

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PHILIP'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105968

Headteacher: Mrs S E Slack

Reporting inspector: Mrs Mary Ward
21118

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 26th June 2003

Inspection number: 246546

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cavendish Road Salford
Postcode:	M7 4WP
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Peter Conniffe OSM
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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21118	Mary Ward	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music	How well is the school led and managed?
19558	Michael Hammond	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	English as an additional language (EAL) Science Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
22994	Valerie Kitchen	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Equal opportunities History Geography	
22999	George Loizou	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
32397	Jim Sturt	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Philip's RC Primary School is a large primary school situated in the Kersal ward of Salford. Its parish straddles the Salford and Bury boundary and many of the pupils come from the Sedgley and St Mary's wards. There are 345 pupils (159 boys and 186 girls), plus 21 full-time and 20 part-time pupils in the nursery, and the school provides education for the 3 to 11 age range. Most houses in the area are owner-occupied. The attainment of pupils coming into the school is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is above average, but all speak English with reasonable confidence and understanding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at 4.3 per cent, is well below the national average and there are no pupils with a statement. The proportion who are entitled to a free school meal, at nine per cent, is below the national average. The school has had 'Beacon' status since 1999. It became part of the Manchester and Salford Creative Partnership and was awarded the 'Gold Artsmark'¹ by the Arts Council in 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with several excellent features. Standards have improved in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection and have been maintained at a high level in Years 3 to 6. Very good teaching ensures that all pupils achieve very well. The school is very well led and managed, with the headteacher providing outstanding leadership. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standard of pupils' work is very good and all achieve very well. Standards in writing and art are exceptionally high.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very well supported by key staff.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good and pupils consequently have a very positive attitude towards learning.
- The quality and range of the curriculum are very good and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent.
- Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The school cares for pupils very well and the consistency of the very good assessment procedures over time has contributed very well to the standards achieved.
- Attendance is excellent and reflects the excellent support parents give to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- All staff work very hard and the school needs to consider further the opportunities arising from the current remodelling of the workforce to ensure an appropriate work-life balance for everyone.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The issues raised in the previous report have been successfully addressed. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented and standards have been maintained at a high level in English and mathematics and have improved in many other subjects. Good progress has been made in developing the school's capacity to deliver information and communication technology, resulting in improved standards. The quality of teaching has improved; it is now very good across the school and pupils have more opportunity to be active in their learning. Good progress has been made in improving provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage and this is

¹ Artsmark is a national arts award for schools in England. It recognises schools for making a strong commitment to the full range of the arts – art and design, music, dance and drama.

now very good. The external environment has been remodelled to create a first-rate play environment. A new classroom has been built and the toilets in the school have been refurbished to an exceptionally high standard. The school is well placed to maintain its current high standards and build upon these strengths.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	C
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	B	A	A	B

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

Children enter the nursery with attainment that is slightly above average overall, but many children lack experience of practical and social activities, resulting in underdeveloped mathematical, creative, manipulative and independent skills. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end of reception, most achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning, and the majority exceed them.

During the inspection, in Years 1 and 2, standards were found to have improved since the last inspection. They have risen substantially in most subjects and pupils achieve very well. In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above average; in music, standards are well above expectations and in art they are excellent. Standards in information and communication technology, history and physical education are above expectations and those in geography and design and technology are in line with expectations.

Evidence from the inspection shows pupils aged seven to 11 years also achieve very well. By Year 6, standards are well above national averages in English and science, and well above expectations in information and communication technology and music. Standards in writing and in art are very high. In mathematics, standards are above average, in history and physical education, standards are above expectations and in geography and design and technology they are in line with expectations. Year 6 results, published in 2002, showed that when compared to schools with a similar starting point in Year 2, performance was average in English and mathematics and above average in science. However, in comparison to schools in a similar social context, results compared favourably with other schools and were well above average in all subjects. Trends over time are in line with those found nationally and targets negotiated with the local education authority have mostly been met and have often been exceeded. The standards achieved are, in part, due to the very good teaching throughout the school, the very good curriculum provision that provides very interesting and stimulating experiences and the school's emphasis on teaching basic skills across the curriculum. The teaching is well organised and sets high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well as a result of well-targeted support and clearly focused activities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The attitudes of pupils are very good. They enjoy school and view learning very positively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and pupils show great respect for each other.
Personal development and relationships	All pupils are happy to accept responsibility whenever opportunities arise. They form excellent relationships with fellow pupils and adults.

Attendance	Attendance continues to be excellent and is well above the national average.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. More than nine out of every ten lessons were found to be good or better, with over seven in every ten very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is a second language are taught very well. Teaching assistants provide very good support for individuals and groups of pupils. English, mathematics and science are taught very well and teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The quality of teaching throughout the school in other subjects is at least satisfactory but mainly good or better. Excellent lessons were seen in English, art, music, physical education and the Foundation Stage classes. The expertise of visiting specialists makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in music and art. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and use it well. Teachers plan their lessons very well and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers provide a range of very interesting learning experiences and have high expectations of all pupils. Staff use a wide range of methods and use questioning skilfully. They have very good relationships with their pupils. These features motivate pupils well and enhance their learning. Teachers generally manage their classes very effectively. Very good use is made of resources; in particular, the introduction of interactive whiteboards in most classrooms very effectively engages pupils and helps to promote information and communication technology as a tool for learning in many lessons. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are very good. Homework is set and used very well to extend what is learned in school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils have access to a variety of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. All statutory requirements are met. Links with the community are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. There are very effective identification and monitoring systems, and teachers and assistants provide very good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well provided for by class teachers and support staff. Work is carefully planned and all ensure that these pupils receive full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. It very successfully enriches the school's life as a very caring Catholic community, helping pupils to develop positive attitudes, a sense of responsibility and high self-esteem. Cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has excellent procedures for ensuring the wellbeing of pupils. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are very good. The school has a strong Catholic ethos and the friendliness and courtesy of the staff and pupils are strong characteristics.

The school makes very good links with parents, and opportunities for them to become involved in the work of the school are both useful and appreciated. The curriculum is planned very well to provide pupils with a rich and varied diet, and its emphasis on the promotion of writing through the arts is an excellent feature. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and addresses all areas of learning very well. The very good provision of extra-curricular activities contributes very positively to pupils' learning and to their commitment to the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an outstanding leader. Senior staff set a very good model for others; for example, in teaching, in leading subjects and encouraging the involvement of parents. Subject leadership is mostly good, and very good in literacy and numeracy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, chaired by the parish priest, is very supportive of the school. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and fulfil their statutory duties very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	All staff have suitable opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility and know all aspects of the school well. The close tracking of pupils' progress helps to identify effectively the impact of provision on standards.
The strategic use of resources	Money has been spent wisely to ensure that all areas are well resourced, to provide sufficient staff to meet the needs of the pupils and to maintain the building to a high standard. Quality is always a priority in everything that is done.

There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers and a good number of support staff. The school has a strong commitment to professional development. Resources to support the curriculum are of good quality. The building and grounds are very well maintained and the recently developed external play areas are first rate. All members of the school community show a strong commitment to school improvement.

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 children like coming to school and enjoy the very good learning opportunities offered. • The school expects children to work hard and they make very good progress. • Behaviour is very good and the school helps children to act maturely and take responsibility. • The school is approachable and works closely with parents. • Teaching is very good. • The school is very well led and managed. • The school helps pupils with their particular needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress. • A few parents felt their children had too much homework.

Parents responding to the questionnaire and at the meeting for parents spoke very highly of the school. All indicated that their children enjoyed coming to school and benefited from the rich curriculum, the very good teaching and very strong ethos of the school. This was evident during the inspection and in the very positive attitudes displayed by the pupils. The headteacher and staff are exceptionally highly regarded by parents. The parents' very strong support for the school is justified and they make an excellent contribution to their children's learning. The homework provided by the school is of good quality and pertinent. The team found that the information provided for parents, when compared to that given by other schools, was good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Children enter the nursery with attainment that is slightly above average overall, but many children lack experience of practical and social activities, resulting in underdeveloped mathematical, creative, manipulative and independent skills. This is a similar picture to that found during the previous inspection. Staff plan thoroughly to provide a wide range of activities, both indoors and out, and after only a short time in the nursery, children make rapid progress. By the end of their reception year, all children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and most achieve the expected goals in all six areas of learning, and the majority exceed them. Their attainment is good overall, and very good in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and personal and social skills. Children make very good progress in their nursery and reception years because all staff work together extremely well as a team.

Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results for 2002

Performance in:	compared with				Key	
	all schools		similar schools			
	Level 2 or above	Level 3 or above	Level 2 or above	Level 3 or above		
Reading	A*	A	A*	A	Highest 5% nationally	A*
Writing	A*	A*	A*	A*	Well above average	A
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A	Above average	B
Science (Teacher Assessment)	A*	A*	A*	A*	Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Lowest 5% nationally	E*

- Overall, in the three years 2000-2002, results in national tests for seven-year-olds show a significant rising trend in writing whilst reading, mathematics and science standards have been maintained at a high level. The results of the 2003 national assessments, available during the inspection, indicate that these high standards are being maintained. All pupils make very good progress. Recently the school has improved the performance in writing, particularly of boys.

Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests results for 2002

Performance in:	compared with					
	all schools		similar schools' - prior attainment		similar schools - free school meals	
	Level 4 or above	Level 5 or above	Level 4 or above	Level 5 or above	Level 4 or above	Level 5 or above
English	A	A	B	C	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	B	D	A	A
Science	A*	A	A*	B	A*	A

Key as above

- In the three years 2000-2003, the school's results have consistently been well above the national averages and improving in line with the national trend in English, mathematics and science. Targets negotiated with the local education authority have mostly been met and have often been exceeded. When compared to schools in a similar social context, results have been consistently well above average. A comparison of the test results of pupils aged 11, in 2002, with their results at the age of

seven in 1998 shows that more pupils achieved the expected level in English and mathematics than in similar schools, but fewer achieved the higher levels. In science, results were in the highest five per cent when compared to schools with a similar starting point in Year 2 and in comparison with schools in a similar social context. Performance at the higher levels was above the average found in schools with similar Year 2 results and well above schools in a similar social context. Since the 2002 tests, the school has successfully introduced strategies to improve boys' writing skills and the mathematical skills of more able girls. During the inspection, all pupils, including the more able, were found to be making very good progress in English and science, and good progress in mathematics.

4. During the inspection, in Years 1 and 2, standards were found to have improved since the last inspection. They have risen substantially in most subjects and pupils achieve very well. In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above average; in music, standards are well above national expectations and in art they are excellent. Standards in information and communication technology, history and physical education are above expectations and those in geography and design and technology are in line with expectations.
5. Evidence from the inspection shows pupils aged seven to 11 years also achieve very well. By Year 6, standards are well above national averages in English and science, and well above expectations in information and communication technology and music. Standards in writing and in art are very high. In mathematics standards are above average, in history and physical education, standards are above expectations and in geography and design and technology, they are in line with expectations. The standards achieved are, in part, due to the very good teaching throughout the school, the very good curriculum provision that provides very interesting and stimulating experiences and the school's emphasis on teaching basic skills across the curriculum. The teaching is well organised and sets high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well as a result of well-targeted support and clearly focused activities.
6. Pupil progress throughout the school is helped by excellent attendance, very good behaviour, the very positive attitudes of the pupils, low mobility of pupils, a rigorous homework system that is supported by most parents and good systems for tracking pupils' learning. The tracking systems ensure that any pupil falling behind in literacy or numeracy is identified and receives extra support. As a consequence of these early identifications, the number of pupils with special educational needs tends to diminish at the top end of the school. Individual education plans are of good quality and have clear targets that are monitored and reviewed by the class teacher. Classroom assistants provide very good support both in class and to implement intervention strategies for literacy and numeracy.
7. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are well established in the school and have had a positive impact on the basic skills of pupils. In Year 2 the majority of pupils read a wide range of suitable material with high levels of fluency, expression and understanding. They write independently with flair and a developing range of creative vocabulary, spell common words correctly and use simple punctuation accurately in their sentences most of the time. In mathematics the majority of Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of number bonds to 20 and are able to recall them quickly. They have, through very good teaching, developed a good knowledge of numbers to 1000, including an understanding of place value and an ability to count in fives and tens. Nearly all pupils are confident in using large numbers and their mental agility is very good. By the end of Year 6, all pupils use a fluent, joined script and all writing is well presented. The quality of writing is outstanding. All pupils are capable readers; many avidly read a wide range of material. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils have very good number skills. They demonstrate these impressively during mental arithmetic sessions where multiplication facts, number bonds and the relationships between numbers and mathematical processes are recalled swiftly. Pupils understand new mathematical concepts quickly and move on at a pace in their learning. For example, during the four days of the inspection, Year 6 pupils moved successfully from fractions, decimals and percentages to proportion and ratio work.
8. In science, standards seen during the inspection are well above average for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. At the age of seven, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of science. They know about the dangers associated with electricity and can construct simple electrical circuits and they can make sensible predictions before carrying out a simple, fair test, with some help from the teacher. By the age of 11, pupils' knowledge

and understanding in all areas of science are very good. They have a broad understanding of the human body are able to plan their own experiments, consider the implications of fair testing and record their findings, often using graphs and charts.

