

INSPECTION REPORT

St John the Baptist Roman Catholic

Primary School

Smith's Wood

Birmingham

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104107

Headteacher: Mrs M Salt

Reporting inspector: Mr R.P. Bamber
15064

Dates of inspection: 30th June - 3rd July 2003

Inspection number: 246353

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: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Arran Way
Smith's Wood
Birmingham

Postcode: B36 0QE

Telephone number: 0121 770 1892

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M. Corrigan

Date of previous inspection: June 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15064	Paul Bamber	Registered Inspector	Mathematics Physical Education	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
11227	John Moles	Team Inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology Geography Educational Inclusion Special educational needs	
32578	Janet Buckland	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage English as an Additional Language Art and Design Music	
10782	Henry Moreton	Team Inspector	English Design and Technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

			History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average sized Roman Catholic Primary School has 189 pupils on roll, with 28 children attending mornings only in the nursery. The school serves a relatively wide catchment area, due to its denominational status, with many pupils coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Very few pupils come from other than white British backgrounds and no pupil's mother tongue is other than English. A considerably higher than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs or takes a free school meal. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low and is still well below the average on entry to the reception class.

Schools in the area find it very difficult to recruit good quality staff. Since the last full inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff and during the inspection there were two supply and one temporary teacher, teaching full-time. A new permanent deputy headteacher has been in post for less than a year. The number of pupils transferring in or out of the school at times other than is normal, is much higher than average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

At the time of the last full inspection, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case. Standards have steadily risen since then, considerably in Year 2. Teaching is good. The school's curriculum fully meets requirements. Pupils continue to have positive attitudes and behave well. The quality of leadership and management is good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the nursery and reception classes have a good start to their education as a result of good teaching and support.
- Because the subject is so well taught, pupils throughout the school attain good standards in music.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave sensibly.
- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and the school is well managed.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6.
- Older pupils' achievement in information and communication technology and in its use to support learning in all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made steady improvement since the last inspection in June 2001. Standards have risen well in Year 2 and in non-core subjects throughout the school. The governing body now much more effective and good improvements are evident in the curriculum and in assessment procedures and their use. The contribution of subject leaders is now more effective in raising standards. As yet, standards have not risen sufficiently in Years 5 and 6, especially in information and communication technology. The school gives better value for money than in 2001.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	B
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	E	D

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

The ambitious targets set for the school's performance in the 2002 national tests were not reached, although relatively, pupils' standards in English were good. Inspection evidence indicates that again this year, the targets will not be achieved. This year's Year 6, however, received considerable disruption to their learning last year, that slowed their progress significantly but have this year made at least satisfactory progress as a result of good teaching. Their standards in information and communication technology are not high enough. The recently published 2003 Year 2 test results, indicate good improvements in writing. Standards in music are above average throughout the school. Children enter the school with very low standards but make good progress in the nursery and the reception classes, reaching the targets set for them in all areas of their learning, apart from communication, language and literacy and mathematics. All pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in their age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their lessons, listen well to each other and their teachers and are polite and well mannered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond to their good moral development by behaving sensibly in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well together and respect each other's ideas and values. They are keen to assume responsibilities when given the opportunity.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils' good attitudes and sensible behaviour contribute well to the positive ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The good quality of teaching throughout the school has contributed significantly to improvement in pupils' standards and their better achievements since the last inspection. Pupils receive teaching that is suited to their needs, because staff assess their work thoroughly and plan the next step of pupils' learning effectively. In the best lessons, pupils know exactly what they are supposed to learn, are given clear explanations to help them grasp new concepts and they are set interesting and well-matched tasks. Pupils who have more difficulties learning or concentrating receive well focussed support, which encourages them to persevere and strive for improvement. The quality of teaching is very good in music. Teachers could do more to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of lessons. The quality of teaching for nursery and reception children is consistently good or very good. Overall, pupils' learning is good. They concentrate well, are keen to finish tasks and work co-operatively. In mathematics, however, too many older pupils find it difficult to apply what they know in order to solve problems. A small minority lacks confidence to work independently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. More could be done to enrich pupils' experiences through visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils benefit from a lot of help, which enables them to achieve as well as they can and their provision is well managed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No pupil falls into this category at present. However, satisfactory arrangements are in place to provide for any pupil who might join the school needing support in acquiring English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' personal and moral development ensures good relationships and behaviour. More could be done to encourage pupils' independence, for them to assume responsibilities and to develop their cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Arrangements for child protection and for pupils' welfare are very good. The school now has effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress and improving their attendance. There is a noticeable lack of oppressive behaviour or racial tension.

The school has worked very hard to improve its partnership with parents with some recent success. Although few parents directly support the work of the school, more involve themselves in supporting their children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Key elements in eliminating the school's serious weaknesses have been the strong leadership of the headteacher and the new deputy headteacher and the more effective contribution of subject leaders in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Another considerable improvement since the last inspection has been the increased involvement of the governors in setting targets and priorities for improvement and in monitoring standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Staff and governors know what the school does well and where it needs to improve. Teaching has improved over the last year as a result of rigorous evaluation of lessons. Test data is analysed in detail to identify how pupils can improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is astute and budget monitoring thorough. Funds are allocated effectively to generate improvements in standards and in the quality of pupils' education and environment. Governors apply best value principles satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good which means that pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. Pupils like the school and behave well. Pupils get the right amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wider range of activities outside school. How closely the school works with them and how well it informs them about how their children are getting on.

The percentage of parents who responded to a questionnaire or who attended a meeting to discuss issues with inspectors was much lower than average. Inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents. They also agree that out-of-school activities could be more wide ranging, especially for younger pupils. Parents receive as much information of similar quality about how their children are getting on, as in most primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards were too low at the time of the last inspection and considered to be a serious weakness. They have now improved considerably in Years 1 to 4 but are not yet high enough in Years 5 and 6.

2. Children enter the nursery with very low standards in their language and mathematical development and in their personal and social skills. They are taught and supported well during their time in the nursery and make good progress but still enter the reception class with well below average attainment, particularly in language and mathematics. In the reception class, children continue to be well taught and make good progress. By the end of the year, most reach the national targets set for them in their personal, social and emotional development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. A significant minority makes very good gains in their use of language and understanding of mathematics to attain national targets in these areas of their learning but most do not. Children in both the nursery and reception class make very good progress in music because they are taught so well by a specialist teacher.

3. The results of the 2003 Year 2 national tests indicate a very good improvement upon those of 2002. A significantly higher proportion of pupils attained the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and the school's drive to raise standards in writing, resulted in very good improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the Level 3 in this aspect of English. As last year, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in mathematics fell short of expectations. Compared with 2002, when standards were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics, progress has been good overall and very good in writing. Inspection evidence confirms the standards pupils attained in this year's tests. In other subjects, pupils' standards are above expectations for their age in music and in line with those expectations in all other subjects.

4. The results of the 2002, Year 6 national tests indicated that standards were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average in English but below average in mathematics and science. This year's standards are not as high in English, particularly in writing, but have risen in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows standards to be below average in all three subjects. The present Year 6 experienced considerable disruption to their learning in Year 5. As a result, their progress slowed significantly during that time and test data indicates that by the end of Year 5, their average standards in English and mathematics were low. Despite consistently good teaching in Year 6 and making good progress overall, they have not caught up sufficiently and are unlikely to reach the targets set for them in their performance in this year's national tests.

5. Inspection evidence indicates that as a result of very good specialist teaching, pupils in Year 6 attain standards above those expected for their age in music. They attain standards below those expected in information and communication technology because until recently their curriculum was not broad enough and they have experienced a backlog of underachievement in the subject. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum standards are in line with expectations for age.

6. Children in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve well. In Year 2, this year, pupils' achievements in writing have been very good. Because the school implemented the National Literacy Strategy a bit later and the National Numeracy Strategy considerably later, than most schools, older pupils have had a less solid foundation in the teaching of letter sounds, to aid their reading, in the basics of good writing techniques or in their knowledge of basic number facts and mental strategies in mathematics. Overall, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are now achieving well because they are better taught and have a secure curriculum. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve satisfactorily. Apart from in mathematics, in Year 2, more-able pupils achieve as well as they should. All pupils with special educational needs, including those who have difficulties in learning, physical impairment or emotional difficulties, achieve as well as other pupils in their age groups.

7. Pupils achieve well in music, particularly in singing and composing music. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not achieve as well as they should in aspects of information and communication technology, namely using computers and other equipment to measure and control. There is underachievement in swimming because pupils have limited opportunities for instruction.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are good. Parents rightly feel that the school promotes the right attitudes and values. Pupils' attitudes to both work and play are generally positive throughout the school. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection and in a report that followed a visit made by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Attendance was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection; it has improved and is now satisfactory, because of the hard work undertaken by the school.

