

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106124

Headteacher: Miss Catherine Cunliffe

Reporting inspector: Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 246562

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 and Nursery
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Roman Road Heaton Norris Stockport
Postcode:	SK4 1RF
Telephone number:	0161 480 5319
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Monsignor Michael McConnon
Date of previous inspection:	26 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English, art, music, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19430	Trevor Hall	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Science, history, geography, Foundation Stage	
22157	Mike Roussel	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Catholic Voluntary Aided primary school is smaller than most schools and has 149 pupils aged from four to eleven years, with 86 boys and 63 girls. In addition, there is a Nursery class, which 25 children attend part time. Just under two thirds of the pupils come from Catholic families. The school serves an area of some social and economic deprivation. Almost a third of the pupils have special educational needs, which is above average and two pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is average for a school of this size. The pupils' needs include mainly learning and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils are from white families, with a small number of dual heritage and a few from Chinese or British Pakistani families. Two pupils are from Traveller families. Three pupils are learning English as an additional language, two of whom are in the Nursery. All three children are at an early stage of acquiring English. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Children's attainment when they start at the school is below average. Half of the teaching staff, including the headteacher, have changed in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school provides a sound quality of education for its pupils and it has several good features. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave the school. Most pupils are doing well but some of the more able pupils could do better. The teaching is good for the children in the Nursery, Reception and junior classes and is satisfactory in the infants. The leadership and management of the school are good and so the school is improving. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of all abilities and in all year groups do well in reading.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of effective support.
- The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good; their personal development is very good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and the acting deputy head's teaching gives a high quality example for colleagues.
- The school has worked very effectively to promote the pupils' good attendance.

What could be improved

- Some of the more able pupils do not make the best possible progress in writing, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' speaking is not as effectively promoted as it should be in the infants.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1998. Progress in resolving the issues from the last inspection was slower than expected for the first two years. When the new headteacher was appointed in 2000 she faced many challenges as the school had been designated as one that was causing concern to the local authority because of declining standards. This is no longer the case; the slide in standards has been halted as a result of more effective management and teaching, and improvement since 2000 has been more consistent. There is now a senior team of managers who provide good leadership and check carefully on the school's performance. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology have improved and are now as expected. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is better than it was and these pupils make good progress. Some good work has been completed to improve how pupils' attainment and progress is checked but there is still work to do to ensure that all of the more able pupils' needs are met. Teachers' marking is still not consistently helping pupils to improve their work.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	E	C	A
Mathematics	A	E	D	C
Science	C	E	D	C

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

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress from a below average starting point and by the time they start in Year 1 most children reach the goals set for their age in all of the areas of learning. In English, the results for eleven year olds in 2002 were in line with the national average and well above those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were below the national average and in line with those in similar schools. These results were a considerable improvement over those in 2001, which were well below average. Far more pupils gained the level expected for their age in English and mathematics and all of the pupils gained the expected level in science. The school met the targets it had set. Fewer pupils, however, reached beyond the expected level than nationally in all areas. On the basis of the work seen now, most of the pupils are making satisfactory progress. The Year 6 pupils are reaching average standards. Some of the more able pupils are not making the best possible progress throughout the school in writing, mathematics and science. There is much more rapid progress for the more able pupils in Year 6 because of work that is closely matched to their needs. Standards in Year 2 are similar, with the same weaknesses in the progress of some more able pupils. In addition, the pupils' skills in speaking in Year 2 are below average. Pupils of all ages are doing well in reading. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their targets. Those who are learning English as an additional language are also doing well because they get good additional help from the staff. The pupils' work in ICT reaches the expectation for their ages in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils make good progress. The pupils' attainment in all other subjects is broadly as expected for their ages by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils' singing is better than expected for their ages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are keen to learn and they are positive about school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and when they play together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are eager to take responsibility and help each other. They get on very well together.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and pupils are punctual.

The school's strong Catholic ethos is reflected in the very good quality of relationships in the school. The school is an orderly community where the pupils know the rules and keep to them. They are proud to receive commendations in special assemblies for their good work, behaviour and effort. The school has worked very effectively to improve pupils' attendance and pupils are rewarded for good levels of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall and as a result most of the pupils learn at least at the rate expected in most aspects of their work. A strength in teaching in all classes is that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met through good support by both teachers and classroom assistants. The teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and so classrooms are conducive to learning. Teaching for children in the Nursery, Reception and junior classes is good because teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach. They use a good range of methods to promote pupils' involvement in activities. Teaching in ICT is good throughout the school because teachers are confident in using computers and teach the basic skills well. The teaching of English and mathematics is good in the junior classes. It is very good for the Year 6 pupils because the teacher's expectations of the more able pupils are consistently high in this class. In some other classes expectations are not as consistent for all of these pupils. The teaching of English and mathematics in the infants is satisfactory but more could be expected of some more able pupils. Pupils of average and higher ability are not sufficiently encouraged to talk about their ideas or opinions. There is some very good teaching of singing because teachers have a high level of expertise. While there are some good examples of teachers' marking that gives pupils clear guidance on what needs to improve, this is not always the case. Teachers give good support to pupils who are learning English as an additional language and so these pupils learn at a good rate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school has worked diligently to improve provision for the youngest children and also to put in place policies and schemes of work for all subjects of the National Curriculum. There is still work to do to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all of the more able pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils' needs are quickly identified and well met through closely focused support that promotes good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils' understanding is checked and their needs are met effectively so that they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The pupils gain a clear sense of what is right and wrong because of the school's very good guidance. They have plenty of opportunities to learn to get on with each other and respect each other. The pupils' awareness of their own and different cultures is satisfactory. Their spiritual development is well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff provide a good level of day-to-day care for pupils and give them good advice and support. There are some aspects of the school site and buildings that need further attention to ensure pupils' well-being.

The school has put some effective work into improving the curriculum. Strengths are the provision for pupils' understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and the good range of activities outside lessons. The school has sound procedures for checking how well pupils are doing but the use of the information gained about what pupils can do is not as well used as it should be to plan work for some more able pupils. There is a good partnership with parents and the school provides good information about its work and how parents can help at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has had a great deal to do since her appointment and has firmly established a climate in which improvement is brought about by looking at what is happening and identifying strengths and weaknesses. The targets set by the school have been met.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil most of their responsibilities satisfactorily and are linked to classes so that they can learn at first hand about the school's work. They have, however, been slow in recent years to assess risks to health and safety and seek improvements in the older of the school buildings.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has worked on the right things first and knows what it needs to work on next.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of additional funds to boost the pupils' attainment and ensure good progress for pupils with special educational needs.