9. Standards in information and communication technology are above expectations by the age of seven and well above by the age of 11. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils experience a wide range of activities and by the end of Year 6 they are able to use a good variety of programs and applications to support their work in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes of pupils in the school are very good and have a very positive impact on the progress they make. Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is very good and pupils show great respect for each other. They form excellent relationships with fellow pupils and adults. All pupils are happy to accept responsibility whenever opportunities arise. Attendance continues to be excellent and is well above the national average. In all aspects of their spiritual, moral and social development, pupils achieve levels of excellence, and they achieve very good levels in their cultural development. The positive attitudes to learning, excellent relationships and very good behaviour, combined with the many opportunities for personal development, continue to be great strengths of the school.
11. Pupils are developing very strong beliefs within the Christian ethos of the school and demonstrate a growing awareness of the beliefs of others. They show great respect for the feelings and values of their fellow pupils and the wider community, and are sensitive to the needs of others. During class assemblies pupils reflect quietly and pray respectfully. They consider how they can help others and be kind to their friends. This was amply demonstrated in the Prayer Group, where the care they had for each other shone out like a beacon.
12. Behaviour throughout the school is very good, with pupils behaving well during break times and around the school. Behaviour during lessons is also very good and as a result no time is wasted. Pupils move about the school in a sensible and orderly manner, and at all times are very polite and helpful. They pay very good attention to the school and class rules. They show very good respect for others' points of view and a very good understanding of right and wrong. There is no evidence of bullying or racism taking place and pupils and their parents are confident that any incidents would be dealt with swiftly and appropriately if the need arose. Very good behaviour and helpful attitudes are expected and characteristic of the school. Children in the Foundation Stage respond very positively, and their behaviour is consistently very good and at times excellent.
13. Relationships in the school continue to be excellent. The school functions as an orderly and caring community, with all of the adults providing very effective role models for the pupils. Relationships and mutual respect between pupils, staff and the many adult visitors to the school are excellent and a strength of the school.
14. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school as they are very well integrated within the school community. The level of support and encouragement that they receive has a significant impact on their self-esteem, their confidence to ask for assistance when they are not sure what to do, and their achievements.
15. Pupils are eager to come to school and clearly take an interest in their work, as is visible in the many displays throughout the school. Pupils co-operate or work independently, taking responsibility for their own and other pupils' learning as much as they are able. A typical example was when a Year 6 pupil happily helped other less experienced pupils understand the intricacies of an ICT program. Large numbers of pupils are involved in the many clubs provided by the school, which include sporting opportunities, a Spanish group, a chess club and a newly formed after-school club.
16. A characteristic of the school is the confidence with which pupils speak and ask searching questions. This was amply demonstrated in the school council, where the pupils discussed ways of spending the money they had raised for equipment for wet play days. Throughout the meeting, which was chaired by a Year 6 pupil, pupils were polite and interested, and asked some very sensible questions.

17. Opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to accept responsibility are very good. Older pupils act as prefects across the school and also help organise games for the younger pupils during lunch breaks. They also take the lead in the prayer group in a mature and dedicated manner, which in itself is a very moving experience. All pupils willingly accept classroom duties. The school council is also beginning to play a vitally important role in the school, with the two elected representatives from each class discussing issues they feel are important to the life of the school. Pupils are proud to accept responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school.
18. Pupils are growing in knowledge of their own and other cultural and religious beliefs. They are proud of their cultural heritage and demonstrate respect for differences in other cultures. They quickly make friends with pupils of other backgrounds and make them feel welcome.
19. Attendance continues to be excellent and is well above the national average, with unauthorised absence being well below the national average. Punctuality, both at the start of the day and in lessons, continues to be very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. More than nine out of every ten lessons were at least good or better, with over seven in every ten very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory in classes for five to seven-year-olds, and good in the Foundation Stage and in classes for seven- and 11-year-olds. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, in contrast to the last inspection, when a small number of unsatisfactory lessons were observed.
21. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good or better in all lessons seen and very good or excellent in nine in every ten lessons. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons, good or better in nine out of ten lessons, and very good or excellent in five out of ten. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, with nine out of ten lessons good or better and nearly seven in every ten lessons very good or excellent. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. The class teacher, in consultation with support staff, writes targets for Individual Education Plans. Targets are specific and focus on what the pupils should be able to achieve. Reviews clearly record progress against each target. Teaching assistants provide very good support for individuals and groups of pupils.
22. English, mathematics and science are taught very well and teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The quality of teaching in other subjects was at least satisfactory but mainly good or better throughout the school. Excellent lessons were seen in English, art, music and physical education, and in the reception and nursery classes. The teaching of basic skills is very good, and literacy and numeracy skills are applied and developed very well in other subjects. In history, Year 2 pupils wrote a lively and imaginative article on schools in the past, while Year 5 pupils produced a well-written and researched booklet on Europe. There are very good opportunities for speaking and listening in all subjects where pupils are expected to contribute their ideas to class discussions. In physical education, Year 6 pupils evaluated and commented on the work of other pupils. In science, pupils in a mixed Year 3/4 class made good use of mathematical knowledge and computer skills to create a spreadsheet and a graph of the results of a noise survey.
23. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and use it to good effect when helping pupils to learn. They regularly attend subject-based courses and make use of expertise offered by the local education authority and outside teachers and coaches, especially for art, music and physical education. Staff expertise is good in literacy and numeracy and they use a range of teaching methods that enable all pupils to learn effectively. In a Year 1 history lesson, pupils were helped to understand what it was like to live in the last century as the teacher kept stopping to ask challenging questions to develop their historical knowledge and understanding.
24. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They have clear plans for learning that are well matched to the pupils' capabilities and that the pupils fully understand. Teachers provide a range of interesting and rich learning experiences. Teachers and classroom support assistants work hard together to ensure

that lessons are of a consistently high standard and that there is a focus on what the pupils will learn. Teachers share their lesson targets with the pupils and usually these targets are clearly displayed as a reminder to pupils. In Year 5 physical education, for example, the purpose of warming up is discussed before the pupils begin to exercise their muscles in preparation for more-complex gymnastic activities. In Year 2 science, pupils know and understand that they are going to investigate how materials such as chocolate change when heated or cooled, which immediately encourages interest and good learning.

25. Pupils learn well because teachers have high expectations and challenge all of them, including pupils with special educational needs, to extend their learning in a range of practical and investigative activities. This was well illustrated in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on using non-standard units, such as hands and feet, to measure desks. They accurately measured their desks using the span of their hands and recorded their findings in their workbooks. In a very good Year 6 design and technology lesson, pupils successfully designed and made a range of fruit salads. They tackled the problems of food hygiene, the safe use of knives and attractive presentation, and successfully met the challenge given to them by the teacher. Excitement came from working in a busy creative learning environment, choosing the fruit and working with a whole range of tools.
26. Staff use effectively a wide range of methods that enable all pupils to learn effectively. Planning takes into account the range of abilities, and teachers skilfully use questioning to meet the needs of all pupils. In the reception class the teacher encouraged the children to find out how to use a reference book and skilfully taught them words such as "index", "author" and "illustrator". In a Year 1 music lesson the teacher successfully encouraged the pupils to use a range of musical instruments to create sounds that suggest weather. In a Year 2 ICT lesson, pupils learn how to create and print out pictures. The work fully challenged them and they worked hard. All pupils worked at a good pace and understood what they were doing. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which motivates them well and enhances their learning. Staff use praise well to encourage all pupils. Learning was greatly enhanced in a Year 6 music lesson as the teacher worked in partnership with a specialist teacher to refine their singing. Pupils enjoyed performing and their singing was of a very high standard. In a Year 5 lesson in mathematics the teacher used questions that focused the pupils' attention on finding factors of numbers. They progressed to discover that prime numbers have two factors and understood how to find square numbers. The very good working environment challenged them to think and they made good progress. A good pace is maintained in lessons and there is a good balance between teacher input and pupil activity. Teachers draw pupils together at the end of the lesson to discuss what they have learned and to make links in the next steps in learning.
27. Teachers generally manage their classes very effectively. They have high expectations of behaviour and co-operation. A Year 3 mathematics class involved pupils working in groups of three, using a game to extend their understanding of addition. The pupils co-operated well and everybody, including those with special educational needs, was fully involved. They develop good listening skills and learn how to contribute to discussion without interrupting. Pupils in a Year 3 English lesson put these skills into practice when they discussed the issue of selling playing fields to developers who planned to construct homes for elderly people. A very interesting discussion took place.
28. Very good use is made of resources and support staff. Teachers use information and communication technology very well to promote learning. The 'smart-boards' found in most classrooms are an excellent teaching resource and are used very effectively to engage pupils and provide a very useful stimulus. In a Year 6 English lesson the teacher successfully used the 'smart board' to inspire pupils to write a newspaper report about an accident in a Victorian factory. Pupils use whiteboards to record their answers, and the teacher is able to assess quickly their level of understanding. Classroom support assistants are used effectively to support individuals or groups in lessons.
29. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are very good in the nursery and reception classes and good throughout the rest of the school. Consequently, staff know their pupils well and pitch work effectively to meet their needs. Homework is set and used to extend what is learned in school.

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

30. The quality and range of the curriculum have been improved since the last inspection and are now very good, with all pupils having access to a variety of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. Lessons are very well supplemented by a very extensive programme of extra-curricular activities that play a significant part in developing pupils' skills, for example, in music and physical education. All statutory requirements are met.
31. In the nursery and reception classes the children are given many exciting practical activities that help them to make very good academic and personal progress in the areas of learning expected for this age range. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been sensibly implemented for the pupils in Years 1 to 6 and are an important factor in the high standards that they achieve in English and mathematics. In science they are given many opportunities to take part in carefully structured practical work that develops their investigative skills very well. The provision for information and communication technology has been improved and now pupils can better use their computer skills to support their learning in other subjects. There are very good planned links between subjects, as is seen in the work of pupils in Year 6, who have used their scientific knowledge and understanding of simple electrical circuits to make battery-powered model cars in design and technology lessons. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and includes netball, chess, dance and art clubs. The use of the comparatively long lunchtime to provide many of these activities is beneficial in extending pupils' learning.
32. There is a very strong commitment to developing the pupils' creative talents as well as their academic ones. This is exemplified by the school being one of the few in the country to be awarded the Artsmark Gold Award by the Arts Council for its commitment to the arts. The curricular provision in art is outstanding and helps pupils to achieve excellent standards. This aspect of the curriculum has been enhanced by the school's involvement in national and local initiatives. A good example of this is 'Creative Partnerships' which provides pupils with the opportunity to work with a wide range of performing and visual artists. There are many visits to places of artistic interest to extend pupils' learning, such as to the Lowry Art Gallery.
33. The planning of the curriculum has been improved since the last inspection, with good use being made of programmes of work that are regularly reviewed. The staff take care to avoid overlap and repetition of experience for pupils in mixed-age classes as they move through the school. The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in the way lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is an additional language is very good and enables them to successfully take part in all lessons and other activities. The more able pupils and the few who are gifted and talented are well supported by visiting specialists, in addition to being given suitably challenging work.
34. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, so that they can learn to respect the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop their self-esteem. The programme of extra-curricular activities and the extensive range of visits effectively support social development. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, which supports their personal development. Examples of this are the way that older pupils are able to look after younger ones at lunchtime, and the school council that helps pupils to air their views about school. There are 'circle time' activities, which enable pupils to explore their inner feelings and thoughts. As part of their work in science the pupils are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs. There is sensitive provision for sex education with the help of the school nurse.
35. The links with the community are excellent and make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning. The strong links with the Servite Fathers and the Parish of Our Lady of Dolours help deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. The parish priest and other priests are closely involved with the pupils through the sacramental programme and in their weekly visits to school in which they lead assemblies and visit the classes to work with the pupils. Many parish events that involve the participation of pupils, parents and teachers are held throughout the year. There are also regular visits from the community policeman and the school nurse to support pupils. Links with local businesses help pupils learn about the world of work. The opportunities for pupils to raise money for a range of national and local charities, including 'St. Joseph's Penny', help them

understand the needs of others. Links with the local cluster of Catholic primary schools supports developments across a range of educational issues. There are also strong links with the local secondary school, with staff working effectively together to successfully prepare pupils in Year 6 for when they transfer schools.