9. Children in the foundation stage have a very positive attitude to learning. They enjoy coming to school, adjust easily to the routine of school life and develop good relationships with each other and the staff. This enables them to have the confidence to 'have a go' and become fully engaged in their learning. They begin to play co-operatively and share sensibly. They behave well and have an awareness of the behaviour expected of them. They are happy and treat one another with respect.

10. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about school and most parents feel their children enjoy attending the school. They enjoy taking part in all the school has to offer, including those activities provided outside the classroom. Pupils are friendly, happily initiating conversations. All pupils spoken to, said how much they enjoy being in school and that the staff are helpful and friendly. Pupils come in to school readily at the start of the day and quickly involve themselves in the daily routines. Older pupils enjoy taking part in activities that help the school run smoothly, such as delivering registers to the classrooms. Pupils in Year 6 elect Heads of House, from their peers, who are responsible for collecting house points weekly.

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school; in many lessons they are very good. For example, in a creative development lesson for the reception class, focusing on music and taken by a specialist teacher, pupils entered the music room quietly and sensibly. They fully understood the expectations set for them and were ready to learn. They enjoyed the lesson, especially showing their class teacher what they had learnt. Similarly, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils rose very well to the challenge set, and worked very hard at the practical tasks, looking at how the size and position of shadows can be changed.

12. Although a few parents expressed some concerns about behaviour in parts of the school, it was found to be good overall. The school's good provision for moral development has a positive effect in this area. The school has successfully tackled some poor behaviour in classes, with support from outside

agencies. In no lessons observed, was the level of behaviour less than satisfactory. Exclusions are only used as a last resort and are very few in number. Appropriate procedures are used when a pupil returns to school. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection. Those pupils spoken to, did not see it as a major issue. They knew what they must do if they had any concerns and showed high levels of confidence in the school's response.

13. Pupils' personal development is good. In some classes where there have been particular difficulties, relating chiefly to behaviour and relationships, the school has sensibly sought external help. The positive effects of this provision were observed in a very good session in Year 4, in which pupils were asked to think about the behaviour in the classroom and decide on ways they could help to improve it. The ensuing discussion showed how much pupils appreciated the importance of listening to each other and working together for the benefit of all. Relationships in this class are reported to have improved immensely since the start of the school year. Similarly, a debate in Year 5 again showed good personal development taking place. The school has already identified ways of developing this aspect and to further develop pupils' independence, both in and outside the classroom, an area the school acknowledges needs improvement.

14. Relationships across the whole school community are good. Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' to children in the reception class. They play with them, read to them and accompany them when the school attends church. Pupils of different ages, gender and ethnic background play together well within the two playgrounds. In lessons, teachers and classmates show respect when pupils express their views and opinions. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were very appreciative of each other's efforts, applauding successes. In lessons generally, pupils work together well when given the opportunity, and gain from discussion and share ideas and opinions.

15. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. There are still some unauthorised absences but the school rigorously follows up any absences for which an acceptable reason has not been provided. Most pupils arrive at school on time and the school day starts promptly.

16. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to the additional support they receive. They develop good relationships with the learning support assistants and workers from outside agencies and this aids their learning in lessons and in small groups, well.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This is a considerable improvement since the school's last inspection when nearly one in ten lessons observed was unsatisfactory. Of the 36 lessons observed in this inspection, just over a quarter were very good, just over a half good and the remainder satisfactory. Teaching in Years 2 and 6, where teaching was at its weakest during the last inspection, is now much better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed.

18. In the nursery and reception classes, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection, largely due to the successful impact of specific early years training. Boys and girls, including the children with special educational needs, make good progress because of this good teaching.

19. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is consistently good and has made a significantly contribution to rising standards in Year 2 and the good progress made by the pupils in these classes.

20. The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. However, there is a greater frequency of satisfactory teaching, rather than good, than in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching in

Year 6 is always at least good and this has resulted in these pupils making good progress over the present academic year.

21. In the best lessons, teachers' plans are detailed which make it very clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and provide pupils with tasks which both interest them and match their present ability. These qualities were well illustrated in a very good Year 2 English lesson, which helped pupils evaluate how suitable stories were for particularly age groups, through studying the text of several examples of books written for younger children.

22. Teachers make good use of resources to make new concepts clearer or to reinforce learning for pupils who find work difficult. They work closely and productively with teaching assistants to ensure that good support is provided for pupils who either need help to keep up or who need pushing on because they finish their work quickly. A telling example was observed in a good Year 5 lesson, in which the teaching assistant gave less-able pupils good encouragement. This enabled them to better understand the way in which blood circulates around the body, while more-able pupils were required to accurately record the relationship between pulse rate and the time that had elapsed since finishing strenuous exercise. As a result, the quality of learning for all pupils was good.

23. In the majority of lessons observed, the good relationships that teachers have established with pupils and the positive way in which they manage pupils' behaviour, resulted in purposeful lessons conducted in a positive atmosphere. There were instances, in all year groups of teachers praising pupils for their genuine efforts and of pupils celebrating each other's successes, which contributed significantly to how well pupils persevere with tasks that they found difficult, and to the pride they took in improving.

24. A specialist teacher, who takes all classes, teaches music very well. As a result, throughout the school, standards in singing and of composing are above those expected for age. In a very good Year 2 lesson, for instance, the teacher's use of excellent subject knowledge enabled her to teach pupils how to play a tuned instrument. Her obvious love of the subject and the vibrant way in which she enthused pupils, ensured that they thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and made very good progress in playing both tuned and untuned instruments in order to create different musical textures.

25. The effective co-operation between class teachers and teaching assistants contributes well to pupils with special educational needs achieving as well as their peers. Because teachers and support staff involve both parents and pupils in reviewing the progress made towards meeting the targets in the individual education plans, those who find learning or concentrating more difficult than most, really try hard to overcome their difficulties. Pupils who need additional, very specific support are sometimes taught separately from the whole class in order to meet their needs well.

26. Where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers try to pack too much into a lesson with the result that pupils are sometimes frustrated about not having the time to finish tasks or have insufficient opportunities to reflect upon what they have learnt.

27. A weakness in teaching throughout the school is the insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning in lessons. During the inspection there were very few occasions when pupils had opportunities to use a computer to either reinforce their learning in English or mathematics, or to independently carry out research in order to widen their knowledge in other subjects. The lack of opportunities to use information and communication technology regularly is a weakness in the teaching of all pupils of all abilities.

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

28. The curricular opportunities offered to the pupils are satisfactory. The school has improved provision since the last inspection. Most areas requiring improvement have been successfully addressed and this is having a positive impact on standards. In particular, improved

long and medium term planning and the better use of assessment have led to better provision in science, as well as the more systematic development of pupils' skills over time, in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography and history. In physical education, the opportunities for swimming remain limited.

29. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school now has teaching programmes in place for all subjects, many of which are based on national guidelines, adapted to match the needs of most of the pupils. Better planning for English and mathematics, together with appropriate staff training and the provision of resources are supporting teachers well. Review of medium term plans means that the learning needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are usually appropriately met.

30. Both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented satisfactorily. However, some opportunities are missed to help pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The school sets itself increasingly higher targets to achieve in national tests and is striving hard to improve. Pupils' attainment is improving steadily.

31. Children in the foundation stage make good progress. This is because of the wide range of learning opportunities made available to them, which are based upon the recommended areas for learning. The interesting range of activities provided ensures that children are motivated, enthused and well prepared for their entry into Year 1. Children become absorbed in activities because learning is fun. The curriculum is enhanced by relevant visits; the nursery children visit a farm and the reception class visit a zoo.

32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides effective management and the good number of experienced teaching assistants provide good support in classrooms. Early identification of need is made and appropriate action taken. A considerable number of external agencies provide advice for the school and the co-ordinator and headteacher are very active in seeking additional support where this is deemed to be beneficial to the individual pupil or group of pupils. The school is involved in local initiatives that benefit pupils, for example, in a writing project for Year 1 pupils and an initiative to help promote pupils' self-esteem and to better behaviour for pupils in Year 4. Individual education plans identify appropriate activities and measurable targets. Teachers are now closely involved in drawing up these plans and as a result are clearer about the particular needs of pupils in their classes. Plans are reviewed regularly and help pupils to make progress that is at least equal to that of the other pupils in their age group. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met effectively and these pupils are well integrated into school life. The school's policy and procedures are in line with the national Code of Practice.

33. As a result of the good level of support provided and of the teachers knowing the pupils well, all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum that is offered. The headteacher and chair of governors are currently putting together a bid for Excellence in Cities funding to further establish a nurturing school that will support learning by parents and children, provide learning mentors and increase support for gifted and talented pupils.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. The older pupils are offered a number of sports including cricket, tag rugby and basketball. They are offered to both girls and boys. Some of the clubs support pupils' learning, for instance in numeracy and information and communication technology. Older pupils enjoy the choir, and some pupils benefit from tuition in recorders and guitar.

35. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The programme encourages pupils to consider their role as members of the school and wider community. Elements of Citizenship are addressed from Year 1. Pupils in Year 4 currently benefit from regular 'circle time' sessions with a visiting professional. Year 6 pupils benefit from acting as reading *buddies* to children in the reception classes. However, the school does not currently utilise all opportunities to promote pupils' independence.

36. Sex and relationships education and the hazards of drug misuse are taught appropriately as part of curricular provision in science. As well as the class councils, pupils are encouraged to develop their learning through participation in class circle time activities, which include regular debates. In one Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils considered the question 'Should parents be allowed to slap their children?' They all enjoyed taking part in this, listening carefully to each other's point of view and developing their speaking skills, (incidentally, the motion was defeated!).

37. The provision for pupils' social development is good and for their moral and cultural development it is satisfactory. These standards are judged to be the same as in the previous report. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The remit of this inspection did not include observations of religious education lessons and, therefore, did not include a significant element of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development.

38. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and insight into Catholic values and beliefs. Displays of pupils' work around the school contribute to the Catholic ethos and each classroom has a focussed display area. The school has a collection of prayers which are spoken at various times of the day. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in special assemblies. Several younger pupils were thrilled to be presented with a 'reader of the week' certificate and older recorder players performed at the start of a whole-school assembly.

39. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school actively strives to develop this in all its work. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are encouraged to make the right choices. Class rules are negotiated at the beginning of each academic year and are clearly displayed in classrooms. Pupils value the rewards they earn and enjoy celebrating their successes with others in special assemblies. Relationships in the school are good and adults provide pupils with good examples upon which to model their own behaviour.

40. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' social development. They are given a voice to share their thoughts formally through circle time, pupil interviews and questionnaires. Pupils care for each other and are encouraged to take responsibilities, throughout the school. A school council and peer mediation are due to start at the beginning of the next academic year. Pupils are encouraged to support those less fortunate than themselves by raising money.

41. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The headteacher recognises the need to improve cultural links in subjects and is currently working with a neighbouring school and an advisor to address this issue. However, several examples of good practice in geography were observed. During their study of Saint Lucia, Year 6 pupils gained a greater understanding of the impact of change on a non-western environment, whilst pupils in Year 4 were greeted in Greek and tasted Greek food during their study of Kefalonia. The school has identified the need to more fully prepare pupils for an interdependent multi-ethnic society and is setting in place strategies to address this.

42. Links with the community and other schools are satisfactory, with teachers from the 'main' receiving secondary school working with Year 6 pupils. Opportunities to visit places of interest, especially cultural and non-Christian places of worship are limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school successfully meets its aim to create a warm and caring atmosphere, in which everyone can work and feel fully included in the life of the school. This is particularly effective in supporting the larger than average proportion of pupils who enter the school at other times than is normal. The adults in the school work hard to guide and support pupils. Staff know pupils very well and develop purposeful and supportive relationships with them. This helps to ensure that pupils are confident to take their concerns to staff in the knowledge that they will be listened to and problems will be taken seriously.

44. The school ensures the very good health, safety and welfare of its pupils through a number of well thought out procedures. The procedures for child protection are thorough and staff are very vigilant. The site is safe and well maintained. Supervision across the school day is very good, with midday supervisors working to the same expectations as the staff during the rest of the day. Risk assessment is used appropriately to ensure the safety of pupils in lessons and on trips and activities out of school. Any accidents and the action taken are correctly recorded. The school promotes the pupils' understanding of their own safety through, for example, work in Year 2, on how to cross the road safely. Healthy living is promoted by the provision of fruit for the younger children and in the insistence that fruit only is brought to school by older children for a snack. All pupils are encouraged to drink water throughout the day – chilled water is available for them.

45. Monitoring of attendance is good. The school secretary checks registers regularly and follows up unexplained absences. There has been an improvement in the level of attendance and there are fewer unauthorised absences.

46. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. In assembly and 'circle time' pupils are reminded about what is appropriate behaviour. Pupils devise their own classroom rules at the start of the academic year. School rules are based on respect and tolerance. Any concerns relating to behaviour or harassment are recorded in line with local education authority guidelines.

47. Overall, the promotion and monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. This is a good improvement since the time of the last report. Relationships between pupils in class are better. The tracking of pupils' personal development is good. Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, which is reflected in their comments in annual reports to parents. However, the school could still do more to provide pupils with more opportunities to learn independently and to assume responsibilities.

48. The school has responded to the key issue in the last report relating to assessment and marking. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are now good. In the foundation stage, the assessment and recording systems are good. Baseline assessments are analysed effectively in order to provide good individual support. Good discussions take place between staff within both classes and at the end of the academic year between nursery and reception staff to ensure a smooth transition.

49. The assessment of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is good. The school makes regular assessments of how well pupils are doing through tests, observations and analysis of their work. Teachers set targets for improvement for pupils. The individual targets are precise and are given to both pupils and parents. Targets for groups are placed on the walls in classes to remind pupils what they are working to achieve.

50. Teachers regularly monitor the rate of progress that individual pupils make. This helps teachers to predict how pupils are likely to attain in national tests and to help to identify those pupils who need additional support. Test results are analysed much more rigorously than at the time of the last inspection and the information is used effectively to plan teaching programmes and individual lessons. Attention has been given to writing this year, which has resulted in better results in writing in the national test results at the end of Year 2.

51. Assessment procedures are good in design and technology and in music. In other subjects it is satisfactory. Assessment in these subjects relates to the key objectives for each unit of work. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit and the more and less-able pupils identified. This information helps in the writing of the reports sent to parents annually.

52. Assessment has been further enhanced by subject leaders analysing pupils' work across the school. The information gained is fed back to teachers to help them be more accurate in their own assessments. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection. A three point system is used to indicate how well the work has succeeded in meeting the objective of the lesson, and where it is used, is an effective tool in raising standards.

53. The arrangements to identify, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils needs are identified early in their time in school and good quality provision is given to support them. Provision includes not only academic support, but also support for pupils with speech and language difficulties and those with behavioural and emotional needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school works hard to develop a productive partnership with the parents who have satisfactory views of the school. Those who took the opportunity to express their views to inspectors were pleased with the expectations set for their children to work hard and achieve their best, because they enjoy coming to school. Parents think that behaviour is good. An unusually high number are pleased with the amount of homework set. Inspectors agree with these positive views. Parents express concerns about a number of areas, including the range of activities outside lessons and the leadership and management of the school. They would also like the school to work more closely with them and provide better information about how their children are getting on. These concerns were addressed during the inspection and judgements are given here and in the rest of this section. The range of activities outside the classroom, whilst not extensive is satisfactory. The quality of leadership and management is judged to be good.

55. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school provides regular newsletters to keep parents informed of events and activities in school and what courses and facilities are available to parents locally. A number of informative pamphlets from local support groups are readily available. Other information is provided as necessary for each class. This includes helpful information each term about what the pupils will learn. Reports are provided annually and are of good quality, providing clear details of what skills pupils have mastered, what they have learnt and what they understand and can use. Very well attended meetings are

held each term for parents when they look at their children's work and discuss progress and targets with their class teacher.

56. The school works hard to include parents. Generally they are successful in this. Most parents welcome the open door policy of the school. They appreciate that the headteacher tries to ensure that if concerns are raised, a response is made quickly to them. The school tries particularly hard to work with the parents of pupils who have specific difficulties, either with their work in school or with their behaviour. In most cases they work together in an effective partnership. However, there are a few parents with whom the school experiences difficulties in making purposeful contact, although efforts continue. Very few parents come in to school to help in the classroom. However, more parents are willing to come to help with specific projects such as the re-furbishing of the enclosed courtyard to accommodate the Foundation Stage play area and to paint the underwater frieze around the walls that surround it. The 'Friends' association is due to be re-launched in September. In the past, it has supported the school well in providing, for example, the bright new benches in the younger pupils' playground. During the inspection, many parents and grandparents of pupils in Year 4 attended an assembly led by the class. The large turn-out was not unusual – these occasions help to give parents first hand experience of what is going on. The school currently runs well-attended courses, such as flower arranging and plans to hold further courses designed to involve parents more in their children's learning.

57. Many parents attend meetings in school aimed specifically at supporting their children, such as those about statutory tests, taking the First Holy Communion and for those with children in the Foundation Stage. Attendance at other meetings, such as focusing on numeracy and literacy, attract few parents. Parents are consulted about aspects of school life. They were recently asked to take part in a questionnaire about the school's drugs education policy. Parents have signed the home school agreement and generally the school enjoys the confidence of the community it serves. Parents listen to their children when they are learning to read.