The headteacher gives a strong lead for the school and has a clear vision that is effectively shared by the staff. A very able acting deputy head, whose teaching sets an excellent example in high expectations of what pupils can achieve, supports the headteacher effectively in the drive to raise standards. The school's staffing and resources are satisfactory, although there are fewer computers than in most schools. Parts of the older building, that houses the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes, are in a poor condition. While the staff try to brighten the environment for pupils through displays of work, they battle against the damp state of some areas. The school has the matter in hand and has reserved most of its carry forward of funds to resolve the problems. The school is good at seeking best value for its expenditure, particularly in the use of additional funding to boost pupils' attainment to the level expected for their ages.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible. • The teaching is good and the staff are approachable. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that they do not get good information about their children's progress and that there are too few activities outside lessons.

The inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views, although some pupils could make even better progress and some aspects of teaching needs improving. The concerns of the few parents are not supported; the school provides good information for parents and there is a good range of activities out of normal lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children join the school in the Nursery, most are starting from a below average point, particularly in terms of their communication, language and literacy skills. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress so that by the time they start in Year 1 most children reach the goals set for their age in all of the areas of learning. This is as a result of good teaching in reading, writing and mathematics.
2. The school's results for seven and eleven year olds at the time of its last inspection in 1998 were very good, in fact the highest ever achieved by the school. Overall, the school's performance dropped in successive years to the extent that, in September 2000, the authority designated the school as causing concern because of trends in standards. The results in 2001 for eleven year olds were very low, with only just over half of the pupils gaining the level expected for their age in English and mathematics. The school set about reversing this trend, under the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher. This was achieved through adaptations to teaching and the reorganisation of classes, including teaching Year 6 in a separate class. The results for eleven year olds in 2002 were in line with the national average in English and well above those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were below the national average and were in line with those in similar schools. These results were a considerable improvement over the 2001 results and indicate the effectiveness of the measures taken to halt the decline in standards. A far greater number of pupils gained the level expected for their age in English and mathematics and all of the pupils gained the expected level in science. However, fewer pupils reached beyond the expected level than nationally in all areas. The results for seven year olds in 2002 were in line with the national average in writing and mathematics and better than the results in similar schools. Results in reading were below the national average but better than in similar schools.
3. The school acknowledges that, having resolved the weaknesses in the achievement of lower and average attaining pupils, it still has work to do to ensure that all of the more able pupils are doing their best.
4. On the basis of their current work, most of the pupils are making satisfactory progress. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Pupils of all ages do particularly well in reading. Pupils learn the basic skills thoroughly, use good expression when they read and use their skills well in order to read for pleasure and to gather information in other subjects. The Year 6 pupils are reaching average standards in English, mathematics and science but not all of the more able pupils in all year groups are making the best possible progress in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 are making rapid progress because of work that is closely matched to their needs, but some have a great deal of ground to catch up on in order to do their best. The pupils speak competently by the time they are in Year 6 and their listening is often good.
5. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science; lower attainers and average ability pupils often achieve well but there are the same weaknesses in the progress of some more able pupils. In addition, the pupils' skills in speaking in Year 2 are below average because they have too few opportunities to speak at length. Pupils' listening is at an average level.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes; they work effectively towards their targets and are well supported. Those who are learning English as an additional language are also doing well because they get the support they need through adaptations to teaching. Pupils from Traveller families are well supported and so they make good progress.
7. The pupils' work in ICT reaches the expectation for their ages in Year 2 and Year 6 and most pupils make good progress. The pupils' attainment in all other subjects is broadly as expected

for their ages by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils' singing is better than expected for their ages and there is some good work in gymnastics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are good. Parents are confident that their children enjoy school. Pupils are purposeful in their work. This is a direct result of very good relationships and interesting lessons. Pupils listen well and work hard, maintaining concentration well. They work effectively together in pairs or in groups, happily sharing ideas and equipment. When asked, they freely explain what their lesson activity is about and correct any mistakes. The junior pupils contribute positively to the discussions in lessons and appreciate one another's comments. For example, towards the end of a literacy lesson, junior pupils entered very effectively into discussion about characters in a story. The pupils highlighted some good social and moral issues. In the infants, some of the pupils are more reticent to offer ideas and opinions in discussions because they do not have the same opportunities or encouragement to air their views.
9. Behaviour is good. Parents very well support this view. Pupils have a keen sense of self-discipline and understand the need for rules; as a result, the school is an orderly place. Pupils are familiar with the codes of conduct, especially the Golden Rules, and the expectations of their behaviour in lessons and on visits out of school. This is evident by the compliments made by the public, when pupils sang in Stockport Market Place. A few pupils in some classes have behavioural problems. However, due to the skilful management of teachers, this does not cause undue interruption to the flow of lessons. Pupils are courteous to adults and to one another. They are respectful of property and are helpful, for example tidying up during lessons when moving from one task onto another. In one lesson, Year 4/5 pupils moved from their desks to the carpet area and automatically placed their chairs tidily under their desks and ensured that there was space for everyone. Pupils' play is good natured. Pupils from different ethnic groups and backgrounds get on very well together. Co-operation with the lunchtime supervisors is good. Pupils show good initiative, for example in looking after any who have fallen at play. Where there are lapses of conduct, pupils know how seriously this is viewed. They know that bad behaviour or bullying is very wrong and are familiar with the systems of rewards and sanctions. There are a very few instances of oppressive behaviour. There were six fixed exclusions involving older pupils in the past year. Nevertheless, this is an overall improving situation with fewer individuals involved and the school seeks ways in which pupils can be supported through difficulties in adhering to its expectations.
10. Relationships are very good throughout the school. The pupils are content in their environment. They are lively and smile readily when spoken to. They confidently share their thoughts with staff. Consequently a good rapport is evident between pupils and between pupils and adults in school. This reflects well in their work and play.
11. Attendance is good. This is a significant improvement on some poor levels in previous years. This is a direct result of the school promoting better attitudes to regular attendance and punctuality at every opportunity. For example, during registration and through assemblies and by the systems of rewards, pupils are reminded of the importance of good attendance. Pupils are keen to come into school at the start of the day. They wait eagerly at the beginning of the day in anticipation of teachers calling them into school. Pupils look forward to their lessons. They greet the teachers cheerfully and are welcomed warmly. Registration conforms to requirements and is prompt and effective. This is good start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The teaching is good overall, and as a result most of the pupils learn at least at the rate expected in most aspects of their work. The school has made good use of the support given by the local authority to improve teaching in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better. The teachers have a good grasp of the national

strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and use these appropriately to plan lessons. However, they are not always ensuring that all of the more able pupils are suitably extended when they plan work. Nevertheless, improvements in teaching have ensured that standards are rising.

