

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Swinton, Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105957

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Dolan

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th July 2003

Inspection number: 246544

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:	Milner Street Swinton Manchester
Postcode:	M27 4AS
Telephone number:	(0161) 794 4028
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Antrobus
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2534 9	George Derby	Registered inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Science Modern foreign language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
1944 3	Nancy Walker	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1009 9	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Foundation stage Special educational needs Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?
3202 1	Andy McClean	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2365 8	Steve Parker	Team Inspector	English Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in Swinton, although it draws its pupils from a wide area surrounding the school, including Pendlebury. The school is of a similar size to most primary schools with 247 pupils on roll. This includes 32 children in the nursery and 30 children in Reception, all of whom are full time. The school's roll has fallen over the past few years. The percentage of pupils who are in receipt of free school meals (7 per cent) is below the national average. There are 21 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and three have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Seven pupils are learning English as an additional language, although none are at an early stage. The majority of pupils are white, although there are three from Vietnam and one from Singapore. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to Reception. Overall it is at a level similar to what is expected for the children's ages although, at times, it can be below this level. Because of the school's strong reputation, parents of children with additional needs are often attracted to the school, especially after they have tried other schools which they perceive to have been less successful with their children. At the time of the inspection there was a temporary teacher, covering a member of staff on maternity leave, in Year 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is a very effective primary school. The leadership and management of the school are good with very good features. The school is very well led by the headteacher and her determination has led to high standards being attained over the past four years. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and the oldest pupils excel in their personal development. They are very well rounded individuals. Pupils achieve very well by the time they reach Year 6 and attainment, currently, is well above average. This is because the quality of teaching is very good overall. The school meets its mission statement and aims very well. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils have achieved very well; their attainment is currently well above the national average and standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are high.
- The school very strongly promotes pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; as a result, pupils who leave the school are very mature, well adjusted individuals, whose attitudes to work are very positive.
- The leadership by the headteacher is very effective; she has built a very strong team who have a very strong shared commitment to the pupils and to the school's work.
- The school's Italian teaching programme and its very strong European links add much to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development.
- The quality of the teaching is very good overall, especially the way the teachers' very good knowledge and high expectations promote pupils' learning and the high degree of effort they put into their work.
- Parents' views are very positive, as is their contribution to the school and to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Standards by the end of Year 2 could be higher and more even across subjects, especially if the assessments that teachers make up to Year 2 were more accurate.
- The school's accommodation.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in January 1998. It has built upon its strengths and improved where there were weaknesses. The quality of teaching has improved well and pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has improved significantly. The issues from the last inspection have mostly been effectively addressed. In Year 3 to 6, the pupils' standards in design and technology, ICT and music have risen and are now at least in line with what pupils are expected to achieve nationally; teachers' subject knowledge in these years is very good. The curriculum is planned well to ensure pupils build on what they have learned previously. Pupils' progress has significantly improved, especially for higher attaining pupils, although more use could be made of the information gained from assessment and, for younger pupils, the accuracy of assessment needs to improve. The school development plan is satisfactory and is detailed in terms of its actions. However, clearer ways to assess the impact of actions still need to be sought. The headteacher's overview of standards is strong. Clear targets are set on the basis of the evaluation of performance. The school is very well placed to improve further.

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	B	C	A	A
mathematics	A	A*	A*	A
science	B	A	A	A

Key

very high A

well above *

average above A

average B

average C

below average D

well below E

average

The pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was well above average overall. The grades above show the performance in the individual subjects. The test results since 1999 have improved at a higher rate than schools nationally. Progress for the pupils who took the Year 6 tests in 2002 over their time in the school from Year 2 was very good overall. It was very good in mathematics and good in English and science. The pupils' attainment in the 2002 Year 2 national tests was the national average overall. This was a much smaller and lower attaining cohort than usual and there were a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. Attainment was in line with the national average in reading and writing but well below this in mathematics. The assessments made by teachers about pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 2 in 2002 identified that the percentage of pupils attaining at the expected level for their age (Level 2) was very high and in the top five per cent of schools. Those attaining at the higher level (Level 3) was below the national average. Overall, the pupils achieve very well from their starting points and, from the evidence from the inspection, their attainment is well above the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and in line with the national average for those subjects for pupils in Year 2. This, again, is a cohort whose levels on entry to the school's nursery were below those expected for their age. Currently progress of pupils by the end of Year 2 is sound and it is good for those

children in the Foundation Stage. By Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly well-developed, although reading and writing are also well above the national average. Pupils' attainment in ICT is very strong and well above that expected for their ages. Only a few pupils enter St Mary's after the Nursery year. However, many of these who have entered recently have had special educational needs (SEN) or have needed extra help with learning or English as an additional language (EAL). Those pupils with SEN or EAL achieve very well. The school monitors and analyses pupils' progress well and has set realistic and challenging targets to be achieved at the end of Year 6, reflecting these staff's clear understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Inspection evidence and pupils' 2003 test results indicate that the 2003 targets have been exceeded. This represents very good achievement by pupils. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and work. They listen very carefully and sustain very high levels of concentration and perseverance. They play a full part in discussion and activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They follow instructions promptly but sometimes become noisy and find it difficult to maintain the usual classroom calm when activities change.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The oldest pupils are very mature, confident and responsible. Occasionally opportunities for personal responsibility are missed. Relationships across the school are very good. Pupils work, support and play very well with one another.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and is now well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall and it promotes the progress and attainment of all pupils. It is particularly strong in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and learn very well. The school has a number of initiatives to support pupils who need extra help. Teachers' expectations are very good; as a result, pupils rise to these and try their hardest - they are eager to please and will always try to get things right. Teachers manage pupils very well overall. Lessons are planned soundly overall and activities take reasonable account of pupils' differing needs and abilities with work well matched to these. This feature is strongest in Years 3 to 6 and supported well by the way groups are set by ability for English, mathematics and science. However, in Reception and Years 1 and 2, and in other subjects across the school, more could be done by teachers to identify clearly what they expect different groups to do and learn in planning and for assessment to be sharper in relation to this. Teachers' questioning is very strong to check and extend pupils' knowledge. Pupils respond very well and they learn very well. English, mathematics (including literacy and numeracy), science and ICT are very well taught. The opportunities to support pupils' speaking and listening skills and subject vocabulary are very strong and these are very well promoted in lessons. The quick fire starts to numeracy lessons are very successful and help to support pupils' mental computational skills. The oldest pupils' research skills are promoted very well and teachers give them a full opportunity to use traditional texts, CD ROM and the Internet. Support staff make a very good contribution in lessons; occasionally they have little to do when the teacher is teaching the whole class. The provision for homework is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good with very good features. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs and interests of pupils. It meets legal requirements and there is a very good emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with a good depth of study planned in other subjects. Although some subjects have less time than recommended, links across the subjects are strong. Very good links with the community benefit pupils' progress in a number of ways; the school's European links and the Italian programme are particularly strong. Pupils' personal development is promoted through the day-to-day life of the school as well as links with the Church. The use of computers to support learning in subjects is well developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are mostly well supported. The provision for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is very strong and a wealth of expertise support pupils and school staff well. For all pupils with SEN, work is usually well matched to their needs and setting in Year 3 to 6 particularly helps such pupils. Occasionally, work is insufficiently adapted with too little thought given to the possible impact of pupils' weak literacy or numeracy skills on other subjects. Although individual education plans are generally well written and detailed, on occasion, a

	particular pupil's needs are not fully represented or supported through targets or actions.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. Assembly, prayer, lessons and the daily life of the school add a great deal to pupils' understanding of their faith and the world around them and to their moral responsibilities. Central to the school's work is that pupils reflect on their experiences and their learning and help and care for others. Staff are very good role models for pupils to respect and learn from. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together and support each other; team work and team building is strong. The school's study programme on world religions as well as links with Italy, Spain and France add much to pupils' knowledge and cultural understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care and the personal support that pupils get is very good. Child protection procedures are good and those for health and safety are sound. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour. Assessment procedures are good overall but better use needs to be made of information gained by some teachers in their planning.

Parents provide tremendous support and view the school's work as very good. The school has a very strong partnership with its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership by the headteacher is very good. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher. Recognising the need to strengthen early years attainment, some alterations are being made to the management to oversee the infant and junior departments. There is a very positive climate for learning in the school. The headteacher is insistent on high standards and also on ensuring that the needs of all pupils are well known and that effective provision is made accordingly. The management of the school is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound overall. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and are kept well informed by the headteacher and other leading staff. They are beginning to ask critical questions about the work of the school and the effectiveness of provision, although they are largely reliant on the headteacher for information. The governors are extremely supportive and take an active interest in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Assessment results are thoroughly analysed and challenging whole school targets set. Data collection is paper based, at present, making a full analysis of progress difficult and not all subjects are as fully tracked as they could be. The school development plan is regularly reviewed and all elements reported to governors. Formal monitoring of teaching has been undertaken by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators have an opportunity to do this when their subjects are due for review. They review subject provision and produce action plans for their subjects. The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of all this work.
The strategic use of	Sound. Financial planning is satisfactory overall. Effective use is

resources	made of the finance the school has and additional grants are sought to benefit pupils' learning. The school is somewhat constrained because of a deficit and has not yet planned to reduce it, mainly because governors have an agreement with the LEA that it is within acceptable limits. Spending is thoroughly analysed to ensure effective use.
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The school makes good use of best value principles, especially to challenge itself to improve further. Staffing levels and expertise is good; accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • How the school helps their children become mature and responsible. • The school expects children to work very hard. • Parents feel able to approach staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on. • How closely the school works with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors support the positive views of parents, although some opportunities for younger pupils to make their own decisions and take responsibility could be better promoted. Information in pupil reports is now much improved. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory, although there are no clubs for infant pupils. Inspectors view the school's work with parents as very strong.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests

1. Since 1999 there has been a significant rise in the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests. There has been year-on-year improvement, with the school consistently exceeding the targets it has set for raising pupils' attainment. The school's results overall have improved at a greater rate than the trend nationally.
2. Standards overall have been well above the national average, with those in mathematics being consistently high – in 2001 and 2002 the school's results in mathematics were among those of the top five per cent of schools nationally. The school achieved its best results ever in 2002; those in English and science were above the national average and in mathematics were very high. Results for all three subjects were also well above the national average when compared with schools with similar intakes of pupils (based on the percentage of free school meals). The pupils' results at the higher National Curriculum level (Level 5) were also well above the national average, except in mathematics where they were very high.
3. The progress made by the 2002 Year 6 pupils, over the course of their time in the juniors (basing their attainment in the Year 2 tests in 1998), was well above the national average overall, both nationally and in relation to similar schools. The school is particularly successful at markedly raising pupils' attainment over the course of the junior years.
4. The performance of pupils in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests has been much more variable over the past three years, although the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and the higher level (Level 3) has steadily improved in reading, writing and mathematics - significantly so in writing and mathematics at Level 3. In the 2002 tests, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average for reading and writing but well below the national average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools it was below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics. This same cohort's attainment in science (for those pupils reaching the expected level) was assessed by teachers as very high. The assessments also indicated that the percentage reaching the higher level was below average. The group of pupils who took the tests in 2002 was small in number. It also contained a large number of pupils with special educational needs who particularly struggled with mathematical knowledge and understanding. In addition, teachers' assessments of levels by the end of Year 2 are not always secure and the school has recognised that more work needs to be done to ensure accuracy of assessment and better consistency in attainment. From September 2003, the deputy headteacher is to have a strategic role in monitoring standards and supporting staff, as well as an increased role to help improve the performance of pupils with special educational needs in the infant department.
5. Over the past three years there has been no significant difference in the performance of Year 2 and Year 6 boys and girls compared with the national picture.

