perspective into their painted landscapes. Pupils in Year 6 produce forceful images in their anti-bullying posters.
- 82 The teaching of art and design is satisfactory. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils, who obviously enjoy the subject. On occasions, teachers direct pupils' work too much. When teachers' instructions and intervention are correctly judged, pupils make better progress in appraising, evaluating and improving their work. In lessons in Years 3 and 4, pupils designed and made a chair, using card in one lesson

and newspaper in another. In both lessons pupils worked in a focused way, regularly referring to their designs. They knew the importance of making a stable chair, so they considered and reconsidered the proportion of the legs to the overall height of the chair and strengthening the legs so that the finished chair could withstand the weight of a doll. Good relationships and challenging tasks resulted in good concentration and good behaviour when pupils asked and helped one another to evaluate their progress. Teachers ensure that pupils' work is displayed well, to celebrate achievement and raise self-esteem.

- 83 Art and design has not been an area for development for some time. The introduction of a scheme of work based on recent national guidelines supports teachers' planning of work, which builds on pupils' knowledge and experience. The co-ordinator has supported teachers satisfactorily during this period, producing a new policy for the subject, monitoring teachers' planning, looking at pupils' work and increasing the range of resources needed to meet curriculum requirements. However, she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching in the subject. Assessment procedures, identified as needing attention in the previous inspection, are still not in place, although the overall picture has improved since then. Once an assessment procedure is resolved then standards in the subject should improve.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 84 Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with those in other schools by the end of Years 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Improvements have taken place by giving greater emphasis to pupils' use of sketchbooks for design and the way that pupils appraise, evaluate and improve their work. Pupils in Year 6 considered the needs of a user before making slippers. They made a prototype, changed their designs and made slippers that were strong, attractive and the right size. Their evaluations were honest and self-critical. For example, "I tried my hardest, but my slippers looked terribly deformed and I don't think Marks and Spencer would want to sell them". Also, "I put foam in the bottom because it was too flat and it wasn't comfortable", or "I think they look like slippers and we tried hard".
- 85 In Years 1 and 2, pupils make steady progress in planning and construction. Pupils in Year 1 followed safe procedures to handle food when assembling fruit kebabs. By Year 3, pupils evaluate their work in detail, considering which parts work well and which need changing. In some classes learning slows when although pupils make successful models, these often follow the teacher's ideas. The development of skill in learning to select appropriate tools and techniques is restricted when pupils are provided with the tools and materials at the outset. Progress increases again in Years 5 and 6 when pupils contribute more of their own ideas to the process of designing and making.
- 86 Teaching is mainly satisfactory. Teacher's knowledge of the subject and interesting lessons ensure that all pupils listen attentively and understood tasks. In one lesson, the teacher organised the equipment and groups effectively. Consequently, pupils worked in genuine collaboration when using a tent, windbreak, umbrella and pushchair to decide how a successful shelter was produced and how they could improve it. Pupils enjoy the subject and want to improve their work. Their behaviour in lessons is good.
- 87 In the past the subject has not been prioritised for development. As a result, resources are only just sufficient to meet curricular requirements. The school has introduced a scheme of work based on national guidelines that helps teachers to plan

work that builds on pupils' previous knowledge and experience. The co-ordinator provides sound guidance for teachers to ensure that pupils have a broad range of experiences in designing and making. This advice is based on the monitoring of teachers' planning and checking the quality of pupils' work. However, there are no systems in place for the co-ordinator to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in lessons. The school has identified assessment as a priority for development. The subject is an identified priority for school development, this together with the provision of opportunities for the co-ordinator to evaluate teaching and learning, standards should improve.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 88 Standards are comparable with those achieved by most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 89 The school has adopted a national programme of work, which is divided into topics and allocated across the year groups. The curriculum is planned on the basis of a two-year cycle, which ensures that pupils do not miss or repeat topics. Teachers plan well together to produce activities in common. This helps to share expertise and to enable pupils to receive a similar curriculum. Teachers pay satisfactory attention to covering the contents of the topics. Consequently, the school has made satisfactory progress in organising the curriculum since the last inspection.
- 90 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop satisfactory knowledge of the locality through walks in the area around the school where they learn about mapping. All pupils identify and explain physical features of the landscape such as hills and rivers. They describe services in their neighbourhood and the jobs associated with them, for example those of postmen and firemen. They begin to learn of the wider world through a study of a family in the Gambia. All pupils can explain some of the important differences in lifestyle between the Gambia and their own locality. More able pupils offer reasoned explanations as to how climate affects these differences. Teachers present pupils with different images of the Gambia so that they do not develop stereotypical images of the country. Pupils begin to identify simple map symbols and average and more able pupils can explain the differences between water drawn from a well and that from a water pump.
- 91 As pupils progress through the school their geographical knowledge deepens and their skills improve. In a study of the features of a river course, pupils in Years 5 and 6 identified the stages of the river from photographs and gave reasons for their choice. More able pupils use technical terms, such as 'estuary' and 'meander', with confidence. One pupil drew on knowledge gained in Year 2 to correctly identify the type of rock the river flowed through to the sea as 'sedimentary'. Teachers expect pupils to review their findings after class discussions. This encourages pupils to think deeply and places enquiry at the heart of their studies.
- 92 Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Lessons have clear learning objectives. Teachers plan interesting activities, such as the examination of crops from the Gambia in Years 1 and 2 and the examination of good quality photographs in Years 5 and 6. This has the effect of stimulating pupils to concentrate, to learn and to be attentive to explanations from their teachers. However, most pupils do the same task at the same level of demand and there is sometimes a lack of appropriate tasks for the range of abilities. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory, overall. Most pupils' work receives only a tick or at best a comment on effort, rather than providing a target for