36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development has been improved since the last inspection and is now excellent. It very successfully enriches the quality of the school's life as a very caring Catholic community, helping pupils to develop positive attitudes, a sense of responsibility and high self-esteem. Provision for their cultural development has also improved and is now very good.
37. The pupils' spiritual development is successfully fostered through the curriculum and the acts of collective worship. A good example of this was in an assembly led by the headteacher, when pupils were able to reflect on how they should live their dreams and, in so doing, make full use of their individual talents. There are other opportunities for meditative and individual prayer in class assemblies and the prayer group. The close links with the parish church enable pupils to take part in a variety of services and celebrations that are a focus of reconciliation and affirmation for all. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the manner in which they affect people's lives. The teachers greatly value pupils' ideas and efforts and this is reflected in the displays of very high quality of pupils' work. In music and art the pupils are able to explore experiences that reflect moods such as happiness or sadness. There are achievement assemblies that are used by the school as a way of recognising pupils' talents and promoting their sense of worth.
38. The provision for moral and social development is an integral part of the school ethos and features in many aspects of the curriculum. There is a positive behaviour strategy that provides a clear and consistent framework of values in which to work. As a result, all pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong. The adults are very good role models, work hard to promote a sense of fairness among pupils and are successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other. The circle-time sessions are used well to promote moral values, with pupils being able to discuss and develop an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Such activities help them to take responsibility for their actions. There are outstanding social development opportunities provided that help pupils to work and play together with respect and tolerance. The opportunities for them to take part in extra-curricular activities and school trips support this development well. Pupils are encouraged to listen to and respect the opinions of others. There are very good relationships throughout the school, based on trust and respect between staff and pupils. The very strong community links help to develop the pupils' understanding of how to become responsible members of society.
39. The pupils' cultural education has been improved since the last inspection through involvement in 'Creative Partnerships' and the experiences gained because of the school's Beacon status. As a result, the pupils have been able to experience stories, music and art from a range of cultures and to work with visiting musicians, authors, poets and artists. Many opportunities are given for them to visit places of interest, such as art galleries, museums and theatres. Art and music feature prominently in developing their cultural awareness, and displays of their work reflect different cultural traditions. Books and artefacts have been carefully chosen to ensure that the environment reflects respect for different communities. The school has worked hard to help pupils learn about the contribution that minority groups make to British society and, consequently, they are receptive to new ideas and experiences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school, with its strong Catholic ethos, is a very caring community that reflects its stated aims well. There is excellent provision for the welfare and protection of pupils. The school has an effective child protection policy, which follows the local education authority guidelines, and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area. Good arrangements are in place to deal with sick children. The school provides a very caring and secure environment for the pupils to work in and the friendliness and courtesy of the staff and pupils are strengths. The staff consistently apply the good range of policies, which very effectively promote pupils' welfare. These include a comprehensive behaviour and anti-bullying policy. The school is committed to a positive discipline and behaviour policy, and as a result

functions as an orderly and caring community. Pupils are well disciplined and good behaviour is both a characteristic and an expectation of the school, with the vast majority of pupils responding very well. Supervision of the children during lunchtime and other breaks is very good.

41. Teachers and support staff have a very caring attitude towards the pupils. Pupils are well cared for, and the procedures for monitoring and supporting their personal development, attainment and progress are very good. In the Foundation Stage there are very good procedures for introducing children to school life and similarly, as they progress to the secondary school, great care is taken to provide a smooth transition from one school to another. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils are seen caring for and supporting each other. The whole ethos of the school is one of caring for each other and this is done very effectively. Part of this caring includes the Healthy School initiative, which involves giving access to water bottles at all times and free fruit at break time. Older pupils regularly support and play with younger pupils, particularly during the lunchtime break. In School Council meetings the older pupils were at great pains to ensure that the opinions of the younger pupils were heard and listened to with respect. Typically in a Year 2 'circle time', pupils role-played with great enthusiasm and honesty 'how to say "no"'. The result of all this work is that pupils are more than willing to talk about themselves and their feelings and to ask for help when it is needed.
42. There are excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting children's attendance, which have ensured that it remains well above the national average. The governors monitor the health and safety policy regularly, and annually conduct an extensive audit of the school. A small number of minor health-and-safety concerns have been raised with the school.
43. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Paper systems are well established and have evolved over time. These systems have been rigorously adhered to and provide accurate information about the pupils from the nursery to the end of Year 6. There are good policies for planning, assessment, reporting, recording and marking that provide suitable guidance for teachers. During the Foundation Stage, staff make assessments of individual pupils in accordance with guidance for developing the national foundation profile. National Curriculum tests are administered at the ages of seven and eleven in accordance with national requirements. In addition to the statutory assessments, pupils are tested regularly using non-statutory test materials, including the Salford reading test that is administered through the school until pupils achieve a reading age of ten years or above. These test results are recorded in well-organised hand-written lists for each year group and scores can be tracked back to see individual progress. The headteacher and core subject leaders have made an accurate analysis of the test results to identify curriculum areas that need to be improved. The school is just beginning to make use of information technology to increase the range of analysis that can be done in an effective and time-efficient way. It has begun to store data onto an electronic system, but so far, analysis is restricted as teachers' assessments and pupils' individual targets have not yet been entered. The school has a very thorough system for ongoing assessment, and information on individual pupils is collected termly in every subject. In some subjects teachers' assessments do not fully reflect the very high standards seen by inspectors; for example, in art, teachers underestimate the proportion of pupils performing above the national expectation.
44. There are good levels of assessment for pupils with special educational needs. Staff have designed very good individual education plans which have precise and achievable targets. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages. Statutory assessments are carried out to fully meet the legal requirements.
45. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to inform the planning of future lessons. They record daily assessments on their planning and write weekly evaluations before determining what to teach next. This area of the school's work has improved well since the last inspection. During almost all lessons, what is to be learned is made very clear to pupils. In most lessons, teachers use time at the end to evaluate very effectively what has been learned. Very good support and advice are provided for pupils about their progress. In reading, writing and mathematics, teachers set individual curriculum targets with the pupils and share this information with parents each half term. Pupils know what their targets are and strive to achieve them. Teachers often feed back to pupils the progress they are making towards targets, through the marking of work. The use of assessment data

to record the level of pupils' achievements and share this with them is very good. The marking policy provides helpful guidance for teachers and contains a clear key for them to follow when marking pupils' work. Since the last report the school has made good progress in developing assessment procedures and has addressed well the issues raised in the previous report.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The Catholic ethos of the school continues to be the driving force in achieving and sustaining a very high standard of partnership with parents. Parents and carers view the school very positively as an integral part of the parish community, where the staff care deeply for their children. Parents describe the school as a happy, friendly place where pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. They always feel welcome and they appreciate the many opportunities open to them to become involved. The partnership between parents and the school is very good and is a real strength of the school.
47. The impact of parents' involvement in the school is excellent. All are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. As a result, a number act as volunteers working closely with the teachers to provide additional support for pupils and this contributes positively to the standards achieved. A number also accompany school visits and help with the extra-curricular activities. The newly-formed after-school club is run entirely by parents with the blessing of the school. There is a very active and enthusiastic Parent Teachers Association, which organises very successful social and fund-raising events for the school and also sends out regular newsletters to parents. Events include family discos, craft and summer fairs and a programme for the national book week. They have raised substantial funds towards the cost of the newly-developed junior playground. They are also involved in safety issues and have recently organised a road safety week and a 'walking school bus'. Each year PTA officers meet new parents and carers to encourage them to become involved in the wider school community.
48. The school's links with parents are very effective. There is a well-established induction programme for parents and carers of children entering the nursery and reception. All the parents spoken to said how much they appreciated the 'open door' policy of the school and the accessibility and approachability of the staff if they have any concerns or suggestions. One parent moving into the area from overseas said how quickly she was welcomed into the school and, despite initial language problems, how settled and happy her child was. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages.
49. The level of information given to parents is good. They are kept informed of their children's progress through parent consultation evenings and an annual report, which includes targets for each child. Parents feel that they are kept fully informed about their children's progress. Each half term they receive details of their children's targets and details of what they will be taught. There is a well written and comprehensive school prospectus and an informative Annual Governors' Report to Parents, which includes all the necessary information. To ensure that the level of information remains as effective as possible, parents have recently completed a questionnaire seeking their views on communication.
50. There is a home-school agreement in place and overall, the contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. Regular homework is provided across the school and is supported by the vast majority of parents. This conscientious approach to continuing learning, at home, ensures pupils extend their knowledge and understanding beyond their lessons in school. Most parents help their children with reading and make good use of the home-school liaison book provided.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher is an outstanding leader. She has a very clear vision that is shared by all staff and governors. Both she and the staff are exceptionally highly regarded by parents. In twelve years at the school she has striven unstintingly towards her goal. There is a very strong commitment by all staff and governors to the maintenance and improvement of the already high standards. Quality is always a priority in everything that is done. The school is very well organised and administrative staff are very effective. The excellent ethos within the school and the close relationship with the parish

ensure that all pupils benefit from the rich and stimulating Christian environment, make very good progress and develop very positive attitudes towards learning. The emphasis on providing a varied, well-balanced curriculum has secured high standards in literacy and numeracy, whilst retaining a good breadth of experience, allowing pupils to excel, in particular in the arts. Since the last inspection the school has been identified as a Beacon school and has achieved the Arts Mark Gold award, in recognition of its work in literacy and art. More recently it has become part of the Salford and Manchester Creative Partnership. These activities have allowed it to collaborate more closely with other schools. Partner schools and the local education authority have applauded this work and the overall impact of these initiatives has been very positive.

52. The governing body, led by the parish priest as chair, is very supportive of the school. Governors take seriously their responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties very effectively. They give freely of their expertise and are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school. They hold the headteacher and staff to account through the setting of performance targets, derived appropriately from the improvement programme. Governors are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and many are regular visitors in school. The governing body conducts its business efficiently through a committee system. The school improvement plan is a well-conceived document that focuses on priorities and appropriately identifies responsibilities for actions and the resources needed to fulfil these. However, greater clarity is needed when defining the intended outcomes, to assist governors and staff in evaluating the impact of actions in the most efficient manner.
53. Senior staff work closely with the headteacher in developing the school. The deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team meet regularly and set a very good model for others; for example, in their teaching, in leading subjects and in encouraging the involvement of parents. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has similarly used her personal skills to improve the provision for the youngest pupils and to successfully introduce the new Foundation Stage curriculum. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership and is effective in his role, ensuring that all pupils make very good progress. Subject leadership is mostly good and is very good in literacy and numeracy. All staff, led by the headteacher, have suitable opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility on an annual basis, and occasionally in more depth, in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan. The close tracking of pupils' progress helps to identify effectively the impact of provision and specific initiatives on standards.
54. The funding for the school is low in comparison to that of other schools in Salford, but the headteacher and governors have applied successfully for grants, and the parents' association and parish have worked hard to raise funds for the school to provide additional resources. Money has been spent wisely to ensure that all areas are well resourced, to provide sufficient staff to meet the needs of the pupils, and to maintain the building to a high standard. Governors regularly monitor expenditure and review the impact of spending decisions. Financial control is very good. Although governors have not adopted a statement of best value, they apply these principles in much that they do. For example, in the recent development of the external play area, the views of pupils and their parents were sought, what was needed was carefully researched and provision in other schools was reviewed before a supplier was identified.
55. The school makes effective use of new technology. Computerised administrative systems are used to manage the school's finances, record and analyse attendance patterns, and manage pupils' personal information, and the school is beginning to transfer some of its detailed assessment records onto the computer to make its analysis easier. Teachers increasingly turn to a computer when undertaking planning and preparing reports for parents or as part of their subject leadership role, and the introduction of computerised whiteboards in many classrooms has made a significant impact on the quality of lessons.
56. The school is staffed by suitably qualified teachers and there is a good balance between experienced and more-recently-qualified staff. Performance management is fully in place and it is well linked to staff development needs and the school's priorities. Well-targeted professional development opportunities are having a positive impact on standards and have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. The school also buys in expert support from the Music and Performing Arts Service and from local artists, and this supplements the staff's expertise very well. Working alongside these 'experts' extends the teachers' subject knowledge and repertoire of teaching techniques, whilst

ensuring that all pupils have experiences of a high quality. The school employs a larger-than-average number of support staff. These members of staff make a very valuable contribution to the learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs, in general during class lessons and when leading groups; for example, in the computer suite. The induction arrangements for new staff are good. The school is very well placed to provide initial teacher training and is a source of inspiration for teachers from other schools. The headteacher is aware of the current imperative to remodel the work force and has begun to consider ways of reducing teachers' workload, but not all systems are efficient yet and full advantage is not taken of new technology; for example, full use is not yet made of computerised record keeping to make analysis of pupils' progress easier.