Standards in the work seen during the inspection

6. In the work seen during the inspection, the attainment of the Year 6 pupils (who were due to leave school soon) is well above average in English, mathematics and science and for the Year 2 pupils, it is average in those subjects. Standards in lessons, and in pupils' previous work, are promoted through very good provision and very good teaching, overall, which has a positive effect on pupils' progress. Overall, the pupils make very good progress over their time in Years 3 to 6 and achieve very well; this is especially the case in English, mathematics and science. Over their time in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, children and pupils make good progress from their starting points. The current Year 2 group has a large number of lower attaining pupils, as well as a high number of pupils with special educational needs, and their current attainments represent good improvement in their knowledge, skills and understanding since starting school.
7. Realistic, but challenging, statutory targets for Year 6 have been set for 2003 and from inspection evidence are likely to be exceeded (as in previous years). However, no targets are set to raise the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or above. In addition, end-of-year targets are not set for Year 2 pupils. The school should increase the scope of targets in order to sharpen its practice and to help raise pupils' attainment at the infant stage.
8. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is slightly below that of pupils of a similar age. A range of good quality learning opportunities and experiences promotes good progress. The children's progress, including those with special educational needs, and the small group of children with English as an additional language, is good in all areas of learning and they are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Informative profiles of pupils' achievement help staff to keep abreast of the progress the children have made, but the information in areas other than communication, language and literacy and mathematical understanding could be used better to plan activities and to ensure that expectations of what children can achieve are always high enough.
9. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The well-targeted support given by teaching assistants in class generally helps the pupils to make very good progress generally by the time they leave the school and especially towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). These are clear, specific and achievable and mostly focus on the pupils' most important needs. At times though, work is insufficiently adapted for such pupils and some IEPs do not always fully take into account pupils' learning needs. The school's good focus in literacy and numeracy is also having a positive effect on learning and standards. There is a good range of support for pupils who need extra help. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress. They are well supported by the school's staff, other pupils and their parents. There is also good additional support, mostly arranged outside school time at local centres, for those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented.
10. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in art and design are above those expected for pupils' ages. In design and technology, attainment is in line with what is expected by Year 2 but above this by Year 6. Pupils show a good eye for detail and make good progress in developing their skills and the techniques they use. In design and technology, pupils attain the level expected for their age by Year 2 and above this by Year 6. They make good progress overall because of good teaching and the depth to which they study the subject. In geography and history, there is a similar picture of attainment to design and technology of attainment with good progress being made.
11. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' standards are above those expected for their age. This represents very good improvement as pupils' attainment, at

the time of the last inspection, was unsatisfactory. The systematic and knowledgeable teaching and the use of the facilities in the ICT suite has significantly raised pupils' attainment and enabled them to make very good progress. This has also had a significant effect on the youngest pupils and raised their attainment so that this, too, is above the expectations set for their age.

12. In Italian, the school's strong commitment to the language, together with a very interesting programme and very enthusiastic tuition, helps pupils to perform very well in the spoken language. In music, the pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills and their attainment is above that expected for their ages for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Good progress is made in developing pupils' skills in physical education overall. The pupils attain the skills they should for their age by Year 2 and Year 6 and standards have been maintained since the last inspection, even though there is now less time for the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The high standards in pupils' attitudes, values and personal development found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and so pupils are able to take full advantage of the education and personal support on offer to them. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning, they behave well and are polite and well-mannered. They are very tolerant and understanding of others and are sensible and confident in the way they react towards each other and adults. However, at times, there is a lot of control exerted by adults. Some is clearly linked to the size of the classrooms and necessary to establish order in such cramped conditions. As result of this, pupils' ability to make their own choices and decisions and their ability to use their initiative and display leadership qualities are sometimes under-developed. However, this improves markedly when pupils approach Year 6 when pupils excel through the opportunities provided. The pupils are a credit to themselves, their school and their parents.
14. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their learning. Parents confirm that their children are very happy to come to school. Attendance during this school year has improved considerably and, at 96 per cent, it is now well above the national average. In lessons, pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and they are clearly keen to learn. They take care with their work and they sustain very high levels of concentration. They play a full part in discussions and activities and their work rate was particularly commendable during the inspection when conditions in classrooms were far from ideal, with very high temperatures and poor ventilation.
15. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and automatically open doors and step back for adults. Around the school, pupils mostly follow instructions promptly. However, when teachers are occasionally unrealistic in their demands of pupils' behaviour, pupils rightly see injustice in their treatment, become disinterested and slow to do as they are told and then time is wasted, for example when pupils lined up after recreation times. Nevertheless, they do not rebel and the school has had no reason to exclude any pupil for many years.
16. Relationships are very good. Pupils like each other and are clearly very happy in each other's company. They work very well together in lessons sharing ideas and equipment. They are a delight to watch at recreation times when large mixed groups of boys and girls join in skipping together. They list 'friends' at the top of their list of reasons why they like their school and they are very supportive of one another. For example, when a boy who was in full view of the audience in a public assembly had a sinus attack, no-one

embarrassed him with any sniggering at all, they simply helped him by quickly rallying to find tissues for him.

17. Pupils develop well as individuals and parents appreciate the part the school plays in helping their children to become mature and responsible people. They display high levels of confidence and they greatly respect authority. They are usually sensible in the way they act when they are asked to run an errand or given a job to do. Although there is no school council as such, pupils' views are contributed through 'house' meetings. Nevertheless, because they are not always given opportunities to take on more demanding areas of responsibility, pupils' ability to use their initiative and to show leadership qualities are not fully developed. Pupils sometimes wait to be told what to do and occasionally lack the initiative to make decisions themselves. For example, in some lessons pupils did not automatically refer to dictionaries or reference books to help them but waited until they were told to do so.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching across the school

18. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It has a very positive effect on the pupils' learning and pupils put a considerable amount of effort into their work. They want to please the adults who support them but they also find the activities very interesting and are motivated very well by what is provided. The percentage of good or better teaching and very good or excellent teaching seen in this inspection is significantly greater than that seen in the previous inspection. The considerable amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen in the last inspection has been completely eliminated.
19. Teaching is best in Years 3 to 6, where the highest proportion (nearly two thirds) of very good teaching or excellent teaching was seen. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is good overall, although only a small amount of very good teaching was seen in this part of the school.

How teaching has improved since the last inspection

20. The headteacher's determination for higher standards and monitoring of teaching has led to significantly improved quality. The school has addressed well the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge was a particular weakness in many subjects in Years 3 to 6. Their knowledge is now very good and teachers excel in their teaching of science, design and technology and ICT, subjects in which there were unsatisfactory elements in the teaching previously.

The quality of the teaching of subjects

21. High quality teaching is seen in English (including literacy skills) and mathematics (including numeracy) overall. This is strongest in Years 3 to 6 where it is very good; in Years 1 and 2 in both subjects teaching is good. Teaching follows well the principles laid down by the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The teaching of many other subjects also follows the structure of these lessons, although there is occasionally some variation in the amount of time allocated and the emphasis on the beginning and ends of lessons. Sometimes the plenary part at the end of the lesson is too short; in others the introductions are occasionally too long. The teaching of science is very good with the best

teaching in Years 3 to 6; much attention is given to the use of key vocabulary and to pupils learning the methodology of practical investigation. Information and communication technology is taught very well overall; the improved resources since the last inspection certainly help and especially the good number of laptops available for use in the classroom. However, the biggest impact on the pupils' skills has been improved staff knowledge and skills and their very good planning.

22. The teaching of art and design is good overall and often very good in Years 3 to 6. A particular strength is the teachers very good subject knowledge and their modelling and technique for pupils to learn from. In design and technology the teaching is good. Design and technology ideas are also linked to other lessons and aspects of the school's work and this helps to enhance the provision. Pupils also study the subject to a good depth. Although only a small amount of teaching of geography and history could be observed during the inspection, examination of pupils' work and teachers' records shows that the teaching is good. Italian tuition is very good and the teacher's passion for the language motivates the pupils immensely. The teaching of music is good. Although there is no specialist teacher, the well constructed programme (for the non-specialist) and the emphasis on music in the daily life of the school help pupils to learn well. Good teaching in physical education is the result of good planning of a range of skills to support pupils' learning.
23. Literacy is usually well promoted in lessons and teachers take good opportunities to reinforce, correct or develop pupils' understanding of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Phonic skills are promoted effectively and teachers now provide good opportunities for extending pupils' writing in other subjects. Pupils' numeracy skills are utilised well in other subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT. Teachers use a variety of resources to enliven their lessons and to help pupils understand what they are learning and ICT is used well to support pupils' learning in subjects as well to reinforce pupils' ICT skills.

The features of teaching

24. Teachers' management of pupils is very good overall and is very effective in Years 3 to 6. It is built on the very firm foundations of the very good relationships that all staff have established with pupils and also on the 'care' that staff have for them. There is a shared commitment to wanting to help pupils to do their best. Pupils respond positively to this and put great effort into their learning as a result. Occasionally, some teachers exert high levels of control due to the cramped conditions in the classroom and the desire to ensure safety. The management of pupils in the Foundation Stage is sound. However, in some parts the approach is a little on the stern side while on some occasions in other parts, in large group activity such as PE, it is too lax.
25. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects has significantly improved and how to impart knowledge to the pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very strong. The way literacy and numeracy skills are taught, developed and supported across the activities is also very good. Written planning is satisfactory and is based on teachers' adaptations of published plans. While there is a good level of detail in the plan, and these clearly identify what the pupils as a whole will learn, they are sometimes not adapted sufficiently closely enough to meet the diverse range of needs of pupils in the classes. Many teachers do this in the practical sense and different activities in a lesson are set for different ability groups, including those with special educational needs.

26. Teachers evaluate the success of their plans well and make notes (for assessment purposes) on the pupils' responses. This aids assessment well and overall their knowledge of the pupils from this is good. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils in lessons is a strong feature of their work and they reflect well on how activities might be modified or how particular pupils' needs might be provided for in the forthcoming lessons. Their review of how the lesson went and which pupils met the expected outcomes is good.
27. However, the recording is not always sufficiently refined enough to systematically identify how different groups have responded or to identify what they have learned in relation to a key objective set for them specifically in the lesson plan. The setting, by ability, of older pupils in the juniors for English, mathematics and science has certainly helped teachers focus very well on specific groups and to provide well matched activities in order to raise their attainment.
28. Time is productively used for pupils' learning, although there is occasionally a little slippage after the morning and afternoon break time (due to the lining up arrangements which sometime take a long time). Pupils are usually very 'busy' in lessons and the pace of working is particularly swift. At times, during introductions to lesson, support staff have little to do, although during the practical part of the lesson, they offer invaluable support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well and they learn effectively. There is an effective working relationship between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff and in the drawing-up of individual education plans, which outline how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs. The school's provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language is good and it ensures that pupils are well supported in the classroom and through activities elsewhere in the school. This is mainly achieved through informal, but effective, support and also involves help provided by other pupils.
30. Teachers use homework very well to support and extend pupils' understanding in subjects as well as to foster interest in pupils. Of particular note are the optional projects set for each half term which enable pupils to use their research skills and seek out objects and information to help them, either independently or with adults.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning

31. The school provides a good curriculum that is broad and balanced, covers all subjects and is relevant to the interests of all pupils. It fulfils statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a broad curriculum framework with very good emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, with good stress placed upon the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
32. Whilst the amount of time spent in teaching some of these subjects (the 'foundation subjects') is slightly less than recommended, the school is aware of this and, since the last inspection, has concentrated on making cross-curricular links to increase pupils' exposure to the programmes of study. A good example of this is the specific 'foundation week' during which the whole school takes a theme and teaches all subjects from within that theme. In addition, pupils study the aspects of subjects presented to a very great depth with

the school promoting the key skills of the National Curriculum (such as thinking skills and problem solving) within these very well. There is little discrete teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE), although the religious education programme, circle time and the general climate and Christian ethos within the school promote ideas and concepts well. Appropriate teaching of sex and drugs education takes place within the science curriculum.