13. Strengths in teaching include:

- Teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, pupils who are learning English as an additional language and Traveller children well; good support is provided both by teachers and classroom assistants.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and so there is a good atmosphere for learning in classrooms.
- Children in the Nursery, Reception and junior classes make good progress because teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach and use a good range of methods to promote pupils' involvement in activities.
- Teachers are confident in teaching ICT and teach the basic skills well.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is good in the junior classes; it is very good for the Year 6 pupils because the teacher's expectations of the more able pupils are consistently high in this class.

14. The points in teaching that need to improve are:

- Teachers' expectations of what the more able pupils might achieve are not always as high as they should be.
- Teachers in the infant classes do not sufficiently encourage pupils to talk about their ideas or opinions.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on what needs to improve.

15. Good teaching ensures that pupils with special educational needs learn well. Pupils' targets are suitably precise and based on the careful assessment of pupils' needs. Teachers adapt their planning sensitively to meet these needs and ensure that classroom assistants know what they need to do when they support pupils in class. Pupils' with behavioural problems are dealt with sensitively and are helped to overcome difficulties. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also receive good support; teachers check pupils' understanding thoroughly and this enables them to take a full part in lessons and make good progress. Pupils from Traveller families also get the support that they need to maintain good progress.

16. The teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes know what these young children need and teach the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics well. Good routines and warm relationships help children to settle down quickly in both classes and children's personal and social development is well supported through praise and encouragement. The children's span of concentration increases in both classes and resources are used well promote children's learning.

17. Teachers have a good understanding of how computers can be used to support pupils' learning and the direct teaching of skills is good. Clear explanations and demonstrations mean that pupils understand what they have to do and so they are confident when they apply the skills they have used in future work. The training that teachers have had in ICT has paid dividends and teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in English, mathematics and most other subjects.

18. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall, and the basic skills in reading and writing are well taught, although the needs of some of the more able pupils are not as well met as the lower and average ability pupils. Teaching in science is satisfactory but, again, the needs of some of the more able pupils are not as well met as they too often do the same work as other pupils.

19. There is some very good teaching in Year 6, where the teacher's expectations are consistently high and pupils of all abilities benefit from carefully planned work that is closely matched to their needs and firmly based on the teacher's assessments of what needs to be worked on next.
20. The teaching is stronger in the junior classes, where teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to speak and express their ideas more fully. There are occasions in the infant classes when teachers do not extend pupils' speaking sufficiently through additional prompting or questions and this restricts pupils' progress in speaking.
21. There are some good examples of teachers' marking that ensures pupils have a clear idea of what they need to do next to improve their work. This is not seen consistently, however, and too often teachers praise pupils' efforts at the expense of providing good guidance on what needs to be worked on next. The school has a good policy for teachers to follow in marking pupils' work, but it is not acted upon consistently.
22. Teaching in music and physical education is good because teachers have a firm grasp of these subjects and plan interesting activities that challenge and motivate the pupils. Homework is planned satisfactorily to support pupils' learning; pupils know what they have to do and when work needs to be returned.

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

23. There has been improvement in the school's planning of the curriculum since the last inspection. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory for pupils of all ages and the school teaches all that it should. The curriculum for the school is suitably broad and balanced. The provision for personal, health and social education is good. A policy has been introduced recently and all classes have times when pupils are able to discuss matters such as 'Looking at Ourselves', bullying and friendships. The school's focus on healthy living has been successful with the 'Fruity Fridays', and drinking water has been introduced in the classrooms. Provision for equality of opportunity is satisfactory and all pupils, regardless of gender, can take part in all activities. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are well supported. The policy for special educational needs meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The key issue from the last inspection concerning the provision for sex education has been addressed and a policy for sex education has been agreed. Education about the misuse of drugs is gained through visits from the 'Crucial Crew' and through personal, health and social education.
24. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced satisfactorily and the school has benefited from intensive support from the local authority in improving provision. Over recent years, the school has worked hard to adopt the national guidance for schemes of work in all subjects and so teachers' planning is appropriately supported in ensuring both coverage of the curriculum and pupils' learning build logically. There is still work to do to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all of the more able pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including clubs for netball, ICT and choir. Good support in developing football skills is given by Stockport County FC. There is a series of planned trips for each year out of the school to visit the zoo, safari park, places of local interest in Stockport and the theatre. Pupils have visited the local library to meet an author. At the present time no residential trips or outdoor pursuits take place, but the physical education manager is looking at the possibility of introducing these activities as an extra boost to pupils' social development.
25. The community makes a good contribution to the life of the school. Good relationships have been developed with the local elderly residential homes and Stockport market where pupils sing carols at Christmas and take part in the Easter Bonnet Parade. Stockport County FC not only helps with football skills training but also groups of pupils attend a ten-week course in the computer suite. Furthermore, they provide the transport to take and return the pupils to the school. An artist has been in residence in the school and there has been an art exhibition

where all pupils' artwork was framed and then purchased by the parents. In addition, Year 5 have had a visit to the school from the emergency services.

26. Relationships with partner institutions are good. There are strong links with other schools in the cluster group and other Catholic schools, and good links with the high school that gives support in sports activities. The school is at present looking into creating a link with a local special school. Good links are maintained with the local university and students visit and take part in art activities, such as clay work and printing with the pupils. In addition, students from a high school undertake student placements in the school.
27. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which was sound at the time of the last inspection, has improved and is now good. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness, particularly in assemblies. The effective use of candles and displays establishes a good focus for reflection and the sensitive involvement of pupils in prayer. Pupils develop a strong sense of pride in their own and others' achievements in the 'Special Mentions' assembly where teachers and pupils share good work, behaviour and awards for swimming as well as other achievements out of school. Pupils are given good opportunities in lessons such as art and design and in English to reflect on how the way that artists' or authors' work makes them feel.
28. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and results in a strong sense of co-operation and good behaviour in the school. Much of this is due to the clear and positive system for promoting good attitudes and behaviour, which is applied consistently by all the adults. The Golden Rules are prominently displayed and well understood by everyone. Special mentions, individual awards that build toward team points and Golden Time are all important factors that motivate pupils to do their best. Pupils develop a good awareness of the needs of others and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in working together. A good example was when pupils in Year 6 offered their own batteries to help other groups make their electrical circuits work. Older pupils kindly help younger ones because they are trained to act as 'buddies', for example in the playground. Pupils are encouraged to care for people in need and there are many examples where pupils have raised funds for charities like the Wellspring Homeless Centre and Pendlebury Children's Hospital.
29. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory, which is better than at the last inspection, but this is one area where further development is still needed. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural heritage in topics on the Victorians and Romans in history. Pupils learn of the work of famous authors, for example when they study *Macbeth* in Year 6. There have been some recent improvements in the opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. Examples are when a samba band visited the school and pupils read books that reflect different cultures, such as *Kensuke's Kingdom*. However, the school does not have secure planning to ensure that pupils gain a better awareness of different cultures in art or music, for example, and so some opportunities to extend pupils' understanding are lost.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The provision for pupils' welfare is satisfactorily assured but a number of health and safety concerns were notified to the school regarding the damp conditions and state of the flooring in parts of the older building. Otherwise, the pupils are secure in a warm and purposeful environment. The staff know the pupils very well and are very caring in supporting their welfare at all times. All adults are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection. Lunchtime supervision is effective. Supervisors stimulate some good interactive play, particularly with the younger pupils. The school cares sensitively for any pupils who are unwell. There is good access to the educational, medical and social agencies when required and the school acts on the advice given.
31. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are very good. This has led to a very good improvement in the rate of attendance. Any unexplained absence is followed up promptly.