58. Contact with parents of those pupils who have special educational need is good. They are kept well informed of all support provided and are regularly invited into school to talk to teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and staff from other agencies about their children's progress. The majority of parents respond to these invitations and the number of parents who do come into school for these meetings is increasing as a result of the frequency and quality of the contact made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good. This is a good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher's and the new deputy headteacher's strong leadership and careful management have been instrumental in removing the serious weaknesses in standards, the quality of the school's curriculum and aspects of leadership and management. The headteacher's personal example when dealing with staff and pupils does much to underpin the school's Catholic values.

60. As a result of extensive consultations and lesson observations, teachers' training needs have been identified and met, and the quality of teaching has improved considerably. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have been introduced and are now being used effectively to inform teachers about how to raise pupils' standards. The close and productive partnership established between the school and the local education authority has resulted in subject leaders becoming far more effective in their role, particularly in influencing improvement in standards. For example, pupils' attainment and achievements are now better in mathematics and in science because the leadership of those subjects is now strong.

61. At the time of the last full inspection the contribution of governors was an area of weakness. This is no longer the case. Despite recent changes in personnel, the governing body

is now knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses, involved in setting priorities for improving standards and has effective procedures for monitoring provision in literacy, numeracy and for special educational needs. Governors have ensured that the National Curriculum for information and communication technology is now fully taught, but recognise that, for older pupils, its implementation has not as yet resulted in standards improving enough.

62. Arrangements for the performance management of staff are now good. There is a rigorous system for appointing new staff. In spite of the difficulties of recruiting good quality staff to the area, the headteacher and governors have been patient and diligent in appointing staff with the expertise needed to improve standards. In addition to the improvements in teaching and in subject leadership, the school has improved the methods for tracking pupils' progress and is now in a much stronger position to take action to meet its target for performance in national tests. The targets set for the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle managers and individual teachers are closely linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan, which in turn are relevant to the need to raise standards even further, especially in Years 5 and 6.

63. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are good. The headteacher and nursery teacher have worked closely together to write an effective policy and to re-shape the early years curriculum to meet the nationally set early learning goals.

64. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has set in place early identification procedures and helped teachers well in the writing of individual education plans for pupils. Working closely with the headteacher, she has involved a wide range of outside agencies to provide support for both individuals and groups of pupils. The co-ordinator has been on recent appropriate training to enable the school to evaluate and improve its practice. There is a strong partnership between the governor with responsibility for special educational needs and the co-ordinator. They meet regularly and the governor is involved in all areas of special educational needs work in the school, including attending review meetings. This means that the governing body are well informed about special educational need matters and provide good support to the headteacher and the co-ordinator. It is this close liaison that has led to improved provision in the school. Special educational need is an area that demonstrates the considerable advances made in recent times as a result of the involvement of all staff, governors and outside agencies.

65. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff to meet pupils' needs and to teach the National Curriculum. The staffing is now more stable, and this is having positive effects in the classroom. The support staff receive training and support, relating to their specific needs and to the overall school priorities. They work well with teachers to meet the needs of individuals and to help with pupils generally. Good provision is made for the induction and support of newly qualified teachers.

66. Accommodation is adequate and is used efficiently. There are several specialist areas, such as a design and technology room and the newly created information and communication technology suite, and refurbished areas such as the library and foundation stage outside play area. However, the playground for older pupils is barren. There is no shelter and nothing except some small play equipment to entertain pupils. Inside the inspection team had concerns regarding the open planned nature of the area around Years 4 and 5. It was noted on several occasions that the teacher's voice in one classroom could be heard clearly in the other through the open plan teaching space, making it more difficult for pupils in the other class to hear their teacher address them or the responses of other pupils.

67. Overall, resources are satisfactory. The shortfalls identified in the last inspection have been rectified. The recently improved resources in mathematics are promoting higher standards

in using and applying mathematics and problem solving. In English, including the library, design and technology and for the nursery and reception children, resources are of good quality. Elsewhere they are satisfactory.

68. The quality of financial management is good, which has enabled the governors to maintain staffing levels and a satisfactory level of resourcing, even when faced with tight budgetary control. Governors have not shied away from making difficult decisions in order to improve the quality of teaching. The budget is tightly controlled and astute financial planning ensures that educational priorities are suitably funded. Monies allocated to training and to purchasing local education authority support have been effectively spent to enhance the quality of teaching and of subject leadership. Governors satisfactorily apply the principles of best value. They rigorously apply best value for money when purchasing goods and services, consult widely with pupils about how they view the school and seek actively to improve the school's performance compared with those nationally, locally and of similar type. The school now gives satisfactory value for money. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

69. The school's administration is very effective and makes a significant contribution to its smooth running and positive ethos.

70. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further the headteacher, governors and teachers should:

- 1. Raise standards of attainment further in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.**

(Paragraphs number 1, 4, 85, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 98, 99, 103, 109, 111, 115)

- 2. Ensure that pupils achieve better in information and communication technology.**

(Paragraphs number 5, 7, 61, 36, 138, 142, 154)

- 2. Promote the wider use of information and communication technology to support learning in all subjects.**

(Paragraphs number 27, 96, 106, 115, 119, 123, 130, 133, 141, 148)

The following minor issues should also be addressed:

- Improve pupils' cultural awareness, especially of living in a culturally diverse society.
(Paragraphs number 41, 42)
- Plan in detail for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills more widely in all other subjects of the National Curriculum.
(Paragraphs number 88, 90, 94, 106, 130)
- The limited curriculum for swimming means that too few pupils achieve as well as they should by the time they leave Year 6.
(Paragraphs number 7, 152, 154)

- Encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning and provide them with more opportunities to take responsibility.
(Paragraphs number 35, 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

36

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

73

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	20	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	55	17	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points

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)	14	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery	YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	59

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10	
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32	

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
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
	2002	14	16	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	10
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	25	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (81)	90 (84)	83 (73)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	7
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	23	25	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (84)	83 (78)	73 (81)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	20	10	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	10	16
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	20	16	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (77)	53 (67)	80 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (44)	67 (40)	77 (60)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	147	3	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	116

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	538750
Total expenditure	564777
Expenditure per pupil	2591
Balance brought forward from previous year	57607
Balance carried forward to next year	31580

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 14 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	28

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	25	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	32	14	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	39	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	56	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	50	32	14	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	39	14	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	32	11	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	46	18	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	18	61	21	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	36	14	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	4	39	29	21	7

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. There are 28 children on roll in the nursery who all attend five mornings a week. Children are admitted in the September after their third birthday. The majority have attended local playgroups. A well thought out induction programme ensures that the children settle well and the nursery children integrate into the life of the school. For example, they attend assemblies, use the school hall for physical education and use the computer suite. This ensures that they transfer easily into the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. The nursery consists of several attractive and well-resourced rooms with a secure outside play area. The rooms are attractively decorated so that the children have a supportive and stimulating environment in which to start their education. The layout of the reception classroom is satisfactory with a large adjoining room for imaginative play. This room is also used for assemblies for Year R to Year 2.

72. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low particularly in the key areas of language, mathematical, and personal, social and emotional development. Despite very good progress in the nursery the attainment of most children on entry to the reception class is well below national expectations. Children continue to make good progress in the reception class so that by the end of the year the majority achieves the early learning goals set nationally in personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. A significant minority also achieve them in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development. Boys and girls, including children with special educational needs, make good progress because of good teaching and the wide range of learning opportunities planned for them.

73. The provision for children in the foundation stage is good and gives them a good base to their education. Teaching and learning is consistently good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Thorough planning and monitoring of children's development are having a positive impact on the quality of learning as they follow the 'stepping stones' detailed in the national guidance for the early learning goals. Assessment is used effectively to identify children's needs and for tracking their progress from entry into school. Parents are kept well informed through informal discussions and parents' meetings. The teacher and teaching assistants work very closely together. They have a very good understanding of the needs of children aged under five. The contribution of teaching assistants to teaching and learning is very good. Children enjoy coming to school, develop good relationships with each other and staff, adjusting easily to the routines of school life.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The majority of children enter the nursery with personal, social and emotional skills that are well below those found nationally. Children make good progress through the foundation stage and achieve the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Much emphasis is placed on the development of independence. For example,

in the nursery, children use a band system when they choose activities and self-register by placing their name card in their group pocket. Children also independently select their favourite self-stamp to record achievements on their own effort chart. In the reception class, children build on the good progress made in the nursery. During the foundation stage they grow in confidence and develop a sense of self-worth and achievement. In structured activities children show good concentration and perseverance, taking a pride in their work. They are encouraged to make choices of various activities during the day so that not all activities are directed by the teacher. They take turns without fuss and help each other with simple tasks.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Children make good progress from a low starting point because of good teaching and an appropriate emphasis placed on the development of speaking and listening skills. The majority of children are unlikely to achieve the expected levels by the time they move into the reception class, although more-able children will do so.