33. The school's aims are supported by clear policies, most of which are recent and relevant and have been regularly reviewed and updated. The school uses national schemes of work, which it has adapted in the light of the school and pupil needs, to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum at their own individual levels.
34. Pupils have a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. They visit well-chosen local places of interest that assist their learning of history, geography, art and music. Pupils use local water sports centres and participate in orienteering courses at a nearby outdoor education centre.
35. There is a football and a netball after-school club, where older pupils receive skills coaching which assist them in their competitive games with other schools. Individual and group music lessons are available in school and there is an active school choir. These skills are used in public performances such as assemblies, music festivals and religious celebrations. Younger pupils, however, have few extra-curricular opportunities and recently clubs have occurred intermittently.

Links with the community and partner institutions

36. There are good links with the community and partner schools that benefit pupils' progress in a number of ways, but especially strong is the school's work with link schools in Europe. The school has a very strong commitment to extending pupils' cultural understanding and opportunities and to enriching the curriculum through foreign language teaching and European links. This is firmly embedded in the school's work and appears as aspects of many subjects, such as Italian mask making in art. The school's links with schools in Europe are very strong and it has been involved in a number of projects over recent years which have resulted in exchange visits of staff and pupils. St Mary's has had long standing links with a primary school in Montevoglio in Bologna in Italy and email and video conferencing facilities have been used for communication. These opportunities have considerably enriched pupils' understanding of culture and language. The Comenius programme has expanded links further with Spain and France and exchange visits have occurred. The links with the Parish church are very strong with the Sacramental programme being delivered from there. The school has clearly benefited from its links with the Italian Consulate and the provision of weekly Italian tuition.
37. The school has a very close working relationship with the Catholic secondary school, deemed a technology specialist school. As a result, pupils have access to high quality computer equipment and expertise and this contributes to the high standards they achieve in ICT. Another advantage to pupils is that they transfer to secondary school with minimal worry and disruption because, having participated in lessons there throughout Years 5 and 6, they are familiar with the school and its staff. These links also support their learning in design and technology and science.

The opportunities for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development

38. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall and a strength of the school. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, and that for their social development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when spiritual, moral and social development was good and cultural development was satisfactory.
39. The school places a high priority on pupils' spiritual development. This fully reflects the school's religious foundation, whose principles are strongly evident in all aspects of its work. Prayers are said during assemblies and at other times during the day, some written by pupils. They know many prayers and join in with confidence and reverence. Assemblies are very well planned to give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and beliefs. Then and during lessons they are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences in relation to Christian teaching. Topics in art, literature and music in particular focus their attention on the beauty of creation and encourage them to think deeply of their place in it.
40. School assemblies are thoughtfully planned to offer clear guidance on moral principles, with adults sharing their own beliefs and experiences sincerely and openly. Pupils play a part in developing class rules. Teachers and other adults are very good role models in showing care and concern for others. They are firm and consistent in stressing the school's expectations for truthfulness, honesty and care for the welfare and property of others. They encourage pupils to think about the consequences of their actions and to set themselves personal goals. Pupils respond well to this and widen their awareness of others less fortunate by helping to raise funds for charity. Study texts in English are sometimes chosen for their focus on moral issues. For instance, pupils in Year 5 were horrified to read how Asian children were exploited in factories making sports equipment, and expressed strong feelings in their formal letters of protest.
41. Pupils willingly help with regular class duties and take on special responsibilities, such as tidying library books. They say that they clear litter around the grounds, though this was not evident during the inspection. Teachers plan lesson activities that involve pupils working on practical tasks with others in pairs or groups. This is generally successful and lessons are harmonious. Games equipment on offer at playtimes helps pupils to learn how to play co-operatively and teaching assistants give them good guidance. Older pupils learn team building on day visits as part of the physical education programme and in the past the school has organised a residential visit to Italy. The provision for social development overall lacks a high level of challenge such as through a school council (although the house captains / representatives do meet from time to time). Pupils rise well to opportunities to take the initiative, for instance in holiday projects such as that on planning a garden. However, there is more scope to develop pupils' initiative.
42. The school has developed very good links with schools in other European countries, with a recent visit of teachers from Spain. Lessons in art, English, geography, history and music in particular introduce pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences. These are extended through visits, for instance to music festivals, museums and places of worship of other religions. There is a strong emphasis on Catholicism as a world religion and on the contrasting cultures of the Commonwealth, with the contribution of its peoples to our modern multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare

43. The school continues to provide a good level of care for its pupils. The headteacher and staff take a considerable interest in their pupils and relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Consequently, pupils know that there is someone they can turn to for help if they need to. Very orderly routines have been established and the Christian principles of tolerance and consideration for others are actively encouraged. As a result, a calm and peaceful atmosphere exists where everyone can work and learn together. Pupils are clearly happy and parents confirm this.
44. Staff keep a very close eye on pupils and are particularly vigilant in ensuring they go home with a known adult at the end of each day. However, at times, because the classrooms often lack adequate ventilation, some staff need to be more mindful of pupils' day-to-day comfort, especially during hot weather. They also need to limit the amount of physical activity outside when there is inadequate sun protection. Nevertheless, there is a sufficient level of first aid expertise and when pupils are ill or injured they receive adequate care.
45. The school's child protection arrangements are good. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the signs of abuse and takes swift action whenever there is concern about a pupil's wellbeing. A few staff need to update their knowledge of procedures and require guidance in this area.
46. Site inspections are regularly carried out by governors and the headteacher, as well as the local education authority. However, these inspections need to be more systematic and rigorous and ensure that all potential hazards which currently exist are dealt with quickly. The school is very thorough in ensuring the safety of pupils on out of school visits. Staff carry out preliminary risk assessments and clearly take action to reduce any possible risk to pupils.
47. The educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils is good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good overall. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and they lead by setting good examples themselves. They are very quick to address the slightest misdemeanour. However, at times, standards of behaviour are set too high. For example, Reception pupils were made to stand up and sit down three times simply because one pupil broke the silence in very politely trying to hand in to the teacher an item he had found on the floor. Teachers are however also quick to praise children and pupils are praised and recognised in assemblies for effort and good behaviour. This encourages them and raises their self-esteem. Overall, what the school does to help pupils to develop as individuals is good and pupils grow into sensible, highly tolerant and very polite young people. This is something that parents are particularly pleased with.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and support for pupils' special educational needs

48. The school has made a good improvement in its monitoring and use of recorded information on pupils' academic and personal development since the last inspection. At that time, although procedures were sound overall, there were weaknesses in the ways in which the school monitored progress in a number of subjects as well as in specific classes within the school. In particular, information gained from assessments was not used effectively to support medium- and short-term planning by teachers. A considerable amount of work across and within subjects and strong leadership from the assessment co-ordinator and senior management team, have resulted in good procedures now being in place in almost all subjects, although in some classes work could still be more carefully

linked into these. Not all staff are skilled at incorporating the information available into target setting for lessons and for different groups of pupils. However, this is being carefully monitored and supported by the school and is an improving area of its work.

49. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are now good. They are particularly strong in English and mathematics where almost all teachers also use the information gained very effectively in their planning for individual pupils and for groups. In English and mathematics for example, the school makes good use of more formal reading, spelling and mathematics tests, as well as of teacher assessment to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress. In reading, writing and mathematics this has led to a well founded system of targeted support in Years 3 to 6. The system of 'setting' pupils by ability for some subjects in Years 5 and 6 has further strengthened this.
50. Assessment and monitoring of progress is less strong in Years 1 and 2 where there are discrepancies in teacher assessments such that at times pupils appear to make very little progress between one year and another. Teachers generally know their pupils well and provide invaluable support in other ways for learning. However, the inaccuracies of some assessments means that progress of individual children and the planning to meet their needs and to set appropriate challenges for them in subjects is not as effective as it could be. The school is aware of this and has reorganised staffing to strengthen all aspects of its Year 1 and 2 and the early years work. In the Foundation Stage, the introduction of the Foundation Stage profile has strengthened record keeping and is ensuring consistency of approach between the Nursery and Reception classes. In addition, there are useful baseline checklists and observational records in place in the Nursery that support the school's checking of the progress children make from entry.
51. In subjects other than English and mathematics, monitoring and assessment and its links to planning has been strengthened by the introduction of a common approach to curriculum planning and to assessment related this. However, there is a need to tie this in more systematically to National Curriculum levels so that progress overall can be measured in a subject and not simply in relation to individual units of work. Some curriculum co-ordinators have already begun to do this as, for example, in geography where the co-ordinator has started to draw up a new assessment scheme.
52. The school has a number of systems in place for identifying pupils who have special educational needs, including the use of specialist checklists and tests. These have been particularly effective in Years 3 to 6 where there is a range of effective targeted support for pupils. It has recognised the need to strengthen its procedures for Years 1 and 2 and is allocating additional resources to this part of its work from September. Individual education plans are generally of good quality, although for some the targets could be even more specific and there is a need to ensure that the most important things a pupil needs to learn are clearly identified for all. The school tries hard to ensure the full involvement of the parents and pupils themselves in the review process and in the IEP target setting. The school keeps good records and examples of pupils' work and attainment and subject co-ordinators keep further samples of work to ensure that they have an overview of standards and achievements.
53. Support provided for the three pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is very strong. The school works very effectively with external services to carry forward programmes into its planning. Support services are highly complimentary about the school's commitment to individuals and the energy they put into ensuring that inclusion is

achieved. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 1 class during the inspection where the support assistant and the class teacher worked highly effectively together to ensure that an autistic pupil was effectively included and his IEP targets were being worked towards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school continues to work well with parents in maintaining a good partnership with them.
55. Parents' opinions of the school are even better than they were at the time of the last inspection and they now hold the school in very high regard. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, with the school's expectations of their children to work hard and achieve their best, and with what the school does to help their children to become mature and responsible. There is little that displeases parents about the school, although a small minority are not happy with how well the school keeps them informed of their child's progress and a significant minority are unhappy with the school's provision for after-school activities. Inspectors concur entirely with this latter perception. Although there have been some shortcomings in the end of year reports to parents in the past, they have been revised considerably and are now much improved; there are no clubs or specific activities for pupils at lunchtime and, although a reasonable amount overall, there are virtually no clubs or activities after school for infant pupils.
56. The school informs and involves parents well and, in return, parents provide very good support to the school and their children. There are regular and informative newsletters supplemented with good information at the start of each term telling parents what will be taught in each subject. Parents can, therefore, take an interest in what their child is learning. Parents can glean information about how their child is getting on from their homework books and home/school reading records. There are good relationships between parents and teachers and they regularly exchange information verbally. End-of-year reports have been improved for this year and now satisfactorily inform parents about their child's progress in all subjects. Even so, some are difficult to understand with too much educational language being used and they sometimes lack individuality with one report reading much the same as another. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have both been improved and now contain all the required information.
57. Parents respond very well indeed to the school's efforts to inform and involve them. They understand the school routines and expectations including homework, attendance, uniform, behaviour and courtesy and they support their children very well in achieving those expectations. Even so, some parents continue to take their children out of school for family holidays in term time. There is very good attendance at parents' evenings and other events such as special assemblies and parents fully support their child's participation in the sacramental programme. There is also a very active parent/teacher association whose efforts continually raise additional funds for the school. They are currently working to find sufficient money to improve the outdoor play areas.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

58. Overall the leadership and management of the school is good with very good features. The leadership by the headteacher and the whole school shared commitment to improvement are very good. The leadership and management of the school have improved well since the last inspection. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school

and is well supported by the deputy headteacher who is taking on increasing responsibility for key aspects of the school's work. The management of the school is good. There is no senior management team as such but there is effective teamwork between the headteacher and deputy headteacher and other senior staff contribute to the running of the school.