improving their results. Judging pupils' levels of attainment is left to the individual teacher and consequently there is no coherent system of tracking pupils' progress in geography.

- 93 Management of the subject is satisfactory but under-developed. The co-ordinator supports the work of colleagues and a sample of pupils' work is monitored but there is no clear view about the standards pupils reach in geography or the quality of teaching and learning. This limits the potential to improve standards.

## **HISTORY**

- 94 Standards in history are in line with those in other schools by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection. The school has adopted national programmes of work that operate on a two-year basis. This allows pupils in mixed age classes to cover all topics and not to repeat them. Because teachers plan the work together, they share their expertise in the subject and provide pupils in the same year group with a similar curriculum. This represents an improvement in curriculum organisation since the last inspection.
- 95 In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a sense of chronology through the use of time lines and a clear sense that history is a study of past events through the topics they study. Pupils know about important people, such as Florence Nightingale, and most of them understand why she is regarded as important. They are aware of the reasons why events, such as Remembrance Day, are commemorated. Teachers use a very good collection of artefacts, such as those used for laundry to enable pupils to visualise how the past differs from the present.
- 96 Pupils in the juniors are good at devising questions for investigations. When pupils in Year 4, used information books to find out about Viking longships they constructed effective models that excited their interest and imaginations. Most of them knew where the Vikings came from. They understood the reasons for their voyages and located the countries they visited. Teachers use a visit by a theatre group to involve pupils in living history and to help them remember historical events. Pupils also begin to understand why people in the past behaved as they did. This activity represents a very good resource because of the knowledge and understanding it provides for pupils.
- 97 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide clear objectives and interesting activities to promote pupils' learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about interesting work. They listen attentively to their teachers and to ideas and explanations from other pupils.
- 98 Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides helpful advice and guides teachers' planning. Support occasionally takes the form of staff meetings about the teaching of history. A recent example was a session on the use of different sources of information in the study of history. Some monitoring work takes place when a sample of pupils' work is examined, but there is no clear view on the standards being reached. The subject lacks agreed assessment procedures. Once an assessment procedure is in place teachers will be well placed to improve standards.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- 99 In Years 2 and 6, standards in ICT are typical of those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. The school has invested wisely in staff training and a new computer suite. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. These two things have meant that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are now making rapid progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils open and use a word processing programme. They move and change text and add pictures. Most pupils save, retrieve and print their work. They work confidently on mathematics and spelling programmes and use an on-screen control game. They learn to find information on a CD-ROM and a simple database.
- 100 Year 6 pupils combine text, pictures and graphics, for example to make attractive cards. They order cut and paste text. Pupils use spreadsheets confidently; they know how to use a formula, for example, to stay within a party budget. They enter information in a simple database and display the information in various ways. All pupils control a floor robot competently and give instructions in a simulation game. Their ability to use the internet or e-mail is uneven and depends on using them at home. However, the school is about to be connected to the network and plans exist to teach these areas.
- 101 Most of the teaching is good and is the main reason for a rapid rise in standards. Teachers have developed their expertise in the subject considerably over the last year. Lessons are carefully planned and new learning is explained clearly using a *Smartboard*. As a result, pupils understand what to do and do not waste time waiting for help. They enjoy lessons, work hard and know that they are making good progress. A few pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not using the new suite as a place for serious listening and learning. During lessons, the teachers do not always make clear the difference between periods of informal support and the times when total attention is needed from everyone. This means that for some pupils progress is slowed. However, most pupils listen carefully and work well together. They respond positively to good teaching and new equipment by exploring and experimenting to overcome any problems they encounter.
- 102 Teachers are beginning to make good use of ICT in English and mathematics. They are supported by useful ideas in the programme of work. In an excellent English lesson, in Year 6, pupils used computers to analyse and improve a piece of writing. They made significant gains both in computer skills and in literacy.
- 103 Leadership in the subject is good. Progress was slow after the last inspection, owing to problems with equipment and finance, but a great deal has been achieved since then. The curriculum is now broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has prepared some practical guidance for lessons, which have improved teachers' confidence. The school has good arrangements for technical support. A useful assessment system is in place, which will enable skills and knowledge to be built on from year to year. Teachers keep samples of pupils' work on individual disks as a record of progress. This work is also used to keep a check on standards through the school although there are no systems in place to check the quality of teaching. Overall, the combination of a challenging curriculum, good teaching and resources promotes positive attitudes and good progress. The school is well placed to keep pace with the rapidly rising standards seen nationally.