76. Children make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Staff converse well with them, encouraging them to talk purposefully about their chosen task and extend their language appropriately. For example, during a listening game on the tape recorder in the nursery the teacher assistant introduces the word 'violin,' because although children recognise the sound they were unable to name it - 'a thing with strings'. Children listen intently for short periods, particularly when the teacher uses her voice well to good effect when reading a story or poem. They also enjoy learning and reciting new and favourite rhymes. All staff make good use of time at the end of lessons for the development of speaking and listening skills, by encouraging children to talk about what they have done.

77. Staff plan creatively to develop reading and writing skills in activities. Games encourage children to recognise letters and sounds. They show a keen interest in books and enjoy the regular, varied reading sessions. They know that print tells a story and use pictures for information. Very skilful questioning by staff helps children to understand stories and instructions. Adults insist on a response and this helps the development of their thinking and speaking skills. Children make good progress in recognising letters and sounds during the foundation stage because they are provided with a stimulating environment of words and pictures. By the end of the reception year more-able children read words and simple books.

78. The opportunities for children to write and draw are good in the Foundation Stage. They quickly learn to write their name on their work and practise forming letters correctly, moving from tracing over letters, writing under a model, to writing independently. Well thought out writing opportunities are planned in imaginatively play. For example, appointment books are regularly used by children in both the photo studio in the nursery and the veterinary practice in reception.

Mathematical development

79. Children make satisfactory progress in the development of numeracy skills because they have daily opportunities to consolidate their learning. The majority is unlikely to achieve the expected level by the time they are five because of their low starting point. Staff plan work carefully to help them extend their limited understanding of mathematical language. Children think very carefully when asked if their container of sand or water is full or empty. They develop an awareness of *more, less, the same and different* as a result of anticipating what will happen when the contents of one jug are poured into another container. By the time children enter the reception class many have gained an understanding of counting and their concentration skills

have improved slightly. By the end of reception year, the majority of children count reliably to ten and write recognisable numbers to five. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where it is good, singing rhymes such as 'five little monkeys' are used to help the children understand the concept of subtraction.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children make good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world because the quality of teaching and learning is good. They will, therefore, achieve the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Staff in the nursery attract children's interest and curiosity and stimulate learning. For example, in their topic on senses, nursery children listen to inside and outside sounds and record these using drawings. They make feely boxes and say whether objects are hard, soft, rough or smooth. In a listening game, in which they faced the other way, they guessed the name of the child talking. Their computer skills are very good. They use the digital camera accurately to take photographs of each other and data handling programs to record eye colour. Children use the mouse controller to select a colour, draw lines, rub out, create a new page and print. More-able children independently produce a superb drawing of a spider with eight legs using a paint program.

81. In the reception class, staff extend children's understanding through effectively planned experiences. For example, two different breeds of puppies visited the class as part of the topic on pets. Children were invited to ask detailed questions they had written the previous day. Very good links were made with literacy, with the children reading their questions, helping the teacher to write the answer, talking to each other as 'talk partners' and speaking to adults. There was evidence of previous computer work but children were not observed using the classroom computer during the inspection.

Physical development

82. Children make good progress in physical development. They learn new skills in lessons and develop an awareness of others. Because of the good quality of teaching and learning children will achieve the expected level by the time they leave reception. In the hall, children pat a balloon to one another with control and progress well to throwing and catching beanbags. For outdoor activities, they have wheeled toys and an adventure playground in the secure area, which is used in fine weather. This area of learning has improved since the last inspection, because accommodation and resources provided have improved. From their entry into nursery, children learn to use tools, materials and equipment with dexterity. They cut different fabrics and papers with improving co-ordination. However, a significant minority of the children find it difficult to grip a pencil well when writing. Children demonstrate good skills when they fill containers with sand and water and use a variety of construction materials to build, which develops their manipulative skills.

Creative development

83. Children make good progress and achieve well in this area because they have many stimulating and challenging opportunities for learning. The majority will achieve the early learning goals in this area before they start Year 1. The good quality of teaching and learning provides all children with opportunities to effectively explore colour, texture, shape and form. For example, following the visit by two puppies, children in the reception class used clay to produce a model of a dog, and used paper, wool and material to design and make a dog mask. There was evidence that children use a wide range of materials and a good variety of activities. Children have many opportunities to develop their imagination in the high quality role-play

areas. Both the *photo studio* in the nursery class and the *veterinary practice* in the reception area are well thought out and provide pupils with many opportunities to extend their language.

84. The teaching of music by the specialist teacher is very good in both the nursery and reception class. Nursery children name many untuned instruments, such as a tambourine, triangle, and maracas. These instruments were then played, with the majority able to keep the pulse whilst they sang 'The wheels on the bus'. Reception children clearly explain the difference between a pulse and rhythm and apply their knowledge whilst singing. Towards the end of both lessons observed, the class teacher returned and children performed enthusiastically to show what they had learnt.

ENGLISH

85. On entry to the reception class, children attain low scores in reading and writing base line assessments, but overall their progress by the end of Year 2, is good. The results of the 2002 national tests indicated that standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 were below the national average. Standards were in line with the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. In national tests, more-able pupils reach expected levels in reading and writing. Standards in pupils' speaking and listening skills in Year 2 are in line with national expectations. This year's national test results confirm that standards continue to rise. Inspection evidence and the school's own assessments also indicate that standards are rising. Standards have improved since the last inspection. This reflects the good provision for both reading and writing in the infants.

86. By the end of Year 6, standards are low when compared to the national average. They are favourable in comparison to the achievements of pupils in similar schools. The 2002 national test results show that the more-able pupils achieve well, but that the average pupils under achieve. Given their attainment on entry to Year 3, pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress.

87. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make satisfactory progress in literacy. They receive good support and the work they do in class is appropriately adapted to reflect the targets in their individual education plans.

88. Pupils enter the school with limited vocabulary and lack confidence in expressing their thoughts and feelings. The school tries to address this issue through providing more opportunities for speaking and listening and by improving teachers' questioning skills. Generally, pupils listen well but when questioned many are insufficiently confident to express a view or do not have a sufficiently good understanding of the subject matter to put forward their own ideas. Some use is made of paired and group work to allow pupils to try out their ideas on one another before reporting back to the class, such as in the Year 1 lesson when discussing fantasy stories. Generally though, teachers' range of strategies to promote speaking are too few and consequently pupils are often too passive in lessons. However, some use is made of drama, debate and collaborative work, but this too has been underdeveloped. Where pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas, as in the Year 1 lesson cited above, they respond well. Teachers' expectations of pupils are inconsistent. In some classes, pupils are expected to answer in whole sentences, in others teachers accept phrases and single word responses. For example, in an otherwise very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher successfully stimulated pupils' interest in Jamaica by giving a potted history of how people from that island have enriched our own culture through music and literature. Although keen to be involved, many pupils lack appropriate language skills or confidence in speaking.

89. There has been good improvement in reading for pupils in Year 2, with a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving the expected national standards. This shows good progress from the low level of attainment on entry. A focus on learning letter sounds thoroughly has given pupils strategies for tackling unknown words, with the result that many pupils are reading accurately and confidently and are progressing at a faster rate. Pupils of higher ability read with fluency and expression. They discuss their reading and many read extensively at home as well as at school. Teachers maintain good records of pupils' progress in reading. Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading and talk about their favourite books.

90. In Year 6, standards in reading are below average although the school's own reading tests indicate that pupils now make satisfactory progress. The school has introduced a number of measures to improve reading skills, including the National Literacy Strategy, the use of more extensive resources (especially fiction) and the provision of an attractive and well-stocked library. More-able pupils discuss their reading preferences. They regularly write detailed reviews of books they read. Pupils of average and low ability are hampered by their limited vocabulary and confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions, and lack skills of deducing meaning from texts. Pupils know how to use the library and understand how to retrieve information using contents and index pages. Teachers' reading records provide a clear picture of the extent of pupils' reading and include comments from adults on progress.

91. Standards in writing in Year 2 are at least in line with national expectations. There has been a good improvement in the last couple of years and pupils make good progress from a low baseline on entry to the school. Pupils are introduced to an appropriately broad range of writing for different purposes. Year 1 pupils write independently using their knowledge of letter sounds and key words. More-able pupils write several sentences correctly using capital letters and full stops. They develop a good understanding of rhyme. Year 2 pupils are beginning to use descriptive language in their writing. The progress of less-able pupils is good and the support they receive from classroom assistants helps them to try hard and achieve well. Work samples of more-able Year 2 pupils show they apply their knowledge of how stories are constructed in their own writing. They include dialogue and use speech marks correctly. They have learned to write in a legible, cursive style. Average and below average pupils do not yet join all their letters. They write in simple sentences but do not consistently use capital letters and full stops.