57. Resources to support the curriculum are generally of good quality and adequate to meet the demands of each subject. Although easily accessible storage space is at a premium, subject leaders organise resources well and make them readily available to their colleagues.
58. The governors continue to make good use of an ageing school by seeking ways of improving the existing accommodation, and much work has been done recently to improve the environment, both internally and externally. Outside the school, raised flowerbeds have been added to the upper playground, and the nursery play area has been redeveloped. This includes a new safety surface, colourful marking and attractive new railings. In addition the lower play area has been improved to a very high standard and includes a new safety surface and incorporates an adventure area, a staging area and a nature trail. Inside, toilets have been redesign and replaced, and an information technology suite has been added. Despite a number of classrooms being small, this in no way restricts the learning process and good use is made of all the accommodation. The governors are in the process of producing an accessibility plan to comply with the Disability Act 2001. The school site is maintained to a high standard by the school caretakers, cleaners and kitchen staff. The quality of displays around the school is exceptionally high, and they are a significant feature of the school's environment.
59. Overall, since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The issues raised in the previous report have been successfully addressed. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented, and standards have been maintained at a high level in English and mathematics and have improved in many other subjects. Good progress has been made in developing the school's capacity to deliver information and communication technology, resulting in improved standards. The quality of teaching has improved and is now very good across the school, and pupils have more opportunity to be active in their learning. Good progress has been made in improving provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage, which is now very good. The external environment has been remodelled to create a first-rate play environment. A new classroom has been built and the toilets in the school have been refurbished to an exceptionally high standard.
60. Taking account of the careful use of financial resources, which are below average for a school of this size, the very good provision made for pupils, the very good progress pupils make during their time at the school and the good progress made since the last inspection, the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no key issues. However, in the context of the school's many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered in the action plan:

Use the opportunities arising from the current remodelling of the workforce to ensure an appropriate work-life balance for everyone by:

- focusing teachers' time and energies on teaching and learning;
- further developing the roles of support staff;
- challenging existing systems to ensure that they are necessary and efficient; and
- further developing the use of new technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

(Paragraphs 53 and 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

98

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

56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	6	63	23	6	0	0	0
Percentage	6.1	64.3	23.5	6.1	0	0	0

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

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)	31	345
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	15

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	95.4
National comparative data	93.9

School data	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	28	29	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	57	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	57	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	100 (98)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	84 (83)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	21	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	28
	Girls	20	19	21
	Total	47	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (93)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	28
	Girls	19	19	21
	Total	46	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (93)	95 (95)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
237	0	0
23	0	0
14	0	0
6	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	663,294
Total expenditure	676,998
Expenditure per pupil	1,814
Balance brought forward from previous year	-4,882
Balance carried forward to next year	-12,936

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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	276
Number of questionnaires returned	192

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	23	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	23	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	23	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	41	10	1	1
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	37	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	39	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	26	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	35	7	1	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good, and considerable improvement has been made since the last inspection. Children enter the nursery with a variety of experiences of pre-school provision. They start in the nursery with skills that are generally above those expected for their age in most areas of learning, and the potential to achieve very well. However, many children lack experience of practical and social activities, resulting in underdeveloped mathematical, creative, manipulative and independent skills. Inspection and school assessment evidence show that, after only a short time in the nursery, children make rapid progress where these experiences and opportunities are provided. By the end of their reception year all children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and the majority achieve the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning, and some exceed them. Overall, their attainment is above average, and it is well above average in knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative, personal and social skills. Children make very good progress in their nursery and reception years because all staff work together extremely well as a team. They plan thoroughly to provide a wide range of activities, both indoors and out. This results in the provision of a very good balance of small-group teaching activities and learning opportunities from which children can choose. The school has worked very hard to improve the outdoor learning opportunities offered to nursery and reception children since the last inspection. As a result, children now make very good progress in their physical development, and their attainment is above average by the end of the reception year. They adapt very quickly to well-established school routines. They show great enthusiasm for learning and thoroughly enjoy the many exciting and stimulating experiences offered to them. They form very good relationships with adults and other children. Staff provide a secure, supportive environment in which children learn how they are expected to behave in a range of situations. Consequently, children respond very positively, and their behaviour is consistently very good and at times excellent.
62. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator leads the work of the Foundation Stage Unit very effectively. Good progress has been made since the last inspection with the successful implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The co-ordinator and her team work very hard to provide a very wide range of enriching experiences, with many opportunities to practise and consolidate skills. The co-ordinator monitors the performance of the Unit effectively through a scrutiny of children's work, planning at all levels and regular meetings with staff. The nursery and reception classes are now very well resourced, both indoors and out. Indoor accommodation for younger reception children is small because of the limitations of the building. However, staff are creative in their use of existing space, and the sharing of learning areas with the nursery ensures that children receive their full curriculum entitlement. The indoor learning environment is lively, stimulating and extremely well set out, and organised to promote choice and independent learning. Teaching and learning are greatly enhanced in all areas of learning through the recent provision and very effective use of computerised whiteboards. An excellent outdoor play area is used very effectively as the 'outdoor classroom'. It provides a soft play area with a climbing frame and balancing beams, roadways for wheeled toys, a garden area for quiet activities, painted playground markings for number and phonic games and many large spaces to accommodate role play and other physical activities. At present there is no covered or partly covered area outdoors which would enable all children to access these valuable learning activities irrespective of the weather.
63. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was good in all areas of learning. All staff work as a team and this is a strength. Nursery nurses and support staff are very well deployed and take a full and extremely effective role in teaching the children. All staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and performance. The best teaching actively engages the interest and imagination of all children so that learning is adventurous and fun. Very good relationships and an excellent knowledge of children's needs and abilities result in high-quality learning. Children are very well supported in their learning. Staff are very skilled at knowing when to intervene to teach skills and knowledge directly, and when to promote independent learning through trial and error, discovery and investigation.

Children sustain high levels of concentration and persevere with tasks because staff plan a balanced range of experiences to suit their different needs and abilities.

64. A rich, meaningful and responsive curriculum has been established, based on the Foundation Stage curriculum and Early Learning Goals. Areas of learning are linked well in a natural way through themes such as “Minibeasts” and “Transport”. Children’s interests and links with their own experiences outside school are skilfully incorporated to make learning relevant and enjoyable. Good use is made of the locality through visits to shops, churches and parks to further enrich the curriculum and enhance learning. Careful assessment through observation takes account of children’s different starting points so that planning of future learning, individual targets and teaching builds on what they can already do. Staff maintain very comprehensive records of children’s progress by collecting evidence of their achievements. Carefully recorded assessments of all areas of learning help to inform the recently introduced Foundation Stage Profiles for reception children. These are shared with parents at individual meetings and have been well received. All parents are very well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and what is to be taught each term. There is a continuous dialogue between staff and parents through regular personal contact, meetings, newsletters and homework diaries. Parents are encouraged to help develop their children’s interest in books and reading skills by choosing books with them from class libraries. Also, they support learning at home by taking Barnaby, the class teddy bear, on holiday with the family and helping their children write a diary of his adventures. Where parents are able to give time to support their children’s learning at home, this valuable contribution has a positive impact on children’s progress in school.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Many children enter nursery having had only limited opportunities to develop personal and social skills in terms of taking turns, conforming to routines and self-help skills. Excellent, skilful teaching and secure, trusting relationships ensure that children make rapid progress in these areas. Most leave the nursery with very good skills and build on these very effectively in reception as a result of very good teaching. Most meet the goals set nationally in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage, and many exceed them.
66. In the nursery there are many opportunities for children to build self-esteem and independence through well-planned activities and sensitive support from staff. Children come happily into school and take leave of their parent or carer without fuss or upset. Staff demonstrate that they care for and value each child as they greet them individually. The very good learning environment, well-organised routines and effective admission procedures ensure that children settle quickly into the nursery class. Older children are encouraged to care of younger ones, explain the routines and ‘show them the ropes’. Children’s self-confidence and self-help skills develop rapidly in the nursery as a result of staff encouraging them to choose their own activities and try new experiences. Children are praised for personal effort and achievement and encouraged to praise each other. As a result they are confident in their use of both the indoor and outdoor environments, choosing activities, and selecting their own equipment and resources with a high degree of independence. Staff continually encourage children to develop good social habits and attend to their own personal hygiene, which most achieve successfully. Personal and social skills are built on very effectively in the reception classes, where children make informed choices from a wide range of equipment and resources, work and play together harmoniously, share and take turns. Most children are able to undress and dress for physical activities without adult help. Children who find this difficult are encouraged by patient staff to persevere, and are rewarded with praise from staff and other children when they succeed.
67. In both nursery and reception classes, staff have very high expectations of behaviour, with clear boundaries which are known to all children. Behaviour is consistently very good throughout the Foundation Stage and in some instances excellent. For example, nursery children walk through the school sensibly and in silence to the hall to attend the celebration assembly. They sit very quietly during the assembly, listen attentively, join in the singing enthusiastically and pray reverently. At snack time, children are very well behaved and polite, saying “Please” and “Thank you” when they are given their milk and fruit. In reception, staff work hard to ensure that children have time to develop ideas, plan and carry out work, and evaluate and refine it; for example, when designing and making

models of different transport. As a result, children concentrate very well and are absorbed in their tasks for long periods, showing perseverance and maturity.