59. The school's internal management structure and the individual roles and responsibilities of senior staff are clear to staff. They have been strengthened by the recent strategic decision to locate the deputy headteacher within the Foundation Stage and infant department to monitor provision. The deputy's role as Special Educational Need Co-ordinator (SENCo) and the increased time allocated to this role from September reflects the school's determination to include all pupils in all aspects of its work and raise standards for all. The school has effective processes and procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work and performance and uses the data it collects well to evaluate the impact and to move the school on. Regular audits of curriculum areas and reports by co-ordinators and a scheduled system of subject review ensure that the curriculum and standards are monitored and evaluated. Effective mechanisms exist for senior staff to monitor classroom practice and curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the quality of planning and work samples are kept to monitor standards in most subjects. In Years 3 to 6 this is particularly effective in evaluating the quality of teacher assessment. In Years 1 and 2 and the Foundation Stage, a weakness in this area has led to a reorganisation of teaching commitments so that senior management can more effectively monitor teacher assessment, standards and teaching at this stage.
60. The school is continuing to develop the roles of curriculum co-ordinators, almost all of whom now fulfil their roles well in relation to monitoring work, planning and standards. The school's financial difficulties, however, have meant that there has been limited time available for monitoring of teaching. However, the school has a clear strategic plan when subjects become priorities for focus and the school tries hard to keep to timescales set. In literacy and numeracy, teaching has been monitored well and senior staff and co-ordinators have used this effectively to support standards. There is a need to further develop these roles to ensure standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science continue to improve to the same level as these and for all pupils.
61. The school's approach to performance management is very good, with a very clear structure laid down for the process of review and targets very well tied to school priorities. School targets are rigorously considered and actions pursued tenaciously so that adjustments are made to practice in order to achieve these.
62. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities and statutory duties soundly. It has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement; it knows it provides high quality provision and wants to improve further. It is aware that it needs to be more active in shaping the direction of the school and, through the work of its committees, such as the curriculum committee, it is beginning to carry out its critical friend role more rigorously.
63. A striking feature of the school is the strong sense of purpose and direction that is shared by governors and staff. They are all very focused and determined on ensuring that the day-to-day work of the school reflects its overall aims and values. This is very clearly evident in all that is done in the school. This includes not only improving the quality of education and raising standards, but also in its valuing of the individual and its religious ethos. All this results in a very well ordered school, where pupils achieve very well by the time they leave,

are thoughtful and considerate of others, highly mature for their age and very well prepared for moving to the high school.

64. The school's improvement plan is satisfactory. It is produced collaboratively with staff and the senior management team and is shared effectively with governors and others. However, the plan, although detailed, needs to be clearer about how some of its actions taken will improve standards and prioritise clearly the most important actions that the school will take. Currently, some success criteria are too broad to enable governors to evaluate the impact of their spending decisions and clear timelines are not always in place.
65. Governors are highly committed to the school and determined to fulfil their responsibilities. They understand their responsibilities and are trying to explore more effective ways of carrying them out. They have set up a system of governors' committees with clear terms of reference and a regular programme of meetings which report to the full governing body. The minutes of these meetings, however, do not always do justice to the breadth of activity and reflection that has gone on. The headteacher keeps governors very well informed about the school's activities but there needs to be a more systematic programme of reporting that includes progress on action plans and the school improvement plan. Currently, these, and aspects such as reports from curriculum co-ordinators and staff training, are reported on. Governors are too dependent on the headteacher for their information and need to develop their role as 'critical friend' further.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

66. Staffing provision is good overall. Teachers are well qualified and mostly very experienced with adequate numbers in order to meet the demands of the curriculum (including the National Curriculum and Foundation Stage) in an effective way. Teachers provide good role models and work in close co-operation with each other to produce a healthy debate on teaching and learning.
67. There is adequate support staff overall. They are generally well deployed to provide specific support for those pupils with special educational needs, although the Nursery struggles for adequate staffing at times. Good arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff and the school.
68. Learning resources are satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum for all age groups. They are a good number of laptops which can be used in classroom, although the provision of ICT overall only has satisfactory provision. Resources are good in history, English, mathematics, art and in the Foundation Stage. School and class libraries are adequately stocked; the school library does not have sufficient non-fiction material for pupils to undertake independent research.
69. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Some classrooms are far too small and provide little opportunity for pupils to be allowed to use initiative. Whilst staff work hard to produce an environment that stimulates pupils, the physical size of some rooms is not conducive to establishing the best standards of teaching and learning. Ventilation is poor with some windows incapable of being opened. Communal areas are well used; constant background noise and pupils moving around the school detracts from the learning environment. The ICT room is small and badly laid out with inadequate ventilation; despite

this pupils' enthusiasm and motivation over-ride these serious deficiencies and pupils work hard. The exterior environment of the school is satisfactory. Play space for children in the Nursery is inadequate. There is a marked contrast between the well tended garden areas and a playground area with some hazardous overhanging branches, un-grassed areas underneath the trees and sharp concrete lips to playgrounds where the supporting ground has been eroded. There is little seating for pupils or quiet areas for pupils around the school.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning

70. The school strategically plans its finances adequately and assigns adequate amounts of money to priority areas identified on the school development plan. The school has needed to be prudent over the past year due to an accruing deficit which it has not yet planned to reduce. This is mainly because of the agreement it has with the local education authority that the deficit is within acceptable limits. However, the lack of clarity about the financial future is blocking the development of other necessary plans, such as alternatives for improving the quality of the accommodation. Subject co-ordinators are not able to be assigned a specific budget to manage and often work needed has to wait.
71. The school office is well run and the clerk controls financial matters very efficiently and effectively. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been followed satisfactorily.
72. The school makes good use of the principles of best value in its spending decisions. It keeps a close eye on how it compares with other schools locally and nationally and challenges itself constantly to improve in the light of local and national initiatives and reviews regularly how it is meeting its targets. It consults, although not widely, on how it is doing. For example, standards in ICT were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The school decided to raise them by developing a new computer suite and took advice from specialists and the local technology college to which most pupils transfer. Competitive tenders for equipment and installation were sought and the award of the contract was informed by satisfactory previous experience of the company concerned. Government funding was used for staff training and standards in ICT have risen significantly. Recent spending on security fencing has been similarly shrewd.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- i. Raise pupils' attainment and ensure that the progress pupils make by Year 2 is a good as in the rest of the school by:
 - improving teachers' assessment of pupils' levels;
 - using the information to inform planning;
 - planning for the needs of different pupils and identifying clearly what each attainment group is expected to learn;
 - ensuring continuity of information from Foundation Stage through to Year 2;
 - setting targets for pupils' attainment by Year 2; and
 - systematically monitoring the provision.

(Paragraphs: 27, 48 - 53 and 59)

- ii. improving accommodation by:
 - expanding the space pupils have to learn;
 - improving the external play environment in the Nursery;
 - improving ventilation; and
 - regularly checking the site to ensure health and safety.

(Paragraphs: 44, 46 and 69)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- ensure there is a plan to reduce the budget deficit;
- enable younger pupils to develop their personal skills; and
- ensure that success criteria in the school development plan show measures (where they can) in relation to improving pupils' standards.

(Paragraphs: 17, 64 and 70)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	4	26	19	18	0	0	0
Percentage	6	39	28	27	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 one and a half 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)	32	217
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	12	6*	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls*	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (90)	89 (93)	89 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls*	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	10	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (86)	89 (93)	100 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

*Too few girls took the tests /were assessed to be reported in this table. Therefore, only results for boys / girls combined are shown.

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	12	20	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	30	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (87)	97 (95)	100 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	30	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (90)	97 (90)	97 (95)
	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	208	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	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	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 - 2003
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	£
Total income	446,780
Total expenditure	472,644
Expenditure per pupil	1,913
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8,090
Balance carried forward to next year	-25,864

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	103
Number of questionnaires returned	247

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	32	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	39	5	1	0
The teaching is good.	74	21	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	35	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	38	6	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	28	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	38	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	32	23	0	8

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

74. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is good overall. Children make good progress in almost all areas of learning during their time there and particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Relationships between staff and children are particularly strong. This means that the children try very hard and are very attentive. By the time they reach Year 1 almost all have attained the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.
75. There is great variation in children's attainment in the six areas of learning on entry to the Nursery. Overall their attainment is slightly below that of pupils of a similar age, except in physical development which it is in line with that expected for their age. A range of good quality experiences, planned from the Foundation Stage curriculum, promote good progress particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. However, in some areas of learning the restrictions of the accommodation mean that children's freedom to explore and learn and staff's ability to plan wide ranging experiences are more limited. Although the teachers, support staff and nursery nurse use the space to good effect, the limited size of the Reception and Nursery classrooms, and, at times, a lack of support staff available in the Nursery, restrict some of the opportunities that children have. Separate areas for each area of learning are designated, but offer limited play and work space. The outside environment is used well by both classes to extend the classrooms but as yet, is limited in design, and is particularly small for the nursery. This means opportunities for such activities as large toy play, climbing, cycling and physical exploration of the environment, are constrained. A lack of staffing restrict opportunities even further, and means that although the Nursery staff work very hard, at times, much time has to be spent simply attending to keeping children safe whilst they are 'outside,' and there are missed opportunities for extending children's skills and understanding.
76. Careful records and observations are made of children in Nursery and Reception to support the school's new use of the National Foundation profile and these are beginning to be used to inform planning and the challenges that children are set in their work. Some additional records are also kept as a 'baseline' and to monitor development by the Nursery teacher. There is scope however, for this to be further developed and linked to teacher assessment in Years 1 and 2, to ensure consistency and to develop the accuracy of teacher assessments.
77. There is particularly strong support for speaking and listening and basic numeracy in all aspects of the children's work. Children whose first language is not English and those with special educational needs have benefited strongly from this, and have made good progress and often very good progress, particularly in their self-confidence and communication. In other areas of learning there is a need for the assessments made to have a more positive influence on teachers' plans and lessons, and ensure to that different challenges are set according to children's abilities and needs. Support staff are generally used well, although sometimes they have little to do in whole-class parts of lessons. They are used more effectively when they record observations of children at these times or have a planned part to play in the lesson.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and the teaching in this area is good overall. It is strongest in the Nursery where children are encouraged to develop independence from the beginning, to work as part of a group and to show care and respect for others. Children are treated with care and respect and so they learn to behave well and to follow the established routines. They show good self-help skills when getting ready for physical education (PE) and for going home and more able children are quick to help others if they are ready first. By Reception, most share fairly and take turns when playing games, they wait patiently for their teacher's attention. The very clear routines and high expectations of behaviour in the Reception class ensure that children's attention and self-help skills develop well. However, some work in the Reception class is too directed by the teacher and opportunities for independence and for initiative are more restricted. More opportunities need to be provided for lower attainers, in particular, to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning, and to think for and evaluate their learning for themselves.
79. The house and points system encourages children to identify with each other and to celebrate each others' successes. Children play well together and in their role-play they are particularly adept at devising joint games. They are sympathetic to each other and readily offer comfort and praise to each other. Humour is used well to illustrate social and moral points and children show high levels of concentration, often for long periods. Occasionally however, in the Reception class, when they are given more freedom, a small group are silly and immature and cannot cope with the new-found freedom and there is a need to provide more systematic opportunities to enable children to become more self-aware in this. By the end of Reception, children are on course to fully achieve the goals set nationally.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Attainment in language and literacy is at a level slightly below what it should be for the children's age on entry to the school's nursery, although skills range from considerably below that level to slightly above. Many children have limited confidence in self-expression and some have limited experiences of books and print. Many opportunities are provided to improve these skills and good progress is made by children of all abilities. By the end of the Reception year, almost all have attained the early learning goals and a small but significant number exceed them. The good and sometimes very good teaching in this area supports the children's confidence well. In whole-group and small group activities and in their own modelling of how to listen and share ideas, staff extend children's language well. Occasionally in the Reception class, the lesson is dominated too much by teacher-talk and opportunities for children to make contributions, particularly if they are lower attainers, are limited. However, as these children complete their work and move round the classrooms they are always listened to and their language and vocabulary is extended well. There is a strong sense of fun and enjoyment in most lessons – staff are strong and expressive story tellers in particular, and this keeps children attentive, involved and encourages them to 'savour' the story language and events and supports their learning.
81. Daily whole-class sessions take place in the Nursery and Reception classes which support children's own confidence in talking and offering ideas, and prepares them well for listening to and evaluating those of others. The few children for whom English is not their first language make particularly good progress and are listened to carefully and supportively by staff and children alike. All children enjoy listening to stories and have made good progress

in basic reading skills. By the end of their Nursery year they handle books carefully, know the front and back of the book and the direction of print. Higher attainers tell their teacher that the person who writes a book is called the 'author'. Most know some initial letters and higher attainers recite the alphabet and can identify a small group of letter sounds and sometimes suggest words that begin with them. By the end of their Reception year, almost all can identify a range of letter sounds and simple words that begin with them. Most have a small vocabulary of words they can write and recognise. Higher attainers are beginning to blend sounds into words and work out how to spell simple regular words. They have a good stab at other words such as 'hippopotamus.' All write their name and higher attainers write short phrases and simple familiar sentences. Generally, children form their letters well and take great pride in their presentation. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy programme are used well in the Reception class and children are well prepared for moving into Year 1. All children are encouraged to 'have a go' and reading progress is systematically documented and supported. As yet, the system for identifying early those children who might need an extra boost is underdeveloped, but the plan to locate the SEN co-ordinator in Reception from September will strengthen this further.