Parents are frequently reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality as essential for their children's development and virtues to be fostered for the future. The educational welfare officer works well with school to support a few families.

32. The school promotes good standards of behaviour very well. Policies are clear to the staff and pupils and they are conscientiously and consistently applied. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to behave sensibly and encourage a responsible approach to work. The staff give good support to the few pupils with individual behavioural problems. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Any inappropriate behaviour is viewed very seriously and parental co-operation is earnestly sought. Any bullying or oppressive behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
33. The school quickly identifies pupils who have special educational needs and assessments are well used to devise targets for these pupils to work towards. The school has worked diligently over the last two years to improve its systems for checking on how well pupils are doing and to track the progress of individuals and different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who are acquiring English. The school's work in tracking progress has focused on ensuring that most pupils reach the level expected for their ages. While there are now suitable procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, the information gained is not used to pinpoint what all of the more able pupils need to do next.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Parents view the school highly. They have confidence in the headteacher and in what the school provides and achieves for their children. This is evident from parents spoken to during the inspection, comments at the parents' meeting and the positive return of questionnaires. The school has good and effective links with parents through regular newsletters that give good information about what is happening in school and there is also a range of meetings with teachers. There is a comprehensive school prospectus and a full governors' annual report to parents. Some minor matters are receiving attention.
35. Parents appreciate the good quality of information on their children's progress. Annual written reports are individual to the pupil, although some lack clear indications for future development. However, much detail on progress and targets for the future are verbally discussed at the termly consultation evenings, which are very well attended. The daily opportunities to talk to teachers throughout the year are also very well used by parents to discuss any concerns. There is good communication with parents of pupils who have special educational needs.
36. The school warmly invites parents to contribute to their children's learning at home and in school. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school overall is good. The home and school agreement has had a good response. Attendance at curricular-related evenings is good. A number of parents, particularly in the younger age groups, hear their children read at home. However, not all parents support their children's work. Some homework is not returned. A very few parents express concerns regarding the amounts of homework. The inspection team found levels of homework set are consistent with those of other similar schools. Parents are always welcome in school. There is limited parental help in school during the day. Nevertheless, parents willingly help at the wide range of events, for example sports days and trips. They turn up in large numbers for the masses, special assemblies, concerts and the major festivals of the church year. The Parent Teacher Association makes a valuable contribution to the family atmosphere of the school. All parents are automatically members. The working party is small, but active. Regular events are well attended by extended family and friends in the community. The significant funds raised are donated for additional school resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides good leadership that has sustained the school through a challenging period. A great deal has been achieved in a short time. The school has improved because of the headteacher's determined focus on improving standards through improvements to teaching and learning. The targets that the school has set for itself have been achieved. For example, a priority in last year's development plan was to improve the effectiveness with which classroom assistants supported pupils' learning. The support of the local authority has been very effectively focused and advice has been carefully implemented. This has ensured overall satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although progress towards resolving the issues raised then has been much more rapid in the last two years.
38. The school has a good capacity to further improve because the staff willingly share their expertise and act upon the guidance given. This has been successful in improving teachers' management of pupils' behaviour. The school's Catholic principles are very well reflected in its everyday work and there is a strong sense of community, with everyone pulling in the same direction to support pupils' personal development and raise standards. These elements ensure that the pupils enjoy learning and want to do well and that the school is in a good position to improve further.
39. The headteacher is well supported by an able acting deputy head who sets a fine example in her teaching. The senior management team effectively ensures that teachers' performance is checked and targets are given so that everyone knows what needs to improve. Teachers are given good feedback following observations in classrooms. Points for improvement that have been identified as common weaknesses in teaching have been pulled through to the school's improvement plan and suitably addressed. Examples of success here are seen in the good pace of many lessons, which was previously a weakness, and also the better provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers who are new to the school or newly qualified are well supported and get good advice. The school makes sound use of new technology to help its administrative procedures.
40. There is a good, comprehensive, school plan for improvement that is based on the analysis of provision, teaching, learning and pupils' performance. The school has identified the right priorities to work on next and there is a firm commitment to improve by all of the staff. Examples of the effectiveness of the school's work in this respect are seen in the improved teaching and learning in investigational work in science in the junior classes and in mathematics work involving shape, space and measures. As a result of good management, the school has worked effectively to resolve the issues of the attainment of the lower and average attaining pupils, and now knows that it now needs to focus on raising the attainment of the more able pupils through more consistently high expectations in teaching and more rigorous use of assessment to match work more consistently to all of these pupils' needs.
41. The work of the subject managers has been developed considerably over the past two years and teachers with particular responsibility for subjects or other aspects of the school's work know what needs to be done next in their areas to bring about improvement. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and ensures that these pupils make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and well supported.
42. There is good financial planning that underpins the school's priorities for development. Good use is made of additional funds to boost the pupils' attainment and ensure good progress for pupils with special educational needs. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis because of high quality support from the school's secretary. This allows the headteacher to focus effectively on her management tasks.
43. The governors fulfil most of their responsibilities satisfactorily. They visit the school and are linked to classes so that they can learn at first hand about the school's work. Governors have set targets for the headteacher and have a sound understanding of what the school has identified it needs to work on to improve. They have, however, been slow in recent years to

assess risks to health and safety and to seek improvements in the older of the school buildings. While the situation is complicated in terms of funding due to the school's voluntary aided status, greater urgency is required in resolving issues. Parts of the older building that houses the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes are in a poor condition and have lacked suitable maintenance. The state of the flooring in some areas of the Nursery, for example, prevents effective cleaning. The staff brighten the environment through good displays of pupils' work, but the damp conditions mitigate against their efforts and work is sometimes spoiled. The school has the matter in hand and has reserved most of its carry forward of funds to resolve the problems.