68. Adults provide excellent role models for the children in terms of mutual respect and courtesy. Children are encouraged to show tolerance, friendliness and honesty in their relationships with others. They show an increasing self-awareness and awareness of others as they progress through the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Most children reach the standard expected in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year, and many attain higher levels than this, especially in speaking, listening and reading.
70. Many children enter nursery with a good vocabulary, confidence, an ability to communicate clearly and well-developed book skills. Staff in the Foundation Stage ensure that good use is made of all learning opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and oracy skills so that they make very good progress in this area. In the nursery, staff promote effectively the use of language for communication, thinking, problem solving and imagination. Children use rich, clearly articulated language confidently to explain photos taken on Barnaby Bear's travels. One girl excitedly gives a colourful account of his journey to Ireland, using complex sentences, observing that 'the sea was choppy when we were on the ferry, but Barnaby wasn't frightened'. Children use language creatively when describing the sounds made by percussion instruments and offer ideas such as 'leaves falling off the tree' and 'branches crashing together'. Expressive language is effectively developed through role-play when children take the parts of passengers and driver on the bus. Reception staff use every opportunity to develop these skills further by encouraging children to listen to others speaking and not to interrupt. Children speak clearly and listen attentively to others during circle time, when they say what they like doing best. All staff participate and intervene effectively in children's activities to reinforce and promote vocabulary, introduce ideas and make links with other areas of learning.
71. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children develop an enthusiastic interest in books and an enjoyment of reading. They choose books with their parents from class libraries on a regular basis to take home to share with their families. There are stimulating reading areas in all classes and a quiet shady area outside where children can sit on logs to enjoy books. All are well used and popular with the children. By the time children enter reception they have a very good understanding of the meaning of print and a good knowledge of books. When sharing a big book about 'The Wheels on the Bus', nursery children demonstrate their knowledge that books have authors and titles. Some can read simple familiar words and point out where in the text it says 'Round and round'. They are confident about making predictions of what happens next and correctly remember which parts of the story have been missed out. Many know the initial sounds and can match sounds to letters in words from the book. Outside, nursery children consolidate and practise their phonic skills using the playground alphabet grid. Some can recognise all the letters on the grid. In reception, children show that they are familiar with reference books and know how to find information using the index. Children are challenged to use their phonic knowledge to read words from the text and all are eager to participate. Many can blend three or four sounds to read and spell simple words accurately. They know the difference between vowels and consonants, and pick them out correctly in their names. Children are encouraged to read and learn key words at home where appropriate. Their progress is carefully tracked using home diaries and comprehensive records of reading and phonic skills.
72. All staff foster the development of early writing very effectively. In the nursery there are many opportunities for mark making and writing for a purpose; for example, children are invited to sign their name to choose a book for story time. There is a wide variety of well-organised activities for children to practise these skills – a tray of rice in which to make patterns and shapes with fingers, a writing area with a choice of paper and pencils, crayons and pens, paints and brushes, and materials for writing down phone messages in the role-play area. In addition, children are allowed to use chalks to draw and write on the playground and walls outside. Many children can write their names correctly with well-formed recognisable letters. Staff are skilled at demonstrating writing for children and encouraging them to see themselves as 'writers' without undue pressure. As a result, children are keen to have a go at 'writing' party invitations, some successfully spelling initial letters of words. Very good teaching ensures that they are at the expected levels or beyond by the time they enter

reception. Teaching in reception is very well paced, challenging and enthusiastic. By the end of reception, children have a good knowledge of simple grammar, punctuation and sentence structure and apply this well in their writing. Displays of children's writing around the classrooms and in books demonstrate that they write for a variety of purposes. Very good progress is evident in the increasing accuracy and control in handwriting and accuracy in spelling. Most children achieve the expected goals and some exceed them by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1.

Mathematical development

73. In the nursery, children recognise numerals to ten through counting and matching activities. They name and choose the correct numerals from random cards, zero to ten, and peg them correctly in sequence on the 'washing line' outside. When making models, children can count accurately how many wheels they have put on their bus. Some know that they have fixed on two wheels and will need four more to make six. Staff use every opportunity to reinforce mathematical language and concepts through the theme of transport – the shapes of the wheels and vehicles, counting numbers of passengers, wheels and windows on the bus, and paying for the fares with money. Children make very good progress through the many activities and small focus groups.
74. In the reception classes, children are beginning to understand the connection between counting on from a number held in your head and addition. At the end of well-paced, challenging lessons, many children are able to count on using mental methods, counting blocks or number lines and then write the resulting addition sum correctly on individual whiteboards. With very clear explanations of processes and good use of the computerised whiteboard, children make rapid progress. Staff ensure that they have many opportunities to reinforce and practise skills through individual and small-group support. Children quickly absorb new learning and are able to understand double numbers. They know that double five is the same as five add five, and that this makes ten. Good use is made of the outdoor area with marked areas for number games and opportunities for number in role-play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. When they begin nursery, children have a good knowledge of technological equipment such as computers and computerised toys. They are very inquisitive and eager to investigate and experiment with everything around them, and staff capitalise on these positive dispositions very effectively. Children achieve very well in widening their knowledge and understanding of the world through a broad range of interesting and exciting activities, both indoors and out. By the end of reception, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area and many exceed them. This is because the curriculum is greatly enhanced by visitors who provide them with a range of first-hand experiences that help them make sense of the world. For example, following a visit from the Fire Brigade, nursery children played on the three-seater tricycle, using it as a fire engine. They worked together to attend a fire and used the hose to put it out. They recalled the fire engine that visited the school and knew that they have to wear safety helmets to keep safe.
76. Nursery children begin to develop a sense of place through the travels of Barnaby, the class teddy bear. They are able to make comparisons between the countries he has been to and their own. They know that when he went to Barbados the weather was very hot and he needed to cool off in the sea, and in Ireland it rained a lot, but it was not very hot. Children understand that these countries are a long way away and that you need to fly there 'because it is quicker'. In the reception classes, children learn about other countries in the world. Colourful artefacts and dressing-up clothes from different countries fascinate and excite them. The "small world" play area is set up as a jungle with tropical vegetation and animals. Children explain enthusiastically that the jungle is very hot and that lots of trees and plants grow there. They know that elephants really live in Africa, but that they can see them in Chester zoo. Staff encourage children to try to find their own country and Africa on the globe, effectively linking their own experiences to a wider context.
77. Reception children demonstrate a growing understanding of the past through their study of old and modern transport. They know that their grandparents went on steam trains when they were little and now diesel trains have replaced them. They can explain how the design of bicycles has changed over the years and can compare the penny-farthing with a modern bike.

78. Children in the Foundation Stage are generally confident and competent in the use of computers and remote-controlled toys. Nursery children create their own pictures of vehicles, using a computer program. They are able to work independently and operate the mouse with good control to click, drag and 'paint' the bus. Children concentrate on the task and are confident in selecting the correct icon to print their work by themselves. Reception children have a very good understanding of how to operate remote-controlled toys. They use the controls skilfully to steer the vehicles between log roadways, altering the speed when necessary. They show a very good understanding of how different vehicles are powered. They know that these toys are powered by batteries and that these need re-charging after a while. In the outdoor role-play area, which is set up as a garage, they discuss how to pump petrol into the bus and whether the tools they are using are powered by battery or electricity.
79. Children learn about cultures different from their own through well-chosen stories; for example, "Handa's Surprise", which provide them with opportunities to talk about their own culture and those of African countries. They explore this further through role-play, using authentic national dress and artefacts. Visitors contribute very effectively to children's cultural awareness. For example, they have gained an insight into the Jewish religion and culture through an informative talk about the Passover. Children in both nursery and reception have many opportunities to learn how to use a variety of materials and equipment. Nursery children make faces from paper plates using scissors and different adhesives with good levels of control. Reception children design and make models of vehicles, deciding which materials are the most suitable for the purpose. They are well supported by staff when they encounter difficulties; for example, getting the wheels to turn. They are encouraged to persevere and solve their own design problems if possible. Children manipulate tools and materials with growing precision and confidence, with due regard to safety.

Physical development

80. Some children enter nursery with only limited experience of co-ordinating some large body movements such as climbing and balancing. Also, many have had little experience and few opportunities to practise finer manipulative skills such as using paintbrushes or scissors. Children make very good progress with these skills in the nursery, where they learn to manipulate a range of tools and equipment for writing, drawing, painting and cutting. Adults intervene skilfully when children encounter difficulty, giving encouragement and demonstrating skills for them. Well-organised activities, both indoors and out, ensure that children have many opportunities to practise newly-acquired physical skills. All children in the Unit benefit from using the enclosed outdoor play area, which has been greatly improved since the last inspection. This provides valuable opportunities to engage in a range of physical activities which include climbing, balancing, sliding and riding. Children confidently ride tricycles, negotiate trailers along roadways and balance successfully along zigzag planks. Nursery children play with large balls, rolling and bouncing them with increasing skill. Some can aim accurately to hit targets made by hoops hanging on the wall.
81. In addition, reception children regularly use the main hall for more-focused physical activity. They understand the reasons for warming up the body before exercise and demonstrate how by stretching, running on the spot and jogging. They make very good use of the space in the hall when moving at different speeds and levels to represent flight. They are well supported by enthusiastic staff who enhance their learning by modelling movements and joining in. Children are making good progress in evaluating each other's performance and saying what they are doing well. They make very good progress in dressing and undressing themselves because staff spend time supporting and encouraging independence. Because of the very good outdoor environment, the provision of well-planned activities and very effective teaching, children achieve the national goals in this area by the end of reception.

Creative development

82. Children make very good progress in this area because they have a range of imaginatively planned activities that allow them to work creatively, developing a range of skills. The very high standards observed in this area have also resulted from visiting art and music specialists, who have worked closely with the children and staff on art projects and music programmes. In the nursery, children experiment with colour mixing, and use these skills to produce sensitive paintings of hyacinths in different shades of purple. In reception, children have worked with an art specialist to produce effective

printed patterns in the style of William Morris. They understand how to use 'hot' and 'cold' colours to achieve different effects, and use a variety of printing materials to vary texture and pattern.

83. In music, nursery children benefit from a specialist working alongside the teacher. They explore different voice timbres, pitch and speed. They participate with great enthusiasm, recognising repeated sound patterns, matching movements to music and singing simple songs. They can follow simple rhythms and some are able to vary pitch and tone appropriately. Reception children take turns with pointers to beat out long and short sounds, using cards as prompts. The teacher expertly moves this on by introducing different instruments. By the end of the session, children are able to 'conduct' each other using very simple notation, and playing the correct number of long or short beats on a recorder and percussion instruments.
84. Children's imagination is developed very effectively in the Foundation Stage through opportunities for role-play, both indoors and out. Nursery children in the home corner take Barnaby Bear on holiday to Italy, observing that they need 'to go to the airport to catch the plane'. Reception children playing outside act out bus travel. They organise who will be the driver and how many passengers will fit on the bus. Staff intervene and support very effectively by reinforcing language such as 'queuing', 'fares' and 'passengers'. The garage play area is made more attractive to the girls when staff provide overalls to encourage them to participate and become 'mechanics'. In both nursery and reception, timely intervention and engagement to extend children's ideas and imagination on a regular basis ensure that they make very good progress and attain very well in this area.

ENGLISH

85. Overall standards in English are well above the national average in Years 2 and 6 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, make very good progress. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The school has since raised standards in Year 2 to well above the national average and successfully maintained its very good standards in Year 6. It has achieved this through very good teaching and learning, very good leadership and management in the subject, a focus on improving writing, especially for boys, and a successful and flexible use of the National Literacy Strategy, and by developing an effective English curriculum that extends and challenges all pupils in all subjects. Results of the National Curriculum tests over the last three years show that pupils' performance has been maintained at a high level in both Year 2 and Year 6.
86. Standards in speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be 'satisfactory and often good'. The majority of pupils enter the school with above-average skills for their age and all make good progress. They are encouraged from the nursery and reception classes to speak confidently, and teachers place a strong emphasis on their understanding of language in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully, not only to teachers' instructions, but also to other pupils during discussions. By the end of Year 2, pupils speak clearly and confidently. In a Year 1 class, pupils were encouraged to discuss what they liked about seaside holidays and what items they should take with them. They listen intently to others and eagerly put forward their own suggestions. In Year 6 many pupils talk about the books they read, using inference and deduction. They are able to talk confidently about authors such as Tolkien and express a considered viewpoint on the merits of his books. Pupils in a mixed Year 3 / 4 class discuss the reasons for and against selling playing fields to developers who want to build homes for the elderly. By Year 6 pupils listen carefully to others and confidently take part in discussions. High attainers contribute articulate contributions that reflect standards well above the national average.
87. Standards in reading are equally high. By the time they are seven, the great majority of pupils are confident readers. In Year 1, pupils are reading a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books. Many have good strategies to help them in their reading and can correct themselves. Pupils in Year 2 continue to make very good progress and are reading confidently and accurately. By the age of 11, almost all pupils read fluently with expression and insight. They use non-fiction texts effectively for research or inferring meaning beyond the literal from fiction texts. They read widely and express their views clearly. Several pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are able to discuss the plot, characters and setting of Harry Potter books. Most read on a regular basis. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to

take books home and share them with members of the family. Parents/carers record details in a Home/School Reading Record. The majority of the pupils said that they enjoyed reading fiction, and a smaller number said they preferred non-fiction. Some older girls said they would only choose non-fiction if they were doing a project. The school has a reading scheme made up of a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books. The school does not have the space for a central library, but has effective strategies for ensuring that pupils have access to a wide range of non-fiction books in their class libraries which contribute to their development as independent learners. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when an insufficient range of non-fiction books and other text available in classrooms was seen as an issue. The school borrows additional books from the local library, especially those linked to a class topic, and has purchased books to the value of £8,500 during the last year. The lack of a central library does not have a negative impact on reading standards. Pupils also have regular access to the Internet as a source of information. Pupils throughout the school have excellent skills for retrieving information. They are all skilled in the use and application of a wide range of reference sources. Pupils in Year 2 explain how to use a table of contents, an index and a glossary, and these skills increase as pupils get older. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils have the ability to skim and scan texts to extract information quickly.