92. Writing standards from Year 3 to Year 6 are below average, but the school has given high priority to addressing weaknesses. Consequently, there has been an improvement since the last inspection in the range of writing. Pupils' 'progress in writing' books provide examples of writing for different purposes. Their skills in letter writing have improved, but some pupils cannot change a formal letter into the format of an informal letter to, for example, a friend. Too many pupils have weak writing skills because, when talking, they do not use complex sentence structures or a broad vocabulary and this affects their ability to communicate in writing. Higher attaining pupils and some of average ability use paragraphs and mostly correct punctuation. Their writing is often imaginative and engaging. Average attaining pupils do not always follow instructions and do not routinely check their work for errors and mistakes. Some of their work remains unfinished and they do not put enough detail in their writing. They are not clear about types of sentences and some of their writing is not well organised. However, the standard of presentation of work displayed is good and provides a model of the school's expectations.

93. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some very good features and some areas for development. Work in all year groups is, in the main, well matched to pupils' ability and is firmly based on National Literacy Strategy objectives. Teachers share lesson objectives with

pupils and appropriately refer to them in the lesson. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, when work was not appropriately matched to pupils' learning needs and pupils were not always sure what they were required to do. Teaching is most successful when opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss texts in pairs or in groups so that they gain confidence in exploring ideas. When inspired, pupils respond very positively. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, all pupils enjoyed making a writing frame to see if an author's stories would be suitable for reception children. Teachers' control is usually good, firm and yet relaxed. Marking is constructive and identifies how pupils can improve their work. The best marking makes reference to pupils' targets. The use of homework is satisfactory overall, is set on a regular basis for the older pupils, but does not always extend the most-able.

94. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not fully involve pupils, many of whom (especially boys) listen passively during overly long teacher introductions. Although their behaviour and attitudes are usually good, they are not stimulated when listening for long periods of time. While there are some very good examples, including writing instructions to show how to make a hare or a tortoise, in design and technology, there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects. There are examples of information and communication technology used in English. For example, the word processing of pupil's poetry based on Michael Morpugo's 'Kensuke's Kingdom'. However, its use is underdeveloped. Too often learning support assistants do too much for pupils and this does not help pupils develop their independent thinking and learning skills.

95. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. Astute evaluations of lessons have contributed to greater consistency in teaching and to effective planning, resulting in a better match of tasks to meet pupils' needs. Systems for tracking individual pupils' performance through the school and individual target setting are helping teachers to raise their expectations of standards pupils' can achieve. The school effectively analyses information from national tests and school assessments and this is a significant improvement from the last inspection, when teachers' use of assessment to influence the work they set was judged to be unsatisfactory.

96. Inspection evidence and the school's own monitoring and assessment procedures indicate that standards are improving for all pupils, albeit more slowly for older pupils. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. All of the many issues then identified as being unsatisfactory have been addressed (with the exception of the use of information and communication technology). Standards for the younger pupils show clear evidence of improvement. Strategies put in place for the older pupils are taking longer to secure results but there are clear indications that this too, in time, will prove fruitful.

MATHEMATICS

97. Standards in the present Year 2 show a good improvement compared with last year, 2002. The national test results this Year, 2003, show that a much higher proportion of pupils attained the expected Level 2 and broadly the same proportion Level 3. When compared with the standards found in the school's last full inspection, standards have risen from being in the bottom five per cent in the country to being on a par with most other schools. Pupils' progress and achievement has been good when measured against their attainment on entry to the school.

98. Presently, most Year 2 pupils have a secure grasp of basic number facts. More-able pupils use their good knowledge of number patterns and sequences to simplify calculations and employ a wide range of strategies to add, subtract and multiply accurately. A few, less-able pupils do not have a firm enough grasp of number relationships to apply what they know to

unfamiliar problems, such as when adding or subtracting money totals. Most pupils tell the time accurately from analogue and digital clocks but a few pupils find converting digital to analogue time more difficult. The most-able pupils confidently sort information about pupils' preferences, odd and even numbers and multiples, into tables and graphs. They interpret data from graphs with a good understanding of scale. A relative weakness amongst below average attaining pupils is in their inability to measure accurately with a ruler or from gradations on measuring jugs.

99. Standards in the present Year 6 are below average but represent an improvement upon those indicated by last year's national test results. A higher proportion of pupils this year is attaining at the expected Level 4 and around the same percentage at the higher Level 5. More-able pupils use a wide range of strategies to simplify calculations, applying their existing knowledge well to solve problems which involve more than one step. Most pupils use a variety of methods to long multiply. They know that the sum of the internal angles of a triangle is 180 degrees and many apply this knowledge to correctly identify the angles of equilateral and isosceles triangles. However, too many pupils at present are insecure when calculating mentally. This results in these pupils losing confidence when asked to work quickly or in arriving at a wrong answer even though they use the correct method. Less-able pupils tend to struggle when faced with calculations involving proportion, conversions of metric measures and in measuring angles with a protractor. Data indicates that pupils in Year 6 have made at least satisfactory progress when compared with their average performance when they took the Year 2 national tests.

100. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and is resulting in improving standards. Because teachers have enthusiastically taken up opportunities for training and to observe highly skilled practitioners from other schools, the quality of numeracy lessons is now good.

101. In the best lessons, teachers make very clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, provide them with clear explanations about the methods they should use to calculate or how to apply their existing knowledge to tackle mathematical problems. Lessons are well structured. There is ample time for practise in mental skills, instruction from the teacher, for pupils to work individually or in groups, to apply what they learn and for an opportunity for pupils, at the end of the lesson, to reflect on what they have learnt.

102. Many of the best features of mathematics teaching were observed in a very good Year 6 lesson in which pupils were subjected to searching questions to probe their knowledge of how to interpret data from a pie-chart. As a result of the pace and rigour with which the teacher conducted the lesson, pupils worked very purposefully and fully consolidated their understanding of fractions, ratios and how to construct a pie-chart.

103. Where there are relative weaknesses in lessons, it is because teachers pack too much into the time available and, therefore, do not cover all the work they plan, or, with younger pupils, prolong lessons beyond the point when pupils can no longer fully concentrate. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they might.

104. A feature of most lessons is the good support given to pupils with special educational needs. Effective teaching assistants work closely with class teachers to provide these pupils with one-to-one support, or teaching in small groups, which helps them achieve well. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher's repetition of a method used previously, helped lower attaining pupils to apply what they already knew about adding 9 and 11, to successfully adding 19 and 21.

105. Good relationships and constant encouragement contribute significantly to pupils' positive response to the subject. In many lessons, teachers frequently praise pupils' efforts which motivates them to try their best to overcome their difficulties and achieve their best possible standards. When teachers use mathematical games or introduce an element of competition in lessons, pupils noticeably respond very enthusiastically. For instance, in an effective Year 5 lesson, when pupils were challenged to use their calculators to beat a previous record for calculating.

106. The mathematics curriculum has improved well since the time of the last full inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is now fully taught and teachers' medium term plans reflect the needs of pupils well. The information derived from analysing test papers, pupils' work and teachers' assessments, are used well to influence what needs to be done to improve standards. A weakness in the curriculum is in the lack of use of information and communication technology to support learning, both to reinforce basic mathematical concepts amongst lower attaining pupils or to extend the more-able mathematicians. There are too few opportunities planned for pupils to apply their numerical skills in other subjects, although there are some good examples in science.

107. The subject is well led and managed. There is an up-to-date action plan which is well focussed upon raising standards. Training to help teachers improve their performance is effective. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and where necessary, extra support provided in order to help them attain as well as they should. Recently, good quality resources have been purchased which have helped teachers make lessons more relevant and interesting for pupils. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of leadership and management since the last full inspection.

SCIENCE

108. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection because pupils have been well prepared in their knowledge of the world in the nursery and reception classes and teachers have built on this basic knowledge well during Years 1 and 2.

109. By the end of Year 6, standards are below the national average. Despite good teaching in recent times and improved achievement, pupils in Year 6 have not had sufficient time to develop a secure background of scientific knowledge to achieve average standards. They are unable to explain sufficiently well the scientific background to things they find out in investigations. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make progress equal to that of other pupils in their age group.

110. Pupils in Year 2, carry out investigations into friction by testing how quickly the same model cars slow down as they travel over different types of surfaces. They accurately sort different types of food into those that aid growth and those that improve stamina and levels of activity. They correctly explain the life cycle of different animals. Year 2 pupils fully understand that some things are made from natural materials and that others are manufactured from man-made materials.