44. The school's resources are adequate but there are fewer computers than in most schools. This limits the pupils' opportunities to apply the skills they have learned. The staffing is appropriate, with a suitable breadth of experience and expertise amongst teachers. Support staff are well deployed to help in classrooms and have a clear idea of what they are doing.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- **Improve the progress made by the more able pupils in writing, mathematics and science by:**
ensuring that teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are more consistent; making better use of the information gained from assessments to plan work that meets the pupils' needs.
(Paragraphs 4, 5, 12, 14, 18, 24, 33, 62, 71, 73, 77)
- **Improve pupils' achievement in speaking by:**
ensuring that teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to express their ideas and opinions in lessons;
ensuring that teachers' questions prompt fuller replies from pupils.
(Paragraphs 5, 20, 59, 69, 76)
- **Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that it gives pupils' good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.**
(Paragraphs 21, 63, 71)

In addition to the issues above, the school should consider the following points when drawing up its action plan:

- *Ensure that planned improvements to the school buildings are carried out as soon as possible.*
(Paragraphs 30, 43)
- *Increase the number of computers available for pupils to use in classrooms.*
(Paragraphs 44, 104)
- *Further develop planning to ensure that pupils' awareness of other cultures is promoted.*
(Paragraphs 29, 86, 112)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

42

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

19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	15	17	0	0	0
Percentage	5	19	36	40	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	149
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	43

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
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	10	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	21	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	88 (87)	92 (93)
	National	84(84)	86(86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	88 (93)	88 (93)
	National	85(85)	89(89)	89(89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (57)	81 (57)	100 (71)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (62)	88 (52)	94 (57)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

* Figures are omitted from the table, as there are fewer than 10 boys and girls.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	96	6	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	29	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	399738
Total expenditure	390009
Expenditure per pupil	2349
Balance brought forward from previous year	44644
Balance carried forward to next year	54373

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	162
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	37	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	37	11	4	9
The teaching is good.	61	35	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	52	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	33	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	43	9	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	59	33	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	48	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	28	26	9	15

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

45. Children enter the Nursery part time after their third birthday, moving into the Reception class in September when they are four years old. At the time of the inspection there were small numbers in both sessions with more entrants due later in the school year. Children come into the Nursery with a wide range of abilities, but standards are below average overall. In both classes teachers are experienced, and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. There is a strong sense of teamwork in both classes because teachers and the assistants working with them are clear about what children are to learn, and their own responsibilities in bringing this about. The teaching is good, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This means that children achieve well and the majority are on course to reach the goals set for them by the end the Reception year in each aspect of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

46. The strengths in the Foundation Stage are:

- Good teaching where a strong emphasis on developing basic skills helps children achieve well so that they make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Children are confident and happy because adults are kind and caring, provide good examples and establish good routines.
- Children with special educational needs are identified early and they are supported well so that they make equally good progress.

47. Areas for improvement are:

- The limited provision, space and resources for outdoor play restrict the progress children make in their physical development.
- Occasionally adults do not intervene as children play and help them to move forward in their learning.
- Because the information the teacher receives about their previous learning is not detailed enough, the more able children in the Reception class sometimes work at the same activities as others when they could be working on more challenging tasks.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. The teaching is good and children achieve well, comfortably reaching the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Well-established routines in the Nursery mean that children soon gain confidence in choosing their play activities, collecting aprons and other equipment they need and replacing it when they have finished. The teacher and Nursery assistant know their children well and give extra support so that children who find it hard to share and take turns soon improve. The youngest children find it hard to concentrate, and soon change their activities. Praise and encouragement mean that this improves considerably, and older children persisted for lengthy spells, for example, when writing letters to Father Christmas or painting pictures. The 'Star Job' each day, with children working on 'concentrating' and 'looking and listening', gives this a further boost, because children understand clearly what they need to work on. This is also a feature of the good teaching in the Reception class, where children behaved very well and showed very good control and co-operation skills in a 'Circle Time' activity. The teacher hid a toy, and the class had to clap loudly or softly to help a child find where it was hidden. Every child did their very best to help, so that there was almost silence when the child was far away, and loud, but controlled, clapping when the toy was discovered.

Children in both classes behave very well and show obvious enjoyment in the many interesting activities their teachers set out for them.

Communication, language and literacy

49. On entry to the Nursery, the children often have limited language skills. Good teaching in both classes gives them confidence and successfully builds their skills, so that by the time they start in Year 1 most reach the goals set for them, except in their writing. They get off to a good start in the Nursery where there are valuable opportunities that stimulate children to want to write in their play activities. A Christmas theme promoted reading and writing particularly well. Older children showed a keen interest in the attractive books around the Christmas tree, turning the pages carefully and beginning to tell a simple story from the pictures. Others persevered to independently 'write' a letter or a card to Father Christmas, eagerly posting it in the class post-box. A few more able children made reasonable attempts at writing their own and others' names and a few letters.
50. Children in both classes enjoy stories and listen intently when adults read to them. Children in the Reception class enjoyed reading to a visitor and were very proud when they completed the book. At this early stage in the year they rely heavily on a familiar, repetitive text and adult help with new words. Good teaching helps them develop a secure grasp of letter sounds and a bank of basic words that they recognise. As a result, most are on course to reach the expected levels in reading. However, they sometimes struggle to talk about stories because their speaking skills are limited. The Reception teacher plans good literacy sessions that help children to firmly build the basic skills of reading and writing. She made good use of resources like picture dictionaries so that children recognised words beginning with the 'O' sound and began to think of some for themselves, for example a brother's name. Later, the teacher supervised children closely in small groups so that they learned to write the letter correctly in simple words. However, everyone had a similar task and more able children copied writing along with others when they were capable of writing more, and doing it independently. Children do not become as independent in their writing skills as they might, and are unlikely to securely reach the expected levels by the end of the year.

Mathematical development

51. Children make good progress in this aspect because teaching is good. The adults take every opportunity in their class teaching and the ongoing activities to practise mathematics skills, so that children develop sound counting skills in both classes. Regular daily practice at the start of the Nursery sessions means that all the children recognise increasingly complex shapes. With encouragement, the new entrants proudly named the square and circle, whilst older children recognised the hexagon and diamond shapes. Number songs and rhymes provide further reinforcement in counting to ten and sometimes beyond. The teacher encouraged children to count when they were thinking about the number of presents to put in a Christmas stocking. "Five cups and saucers and one more for Emily ... that's six" was one example. There are plenty of opportunities for children to practise their counting skills in the Reception class, and many will happily count to 40 as a result of these. Activities like counting around the circle of children, or taking turns to count on from a given number on the number grid, mean that children confidently recognise numbers and count accurately. A group of less able children made good progress when the teacher engaged them in playing a 'Star Game' she had made. She patiently showed them how to count the marker along the squares, guiding their hand so that they learned to count carefully, one by one.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. The teaching is satisfactory and children are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. There are a range of opportunities set out in each class that extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world through sand, water and construction play. Children make the best progress when they work on activities with adults who talk to them about their work. In the Nursery, children learned to join paper and card to make an