Mathematical development

82. Most children enter the Nursery with skills slightly below that expected for their age in mathematical development. Consistently good teaching and the many incidental opportunities provided to support the childrens' understanding of number, shape, capacity and size mean that most enter Year 1 having achieved the early learning goals in mathematics. Good progress is made by the children. Through the stories, number rhymes and routine activities in the Nursery class, as well as the timetabled mathematics times, children start to count forwards and backwards. Higher attainers count in 2s and some complete simple practical sums such as working out how many passengers will now be sitting 'on the bus' as people get on and off. They understand concepts such as 'full' and 'empty' when playing with water and sand. A good start is made with exploring mathematical language and this is built on well by the Reception teacher who expects children to know a range of words for 'add' and 'take away'. By the end of the Reception year, children understand simple comparatives such as 'smaller', 'larger', and 'taller'. They confidently count and carry out simple number operations up to 10 and higher attainers are counting confidently much beyond this. They do simple addition and subtraction sums and some count freely in twos and fives. As part of their broader work they complete simple class graphs. Most know the names of triangles, circles and squares. Higher attainers use 'oblong' or 'rectangle' and can identify shapes in the room. Numeracy is extremely well supported through childrens' other activities in the classrooms and the children are well prepared, through many oral counting and predication games, for the National Numeracy strategy work they will move on to in Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Children make good progress in this area because of the good quality of teaching and the careful explanations that they are given as they explore their environment and as teachers share books and activities with them. Almost all achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of their Reception year. However, they could make even more progress if the external environment were more interesting and if there was more freedom outside and inside the classrooms for individual and small group investigations. Staffing levels in the Nursery means that adults are not always available to talk about and extend children's thinking – for example when a strange 'bug' was seen in the playground a child persistently asked what it was, but no adult was available to explore this further. In both classes,

children of all abilities gain knowledge about themselves and the world around them. They grow plants and Reception aged children understand that plants need light and water to grow. Nursery children observe weather and seasonal changes and explore shells and stones and their properties, enjoying the colours and textures. Higher attainers use a varied vocabulary when doing this; other children have their vocabulary extended through the teachers' use of sensitive questioning. Occasionally, this is not focused enough and an activity does not extend the childrens' thinking because the intended learning outcome has not been thought out in detail enough for children of different ability. Reception children are developing a good understanding of how things change over time. By the time they leave the Reception class, however, almost all children have developed the appropriate investigative skills and look carefully and with curiosity at the materials their teachers share with them.

84. In the Nursery class children use computers with increasing confidence; higher attainers 'drag' pictures, whilst others use the mouse to change their activity with confidence. However, the organisation of the classroom and the height and design of the designated 'computer' area in the Reception class is inappropriate, and means that computers are far too high to reach and are not as available as they should be to support learning.

Physical development

85. Children enter the Nursery with great variation in their physical skills. Although their skills overall are in line with children of a similar age, these are generally more developed for areas such as climbing and running, and less developed for the fine motor skills such as handling scissors, brushes and pencils. The teaching is satisfactory and the children make sound progress overall, particularly for the finer motor skills. By the end of Reception, they use scissors with confidence and their handwriting is well formed and controlled. Staff model how to hold these well, for example, how to make careful delicate strokes with paint brushes, and children learn to vary the pressure as they try to make a particular effect. In timetabled physical education (PE) lessons, children learn to make use of space and develop their skills of co-ordination and control. Although children are keen to display their developing skills, lessons are insufficiently planned with different groups in mind and as a result, groups sometimes get restless, as in a Nursery PE lesson, and children have insufficient guidance to move their skills on as much as they could. Currently, the outdoor play areas only offer limited support for using large climbing apparatus, large constructional toys and pedal toys. The school is addressing this for Reception-aged children but needs also to improve the area for Nursery children.

Creative development

86. Good progress is made in this area of learning and the majority of children attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. Children enter the Nursery with below average skills in this area but the emphasis on story, role-play, singing and simple musical activities, as well as use of paints, crayons and small constructional toys, supports their development very well. Teachers and volunteers, including trainee nursery nurses, are particularly successful in supporting childrens' imaginative story and role-play work. Teaching is good overall. Children in the Nursery enjoy dressing up and play together well, as they pretend to be policemen, mothers, fathers and shoppers. They chatter on pretend telephones and pretend to write their shopping lists. Higher attainers structure this play well with dialogue. All children join in favourite nursery rhymes and songs and have a growing repertoire of these that they sing increasingly tunefully. They handle paint with increasing control and enjoy the effect of mixing colours. Children in the Reception class

know that you can mix paints to make different colours. They colour in worksheets and their own drawings with great care, adding increasing detail as they move through their Reception year. They are keen to 'show off' their creations and talk freely about how they did something. In cooking sessions, they comment on how the mixture changes and enjoy selecting materials. However, limited resources mean the group shares one bowl. Although they wait patiently, there are missed opportunities for both creative development and increase knowledge and understanding, as children have fewer opportunities to experiment and compare because of this. Similar constraints operate in both Reception and Nursery classes because of the restrictions of the accommodation. This affects the balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities and the availability of different activities for children.

ENGLISH

87. The pupils' standards seen on inspection are in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and well above the national average at the end of Year 6. These findings reflect the results of the national tests in 2002. Early indications suggest similar results in the 2003 tests for Years 2 and 6, though no comparison can yet be made with other schools. The Year 2 results in 2002 were below the national average of similar schools in reading and writing. The 2002 Year 2 cohort, as well as the current group, had a large number of pupils who were lower attaining or had special educational needs. The Year 6 results in 2002 were well above the average of similar schools. Only two pupils in Year 6 did not reach the expected level for their age (Level 4), and over half reached the level above, which is much higher than the national figure. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils achieve very well in English by the time they leave the school. This is principally because of very good teaching which is particularly seen in Years 3 to 6.
88. The rate of improvement in the Year 6 results since the last inspection has been more rapid than that found nationally. The main reason is the high quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6, where instruction is sharply focused on the developing needs of individuals and groups at a similar level. This focus is strengthened by the division of the Year 5 and 6 classes into groups ('sets') of higher or lower attainment for English lessons. Since there is only one class in Year 5, each set is only half the class, and pupils benefit from intensive and challenging instruction.
89. By contrast, standards at the end of Year 2 have varied more widely and are presently lower in reading and no higher in writing than at the last inspection. Pupils are presently making satisfactory progress, but their performance is not assessed frequently enough or in enough detail for specific weaknesses to be identified and tackled. Structured materials for teaching reading skills are not used systematically, and expectations for the quantity and quality of pupils' writing could be higher.
90. Pupils reach average standards in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 and well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Progress and achievement for pupils in Year 3 to 6 is very good. Teachers develop very good relationships and take care to involve their whole class in discussions. All take an active part, showing great enthusiasm when learning that involves a game or competition. In answer to questions, pupils speak clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures, and the conventions of 'Standard English' are soundly established by the end of Year 2. Most attempt to read aloud with dramatic expression, and excellent coaching of this skill was seen in a Year 1 lesson. The school reports that all pupils take part in drama performances and elements of drama are included in some lessons. Pupils in Year 3 showed impressive confidence in

leading a school "celebration assembly", having learned their parts by heart. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very confident in talking to adults and explaining their ideas in detail. They work very well together on shared tasks in all subjects and use technical terms correctly when ideas are developed through talk. Many older pupils are particularly forthright in expressing their opinions in class discussions, which can be very lively. It is clear from their responses that they listen carefully to others, showing sensitivity towards their views. With such confidence, they could take the lead more often and speak at greater length, for instance in reporting back to the class at the end of lessons, in all subjects.

91. Standards in reading are average at the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. A commercial reading scheme is used to guide pupils' progress in the early stages, and books for wider reading have been graded for difficulty so that pupils' interest is held while their skills are developed. Pupils in Year 2 generally understand what they have read and sound out unfamiliar words to find their meaning. However, a small number have not developed this skill sufficiently and so cannot read independently. Higher attainers talk confidently about books they have enjoyed, with one boy particularly keen to study information on dinosaurs. Interest in reading of all kinds is developed very well throughout the school, with particular emphasis on fiction. The expectations for homework reading are well established, alongside silent reading sessions, adult-guided reading groups and structured reading tasks in most subjects. Many parents give very good support by hearing their children read at home, taking them to local libraries, buying them books and talking about them. As a result, pupils have a wide experience of reading for different purposes by the end of Year 6. Most have favourite authors and can explain and compare their preferences. Their understanding of how to use the library and find specific information is sound. However, the library stock is small, which limits pupils' opportunities to carry out independent research.
92. Standards in writing are in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and well above the national average by the end of Year 6. Through the school, pupils learn to write for many different audiences and purposes, including poetry, stories and factual reports. By the end of Year 2, pupils with average attainment or higher, write clear personal accounts and lively stories, using a good range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Standards of spelling and punctuation are sound. A few pupils reach much lower standards because weak pencil control slows their progress and they need more consistent guidance and practice. Most pupils develop a joined style of handwriting by the end of Year 3. Some pieces are word-processed, and such work develops well in the juniors. By Year 6, pupils use a range of techniques to hold the reader's attention in their stories. Their good standard of spoken English is reflected in their wide range of sentence structures and vocabulary. They describe technical processes accurately in other subjects, using the correct terminology and structuring ideas in paragraphs. They check their work for accuracy before handing it in. Some pieces reach a very high standard when developed in stages through planning, drafting and editing for display.
93. Pupils with special educational needs in language or those with English as an additional language are given work that reflects the targets in their individual education plans. They too write for real purposes, without over-use of narrowly focused exercises. Some are withdrawn for intensive instruction in literacy skills based on officially recommended programmes of study. Their development is carefully monitored so that they build on success, with the result that they make very good progress through the school.