88. Standards in writing are very high throughout the school. Pupils learn how to write for many different purposes, such as stories, plays, persuasive argument, autobiography, book reviews, Shakespeare in modern language, letters, instructions, poems and reports. By Year 2, almost all pupils write well-structured and interesting pieces. Pupils write with confidence and their work is organised, imaginative and clear. Their spelling and punctuation are at a high level and they use their wide vocabulary well. Many pupils use a greater range of punctuation such as speech marks and question marks. Most form their letters correctly and achieve great consistency in the size of their writing. Pupils are beginning to join their writing. By Year 6 most produce written work of high quality, which often includes detailed descriptions of settings and characters. Punctuation is used accurately, and pupils have a good grasp of grammar. They use a fluent, joined script and all writing is well presented. Pupils use a variety of writing styles for different purposes; for example, in Year 6, where they comment about the different styles of writing by authors such as Roald Dahl. Pupils in Year 3 write plays while Year 5 pupils write critiques of poems such as 'Matilda'. They choose their words with great care to achieve their objective. Further opportunities exist for extended writing with a purpose in other subjects.
89. Other subjects make a very good contribution to the development of pupils' literary skills throughout the school. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils extended their speaking and listening skills when discussing the differences between modern schools and Victorian schools. Year 6 pupils were able to discuss fair testing in a science lesson and write a report on the results of their test. They are given good opportunities to read out their work to the whole class. Writing is well developed in other subjects and pupils record their work for a variety of purposes. Older pupils made attractive clay plaques based on Lowry and wrote detailed accounts of how they produced the plaques.
90. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good throughout the school. They listen carefully and are keen to contribute in lessons. They respond to teachers' encouragement and are willing to concentrate and complete their work. Pupils take a pride in their work, discuss it sensibly and show an interest in the work of other pupils.
91. Teaching and learning in English are very good throughout the school. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and the English National Curriculum, which they use effectively in their planning and teaching. Work is matched appropriately to the needs of all pupils. This allows pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, to make good learning gains. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to reach high standards. Classroom support assistants are used effectively to support learning. Pupils' learning is further developed by teachers sharing learning objectives with them and using time at the end of lessons to discuss what has been learnt.
92. There is strong and very effective leadership of the subject. The subject leader has successfully developed strategies to raise standards in English throughout the school, especially in writing. She monitors teaching and learning by observing lessons, examines teachers' planning and reviews pupils' work. She also analyses national and school tests to target pupils who need extra support.

Each half term every pupil has to produce a piece of writing which is assessed and recorded to monitor progress. Targets for improvement are shared with pupils.

93. Classroom resources are well organised and of good quality. Excellent use is made of computerised whiteboards to enhance learning. Pupils have ready access to a wide range of resources including the Internet and class library books.

MATHEMATICS

94. Standards in mathematics are well above the national average in Year 2 and all pupils make very good progress. In Year 6, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Since the last inspection the school has addressed the underperformance of more-able girls and successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, including intervention programmes targeting pupils in need of additional help. Staff have undertaken extensive training and resources have been improved. Overall, progress since the last inspection is good.
95. By Year 2, most pupils can work confidently with numbers up to 1000 and know what each digit represents. They know addition and subtraction facts up to 20 and can count forwards and backwards in ones, twos and tens. Pupils accurately use mathematical vocabulary related to time, money and measurement. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were able to estimate length using non-standard measures and distinguish between the lengths of a series of objects. They used this information to create accurate sentences using the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Most can work very confidently with large numbers. In both Year 2 classes, pupils rapidly counted accurately in hundreds backwards and forwards, using large numbers to 1000. All pupils work neatly and accurately when recording their work. They are able to choose appropriate methods to record addition and subtraction problems.
96. By Year 6, pupils use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with whole numbers and decimals. Their understanding and mental recall of tables are very good. Most pupils have a very good understanding of place value and work confidently with two-, three- and four-digit numbers. More-able pupils use even larger numbers. They can use a range of strategies to solve problems involving proportion and ratio, and can suggest extra problems for other pupils to solve. Pupils have a very good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. They are able to reduce fractions to their simplest form. Many pupils are able to calculate the perimeter of compound shapes, construct triangles accurately and complete complex graphical work involving co-ordinates. Pupils have a very good understanding of number patterns, square numbers, square roots, prime numbers, odd and even numbers and patterns associated with multiples of the various times tables. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of using this information to create different patterns created by the final digit of various multiples.
97. Across the school appropriate emphasis is placed on linking mathematical development to other subjects. Pupils used their mathematical understanding in information and communication technology lessons in Year 6 to create charts from their science experiments. In a Year 3 science lesson, pupils use measures of length accurately during work on friction. The pupils and teachers use information technology exceedingly well to enhance mathematics lessons. The computerised whiteboards are used by a Year 1 teacher to support the plenary session and display the work created by a group of pupils for all to see. Year 2 teachers portray number lines in ones, tens and hundreds to support pupil understanding of place value. In Year 6, the teacher presents challenging ratio problems using the board. At lunchtime, Year 5 pupils' work very well with a classroom assistant, using an individualised mathematics program. This intervention is managed well and has a very positive impact on the targeted pupils.
98. Pupils throughout the school respond very well in mathematics lessons. They enjoy the challenge of mental mathematics, participate enthusiastically and generally behave very well. Even in the very few instances where the pace in lessons slows, the pupils still behave well. Pupils observed playing mathematics games co-operate very well, and during lessons work is beautifully presented in their mathematics books. Pupils listen attentively to adults and participate fully, as seen when they are given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding by displaying answers on individual

whiteboards. In discussion with pupils it is evident that they enjoy this subject, and older pupils speak with enthusiasm about their teachers and the learning methods used in lessons.

99. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, but in both key stages some lessons are very good. Most teachers prepare lively and interesting learning environments in their classrooms that provide pupils with useful numeracy prompts to aid their learning. These are referred to and assist those who are working independently. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and are very familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning is very good and teachers are making very effective use of the units of work prepared nationally. Work is pitched very appropriately to the differing needs of all pupils in most classes. This is more difficult in the mixed-age classes where in some instances the pace and range of work were a little slow. For example, the teacher demonstrated how to divide 38 counters by six and continued to repeat the demonstration for younger pupils who did not understand, while more-able pupils became restless waiting for the next activity. In other classes considerable thought is given to the modification of tasks to make them accessible to all. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson in which pupils were learning about proportion, the more able pupils were able to move swiftly on to work about ratio, ensuring challenge and progression in their learning. Most teachers manage their pupils well and use praise skilfully to encourage and motivate. Where classrooms are equipped with computerised whiteboards, they greatly enhance the delivery of the lessons. In most lessons, teachers explain and demonstrate new processes very well. When solving problems they encourage pupils to explain their thinking, using the correct mathematical terminology. Very good support is provided for pupils by teaching assistants who also provide well for pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons, teachers maintain a very brisk pace and use their time efficiently to support a particular group whilst maintaining an overview of the others who are working independently. However, where teacher exposition is too long it sometimes adversely affects the pace and in some cases the pupils' capacity to sustain concentration. Learning is clearly evident in lessons where teachers explain what is to be learned at the beginning and where at the end pupils are encouraged to assess how well they have achieved. This practice is evident in many lessons. Teachers set targets for pupils in mathematics which are reviewed every half term. Few teachers refer to these when marking work. However, pupils are able to talk about their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Homework is set regularly, with consideration for the different abilities within the class, and is followed up well during lessons.
100. The subject leader for mathematics fulfils her role very well and has a very positive effect in keeping standards high. She has organised training for staff, prepared a helpful policy, reviewed all aspects of the subject and prepared a suitable action plan. She has observed lessons across the school with the LEA adviser for mathematics, providing colleagues with useful feedback on what went well and how the lessons could be improved. She has regularly undertaken an analysis of test results and included this information in an annual position statement to governors. She has a good understanding of standards across the school. Test information is used very well to track the progress of individual pupils and identify those who need extra support. Teacher assessments of the pupils are collected termly for each class in the school, although this substantial data has not yet been analysed to reveal information about teachers' expectations and the progress of pupils in all year groups.

SCIENCE

101. The standards that most pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach are well above those expected for their age. The quality of teaching and the attitudes of pupils are very good and there is a strong atmosphere for learning, so that pupils of all abilities achieve very well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in terms of standards, the quality of teaching and the quality and range of the curriculum.
102. Most pupils in Year 2 have a very good knowledge and understanding of pushes and pulls as forces that can change the shape of some materials. They know about the dangers associated with electricity and can construct simple electrical circuits. They can confidently explain the properties of different materials and know the conditions necessary for the healthy growth of plants. They have good observational skills, as was seen when they were exploring and describing the way everyday

materials changed when heated and cooled. They can make sensible predictions before carrying out a simple, fair test, with some help from the teacher.

103. Most pupils in Year 6 have a very good knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the major organs of the human body. They know that light travels in straight lines and that shadows are formed when an object blocks a light source. Pupils understand the differences between solids, liquids and gasses, and which materials make good thermal insulators. They have an extensive scientific vocabulary, as was evident when they were discussing and investigating the factors affecting air resistance. They can identify the need to make a test fair and can carry one out independently of the teacher. The conclusions to their experiments are good, being evaluative and based on prior scientific understanding.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they can do and, consequently, set challenging and interesting work. The activities build well on previous work so that pupils can use prior scientific knowledge and understanding to support their learning. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and the learning objectives shared with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so are able to ask relevant questions to find out what pupils know and to further develop their scientific understanding. This was evident in a high-quality lesson for pupils in Year 3/4 on developing their understanding of the effect of friction in slowing down and stopping moving objects. The pupils can communicate their findings clearly, and effectively used their literacy skills in their report writing as well as in their labelled scientific drawings and diagrams. In experiments to show pulse rate before, during and after exercise, the pupils in Year 6 have used their numeracy skills well to take accurate time measurements. Pupils can use information and communication technology to enhance their work, and the school is keen to provide more opportunities for them to do so.
105. The attitudes of pupils are very good. They maintain their concentration, behave very well and are interested in the opinions of others. Pupils collaborate very well during experiments and handle the scientific equipment and adequate resources with care. They show curiosity and a great deal of enjoyment in their work.
106. The curriculum is very good and enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through carefully structured investigative activities, which are well linked to everyday life. The way that pupils collaborate so well in these activities makes a very positive contribution to their personal and social development. There is good leadership by a recently appointed co-ordinator, who has clear ideas on how the subject can be further improved. The planning procedures incorporate national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. There are very good arrangements for checking the attainment and progress of pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good, as a result of the extra support they are given. The accommodation is adequate and is enhanced by a nature trail that is used well to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of life process and living things.

ART AND DESIGN

107. The standards that most pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach are very high and all achieve extremely well in this subject. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. This improvement can in part be attributed to the school's involvement in Creative Partnerships and the enrichment of the staff's and pupils' experiences as a result of the Beacon Status for the arts. The very high standards have been recognised through the achievement of the National Artsmark Gold Award, gained by very few schools nationally.
108. By the age of seven, pupils use with confidence a variety of media to produce sketches, observational drawings and pictures involving a range of techniques. A substantial amount of work was seen that involved the whole class or groups of pupils working co-operatively to produce large-scale collage in paper and materials, and in some cases using natural objects. As part of a Year 1 project on the jungle, pupils used a variety of paints and pastels to create a camouflage effect to replicate the skins of the animals. In a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were developing their knowledge of natural form, they

used pencils and oil pastels to recreate the growth pattern of trees. A feature of the pupils' work is how they often use other artists' styles to recreate the textures and tones in their pictures. Higher-attaining pupils work with greater skill, producing more detail and demonstrating greater control of the media used. Sketchbooks are used exceptionally well by pupils throughout the school and clearly demonstrate the progression in their skills and understanding of the subject. Features of the pupils' sketchbooks are the use of vocabulary to describe colour and texture, and experimenting with block printing. There is evidence of excellent 3D work displayed around the school that shows how pupils use clay to make sculptures and tiles. Waste materials have also been used to create large models.