attractive 'musical' cracker using pasta and rice to create a shaker. The Nursery assistant offered useful tips like "You might want to scrape the spreader on the side". This helped the children to use it more evenly and economically, and their crackers were firmly made. They made good strides in their computer skills when the Reception teacher worked with each child in turn helping them use a *Splodge* painting program to create a picture. They knew how to change the size of the brush size and the paint colour. They added a spray effect and their name, and were rightly proud of their Christmas candle pictures. There were several instances when the classroom assistant, through discussion and demonstration, enabled children to make good progress. Children knew the names of many fruit and vegetables and made tasty Christmas biscuits as a result of her work with small groups. However, children made slower progress when left to work on activities by themselves because these activities are not so carefully planned. In the Nursery, more able children repeatedly cut out shapes in the dough whilst younger ones soon lost interest. In the Reception class a more able group were set the task of making a building with two towers and a roof. They lost interest and spent their time chatting, so that only one child managed to construct a building. The adults could do more to check their progress as they work, and encourage them by discussing what they have made before they pack away.

Physical development

53. Children make sound progress and the teaching is satisfactory. In both classes children learn to use scissors, paint brushes and other tools with increasing skill and accuracy. Good teaching in this aspect was seen in the Reception class where good use was made of the school hall for physical development. Children behave very well in these sessions because the teacher has established good routines so that they understand the way things are done. They listen carefully to instructions, and safely and sensibly set out mats and benches. They travel around in different ways, side stepping and jumping without bumping into others. They make good progress because the teacher and classroom assistant demonstrate and participate alongside them. Most children are on track to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. There is a limited space for outdoor play shared by both classes. Children in the Nursery enjoyed riding bicycles and scooters, showing sound skills in steering and pedalling. Sometimes, more could be done to move children forward by intervening with suggestions and ideas that help them to vary their movements and activities more. However, the equipment for climbing, balancing and riding is inadequate. This limits the experiences that teachers can provide to develop children's physical development through outdoor play.

Creative development

54. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory, and children are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. The Nursery children enjoy singing and know the words to a number of songs that they sing tunefully. There were lots of happy faces when they sang 'Space Ship to the Moon' and 'Who is Coming on Christmas Night?'. In both classes children benefit from opportunities to work with a range of different materials so that they become more skilled in using paint, chalk, glitter and other media to create attractive pictures and patterns. This experience was particularly noticeable when Nursery children painted Christmas trees. Children new to the Nursery happily brushed paint all over the paper whilst older children painted a recognisable tree, then carefully added a sponge effect to decorate it. They are very proud of their work. The delight of one child who rushed to show her work was evident when "Look at my snowman" resulted in lots of praise. Both classes have role-play areas and the Nursery children enjoyed dressing up as angels as part of the Christmas theme. However, they were not sure what angels do, and some tended to lose interest without adult involvement in their play with suggestions and ideas to stimulate their imagination.

ENGLISH

55. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the better standards reached by eleven year olds in 2002 are being maintained. Standards are average for all pupils in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the time pupils leave the school. The junior

pupils achieve well in reading, speaking and listening and satisfactorily in writing. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and listening but below average in speaking. Pupils do well in reading in the infants and satisfactorily in writing and listening. Given that the pupils mainly start from a lower than average point in language and literacy, their overall achievement is good by the time they leave the school.

56. The strengths in the subject are:

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in reading because of good teaching.
- Average and lower attaining pupils do well in writing in all year groups and standards in handwriting are very good for the older pupils.
- The teaching in Year 6 is very good and more able pupils make rapid progress in writing in this year.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in all year groups.

57. Areas for improvement are:

- Some of the more able pupils should be doing better in writing in both the infants and the juniors.
- The pupils' speaking in the infants should be better.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently helpful to pupils.

58. Teaching is good overall. The basic skills in reading are taught well in the infants and teachers provide a good example for pupils when they read aloud to the class. As a result, pupils read with good understanding and lively expression; pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils learn the sounds that different combinations of letters make quickly and thoroughly because teachers give them plenty of practise through interesting and varied activities. Teachers stress the need to read for the sense of a sentence so that pupils can work out unfamiliar words. These skills mean that pupils approach new work with confidence and they enjoy reading poems and stories on their own and as a class. In one lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher used poems on a winter theme to extend pupils' understanding of how writers use language to create atmosphere and this was reflected when pupils read the poems. This good teaching of basic skills in reading continues in the juniors. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, average ability pupils used the skills they had been taught very effectively to skim through a passage and pick out the major points so that they could write a report on what people need to keep healthy. In a very effective lesson in Year 6, pupils' understanding of how general statements are used to introduce a report was very well promoted through the teacher's questioning of different abilities, following her reading to the class. The teacher was careful to explore the more difficult terms in the passage so that the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were fully involved. The older junior pupils are very keen readers and read widely; they have firm opinions about why they enjoy particular authors' work or certain styles of writing. They often recommend books to friends or choose books that they know because extracts have been read in class. One group of Year 6 pupils, for example, discussed preferences and suggested to a pupil who had given up on reading *The Hobbit* that he should persevere, because the first few chapters were hard going, but it was worth the effort. These pupils had interviewed an author during a visit to a local bookshop and were clear that they liked her writing because: "the stories are based on traditional fairy tales; they are gripping and the plot keeps you guessing; the characters are interesting and you want to find out what they will do." Pupils think about the messages in stories. One Year 6 pupil, who had read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, as a result of hearing an extract in a literacy lesson, was touched by Anne's delight at having extra cooking oil at Christmas and compared this to her brother's request for a mobile phone as a gift.

59. Teaching is stronger in some respects in the juniors than in the infants. This is mainly because the infant teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to express their ideas or prompt pupils to answer questions more fully. There are occasions when teachers talk for too long rather than giving pupils the chance to speak and give their opinions. This leads to some

passive listening and a lack of vitality when pupils answer teachers' questions. Too often, teachers are satisfied with short phrases or one-word answers from pupils. In the junior classes, teachers are more adept at drawing pupils out in their responses and so pupils make better progress in speaking. Teachers often re-phrase sentences for pupils so that vocabulary and sentence structure are extended. While teachers in the infants are good at prompting pupils to read through what they have written to see if it makes sense, they do not sufficiently encourage pupils to check that what they say makes sense or whether it could be put better.

60. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both the infants and the juniors. This is because the teachers have a good grasp of what these pupils need to work on next to improve and classroom assistants are well deployed to support their work in groups or individually. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher gave good support to a group of pupils that enabled them to choose appropriate words to complete a poem. In a Year 3 lesson, a classroom assistant worked with a group of pupils on learning the sounds of strings of letters and incorporated key words that the teacher's assessment indicated the pupils were unsure of. Good quality support led to rapid progress by these pupils. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported. Teachers and classroom assistants check the pupils' understanding and encourage them to use new vocabulary.
61. Pupils in all classes are given good opportunities to write for different reasons and they use their skills well in subjects such as history and geography, when they write accounts, or in science to record their investigations. All teachers ensure that pupils use ICT to support their work in writing. In Year 1, for example, pupils used the computer to write a list of instructions and the teacher neatly tied in a session on using the enter key to precede the literacy session. Year 3 pupils used the spell check facility very competently when writing a report.
62. Average and lower ability pupils achieve well in writing in both the infants and juniors, but some of the more able pupils should be doing better. There are high expectations evident in the Year 6 class that promotes more rapid progress for the more able pupils in writing. In the Year 6 class, the teacher's careful assessment of what pupils can already do in writing is used very effectively to establish a challenging but realistic starting point for the higher attainers. This is not always the case in some other classes and expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve in writing are inconsistent and are sometimes too low. This is because the school has concentrated its efforts on improving pupils' performance to the level expected for their age and there is too little use of assessment in writing to pinpoint those pupils who are capable of going beyond this level and planning appropriately challenging work for them. Too often, the more able pupils cover the same work in writing as the other pupils and the work lacks challenge for them. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, a group of more able pupils started at the same point in writing instructions as other groups but were capable of more demanding work. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, more able pupils had too little time to finish their own poems because they had to complete lines that were given to them before they started to develop their own ideas. Occasionally, the work is too hard, as in a Year 3 lesson when a group of more able pupils struggled to plan a report and drifted into writing instructions. Pupils' handwriting is neat and well formed by the time they leave the school. Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work in this year group and also in Year 3. In other year groups, the pupils' handwriting is acceptable but is not as good because teachers' expectations are not as consistently high.
63. Teachers' marking is too variable in quality to be helpful to pupils. While there are examples of good quality marking that helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work, too often there is more praise than guidance and so pupils repeat mistakes in spelling and punctuation.
64. The management of English is sound and has some good features. The subject manager, who teaches in the Foundation Stage, has worked effectively with the school's senior management to bring about improvements in standards, particularly in increasing the number of pupils reaching the level expected for their age in writing. The support and advice given by the local authority have proved beneficial and have been well used by the school to improve the way in which the National Strategy for Literacy is used to support pupils' progress. While not directly

involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning, the subject manager has a sound overview of the subject. As a result of the close monitoring of the subject by the senior managers, the school knows what it needs to do next, and action taken to date has resulted in more effective teaching and targets being met; there is a firm foundation for further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

65. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The downward trend in standards has been halted. Standards are average by the age of seven and eleven and most pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs, lower attainers and pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress and the middle attainers make satisfactory progress because the work is suitably matched to move the pupils on in their learning. However, while most of the more able pupils make satisfactory progress, some of them should be doing even better because the work is not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils' progress is often more rapid in Year 6.
66. The strengths in the subject are:
- The effective work of the subject manager.
 - Resources for mathematics are of good quality and quantity with plenty of practical equipment.
 - Individual target setting as a result of the analysis of tests.
 - Use of ICT in mathematics.
 - Effective use of data handling in Year 6.
67. The areas for improvement are:
- More consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils.
 - Better guidance in teachers' marking.
 - Further development of using and applying mathematics and shape, space and measures.
 - More opportunities for pupils to engage in speaking in the infants through discussion about what they have learned and the ways that they have solved mathematical problems.
68. Through checking on the teaching of mathematics in the school and also as a result of the analysis of test results, the school has recognised that 'shape, space and measures' has been identified as an area for development. This is included in the mathematics action plan and is being suitably addressed through adaptations to teaching, guided by the subject co-ordinator. Progress in data handling throughout the school is satisfactory and good in Year 6, with a good range of work where pupils have collected data and then produced their findings in a range of graphical representation. An example is when pupils gathered their data from investigations then used computer programs to represent data in graphic form, such as block graphs, line graphs, pie graphs and pictograms. This was clearly seen in the 'Fruity Friday' graphic display linked to the school's focus on healthy living. This is a good example of the effective use of ICT in producing the graphical representations. From the beginning of this term all pupils have individual targets set for mathematics following an analysis of tests. However, it is too soon for this to have any noticeable effect on standards.
69. Lessons in the infants begin with an oral session to develop pupils' mental skills, although at times the pace of the lessons is too slow and consequently does not always stimulate and challenge the pupils in their learning. The group work that follows is matched to the lower and middle attainers, but there is sometimes not enough challenge for the higher attainers. By the age of seven, pupils count to and from 20, and add three numbers, such as $6+6+4=16$. They add $71+10$ and $90+10$ and take away $13-10=$ and by the age of seven understand the concept of division and the use of the division sign. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were making good use of practical equipment to divide 10, 20 and 100 pegs by 2, 5, and 10 and then writing the answers as a number sentence. The planning for lower ability pupils in numeracy lessons is adapted so

that they use smaller numbers; although they follow a similar pattern of work, it is at a lower level. For example, they recall number facts to 10 and use these in calculations such as $10-6$, learn table facts such as 5×2 or 3×6 , recognise sequences of odd and even numbers and tackle fractions. Pupils with special needs are well supported by learning assistants. All pupils learn skills in calculating with money to and from 50p, use simple measures and interpret graphs, and know the names of shapes at their different levels of ability. In Year 1 pupils were learning about time and were engaged in learning about the time if it is one hour before or after a certain time. In this lesson the teacher made good use of vocabulary related to time. The end parts of some sessions are not always used to give pupils the opportunity to talk about what they have done and learned in the lesson, or to discuss what they will be doing in their next lesson. This restricts the pupils' use of mathematical language.