## MUSIC

- 104 Standards of music are satisfactory. This represents a weaker picture than at the time of the last inspection. However, this is largely because the previous co-ordinator, who was a music specialist and did much of the teaching, has left the school. There is still enthusiasm for the subject among the staff but fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their skills fully.
- 105 By Year 2, pupils appreciate how music differs according to its intended impact. For example, when listening to a composition on weather, pupils understand that louder music may well signify heavier rain. They play a range of percussion instruments correctly to represent ideas or actions. Pupils work in groups to produce images like sunshine, although they sometimes lose concentration. Their singing is sound. Pupils try to sing in tune and follow a rhythm accurately. They respond well to more uplifting hymns.
- 106 By Year 6, pupils achieve good quality singing. They sing tunefully together and produce a pleasant resonance. They sing in two parts, including songs with echoing phrases and in rounds. They sustain a good rhythm. However, they do not always show enough expression in singing. They vary the volume but do not interpret the mood of the music enough. Pupils are good at composing. They use percussion instruments to represent the planets, for example. They know how to produce quiet and gentle sounds to represent Venus but do not have enough technique to explore the scope of tuned percussion instruments, like xylophones. Pupils are aware of the essential elements of music, such as tempo and texture, but do not always use them in practice.
- 107 The teaching of music is sound and often good. Teachers who lack confidence in their own expertise overcome this by working with an effective scheme of work. More confident teachers sometimes teach more than one class. Teachers create a very positive atmosphere in lessons and relate very well to pupils. Their own keen approach makes pupils enthusiastic and happy to immerse themselves in music. Teachers explain issues clearly to pupils and convey a sense of purpose. As a result, pupils tend to spring into action when offered an instrument and a chance to compose. Teachers are organised in lesson planning and resources. Recorded music and instruments are always to hand to make sure that lessons flow well and little time is lost. Teachers sometimes use rich influences, such as Holst's Planet Suite, that succeed in motivating pupils.
- 108 Although there is much enthusiasm for music in the school, there has been no recent staff training to improve teachers' skills and confidence. Nevertheless, the school is well stocked with a good array of percussion instruments and it has introduced a new, suitable scheme of work. This provides a valuable framework for learning. Although the co-ordinator is able and eager to develop the subject, there are no opportunities to monitor how well the subject is doing in order to drive up standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 109 Standards in gymnastics, games and dance match the levels expected by the end of Year 2. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Most pupils swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Pupils gain many of the skills necessary to be successful at sport and games and do well in local tournaments. In gymnastics and dance, pupils are very well co-ordinated and balanced. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory. This judgement is made on the basis of discussions with Year 2 pupils, who speak about the subject with enthusiasm and understanding. Teaching is good in Years 3 - 6. This is due to careful planning, which provides challenging activities to enhance development of skills.
- 110 In games, gymnastics and dance teachers ensure that pupils know the rules and understand the importance of safety procedures. Infant pupils learn to move at different speeds and directions; they use apparatus to jump and land safely. They learn patterns of movement from different cultures and country dancing. They develop early games skills such as sending and receiving balls. All junior pupils develop considerable control and accuracy when running, dodging and changing direction in games such as football. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 dribble, pass and control a ball when working in pairs, threes and fours. Good coaching by teachers in Year 6 help boys and girls to gain a sense of competitive spirit and ability to play together as a team. In gymnastics, pupils very effectively plan, practise and refine a sequence in canon, unison or mirrored movement.
- 111 A feature of good teaching is the very good relationships teachers have with their pupils. This ensures that pupils behave in a safe way when moving at speed around the floor or with apparatus. Teachers plan a series of short games during lessons so that pupils are well challenged, move vigorously and develop skills in an enjoyable way. Teachers are quick to praise pupils for their successes, explaining why their work is good and this motivates them to try even harder. Teachers create a clear sense of purpose for pupils, who then perform confidently for the whole class. This was evident in a very good lesson with pupils in Year 6. As one group of pupils demonstrated their work in gymnastics, the teacher talked through each movement, checking that they had fulfilled the agreed criteria. Teachers encourage pupils to share their skills with others, as in a Year 3 class where individuals demonstrate dancing like a robot. This encourages pupils to try harder. Some teachers assess pupils informally as they work and set activities to match the physical skills of individuals. The learning support assistant provides sensitive help and support to pupils with special educational needs.
- 112 Physical education has good priority on the school timetable. Lessons are well planned and include warm-up activities and time to cool down. As a consequence of the emphasis teachers place on being healthy, pupils understand the importance of these times and of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils who attend after school sports clubs, such as football, benefit considerably from good coaching.
- 113 The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator, who is a specialist and new in post. She checks teachers' planning, but has not yet been given time to monitor teaching in the subject. Assessment systems are not yet in place and so there is no consistent approach for physical development. Although the school have improved resources through the Top Sport scheme they remain only just adequate. Standards are good in Years 3–6 and with further appropriate resources standards have the potential for rising still further.