94. Overall, the quality of teaching is high. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching in one lesson was good and in others was satisfactory. Of the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the teaching in one was excellent, in over half it was very good, in one it was satisfactory and in the remainder was good. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy guides teachers' planning and gives lessons a clear sense of purpose. This is explained at the outset so that pupils understand what is expected of them. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations for pupils' attentiveness, and the quality and quantity of their work. The subject matter is interesting and relevant, based on study texts that offer good models of language and of moral principles. New information is explained carefully, with skilful use of the chalk boards and whiteboards, and examples of usage are repeated in different ways that hold pupils' interest. As a result, they listen carefully and have very good understanding of language features. The standard of questioning is generally very good, showing high expectations for well thought-out answers. This was a particularly impressive feature of the excellent lesson for high attaining pupils in Year 6, where both the material and the questions asked were very challenging. Younger pupils though would benefit from more time to work out their answers, for instance by talking with a partner or using a mini-whiteboard to note their ideas before answering.
95. Most pupils settle to work quickly and confidently on independent tasks. Teaching assistants give very good support to specific individuals and groups at such times, particularly to those with special educational needs, low attainment or with English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make good and often very good progress. However, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not concentrate hard enough when expected to work independently. At times, they chat and distract others, significantly slowing their progress, and expectations for the pace and quality of their work needs to be higher. In general, reviews at the end of lessons are used well to evaluate the progress of different groups, to develop speaking skills and to reinforce the lesson's targets. In the best marking, teachers give encouragement and identify how future work could be improved. However, pupils are not consistently given enough time in lessons that follow to do corrections or follow-up work in response to marking.
96. The subject is very well led and managed. The National Literacy Strategy is securely in place and is used effectively to focus on literacy standards in all subjects. The careful analysis of test results and samples of pupils' work has been a key factor in driving the steady improvement in standards in Years 3 to 6. Well focused staff training and additional resources have been provided to meet identified needs. The school recognises that closer monitoring of standards is needed in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have been very successful in communicating their high expectations, so that pupils as a whole are keen to do well and show a strong pride in their achievements. Teachers work hard and very skilfully to publish pupils' best work in class displays and anthologies to stimulate interest and reward success. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

MATHEMATICS

97. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is in line with national average. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. During their time in school, pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6; all pupils show great interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, stimulated by the encouragement given to them by their teachers.
98. By the end of Year 2, most pupils show a good understanding of place value to 1000, showing confidence when dealing with problems of addition, subtraction and multiplication;

working with division problems is less well established. Pupils are encouraged to use inverse operations to check their work. They show their command of two, five and ten times tables, using dominoes to write multiplication statements. Pupils of higher ability show their knowledge of how to use simple costings to purchase items in shopping, draw and define symmetrical patterns and use their numeracy skills with numbers up to 1,000 to demonstrate their command of addition and subtraction of three digit numbers. They are confident in descriptions of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, use measurements in metric units and show command of the vocabulary of rotation and symmetry. Pupils of average ability are confident to add, subtract and multiply 2 and 3 digit numbers involving hundreds, tens and units (HTUs). They can describe right angles and draw them with accuracy as square corners, as well as being able to solve problems with time difference. They demonstrate the ability to draw block graphs and bar charts and interpret information from them. Pupils of lower ability demonstrate a good understanding of their two, five and ten times tables, can distinguish sequences of odd and even numbers, identify common shapes and draw pictures to show their understanding of reflective symmetry.

99. All pupils in Year 2 benefit from teachers' application of skills to everyday tasks in their lives, making mathematics relevant to them. They are confident to discuss their work and explain their mathematical reasoning. In their work on time, pupils are confident in describing why a certain journey would take a specific time.
100. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have a good understanding of the four rules of number up to and beyond 1,000 in a variety of contexts. Higher ability pupils can confidently describe shapes and visualise what properties that shape has, in a game at the start of a lesson. This not only ensures a brisk start to the lesson but shows that pupils can identify such shapes from memory. In one class, pupils experiment with a series of common circular objects such as plates and tins brought from home, to see that there is a relationship between their diameter and circumference. Pupils then use deductive reasoning and high order thinking skills, such as hypothesising, to come to a common rule to find the circumference of a circle when its diameter is known. Pupils regularly use inverse operations to check their answers, a particularly strong feature of such work being the use of complicated mathematical vocabulary such as π ('pi'), 'radius' and 'circumference'. Pupils readily discuss their workings, their findings and their hypotheses. In one lesson, a group of pupils identified the properties of quadrilaterals in order to classify various two-dimensional shapes and describe them to each other.
101. Pupils of average ability deal confidently with number problems to 1,000, can distinguish between 'mean' and 'median', plot graphs and can use a grid method to solve the multiplication of three-digit by two-digit numbers. They use drawings to find out about reflective symmetry and rotations about a central point. In work upon probability, pupils successfully work out and draw what the ratio of 40 marbles in a bag would look like if the ratio of blue to red marbles is 3:1.
102. Pupils of lower ability deal confidently with problems in the four rules of number; less confidently with division. They demonstrate the ability to multiply three-digit by two digit numbers using standard methods. They read scales and measure capacity and weights to a good degree of accuracy, use Venn diagrams and block graphs to obtain information and have a good grasp of the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils in one Year 6 group converted the fraction of two fifths to 40 per cent and then to 0.40.

103. All pupils show a very good grasp of mathematical vocabulary, which is emphasised well in all lessons. They are given ample time by teachers to explain what particular mathematical features are; as in one class where pupils were asked to define the properties of certain two-dimensional shapes, they were confident in describing the differences between equilateral, scalene and right angled triangles.
104. All pupils are given good opportunities to solve problems, and this is a feature the school has tried to develop recently, ensuring pupils understand the need for mathematics skills in their own lives. High levels of speaking and listening are evident in all lessons; teachers do their utmost to question all levels of ability from those identified as being gifted or talented in mathematics, to those who have special educational needs. Boys and girls receive equal challenge and in all lessons are given opportunities to work together and discuss their mathematics. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included; classroom assistants help with less able pupils and are effective in supporting those who have numeracy targets in their individual education plans.
105. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good; in Years 3 to 6, it is very good, with some excellent teaching seen during the inspection. The daily three-part lesson has been very successfully introduced. Brisk starts to lessons with challenging mental activities set a demanding tone to the lesson which is continued throughout the majority of lessons. Teachers use demanding questioning techniques. In a Year 6 class, pupils were asked to check their answers on calculating the circumference of circles using inverse operations with the aid of a calculator. Planning ensures that opportunities for exploration and assessment are well used; further development in providing different levels of challenge to all abilities is needed. Classroom assistants work closely with teachers, particularly in support of less able pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to very good effect. In the most effective lessons, teachers present challenges to pupils that are open-ended, giving their pupils ample opportunity to work collaboratively and to discuss their findings before presenting them to the rest of the class. When discussing the relationship between the circumference of a circle and its diameter, pupils came to the conclusion that in most cases it was just more than three times; this led to interesting discussions on the value of π (pi). Because of teachers' confidence in and enthusiasm for the subject, pupils enjoy their mathematics and display good behaviour.
106. Occasionally, teachers do not make full use of assessment opportunities at the end of lessons to know what pupils' strengths and weaknesses are. There is sometimes less demand for pupils to think about the conclusions to be drawn from their learning to be applied in other areas. The use of ICT is not always prevalent in lessons as a tool to enable pupils to research the subject, to practise mathematical skills and to explore mathematical problems.
107. The use of assessment information is good. All staff are given feedback upon test results and what areas need to be given priority. The school has identified problem-solving as a major area for development and this is evident in pupils' work. Targets in mathematics are set but currently lack whole-school consistency. Whilst work is regularly marked, it sometimes lacks suggestions to pupils in how to improve their work.
108. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of the future direction of the subject and an action plan is in place to achieve it. Regular consultation takes place; all staff are encouraged to see the work of colleagues in different key stages and any guidance obtained from training is disseminated to all staff. Resources are good and used effectively.

SCIENCE

109. Since the last inspection, standards in science have improved significantly. Standards were broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, at that time. A major weakness was that of pupils' inability to design their own experiments, with staff also lacking the confidence to support this. Since 2000, for pupils at the end of Year 6 standards have been at least above the national average and often well above average, such as in 2002. Older pupils' abilities to construct a fair test, to consider all the variables and to design a test are now very strong. At the end of Year 2 the percentage reaching the expected level and above (as assessed by teachers) has varied. Some of this is due to the variation in the abilities of the different cohorts taking the tests, but some is occasionally due to the inaccuracy of assessments made by teachers themselves. In 2002 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) was very high and in the top five per cent in comparison with other schools nationally. The percentage reaching the higher level (Level 3) was below average; this was a much smaller and lower attaining cohort than usual and there were a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. In previous years (1998-2001) the percentage reaching the higher level was well above the national average or very high in comparison to other schools.
110. Standards seen during the inspection are average for pupils in Year 2. This, again, is a low attaining group of pupils with a large number of pupils with special educational needs. However, from their starting points this represents good progress. Standards are well above average for pupils in Year 6 and these pupils are on course to exceed the targets set for 2003. These standards accurately reflect the make-up of the current groups of pupils; there is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. The school provides systematic opportunities for practical investigative and experimental work and the rigorous way pupils are taught to carry this out, promoting their thinking skills, helps them to really grasp scientific ideas. In addition, the use of specific scientific vocabulary, and the emphasis on understanding the scientific ideas related to this, helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. Overall, pupils' achievements (including those pupils with SEN and the small number with EAL) are very good. All achieve very well due to good or very good teaching and a strong willingness by the pupils to learn. The links with the Roman Catholic high school that the pupils will transfer to are very strong. Very well taught science lessons there help pupils to get used to the new facilities as well as further strengthen the experimental and investigative methodologies learned at St Mary's.
111. By Year 2, pupils achieve well overall. This is because the teaching and planning of work is generally effective, leading to pupils building on what they have learned previously and making good progress. Throughout the school there is a considerable emphasis on, and much well planned work that includes investigation. This starts with extending pupils' observation and exploration skills, developed in the Foundation Stage. Good quality work is spent on recording observations and identifying predictions. Pupils in Year 1, for example, competently write up their investigation into the intensity of sound changes when maracas are moved when shaken. They realise the pitch changes the nearer the maracas are moved to the listener. They are supported well by way the teacher models the activity and provides guidance on how to record findings. By Year 2, the pupils investigate habitats and explore the school grounds to discover where different creatures might live; they discover that some need damp conditions in soil while others prefer shrubbery. The support for recording is less well organised than in Year 1, although adequate.

112. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they achieve very well; this is through the very good expertise provided by teachers who teach in Years 3 to 6 and their detailed planning, and considerable attention to scientific vocabulary and the ideas related to it.
113. Year 3 pupils are very clear about what constitutes a 'fair test', although pupils with special educational needs still require support for this idea; the help they get is good and they begin to understand the basic idea. Pupils test the passage of light through different materials. Prior to this, they predict the possible effects. They identify which lets a little light through, which lets no light through and which lets all the light through. This develops into their secure knowledge of transparent, translucent and opaque materials. By Year 6, most pupils show an impressive skill in identifying what is needed to construct an investigation; they can identify what they must keep the same and what can be changed in order for their test to be fair. In a 'transition' lesson at the high school they are to attend in Year 7, they test the solubility of sugars. They vary only the sugar type and are aware of the other factors which need to be kept the same, such as the amount of water, temperature and the amount of time the solution is stirred. From the pupils' analyses of the results of the different groups of pupils carrying out the investigation, their ideas clearly indicate why variations, such as a result of inaccurate measuring, could possibly occur.
114. The teaching of science is very good overall. Activities are very interesting and the pupils really enjoy the lessons which make them think scientifically. They are very clear about what they are to learn and do. The teaching is strongest in the junior department due to the high degree of knowledge by staff. The setting of pupils by ability has also helped teachers focus their planning on specific groups and meet pupils' needs very well. A key feature which helps the pupils to learn very effectively is in the very challenging way the work is presented in most classes. Pupils are helped to 'think' and behave as 'real scientists'. The deeply probing questioning by teachers makes pupils think about what they are testing, what they are trying to find out and to use their existing scientific knowledge to hypothesise. The way teachers support the way pupils are to record their results and the utilisation of data techniques (including the recording through the use of ICT), such as tables and spreadsheets, helps to successfully improve logical thinking. It also helps them to lay out their work and present it well. The very good attention to scientific vocabulary helps pupils gather their thoughts quickly, when responding to questions or planning.
115. In Years 1 and 2, although the teaching is good overall, and a wide variety of challenging activities presented, the variation in pupils' abilities and attainment in the Year 2 class is extremely wide and is a real challenge for the teacher to plan for. At present, although activities are set for different ability groups within the class, teachers do not always specify what they expect the pupils to learn and work is not always as precisely matched to their needs as it could be, both to stretch some pupils or to give others work broken into finely graded steps. Teachers' marking is constructive and praises well what pupils' have understood or have produced.
116. The subject is well led and managed and provision has improved well since the last inspection. The school's focus on investigation and experimentation has paid dividends in terms of pupils' achievements. The co-ordinator advises and supports her colleagues well. She has a very good grasp of the issues facing the subject and its development and the attainment levels in each class. Pupils' progress is assessed, recorded and tracked soundly overall, and is especially good across Years 3 to 6. More could be done to ensure the accuracy and use of data in Years 1 and 2. The school is planning to improve the assessment system further with closer attention given to pupils' achievement assessed against the objectives set for the medium-term and more attention given to the moderation

of work using criteria for the early National Curriculum levels. Targets to identify further improvement on an ongoing year-by-year basis are set for Year 6 but could be usefully extended across the school. The setting of pupils into different groups by ability in Years 5 and 6 has helped the co-ordinator particularly focus on the lower attaining pupils. This also worked well in helping their practical ideas of testing, supporting their mathematical knowledge, especially for interpreting data and improving their understanding and use of key scientific vocabulary.