111. Pupils in Year 6, carry out an investigation into shadows knowing that only one factor should change if accurate measurements are to be made regarding the ratio by which a shadow enlarges when compared to a light source. Whilst they understand the crucial elements of a fair test their lack of knowledge of how shadows are formed means considerable trial and error has to take place prior to

starting the experiment. In addition, many errors occur in the selection of an appropriate scale for measurement. Pupils understand that the rate at which sugar dissolves depends upon the volume of water present. They understand that mould growth on bread can be accelerated by leaving it in a warm place but are less sure about the effect of the absence of air movement and the formation of a moist microclimate. Teachers are, therefore, setting appropriate investigations to enable pupils to learn what they should be learning in Year 6, but it is this lack of secure prior knowledge that makes it difficult for pupils to attain the standards expected for their age. Pupils in the younger age groups are already displaying a greater understanding of scientific facts as they link scientific knowledge with practical experiment. The school is therefore well placed to improve results in future years.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers display good knowledge, plan interesting activities and set a good pace in lessons. Teachers expect pupils to devise solutions to problems in a limited amount of time and to write up their notes before the conclusion of the lesson. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of scientific facts and good progress in the development of their investigative skills. The greater use of investigation, to aid pupils in their understanding of scientific concepts, is improving pupils' achievement well. Pupils have a greater understanding of the reason why things happen in the world around us, than they did at the time of the last inspection. In addition, pupils take greater responsibility for devising ways of carrying out investigations. This is an area identified by the school for continued development. Teachers establish very good relationships in the classrooms and pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions, even if their contribution contains an error, secure in the knowledge that their contribution will be treated with respect.

113. Pupils, throughout the school are keen to take part in scientific investigations and their attitudes are good, sometimes very good and they handle equipment sensibly. They try hard to set their work out neatly so that other people can understand what they know and pupils refer back, with ease, if asked to do so. Pupils contribute willingly to discussions and behave sensibly. This means teachers engage in interesting debates knowing that pupils will listen to each other, put forward suggestions relevant to topic under discussion and that pupils will learn a lot from these debates.

114. The quality of leadership and management is good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has a very good overview of the areas needing development. An appropriate range of lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work has been carried out. These monitoring strategies are an improvement since the last inspection and the recent visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Much has been done to train teaching staff in the planning and use of investigations to help pupils learn, and this is an area of the curriculum that has improved since the last inspection. An area of particular focus has been the successful transition of knowledge and understanding of the world gained in the foundation stage to Year 1. As a result of these recent initiatives, the quality of the science curriculum is now satisfactory. The development of pupils' vocabulary in lessons, the use of note taking and report writing taught in literacy lessons is developing as is the use of tally charts and graphs learnt in mathematics lessons. The recent science week has raised the status of the subject in the school and the work of the governor responsible for science has successfully involved national firms and local initiatives in supporting this focus.

115. The contribution of science to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and used appropriately to help teachers plan lessons to enable, older pupils particularly to make up lost ground in scientific understanding. The quality of marking is satisfactory. However, the lack of a clear statement of the lesson objective or a title for a piece of work, means that comments are often general and do not help pupils understand what they should know. Resources support teaching and learning satisfactorily and are now sufficient in quantity to promote independent investigative work. The

use of information and communication technology to record results and present reports and findings is, however, under-developed. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area for development.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for age in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

117. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had experience of a range of media and techniques. They creatively explore ideas in sketches and drawings in their sketchbooks with an emphasis on pattern, line and tone. Pupils in Year 1, fold paper to make interesting three-dimensional pictures. During a visit to a wood, pupils carefully observed sculptures and used natural materials to create their own. Pupils in Year 2, work in different ways to interpret the style of Van Gogh, with sensitivity and care. A display of collage work shows that pupils understand texture and shade which enables them to produce effective pictures using different media.

118. Pupils in Year 3 observe similarities and differences in the paintings by Edouard Vuillards and use detailed patterns to reproduce Egyptian death masks. In Year 4, pupils talk in depth about the work in their sketchbooks. They create landscapes by blending pastels effectively together. Their understanding of the way in which an artist presents and chooses different media is clearly illustrated by pupils' evaluations of a chosen Christmas card. Self-portraits by Year 5 pupils show accurate detail of facial features. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about how they evaluate and improve their work. Four pieces of work in their sketchbook illustrate this from the initial pencil drawings to the finished pastel picture.

119. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where it is good, pupils develop their work over a series of lessons. For example, whilst studying a theme on decoration, pupils observed different types of jewellery, designed their own and made a mock-up. Whilst making the mock up, pupils talk to each other about how they would develop their ideas from their original design. At the end of the lesson they clearly stated what they had learnt and how they could further change their design as a consequence of the experience. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory because the development of pupils' art and design skills and the use of different media are inconsistent as they move through the school. Opportunities to link art and design with information and communication technology and other subjects is also underdeveloped. The implementation of the new teaching programme should address these issues.

120. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator's file is comprehensive and a portfolio of work has been collated which helps teachers understand what standards are expected. There is a very detailed one-year action plan, which is reviewed twice yearly, which is also helping to raise standards. Assessment procedures are good, because evaluations are used to set more relevant and wider range of tasks. Resources have improved since the last inspection, but the headteacher has identified the need to improve these even further in order for pupils to acquire specific skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Due to the organisation of the timetable it was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology. Pupils' previous work, work on display and teachers' planning have helped to inform judgements. Standards in design and technology at the end of Year 2 and Year

6 are in line with those expected nationally. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the last inspection. Pupils now make satisfactory progress in developing their skills as they move through the school.

122. The reason for this improvement is because of the leadership of the co-ordinator. A broad and balanced curriculum, allied to effective assessment, is now in place from Year 1 to Year 6. The school now devotes an appropriate amount of time to teaching design and technology. Consequently, pupils now build on their knowledge and skills over time.

123. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They take pride in their work, and like to work collaboratively with others. Younger pupils design and make model homes, paying attention to the materials and tools used. They do the same in food technology, carefully evaluating their finished product. By the end of Year 2, they design and make a simple wind up mechanism to propel their vehicles and also make attractive finger puppets. From this secure base, they design and make sandwich snacks in Year 3, functional money containers in Year 4 and striking masks, moving toys and tasty biscuits in Year 5. By the end of Year 6 they develop their planning strategies, understanding well the correct sequence of action, and making appropriate modifications as they go along. In their design specifications they pay particular attention to whether the product is fit for purpose and discuss with each other the advantages and disadvantages in order to evaluate their products effectiveness. There is some evidence of pupils using their information and communication technology skills in design and technology, including for research, but this area of their work is underdeveloped.

124. Resources are now good and the newly equipped room, which is dedicated to design and technology, is an asset. Effective training has increased the confidence of staff to teach all aspects more fully with a resultant rise in standards.

GEOGRAPHY

125. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are in line with those expected for these age groups and achievement is satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection because there has been a greater concentration on pupils giving reasoned answers, based on geographical knowledge. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all pupils including those with special educational need make satisfactory progress.

126. Pupils in Year 6 talk confidently about the geographical features of St. Lucia and the effect the tourist industry is having on the island. They talk knowledgeably about the likely impact of a proposed tourist complex on an area of outstanding beauty, whilst at the same time balancing the need to improve employment and inward investment of the tourists' money. They apply the same skills to a local study where they examine the impact of different traffic systems on a local shopping area. In this study, pupils also gain first hand information by interviewing local people. They make appropriate comparisons between the two locations.

127. Pupils in Year 2, make a successful link between their work in science, on creatures of the seashore and the geographical features of the seaside. In contrast, they study the life of a family in a Mexican village. They learn the position of principal cities and towns in England. Younger pupils use maps, to plot their route to school, identifying significant features on the way.

128. From the observation of lessons and from analysing pupils' books, the quality of teaching and learning is judged to be good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. This is the result of teachers having a greater understanding of the need for pupils to link the types of land and climate with the creatures that live in a particular environment and the impact of geographical features and environments have on human activity and vice-versa. From the lessons observed, the care pupils take with the presentation of their work and talking to them, their attitudes are judged to be good overall. When interviewed, pupils were very willing to talk about their work and explain with interest what they have learned.

129. Currently, there is no co-ordinator and the headteacher is overseeing the management of the area. The curriculum is satisfactory. The headteacher is effectively promoting the identification of links between geography and other areas of the curriculum. For example, by requiring pupils to use their skills of persuasive writing to complete a tourist brochure for a Greek island. New assessment procedures have already helped teachers to evaluate pupils' understanding of their work and they use the information well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

130. There are sufficient resources to support the curriculum and the school makes good use of a local loan scheme to supplement them. Debate about the impact of human needs and desires on geographical features make satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy are used successfully by some teachers to require pupils to research, and record their findings and to compile graphs. However, their use is inconsistent across to school and is an area for further development.

HISTORY

131. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in history is in line with the expected standards. This is a very similar picture to the findings of the previous inspection. Analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work shows that progress is satisfactory.

132. Pupils in Year 1 learn out about Remembrance Day, and write succinctly about the Great Fire of London. Year 2 pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of famous people in the past, such as Florence Nightingale. They identify features of homes today compared to the past, with the more-able pupils coherently explaining why people from different societies live in different styles of homes. More-able pupils record their work neatly and write in sentences using accurate punctuation and spelling. As they move through Years 3 to 5, pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the types and reliability of different sources of evidence, such as the artefacts found in Ancient Egyptian tombs and Tudor palaces. In Year 6, pupils develop their skills of brain-storming when learning about World War Two, including what changes took place for families in nearby Coventry.