109. By the age of 11, all pupils can collect information about and review the features of the work of an adult artist, discussing the similarities and differences between their work and the original. Through building on earlier work, pupils are able to compare and contrast the work of different adult artists in relation to the style, subject matter and medium employed. Pupils can use a range of media with confidence to produce images of natural objects. Pupils are able to design and make pots that they then evaluate, using their developing knowledge of the relative qualities of materials. Increasingly pupils make use of their sketchbooks to research work about different artists, compile visual information and assist with the development of their ideas. Higher-achieving pupils had explored perspective in their books before landscape painting using watercolour in the style of the artist Turner.
110. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support pupils' learning. Using the Internet they research the life and works of famous artists. This is greatly enhanced by the use of computerised whiteboards so that all pupils can clearly see enlarged versions of different pictures and texts. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to create pictures using a "Paint" program. They develop their skills very well as they progress through the school. In Year 2, pupils were observed creating pictures using blocks of colour. By Years 3 and 4, pupils' work is greatly refined and contains much more detail. By Year 5, pupils are able to texture backgrounds and create sharp foreground images, whilst in Year 6, pupils can recreate pictures in the style of Mondrian that are of exceptional quality.
111. All pupils thoroughly enjoy this subject. They listen intently to their teachers, respond enthusiastically to questions and follow instructions appropriately. When provided with opportunities to work independently or in co-operation with others, they are well motivated, remain on task and work exceptionally hard. Behaviour in art lessons is excellent.
112. The overall quality of teaching and learning in art and design is excellent. Most teachers are confident in this subject and provide very good learning opportunities for their pupils. Where visiting artists contribute during lessons, the quality is excellent. The frequency of these visits has increased due to the Creative Partnerships initiative and the school's Beacon programme. Teachers work alongside the artists, potters and sculptors and this has greatly improved teacher subject knowledge, confidence and artistic skills. Throughout the school, teachers work from plans drawn appropriately from national guidance that clearly identify the intended learning. They make excellent links with literacy, drama and creativity in the use of language and the development of vocabulary. Links are made with other subjects such as history, design and technology, mathematics and religious education that give relevance and purpose to the tasks undertaken. Activities are exciting and match the ages and different abilities of all pupils. Teachers are very well prepared, and resources are readily available and presented in a very stimulating way. For example, in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher planned a series of lessons designed to develop pupils' portrait painting. The pupils explored the technical aspects and the symmetry of drawing faces but then developed their work to use colour and asymmetrical design in the cubist style of Picasso. During the lesson observed, pupils were given expert tuition on how to mix and blend colour using oil pastels. In a Year 1 class the teacher created an exciting atmosphere in the room by playing appropriate jungle music whilst pupils explored camouflage and recreated animal-skin designs in paint and pastel. Resources used in lessons are very good for the task and provide pupils with enough variety to make independent choices. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and introduce techniques confidently. Where it is available, teachers deploy additional adult support very well. This ensures that guidance and support are available to pupils and that they remain on task and give excellent attention to detail. During lessons teachers ensure that the correct technical vocabulary is used, as in a Year 5/6 lesson, where pupils talked in detail about the perspective required in still-life drawings of fruits and bottles.

113. The quality of work displayed about the school is of an exceptionally high quality. The care and expertise with which staff present pupils' work greatly enhances the learning environment and adds to the ethos of the school. The subject makes a substantial contribution to the pupils' cultural development by raising their awareness of their heritage and that of others; for example, through the study of art from Australia and China. The school very effectively involves local artists in working alongside pupils and school staff to produce work of exceptional quality, such as the Lowry pottery proudly displayed in the school. Often, the displays include creative writing and poetry that have been stimulated by the art. This cross-curricular work is of a very high standard.
114. Recent changes to the leadership and management of the subject have not interrupted the significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has given excellent support to the new subject leader, who has made good contributions particularly regarding the management of Creative Partnership projects. Curriculum progression and resources have been audited and a position statement is presented to governors annually. The subject leader is conscious of the need to improve teachers' ability to assess pupils' work by referring to the National Curriculum. The evaluation of the Creative Partnerships and Beacon Projects show the significant impact of these. In refining the targets for the next phase of these projects there is scope for a greater focus on the quality of teaching and learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. During the inspection, only one lesson could be seen and, consequently, it is not possible to report on the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, evidence from looking at pupils' work, displays and talking to pupils and staff shows that pupils are achieving in line with their capabilities.
116. Most of the pupils in Year 2 know and understand about the properties of different materials and how best to shape, assemble and join them. They have suitable skills in using construction kits to make a variety of models. They know how simple mechanisms work and can use them to make moving pictures incorporating simple levers. They can also design and make wheeled vehicles with working axles. Pupils use their scientific understanding of healthy eating to design and make nourishing meals in their food technology activities. In this work they show they can make simple evaluations of the finished product. In Year 3, the pupils show suitable skills in designing and making 'moving monsters' out of recycled materials and powered by pneumatics. In Year 6, most pupils show that they have appropriate skills in using a range of materials and tools. They can also suitably evaluate their work and make modifications as it progresses. This is seen in their work on designing and making working models of Egyptian shadufs, in which one pupil has written '*I think I could improve it by making a firmer base*'. They know the need to work safely when engaged on technological tasks.
117. The one lesson seen in Year 6, on making a fruit salad from previous designs, was very good. The teacher demonstrated safe methods for cutting and slicing a variety of fruit very well, in order to give pupils the confidence to try it for themselves. The discussion that she led, based on the previous week's homework, effectively developed the pupils' knowledge and understanding of food hygiene. Pupils showed good skills in using knives and other equipment to cut and shape the fruit. They collaborated well and took pride in presenting their work. They behaved very well and had very positive attitudes towards their work.
118. There is a very good curriculum that enables pupils to experience a wide range of interesting activities. Good links are made to other subjects, especially science, history and art. The planned opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups make a very positive contribution to their personal and social development. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides secure leadership, as she is able to support and advise her colleagues. She has identified the need to develop the use of information and communication technology in the control aspect of the subject. There is also recognition of the need to better check the attainment and progress of pupils. There are secure planning arrangements based on national guidelines that effectively cover all aspects of the

subject. The resources and accommodation are adequate, although some classrooms are rather cramped for practical group activities.

GEOGRAPHY

119. During the inspection, there were no observations of geography lessons in Years 1 or 2 and only a small number of lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. Evidence from the small number of lesson observations, samples of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and staff, school documentation and displays indicate that standards by Year 2 and Year 6 remain in line with national expectations. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound progress. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.
120. By the age of seven, pupils can draw independently a labelled map of their bedroom and their classroom, with a key to the information provided. Pupils understand that maps can tell you where to find features and places and explain how to use the key on the map of their school to find certain classes. Pupils can point out physical and man-made features on a map of the island of Struay and name them, for example, bay, loch, mountains, post office and house. Pupils discuss weather charts and explain that a forecast means predicting what the weather will be like. They can compare climatic differences and features of the rain forest and Polar Regions. A more able pupil explains the cycle of evaporation and rainfall accurately and how vegetation is lush in tropical regions because of the combination of heat and moisture. Pupils know what animal and plant life is supported in contrasting localities and have a growing awareness of how life adapts to certain conditions.
121. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are able to describe and compare physical features within their own locality, and begin to see how people can damage or improve their environment. When asked to offer suggestions as to how they could improve a local park, pupils responded appropriately with ideas such as access for the disabled, a graffiti park and toilet facilities. Year 4 pupils are learning about co-ordinates and map reading. Most pupils are able to locate places on an Ordnance Survey map, and plot co-ordinates on a grid. All pupils can locate their school and most can use co-ordinates to define areas within the locality and consider their uses. By Year 6, pupils are able to suggest how various human activities affect the environment, for example, how tourism has affected Alpine France in terms of road congestion, the sale of farming land to build hotels, air pollution and litter. They compare climates and geographical features of their own locality and that of Stanton in Peak, Derbyshire and describe how these can cause similarities and differences for those who live there.
122. Only three lessons were observed in geography. These, together with evidence from the scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work, indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school, with some examples of very good teaching. Lessons are generally well planned and organised, but work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' individual needs in some classes. Good use is made of resources to support learning, for example, pupils are able to make secure deductions about their environment based on good photographic evidence and use of maps. Where available, teachers make good use of computerised whiteboards to enhance learning. For example, photographs of the local park were enlarged on the screen to help remind pupils of their visit and prompt them to recall the faults they had discovered. In the best lessons, teachers secure a brisk pace and exemplify what is being learned as the lesson progresses. Pupils are given opportunities to share ideas and teachers are skilful in drawing out imaginative responses and extending thinking. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support during lessons from classroom assistants.
123. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Most show a genuine interest in the subject, respond to questions willingly, use resources sensibly, work collaboratively and concentrate on tasks. A small number become restless as lessons progress, especially when they don't understand what is required of them.
124. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. He has undertaken the monitoring and evaluation of planning and work to gain an overview of standards but has not yet had the opportunity to carry out a programme of lesson observations. This would contribute to the audit of standards and staff training needs in order to raise the quality of teaching,

learning and attainment further. The school has rightly prioritised the subject for review in the school improvement plan.

125. Improvements to teaching methods ensure that geography is a practical subject where pupils use enquiry and investigative skills to gain knowledge and understanding. All programmes of study are covered within a two-year cycle and assessment takes place at the end of units of study. Effective links are made with other areas of the curriculum such as history, mathematics and English. Information and communication technology is used well as an effective aid to learning.

HISTORY

126. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained and remain above national expectations for pupils aged 11 years. Standards have improved in Years 1 and 2 and they are now above national expectations for pupils aged seven. Overall, good progress has been made since the last inspection.
127. Pupils throughout the school make good progress, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. Younger pupils recognise some of the differences between schools today and school life fifty years ago by studying photographs of their school. They remember that certain things are different, for example, people's clothes and the teachers, but that the building has remained the same. Children learn about school life in Victorian times and demonstrate some previous knowledge by asking 'Was this the time when children had to sweep chimneys?' Most pupils begin to appreciate why life was different in those days, for example, that because there was no electricity there were no computers. Pupils know that 'researching' means to find out information. They appreciate that they can investigate the past, using a range of sources including looking in books, studying pictures, photographs and artefacts and searching the Internet. In a very few lessons, pupils make only satisfactory progress when they are unclear as to the purpose of the task, are given insufficient indications as to why they have done well or what they need to do to improve.
128. By the age of 11, pupils are working above the nationally expected level. They use their previous experience and knowledge from a recent study of the locality to accurately estimate the age of houses. They can identify the ages from looking at the style, design and building materials used and have a good knowledge of listed buildings. Pupils are able to hypothesise about reasons for population increases in the local area at certain times in the past. Their suggestions, linking cause and effect, are based on previous studies of different periods and include the development of roads, the coming of the railways and the potato famine in Ireland. Pupils can explain that the reason there was no census in 1941 was because of World War Two. They demonstrate that they are using mathematical knowledge of graphically represented data to help them explore population increases, and geographical skills to interpret maps from other centuries.
129. All pupils are very enthusiastic and show great interest in the past. Many talk excitedly about what it must have felt like to live in Victorian times and thoroughly enjoy taking their part in role-play during a session on the Victorian schoolroom. Older pupils are keen to use different methods of research and apply themselves well to tasks, demonstrating initiative and independence. They take great pride in their work, which is always well presented. Behaviour is consistently good or very good during history lessons.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. In the best lessons, teachers actively involve pupils and maintain a brisk pace to keep their interest. There are very high expectations of pupils' performance, behaviour and attitudes to work. Planning is clear and differentiated well for pupils of all abilities, and resources and artefacts are organised and used effectively. Teachers make good links with literacy, mathematics, geography and information and communication technology when presenting history. They provide interesting activities, making effective use of resource boxes from the museum for projects. The curriculum is enriched by visits to museums, galleries and studies of the local area. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, carry out independent research and present their findings in a variety of ways. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to allow pupils time to discuss what they have seen and

experienced, or give pupils a sense of what they need to do to improve. Homework is used to good effect to give even more opportunities for pupils to practise their research skills.

131. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and demonstrates great enthusiasm for the subject. Resources have been audited and enhanced and are of good quality, well organised and colour coded for different age groups. The co-ordinator has reviewed teachers' planning and pupils' work to gain an overview of standards in history across the school. There have been some opportunities to observe classroom practice, but more regular monitoring would increase her capacity to raise attainment further. She ensures that all objectives are covered in half-termly plans, that programmes of study are covered appropriately and pupils' progress assessed regularly. The school has shared good practice with other local schools on an Egyptian project, which was resourced through the Beacon status funding. The presentation and teaching of history have been greatly enhanced by good use of information and communication technology in the form of whiteboards, relevant websites and the use of PowerPoint. This helps to make the subject come alive for pupils. Also, the introduction of historical enquiry methods and the teaching of investigative skills have been instrumental in raising attainment, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Standard in Years 1 and 2 are good, with pupils working above national expectations. In Years 3 to 6, standards have risen and by Year 6 attainment is well above average. Since the last inspection, resources for information and communication technology have been significantly enhanced. A computer suite has been developed and the range of software has been extended. The introduction of interactive whiteboards into many classrooms has also had a dramatic impact on the quality of teaching in this subject and has enhanced the use of information technology across the curriculum. Teaching staff have undertaken government-funded training and the school has reviewed what is taught in line with national guidance. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has given information and communication technology a high profile and pupils are confident in its use. Computers are in great demand throughout the day, and older pupils access them independently at lunchtimes, break times and other designated times.
133. On the basis of the work seen, discussions with pupils and the taught sessions observed, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and those in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress through the use of carefully selected programs designed to support literacy and numeracy. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make very good progress; in particular, the visual nature of the interactive whiteboards supports their learning effectively.
134. In Year 1, pupils are able to use a range of programs with growing confidence and accuracy. For example, they can input information about themselves and create a pictogram, they can type a short passage using 'text ease' and make some amendments to it before printing, and they can follow a pre-programmed route in 'turtle' using small steps. By the age of seven, pupils can use a word processor, changing the colour and size of the font, and use a paint program to create patterns and pictures. They can use a 'turtle' to move in different directions, for example, when producing designs in the style of Mondrian; they make overlapping rectangular shapes and block these with colour to create a good representation. By the age of 11, pupils are able to work confidently with a range of programs. Year 5 pupils using a control program, 'Flowol', can sequence traffic lights, predicting accurately what will happen and making the necessary adjustments, becoming increasingly aware of the need for precision. In Year 6, pupils are able to use a variety of programs and applications to support their work in other subjects and can integrate information and pictures from a variety of sources. They use 'PowerPoint' to prepare presentations on a range of subjects. For example, they add sound and animation to a presentation to their classmates on 'Who wants to be the house point champion' giving due consideration to layout and structure to suit their audience. They call upon relevant information from the Internet and redraft this to create project reports of high quality that include suitable illustrations and maps. Some pupils further enhance their work at home, by scanning pictures, but this facility is not available within school. They are skilled in refining text using a word processor and understand the value of a database and spreadsheet and can use these for their own purposes. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to explore the creation of a web page.

135. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy using computers and have extremely positive attitudes towards their work. They concentrate and respond very well in class or group sessions, and get on with their work responsibly when they have specific tasks to complete. Pupils are very keen to learn and want to improve their skills. They support each other and share their expertise, sometimes giving freely of their time to tutor each other at lunchtimes. Throughout the school, pupils co-operate well and help each other willingly; they like to demonstrate what they can do. They recognise that computers are an important feature in everyday life and that they are used extensively in shops, businesses and hospitals for a variety of purposes. Many pupils have access to a computer at home and eagerly share their experiences with their peers and build on their expertise within lessons.
136. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Other adults working in the school contribute very well to the teaching of information and communication technology as they support groups and individuals in their learning. Direct teaching methods are used to teach skills and routines, and to introduce programs; pupils then are given suitable opportunities to practise these. The acquisition of Interactive whiteboards, which are used extensively in nine classrooms, has made the development of skills much easier to demonstrate and has enhanced the quality of teaching in many subject areas. Very good use is made of information technology in other subjects, for example, in mathematics to create problems for pupils to solve and to illustrate solutions, in history to research information from the Internet and in geography to record data from their projects on sounds around the school. Pupils report that this technology has made lessons much more interesting. Planning clearly identifies what pupils are to learn, teachers give clear instructions and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Learning is enhanced, particularly for older pupils, by the good opportunities provided for pupils to access computers independently such as the lunchtime sessions for pupils to work on an individualised mathematics program.
137. The subject leader provides good leadership. She has a clear vision for future developments in this subject and has effectively overseen the significant improvements to resources and has secured appropriate technical support to ensure interruptions to lessons owing to technical problems are minimised. She has ensured that national guidance has been taken into account and suitably adjusted to meet the needs of the school. Good emphasis has been given to the development of information and communication technology across the curriculum. There is a clear policy that provides good guidance for teachers. She has taken external advice on how to further develop assessment in this subject and is beginning to develop this with her colleagues to gain a clear view of standards across the school. Teachers assess the progress made during lessons and evaluate their delivery of the planned units and use this information well as they plan the next unit of work. However, opportunities for teachers to discuss pupils' work or the standards they achieve are still at an early stage.

MUSIC

138. The standards reached by most pupils throughout the school are well above those expected for their age and all pupils make very good progress in widening their repertoire of musical skills and their understanding of musical forms. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and contributes greatly to the overall ethos of the school. Many pupils are able to participate in musical performance and tuition beyond their ordinary lessons. Parents greatly value this enrichment to the curriculum and enjoy the quality of the musical performances. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in terms of standards, the quality of teaching and the quality and range of the curriculum.
139. At the age of seven, most pupils sing very well with a good sense of melody, clear diction and can maintain a steady beat. They listen to music very attentively and compose and perform their own pieces with growing skill and understanding. For example, in a Year 1 lesson they appreciated the way in which a piece of music resembled the sounds made by the weather. They then selected percussion instruments to make their own representations of a weather poem, paying careful attention to the structure and dynamics of their piece. The singing of seven to 11-year-olds is also very good and that of the large choir is excellent. Pupils sing with great feeling, their phrasing is very good and when singing in parts or performing a solo they blend each element skilfully. The introduction of 'singing for the hearing impaired' when singing, which is a common feature across the

school, helps pupils to understand the meaning of words and appreciate the needs of others. By Year 6, pupils have a wide repertoire of songs and can talk about different types of music, discussing sensibly their preferences. In dance, they are able to interpret music through movement, with great sensitivity. When listening to music by Debussy, Year 5 pupils are able to discuss the relationship between the sounds of the sea and the musical elements within the piece, recording their thoughts to create a 'soundscape', leading onto the composition of their own works. Higher-attaining pupils are familiar with standard notation. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, are provided with equal access and consequently they make very good progress. Music and the instruments available are drawn from a wide range of cultures giving pupils a good sense of musical traditions.

140. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The specialist teacher who works in the school each week, taking different classes over the year, makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' learning and also to the quality of provision in other lessons, by providing expert advice and support, as he models best practice for non-specialists. Other teachers have good levels of musical knowledge and are enthusiastic, and this is a key factor in the success of the subject. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and give them suitable opportunities to rehearse and improve their work, and consequently gain confidence and enjoyment from the opportunities provided to perform. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to use computer programs to compose or explore musical themes. Teachers plan their lessons very well, calling upon the scheme of work derived from national guidance and a well-structured commercial scheme and trying wherever possible to make relevant links with other subjects. They use resources very effectively and pupils handle these with great care. Pupils are very interested in music and derive a good deal of enjoyment from this subject.
141. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader provides good support for teachers and liaises closely with the visiting specialist teacher. She has reviewed the music curriculum and has developed this by introducing a commercial scheme, which recognises the needs of non-specialists. She has audited resources and has ensured that teachers have the instruments and music that they require to deliver their lessons. Arrangements have been made for pupils to have access to instrumental lessons through the Music and Area Performing Arts Service and these opportunities are well supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including special events such as a visit to the school by 'Bond', the popular string quartet, and the St Patrick's Day talent concert. The subject leader is relatively new to the school and as such has had only limited opportunity to monitor music provision and the standards achieved across the school, but she has discussed these with other teachers and the specialist teacher and she has reviewed teachers' plans and observed the pupils' performances, taking note of their achievements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Pupils' attainment is above that expected for their age by the ages of seven and 11 years and is particularly good in dance. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when attainment was found to be average throughout the school. The curriculum is well planned and encourages the pupils to be physically active and self-confident. They are given a wide range of experiences which encourages them to develop skills and attitudes that develop healthy lifestyles. An impressive range of sports is introduced into the curriculum and excellent extra-curricular activities are offered, which improve pupils' standards of attainment. Specialist teachers from outside the school teach a range of activities such as dance and basketball. The high level of expertise shown by these teachers has a positive impact on developing pupils' skills. Each class has at least two sessions of physical education every week and all areas of the physical education curriculum are covered. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school and those who participate in extra-curricular activities sometimes make very good progress.
143. By the age of 7, pupils control their movements well as they move to music. Year 1 pupils successfully use movement imaginatively in response to the beat of a Bodhran and Irish music played from a CD track. They change speed, rhythm and direction well and successfully refine their movements to perform a dance. They work well together as a class and are able to link their movements and keep in time to the music. Year 2 pupils benefit from the high level of expertise

shown by a specialist dance teacher employed by the school. They express through movement ideas and feelings. They put together simple sequences and develop control and co-ordination. By the age of 11, dance and gymnastics have a very high profile and pupils reach good standards. Pupils are very aware of safety and health matters and they warm up in preparation for exercise and cool down after it. Year 5 pupils choose and put out apparatus quickly, carefully and with a high degree of co-operation. They perform well-controlled sequences incorporating turns, jumps, and balances. They exercise vigorously, gaining good skills in planning, performing and evaluating their performance. Year 6 pupils plan, use and adapt ideas for individual and paired dances. They create and perform a dance that is well timed and of a high standard. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 go to the local swimming baths and most are able to swim a minimum of 25 meters by the age of 11.

144. Pupil's attitudes towards physical education are very good. They are well motivated and work very hard. Behaviour is excellent in these lessons. They are very keen to improve their standards and put in a lot of effort, concentration and perseverance. Pupils work very well together, appreciate the efforts of others and are very pleased when a group effort is successful, especially when performing dance activities. Many activities need pupils to co-operate and support each other and make a good contribution to their personal and social development.
145. Teaching is very good throughout the school and pupils learn very well. High expectations, very good lesson planning, very good relationships with pupils and awareness of pupils' needs featured in all lessons seen. Year 2 pupils developed a range of dance activities working in pairs. They responded well to the pitch and rhythm of music through movement during a very good lesson that used clouds and rain as a dance theme. The teacher encouraged pupils to refine their movements and they responded by changing speed and direction. The pupils managed to link their movements together to successfully perform the dance. Very good teaching was also seen in a Year 5 games lesson when pupils were taught to improve their skills and tactics for attacking and defending when playing ball games. The lesson was very well planned and pupils showed an increasing accuracy when throwing a football to their partner. Pupils successfully worked in groups of four, progressively developing their throwing and catching skills while applying skills and tactics suitable for attacking their opponent's goal. The teacher demonstrated correct throwing and catching techniques and pupils responded by trying very hard to improve their skills. At the end of the lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to discuss what they had achieved and what they must do to continue to progress.
146. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has helped to raise standards since the last inspection by monitoring lessons and identifying areas for improvement. He has provided support to help teachers improve their skills in the subject by introducing a new scheme of work, updating the policy, and bringing outside coaches and teachers to work alongside them.
147. Accommodation is good and allows physical education to be taught effectively, although the school does not have a playing field on site. The large school hall provides plenty of space for teaching dance, gymnastics and games. The playgrounds are smaller but have been refurbished to a high standard, enabling games and athletic activities to be taught effectively. Resources are good. There is ample gymnastic equipment, both fixed and portable, and sufficient small games equipment. There are excellent links with the local community that enrich the curriculum opportunities for pupils and contribute to raising standards. The school is involved in the LEA's sports development scheme and St Monica's High School sports initiative, and pupils are being introduced to squash, basketball and hockey. The school takes part in many tournaments throughout the year and has achieved significant success, especially in football and athletics. The school is part of the Beacon project on dance and has been successfully involved in developing pupils' writing and creativity through dance.