ART AND DESIGN

117. Pupils' attainment in art by the end of Years 2 and 6 is above what is expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection with pupils making good progress overall in their time in school.
118. The quality and breadth of work displayed in school is very good, ranging from abstract art following the style of Jackson Pollock produced by Nursery pupils, pastel crayon work in the style of Lowry in Year 2, collages in the style of Monet from Year 4, to self-portraits in the style of Picasso from Year 6.
119. A variety of work from all ages and abilities is displayed with care and pride, thus enhancing the school environment and celebrating pupils' talents and achievements. This work is presented exceptionally well and shows the value the school places on the pupils' skills and talents.
120. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate competence using a variety of media incorporating clay modelling, pastels and simple textile work. In Year 1 they make sculptures from common garden artefacts in the style of Andy Goldsworthy, plus abstract pictures in the style of Vanessa Bell.
121. By the end of Year 6, pupils have also experienced working with a variety of materials and techniques. Year 4 pupils design and make their own miniature gardens. Years 3 pupils paint landscapes in the style of Van Gogh. In one Year 4 lesson, using a variety of stimuli, pupils showed great imagination in producing paintings in the style of Australian Aboriginal art, whilst Year 5 pupils produced paintings of lilies and irises in the style of Georgia O'Keefe.
122. From the lessons observed and an examination of the pupils' work displayed around the school, the quality of both teaching and learning is good and often very good in Year 3 to 6. Pupils are highly motivated by teachers' very good subject knowledge, enthusiasm for the subject, good use of a variety of different resources and opportunities for hands-on experiences and experimentation.
123. Discussion and evaluation of each other's work ensures that all pupils learn to respect the efforts and achievements of all pupils. This work makes a significant contribution to enhancing the school environment, particularly entrance and school halls, and makes a similar contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
124. Leadership and management of the subject are very good from a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Clear progression in learning is achieved through the use of the well devised and adapted scheme of work. Resources are good and well-used. Accommodation is unsatisfactory with two few areas for pupils to work easily in their classrooms. The school makes effective use of space outside the classrooms, however,

but often the pupils cannot be all taught at once. Pupils concentrate and work well in some quite difficult conditions because they are well motivated by the opportunities their teachers provide.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards in design and technology are currently in line with what is expected for pupils' ages by Year 2 and by Year 6 they are above what is expected nationally. Pupils make good progress overall because of good teaching and the depth to which they study the subject. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Year 6 were below what they should have been and pupils made unsatisfactory progress during Years 3 to 6. Design was a particularly weak feature of the pupils' work, with too few opportunities provided. This has now been considerably improved and is a strong feature of their technology work.
126. Although it is was only possible, due to timetabling arrangements, to see two lessons in design and technology, from the pupils' work and photographic evidence, the quality of teaching is good overall and particularly strong in Year 6. It is evident that the work is planned well to challenge pupils' ideas and thinking and to help them to solve specific problems which are set. Pupils' ability to evaluate their ideas, design and products has improved well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress along with the rest of the pupils and there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
127. By Year 2, pupils have already had many opportunities to evaluate products. In Year 1 they have considered the features of fruit and vegetables and evaluated appearance and taste, recording their results well. Year 2 pupils talk confidently with each other about their ideas and plans of what they will do in design and technology projects. They choose tools appropriately for the task in hand and can say where their work needs to improve. In a lesson on producing a 'dream' coat, they have considered designs using ICT and produce a range of patterns which they choose for their coat. They begin to understand the need to cut around outlines made from templates, working out how to use the least cloth when two are to be cut from one piece.
128. Towards the end of their time in school in Year 6, the pupils have undertaken a good range of opportunities, some of which take place offsite at an education centre. They have a good understanding of the key elements of design, making and evaluation. For instance Year 5 pupils produce 'bridge' type structures made of paper straws and test these for the strongest design. In Year 4, pupils produce interesting 'garden' designs, reflecting how their school outdoor environment might be improved. However, the written work, although detailed, is mainly descriptive with little reference to the project design and rationale. Year 6 pupils work very productively on 'protecting property' through the design and production of a security device utilising switches to activate an alarm. Pupils use their knowledge of electrical circuits in their designs to carefully consider where the conductors should be available to contact and where they need to be insulated. They test their products well, working out where possible faults might occur and why.
129. The evidence from planning, records, lessons and pupils' work indicates that teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and present activities to pupils in such a way as to challenge them to think and solve problems through design activities. The way most activities are presented re-inforce well the design, make and evaluate concept. In Year 2, the teaching challenges most pupils well, although unlike most other years there is

sometimes insufficient attention to the needs of pupils with learning or co-ordination difficulties and to providing work in smaller steps for some.

130. The leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory. The planning for the subject has been based on national guidance and plans for the development of the subject are incorporated in the school development plan. Monitoring of pupils' progress is carried out through examination of their design books and a portfolio of pupils' work in being built up. Teachers' plans are also looked at from time to time. Teachers assess pupils' progress formally only at the end of the year, although the need to assess pupils' learning which relates to the activity undertaken at the end of a module of work is to be developed. Resources are just about adequate. The use of ICT to support learning in design and technology is sound.

GEOGRAPHY

131. The school makes good provision for geography. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Very few geography lessons were able to be observed during the inspection. However, the range of work seen, discussions with teachers and children, scrutiny of teachers' planning and records and discussions with the geography co-ordinator confirm that standards and teaching are good. Pupils make good progress in the subject during their time at the school. Most pupils approach their geography and work with great interest and enthusiasm, because the work they are asked to do and the materials teachers use are generally interesting and well thought out. They attend and concentrate very well and work extremely well together when given the opportunity.
132. In most classes geography is well planned and teachers are clear about the intended learning outcomes for pupils in lessons. The school uses a published commercial scheme to ensure that pupils' skills knowledge and understanding build on what they have learned previously and to support teachers' planning and assessments. The geography co-ordinator has rightly recognised the need to supplement this so that there are clearer links to National Curriculum levels and to ensure that teaching and learning takes account, not only of what pupils have experienced before, but also individual children's skills and knowledge. The proposed new assessment formats should support this well. A strength of the teaching are the interesting materials and topics that teachers explore with pupils and the opportunities for independent and group working offered, as children are encouraged to find out things for themselves. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are well supported, but work is not always set with pupils' specific educational needs taken into account, so that they can complete it with maximum independence and challenge. A weakness in some classes is that activities do not always take account of different groups of children's needs and work is similar for the whole class. This limits the challenge for higher attainers and for lower attainers means that their prior learning is not effectively built on. Similarly, the marking of work does not always make clear to pupils what is good about what their work and how they might improve it.
133. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is generally in line with national expectations for pupils of their age. In Year 1 they make comparisons between Swinton and other places, for example comparing transport and making simple comparisons of lifestyle. They compare London and Swinton and are able to identify distinguishing features. In Year 2 they compare the features of island life and Swinton and know that the environment influences the range of jobs which people will do. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of the immediate locality of the school. They draw simple maps and know that London is the capital of England. They know of one or two local and regional features and

use words like river and mountain and can identify simple distinctions between the seaside, city and countryside.

134. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the expectations set for them nationally. This is because of the good teaching and close links between literacy, ICT, numeracy and history and the ways in which teachers help pupils to use their skills to think about and explore geographical concepts. For example, through a very practical example of packing a suitcase as well as pupils' recall of their holiday experience all pupils in Years 3, including those with SEN, were enabled to consider different climates and regions of the world. By Years 5 and 6 pupils have effective map-reading skills and good understanding of environmental issues. Higher attainers use words like 'pollution' with confidence and cite examples of how man contributes to this. Studies of different settlements and of the features of countries such as Kenya have equipped them with an understanding of geographical vocabulary that they use to explain how rain forms, and the different features of deserts and mountain/valley terrains. They use words such as 'evaporate', 'water vapour' and 'erosion' in discussions and listen well to each other, adding additional information for each other if they feel the explanation is not full enough.
135. Geography makes a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of others and of cultural distinctions. It is linked well into history and science in most classes and also makes a strong contribution in the way in which most teachers promote opportunities for collaboration, research and the recording of ideas and findings. The subject is very well led and has a strong development plan, based on a clear audit of current strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Teachers' planning and pupils' work is monitored carefully and a new assessment profile is being devised.
136. The local environment and events are used very well to enrich experiences as are the school's very strong European links and the annual 'Foundation Week', when subjects such as geography are part of a week's theme, enabling pupils to explore other environments and cultures even further.
137. Geography supports pupils' basic skills very well and, in particular, their literacy, numeracy and research skills. Assessment has been strengthened but needs further development to ensure all teachers are clear about pupils' attainments and use this information in their planning. Resources are adequate and there is good use made of the local and regional environment and European contacts to strengthen these and add depth to the curriculum.

HISTORY

138. During the inspection there was only limited opportunity to observe the teaching of history. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of planning documents and discussions with pupils, teachers and the subject co-ordinator.
139. The school makes good provision overall for history and improvement since the last inspection has been good. In particular, the curriculum has been strengthened by the adoption of a commercial scheme which supports planning and the building on what has previously been taught. Assessment, too, has been strengthened through the assessments made when pupils have completed a unit of work. However, there is scope for these to be tied into National Curriculum attainment levels more tightly, so that teachers are clear about whether pupils are making sufficient progress overall in subject skills and understanding, as well as in the individual units.

140. Pupils' attainment in history is as expected nationally by the time they reach the end of Year 2, and by the end of Year 6 is above the level required. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points when they enter Year 1. However, in some classes the subject is planned and taught in a 'block' of time. This means that although pupils generally have a good concept of the passing of time, of different civilisations and of such notions as the reliability of historical evidence by the end of Year 6, lower attainers, in particular, need much reminding of what they have done previously before they can build on it for new learning. From the evidence presented and the limited observation made, history is well taught throughout the school. This is particularly the case in Years 3 to 6, where there are very strong links made with other subjects and many opportunities provided for collaborative working. Very good use is made of the school's ICT facilities to find out more facts and for pupils to research different perspectives on events. Computers are also used well by pupils and teachers to present their work.
141. In Years 1 and 2 close links are made between history and geography and this strengthens pupils' understanding and recall of their work. For example, in comparing London and Swinton they have explored key aspects of everyday life in the last century and are quick to tell their teacher about gas lamps, cold slabs and bath tubs. Visits to the local war memorial support pupils' understanding of some aspects of World War 1 and by the end of Year 2 most pupils have an understanding of the past through the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys as well as historical events. They learn to sequence events over time and have drawn simple family trees.
142. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have learnt about events in the lives of the Romans, Anglo Saxons and Vikings, their travels and where they came from. Higher attainers use words like civilisation and identify differences between the groups and our lives today. All pupils have a developing understanding of chronology and of fact and fiction. This is developed well as pupils progress through the school. Year 6 pupils explain clearly what might be seen as opinion and what is fact. Higher attainers refer to primary and secondary sources, saying that one is 'hearsay'. Their work shows good historical understanding, effective use of appropriate historical vocabulary and a good grasp of issues. Year 6 pupils have good factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain since the 1930s. Some pupils gather considerable information about these periods particularly in Years 5 and 6 where there is a good focus on developing research skills and historical investigations.
143. However, in not all history lessons are the tasks set matched to children's needs, and the pupils' work reviewed shows that in some classes the same work is undertaken by pupils of all abilities and needs. This makes lower attaining pupils very dependent on support for completing the work and, occasionally, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough by what is set. Similarly, marking does not indicate to pupils what the strengths of their work are and how it might be improved. There are good links made to other subjects and to basic skills work and strong support for pupils' understanding of other cultures and beliefs, as well as of Britain today.
144. History is well led and managed by a relatively new co-ordinator who has audited planning, pupils' work and the curriculum. She has identified the need to develop assessment further so that everyone is clear about pupils' curricular levels as well as what they have covered. In addition, she has identified the need to plan work in ways which take pupils' particular learning needs into account. Although pupils with SEN and EAL pupils generally make similarly good progress to their classmates, the lack of different work or different ways of approaching work in some classes means that these pupils are left too dependent on adult