133. Good teaching was observed in lessons in Years 2 and 3. All pupils in Year 2 worked hard, and had a lot to say about how seaside holidays now compared to those in the 1900's. Similar opportunities to contribute were given to pupils in Year 3 when discussing the importance of Boudicea and her rebellion in AD60. Teachers make good use of relevant resources to support pupils' work. Work analysed reveals a good quantity of recorded work in history. All pupils are encouraged to practise recording their work in their own words. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to record pupils' work, but older pupils use the Internet successfully to find additional information about

aspects of their work. Some work such as colouring in outlines is undemanding and not enough attention is given to challenging the more-able pupils.

134. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The effective monitoring of teachers' plans ensures that all aspects of the subject are taught. Assessment is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135. At the time of the last inspection, the full National Curriculum for information and communication technology was not taught, resources were poor, as were standards and the progress made by pupils. However, since then, resources have improved, there has been intensive staff training and an effective revision of the programme of work. As a result, standards have improved.

136. By the end of Year 6, standards, whilst they are below those expected for pupils of this age, are not as low as at the time of the last inspection or the visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The reason why standards are still below expectations for older pupils is that they have had a much wider gap in knowledge and skills to close than those of the younger age groups, with whom their prior attainment was more closely matched. By the end of Year 2, standards are now in line with those expected for this age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress.

137. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and makes a significant contribution to standards achieved. Most teaching takes place in the new information and communication technology suite which enables the majority of pupils to have individual or paired access to a good quality computer. Teachers and learning support assistants maximise the time pupils spend practising and improving their skills, and increasing their knowledge of information and communication technology. Good teaching is characterised by the promotion of positive relationships and purposeful activities. Good behaviour and sustained concentration greatly enhances the quality of pupils' learning and the development of their skills. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils are confident and skilful in their use of computers. They quickly log on, select appropriate items from the menu for their research, respond quickly and appropriately to questions asked on the screen, jot notes down for use in their project and close programs down. In one example, a class rapidly collected information about creatures that live on the seashore to add to their project on holidays at the seaside.

138. By the end of Year 6, good teaching promotes pupils' good achievement and the effective development of their skills. Older pupils are taught the use of the Internet to research facts about, for example, the life of John Lennon. However, their lack of knowledge and skills means that this takes some time to accomplish and they are often slow to access a site to trawl for information. It is this lack of experience that lowers standards for this age group in both researching information and in using computers to control or measure. For example, when pupils were required to set up a control system to illuminate the staircase in a lighthouse, many pupils, whilst very confident to have a go, lacked sufficient expertise to complete the whole cycle successfully by themselves.

139. Teachers manage and organise pupils' learning well, and make effective use of learning support assistants and volunteers to promote pupils' development in the subject. They carefully

group or pair pupils, to provide mutual support for those with special educational needs who progress well as a result.

140. As a result of the provision of good quality resources and accommodation, carefully structured teaching and good levels of support, pupils are keen to settle to work. They concentrate well, persevere when things do not work as they expect, and complete activities with determination. These good attitudes mean pupils cover a considerable amount of work in each lesson and learn well as a result.

141. The curriculum has been revised recently, resulting in rising standards and improvement in the range of skills taught in the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2. Because older pupils' skills are insufficiently developed and there are no computers in most classrooms, there is too little use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. However, in a Year 2 class, the teacher made successful use of a CD-ROM and the Internet to extend pupils' knowledge of sea creatures in work in science, history and geography.

142. The subject is well led and managed. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but do not, despite the increase in staff confidence and knowledge, identify individual targets for improvement, particularly for pupils already skilled and knowledgeable in the use of information and communication technology. The school has a well-equipped information and communication technology suite, which is efficiently maintained by a member of the support staff. The school has provided considerable training for teachers and this has improved staff confidence. This increased confidence, which coupled with good resources, has resulted in a rapid improvement in the quality of learning offered to pupils and improved standards of attainment. Children in the foundation stage have access to a computer in the nursery, and they also regularly use the information and communication technology suite. This is good practice and means they are appropriately prepared for their work in Year 1. However, the keyboards do not have lower case lettering and the screens are very high up which makes it difficult for all children to use the machines comfortably.

MUSIC

143. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards above the national expectation for their age because they are very well taught. This is in line with the standards reported in the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress.

144. Year 1 pupils recognise and correctly name an appropriate variety of untuned instruments, such as triangles, claves and tambourines. Pupils hold them correctly to produce rhythms which they later perform as a canon or a round. The pupils clearly enjoy singing, with the teacher ably demonstrating the pitch for pupils to copy. Pupils in Year 2 know the difference between tuned and untuned instruments. They also knew that to make a thicker vocal texture more pupils needed to sing. Composition work was not observed during the inspection, but a display in the music room shows a clear development of skills throughout the school. To meet the requirements for the listening and appraising section of the National Curriculum, the specialist teacher plans a listening week each half term with key questions for the pupils to answer. The class teacher delivers these and evaluations are returned to the music teacher to inform future planning. However, when questioned few pupils could name any composers, even when prompted.

145. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The specialist music teacher has very good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and managed, and the pace of learning is brisk. In a good lesson in Year 2, the song *Ten Little Sausages* was taught, practised and then accompanied, firstly by untuned and then by tuned percussion. All pupils were involved, with pupils with special educational needs performing as well as the rest of the class. Pupils enjoy performing to their class teachers during the plenary sessions to demonstrate what they have learnt. Music promotes pupils' social skills well. For instance, in Year 1, pupils learn to take their turn and wait silently in a musical game.

146. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in music lessons are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have a positive attitude. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy music and look forward to weekly lessons in the suitably resourced music room, which provides a good environment for teaching and learning.

147. Visiting musicians enrich the curriculum and older pupils are taken to the Birmingham Symphony Hall and the National Exhibition Centre for live concerts. Music is used to enhance assemblies and school productions. However, there are missed opportunities to listen to music as pupils enter and wait for others at the beginning of assemblies. A small number of pupils from Year 4 onwards, learn to play the recorder or sing in the choir. Pupils played recorders tunefully in an assembly during the inspection. A visiting specialist is teaching a few pupils to play the guitar.

148. The leadership and management are very good. The specialist teacher has produced an interesting and relevant programme of study for the school. The co-ordinator has identified the need to make more use of information and communication technology to support learning and this is planned for next academic year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149. During the inspection it was only possible to observe dance and games lessons. In these aspects of the curriculum, all pupils in both Year 2 and in Year 6 attain standards in line with national expectations. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection.

150. By Year 2, more-able pupils combine head arm and leg movements in synchrony to convey movement through contrasting terrain. Most pupils move at different levels and speeds in response to different tempos and timbre.

151. By Year 6, many pupils work co-operatively to choreograph their own simple dances based on given criteria. Many Year 5 pupils, for instance, successfully used facial expressions, arm and trunk movements to convey haughtiness, courage and fear. Most Year 6 pupils throw a ball accurately over short distances and use their hands to project a ball in given directions. All pupils understand the rules of simple games and follow them with a good sense of fair play. All pupils responded enthusiastically to activities in lessons and clearly enjoyed improving their performances.

152. There is a weakness in pupils' attainment in swimming, because, as at the time of the last inspection only Year 3 pupils have two term's swimming instruction, which limits their opportunity to attain the expected competence to swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave Year 6.

153. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons, providing pupils with a good role model and conduct suitable warm-ups and cool-downs to prepare pupils for exercise and returning to the classroom. In the best lessons instructions are clear, expectations of pupils'

commitment, achievement and behaviour are high and pupils are given ample opportunity to demonstrate their good performance and to evaluate that of others. Many of these positive features were observed in a well-taught Year 6 games lesson in which pupils worked at good speed, enthusiastically and made good progress in fielding, catching and batting, as a result of effective and knowledgeable instruction. Teaching is less effective where teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge, do not provide pupils with clear enough instructions about how to organise their performance or fail to encourage pupils to evaluate their own and others' performance in order to improve.

154. Apart from the weakness in swimming, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Older pupils' experiences are satisfactorily enhanced through after-school clubs, many of which are provided through the school's effective links with the community. Clubs for football, netball, tag rugby, cricket and basketball, are run at various times during the year, and encourage pupils to work together, experience a range of sporting activities and which promote their moral and social development well. The school has had some limited success in the local schools' five-a-side and netball tournaments. The personal and social development and self-esteem of a group of less-able pupils were very well promoted when they successfully competed in a local gymnastics festival. The physical education curriculum rarely employs the use of information and communication technology to support learning and opportunities are missed to use software to record performances in athletics or to measure pulse and heart rates before and after exercise.

155. The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory. Shortcomings in resourcing for games and gymnastics have been remedied and teachers' training needs identified through discussion and lesson observations. Since the last inspection, the methods for assessing pupils' performance and progress have improved. However, the knowledge gained from these assessments is rarely used in lessons to set pupils with different competencies, more or less difficult tasks.