support for completing their work. Resources for history are satisfactory. There is good use of ICT and of the locality and the annual theme weeks, including the use of visitors to enrich the curriculum further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. The provision for ICT is very good. It was identified as a particular weakness at the time of the last inspection and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils' opportunities to learn ICT were not sufficiently systematic. The school has responded very well to the key issue and the pupils' progress is now very good overall. This is mainly because of the very good quality of the programme of work, the depth to which the pupils study the subject, and the use they make of ICT in their everyday learning. The programme is set out clearly and taught systematically, utilising staff's very good knowledge. The work is very well planned to build on what pupils have learned before. Pupils' achieve very well and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above what it is expected to be. The attainment targets for Year 6 pupils, set in the subject development plan, have been exceeded.
146. The school values considerably the use of ICT, both for the staff themselves and for the pupils' learning. The school has very successfully set up a climate where ICT is used quite naturally by pupils as a tool for communication, exploration, investigation, research and recording. Recently, as part of some action research work locally, children in the Foundation Stage have been introduced to the positive effects of using desktop publishing software to support writing. This has successfully stimulated their imagination and creativity and supported their first steps in becoming storywriters.
147. By both the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the expectation for their age and they have made very good progress. Pupils in Year 2 are confident in managing the use of the computer. They log on to the computer system successfully and choose the required programme from the desktop. They save their work accurately in a location where they know they can retrieve it. They enter simple instructions to make an object move on the screen and create simple sequences to create effects. Occasionally, a few make errors and some find the keyboard layout problematic. However, most pupils when word-processing can change their work (for instance, to insert full stops or capital letters or delete words) using simple editing facilities and have a growing awareness of the impact of the use of different fonts and sizes in their writing. They compare and contrast accurately the differences between a desktop published label and a handwritten label. They are confident in using ICT to collect information using different sources such as CD-ROM.
148. By Year 6 pupils are highly competent users, using ICT in a variety of contexts as well as continuing to develop the skills in the subject itself. They display a very good knowledge of all aspects of ICT such as word-processing, database work and the use of instructions to control devices or make things happen. During the inspection, pupils were finding information on Buddhism as part of their work on 'World Religions'. They very competently researched the subject using the Internet and developed their knowledge, for example, on the different places of worship and on the five precepts of Buddhism. High quality graphics work was produced using desktop publishing software, displaying their new-found knowledge.
149. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The support provided to staff by the co-ordinator and the way the school values the use of ICT means that staff's commitment is increased and they view it as an essential tool for learning. Such high quality teaching is

because of the very good, detailed planning, with clear attention paid to what pupils are expected to learn. There is very good knowledge of the particular skills to be learned when a unit of work is taught (especially now that teachers have completed the recent national training), and a wide range of mostly well chosen, interesting and 'child-friendly' software used. Staff give pupils good individual attention which helps them develop their skills or build on ideas they have, such as for sequences in a 'logo' program. Teachers give clear instructions at the beginning of the lesson but there is little demonstration. Occasionally, a few pupils struggle with a long list of instructions or sequences to follow. Although there are the facilities for demonstration, the room layout does not lend itself to this, being too small and badly laid out. In addition, seating and benching is sometimes at the wrong height and ventilation poor. Despite all this, pupils work very hard and their enthusiasm and motivation spurs them on in some quite difficult environmental conditions. Teachers generally provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas among themselves and to collaborate when working. In addition, pupils' good examples and ideas are readily praised and shown to others, promoting self-esteem enabling pupils to learn from good practise. Ways of recording pupils' progress are in place although the school is looking for improved systems. However, teachers have a very good knowledge of what pupils can and cannot do and of their level of understanding and knowledge in ICT.

150. The subject is very well led and managed by a very competent co-ordinator who has worked hard to develop the subject. There is a clear view on the subject's strengths and weaknesses and how the subject needs to further improve. What needs to be done is made explicit through the detailed long-term development plan. This is due to updated and is to include such actions for the need for a greater range of learning activities utilising ICT, increased software for subjects and subject leaders identifying even more opportunities for the use of ICT in their own planning. The level of monitoring of the subject is dependent on when the subject is a major priority for focus and review in the school cycle. Last year the co-ordinator had time away from lessons to take in samples of pupils' work and check levels already assessed by teachers. A portfolio of assessed work has begun to be put together. Lesson plans are regularly checked and next year detailed lesson observations are scheduled. Resources are adequate overall and the school has a good number of laptops which enables flexible use in the classroom.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Italian

151. The school has a strong commitment to this work and has benefited immensely from the provision of Italian tuition provided by the Italian Consulate. Although originally provided for the whole school, it is now just taught to pupils in Years 3 to 6 for one lesson a week, and follows a formal language programme laid down by the Consulate.
152. Although there are no national standards for pupils learning a modern foreign language in a primary school, the pupils achieve very well overall and leave school with a the ability to speak Italian akin to those pupils learning a language in the early years at secondary school. Pupils can respond to simple phrases, reply using short sentences and use a very good range of vocabulary. Their enthusiasm for learning the language is immense and the school often intersperses everyday English language used in assembly or class with Italian phrases and often expects pupils to respond in Italian. This reinforces the use of the language well and helps bring the language 'alive' – not just restricting its use to the 'once-a-week lesson'.

153. Only one lesson (with Year 5 pupils) could be seen during the inspection, but from this and discussion with pupils, some written work (the main thrust for teaching is the development of spoken language) and discussion with the co-ordinator, the teaching is very good overall. The high degree of expertise from a native Italian teacher, her exceptional passion for the language and the way it is taught using visual aids, games and much pupil participation through role-play, mean that pupils learn very well indeed. The very good modelling of the language and the way the learning is finely graded means that the pupils succeed very well and produce good sound patterns when they speak. The teaching takes account of the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs well. In addition, it also supports the confidence of Italian speaking pupils admitted to the school and whose English is limited on entry. (Two pupils this year have made exceptional progress in English, gaining Level 5 in the national tests).
154. The subject (and the wider aspects of the European links) is supported exceptionally well by the headteacher and Italian co-ordinator. They have undertaken language courses to improve their own use of Italian. The course is monitored informally through examining the pupils' everyday skills in the language, although much of what is taught is laid down externally. Although there is no specific assessment scheme, pupils receive certificates for their work and gain points for their achievements. This helps staff monitor the impact of the teaching as well as pupils' learning.

MUSIC

155. The pupils' standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above national expectations for their age. Pupils make good progress in their time in school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils were reported as making satisfactory progress and with attainment in line with expectations.
156. Pupils benefit greatly from the school's musical ethos and the promotion of the subject by all staff.
157. Pupils in Year 2 show how sounds and tempo can be changed, accompanied by a range of percussion instruments. They learn to distinguish between rhythm and beat and sing along to a variety of common tunes to demonstrate varying beats. They listen attentively to the work of others and can produce good evaluations of these examples.
158. By Year 6, pupils sing clearly with good musical expression in lessons, assemblies and choir practices. Pupils compose simple melodies using the pentatonic scale and work in groups to play and evaluate each other's work, using a range of percussion instruments.
159. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is no music specialist, at present, (and this is a concern for the school). However, the use of a well constructed common scheme of work, collaborative planning and teachers' co-operation and enthusiasm, leads to pupils making good progress in lessons and other musical activities and opportunities throughout their school lives. Teachers use correct musical vocabulary such as 'tempo', 'pitch', 'structure' and 'rhythm'. They also make sure that all pupils, regardless of ability, have an equal chance to express themselves musically.
160. The use of music across the school is evident in the school's religious life, in art where aboriginal music is played to support pupils' appreciation of Australian artwork and in PE lessons where percussion instruments are used to create the mood of rough and smooth seas in a dance lesson. The school uses its choir to support activities held during religious

celebrations. National ballet and drama groups have visited the school to work with pupils on musical extracts from *The Tempest* and a Christmas Carol. African drummers have also visited the school. There is very good provision for a range of instruments from peripatetic staff who visit the school on a regular basis.

161. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Resources are good. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is very good and this makes sure that music makes a tangible contribution to school life. At present, the provision could be strengthened further by systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and improved accommodation. Pupils in many classrooms work in confined spaces, although the school compensates well in most respects.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Not all the elements of the programme of study were inspected, but observations of lessons and playground activities indicate that the pupils' standards meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection, although there is now less time for the subject. However, pupils in Year 1 showed skills well above those usually seen for pupils of their age in a dance performance that were carefully developed over several lessons. Through the school, pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities so they make similar progress to that of other pupils.
163. Pupils through the school have sound levels of fitness and agility. They dress suitably for lessons and take part energetically. They work well with partners, respond positively to coaching and try hard to improve their performance. Most run with determination and show enjoyment in competing with others. Pupils in Year 2 throw or bowl a soft ball accurately to a partner, though very few can catch successfully. The school has provided playground equipment to help improve these skills. Pupils in Year 3 throw a ball over-arm and under-arm, and have satisfactory skills in landing a bean bag or quoit on target. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the heart, how to land safely on hard surfaces and why it is important to stretch and warm up before exercise and to cool down afterwards. When asked to evaluate their own performance and that of others, they show sound appreciation of strengths and weaknesses in technique. In the first lesson in a unit of work on skipping, some Year 6 pupils, particularly girls, showed high standards of co-ordination and made quick progress in a range of styles. About a third, mainly boys, found the basic movements difficult. Overall, though, pupils made good progress, with most reaching a satisfactory standard.
164. Teaching is good overall. In lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, the teaching in one was excellent, in one it was very good and the other satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching in one lesson was very good and the others were satisfactory. Lessons have a clear purpose and are planned around well-balanced stages of instruction, demonstration, practice and evaluation. This ensures that pupils have time to recover and consider what is expected of them before they try again to improve their performance. In the best lessons, this cycle of activities is repeated several times so that pupils make well informed progress in clear stages. This sequence was particularly strong in the excellent lesson, where pupils in Year 1 were developing a dance sequence reflecting the movement of the sea in a calm or angry mood. Groups took turns to dance, to play percussion instruments and to evaluate the performers. Each performance began with the challenge for each pupil of "freezing" in a dramatic position of their choice: balancing, bending and stretching. This moment of stillness focused their imagination on the scene and very successfully prompted a wide

range of flowing movements to follow. Pupils' intense involvement led to a collaborative performance of high quality.

165. In all lessons, demonstrations by pupils or the teacher are well chosen to focus on specific techniques. However, when teachers talk for too long, pupils do not have enough time to practice skills for themselves. Some then lose interest, and instances were noted where teachers controlled attention through commands, sometimes harshly, rather than through quicker instruction, frequent change of activity and more pupil involvement. By contrast, groups of Year 6 pupils responded very well to the challenge of planning their own sequence of warm-up exercises, with one group then leading the class without the teacher's help. The very good behaviour noted in most lessons suggests that pupils would respond well to more opportunity to take leadership roles in this way.
166. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinators have successfully improved the quality of resources. Staff have had recent training, which has increased their confidence but not yet had a consistent impact on standards. Planning is guided by official recommendations and all required elements are covered, including swimming. Pupils in Year 6 are introduced to an interesting range of outdoor activities, such as orienteering and water sports, on day visits to nearby centres. The school football and netball teams take part successfully in local competitions. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.