70. Pupils' mental calculation skills are developed well in the juniors because of the enthusiastic oral sessions at the beginning of each lesson. Consequently, by Year 6 the brighter pupils work easily and accurately in adding decimals to three decimal places, calculate decimal fractions, use and interpret co-ordinates and calculate money in large numbers such as $\pounds 145.00 - \pounds 99.00$ and $\pounds 46.00 - \pounds 2.99$. In response to the identified weakness in shape, space and measures, Year 6 has covered a range of work that includes drawing two-dimensional shapes, making three-dimensional solid shapes from nets, calculating area and perimeter, recognising the difference between imperial and metric units and converting different metric measures. A significant strength is their work in data handling where they collect and record data in a frequency table, construct graphs and diagrams and have an understanding of the mean, mode and median of data and the probability scale of 0 to 1. Average ability pupils tackle similar work, but it is somewhat easier. Lower ability and pupils with special educational needs have work that is well matched to their needs, are well supported by learning support assistants and consequently make good progress over time. A further strength is the use of ICT to represent graphical data.
71. Teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching in the infants is satisfactory and good in the juniors. There is some very good teaching in the juniors, especially in Year 6. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place in all lessons. In the best lessons observed, the teachers use good questioning at a range of different levels backed up by the use of resources such as practical equipment and number lines to develop pupils' mental and oral skills and their understanding of number. The good start to the lessons sets a brisk learning pace and high expectations, which the pupils respond to during their follow-up work. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is sometimes too slow and lacks challenge, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Teachers' expectations of what the higher attaining pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough. A common feature in lessons is the good provision for those pupils with special needs who are well supported by teaching assistants. Where teachers' planning is at its best, it identifies clearly what different groups of pupils in the class will learn. A good feature, which is consistent in the best teaching, is the management of the pupils' behaviour, which reflects on the pupils' good attitudes to learning. Sound assessment procedures are in place but the information gained is not always used sufficiently to guide future planning, especially in short-term planning. Furthermore, the quality and consistency of teachers' marking are variable and do not always give pupils guidance on how they can improve their work.
72. The management of the subject is good. The subject manager has worked very hard to develop the curriculum and has been well supported by the local education authority adviser for mathematics. In addition, good quality resources have been obtained and a published mathematics scheme has been purchased to support the teachers in their planning and development of the teaching and learning in mathematics. Monitoring has yet to have sufficient impact on developing consistent approaches to the subject or spread the good practice that exists in the school. The subject policy is in the process of being updated and has yet to be reviewed by the governors. The use of ICT to support the subject is well planned, but with only one computer per classroom it makes it difficult for pupils to work independently on mathematical programs at regular intervals.

SCIENCE

73. Standards in science are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. There has been satisfactory improvement. The majority of pupils reach the levels expected for pupils by the age of seven and eleven years. Due to improvements set in place when the headteacher took up her role, the teaching has recently improved, particularly in Year 6. As a result, there was a significant improvement in the science standards in 2002 when all of the pupils reached the expected level 4. This included those with special educational needs who benefit from good support by teachers and support assistants who make sure that they understand and know what to do. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels because teachers do not take enough account of the previous learning of more able pupils when planning science activities. This means that their work sometimes does not challenge them sufficiently, and they do not move forward as rapidly as they might.
74. The strengths in the subject are:
- The leadership and management of the subject are good and are bringing about improvements in teaching and resources.
 - Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported effectively in lessons.
 - High quality teaching in Year 6 boosts the progress of older pupils.
 - Pupils are enthusiastic and behave well because teachers plan interesting and practical activities.
 - The presentation of pupils' report writing is good.
 - Pupils' learning is strengthened by teachers' effective use of questions in well-managed lesson introductions and discussions.
75. Sometimes pupils' learning is not as good as it might be because:
- The work set for more able pupils does not always challenge them to achieve the higher levels.
 - Younger pupils sometimes struggle to explain what they have learned because they have too few opportunities to observe and discuss for themselves
76. The teaching of science is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their science work because the teachers plan interesting and practical activities that steadily build pupils' understanding of each aspect of science. The school's focus on improving pupils' investigational skills is proving successful. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are to learn at the start of the lesson and this gives a good focus for activities. They manage their introductions and discussions particularly well, successfully using questions to establish what pupils already know, to encourage them to think hard and to check that they have understood. One such discussion in Year 2 extended pupils' understanding of the changes taking place when water is cooled and heated. They made simple predictions using words like 'evaporated' to describe what they had noticed when ice cubes melted in the classroom. However, the introduction of too many worksheets meant that pupils had little opportunity to observe and talk about the changes taking place when they placed the ice cubes in water or near a radiator. Because they have not thought through for themselves what is happening they sometimes struggle to explain and record their findings as fully as they might.
77. There is good support for less able pupils and those with special educational needs who make good progress. The adults work closely with them so that they know what to do. The best example was in Year 6 where the teacher and classroom assistant provided very good support as pupils worked, intervening with questions at just the right moment. "Why does the wire need to touch the metal on the bulb holder?" meant that a pupil remembered that "the plastic is an insulator". This good support meant that less able pupils made equally rapid progress, sometimes being among the first to make their circuits work. The provision for more able

pupils is less effective. Although teachers know who they are, the work is usually pitched at the same level for everyone. Where more challenging activities are set, these are sometimes over ambitious. For instance, younger more able pupils struggled to devise their own fair test and made little progress because they did not have the necessary skills. More detailed information about what pupils had previously learned would have helped the teacher to adapt the task to a more appropriate level.

78. Pupils make good use of the skills they learn in literacy and mathematics. They report their science work more effectively as they move through the school. They take pride in their work, presenting it neatly. Teachers make good use of the skills pupils learn in literacy and mathematics so that older pupils record their observations and conclusions logically, highlighting their findings in graphs and charts. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 produced graphs that showed clearly how bones grow following an investigation where they measured the head sizes of some teachers and pupils. There is a growing use of ICT, for instance when pupils in Year 6 produce graphs on the computer that show the results of an investigation into dissolving substances. However, more could still be done to develop these skills in pupils' work in science if there were more computers.
79. Excellent teaching was seen in Year 6 where there is a strong sense of shared partnership in learning between teacher and pupils. Pupils collaborated effectively when working together in pairs. They helped each other by freely sharing equipment and offering suggestions that helped others make their circuits work. The teacher encouraged them to use their initiative and to raise and answer their own questions. A pupil asked whether the bulb might be brighter if a motor was added to the circuit. Rather than giving him the answer, she encouraged him to investigate this and report back to the class later. The recent boost in science resources means that there is plenty of equipment for this aspect of science so that pupils are able to experiment freely. The teacher listened to their discussions as they worked, recording their comments. "More batteries have made my bulb brighter" and other comments were displayed on an overhead projector. This formed the basis of a brisk discussion at the end of the lesson that helped pupils suggest ways to make a brighter light, such as using thicker wire. This provided a strong sense of purpose for further investigation in the next lesson.
80. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject because she has identified what needs to be done through checking teaching and learning and there is a clear programme of development that is being steadily worked through. As a result of improvements in planning, teaching and resources, standards are now rising again.

ART AND DESIGN

81. The pupils' work broadly meets the expectations for their ages at seven and eleven years of age; this is the same as at the previous inspection and there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject. The subject manager provides sound leadership for the development of art and design and has a suitable action plan.
82. The strengths in the subject are:
 - The teachers' planning ensures that pupils' skills are successfully built upon in each year group and that pupils use ICT to support their learning.
 - The involvement of artists in residence widens pupils' experience.
83. Areas for improvement are:
 - To plan to better promote pupils' awareness of art from different cultures.
 - Visits to local galleries.
84. No lessons were seen but it is evident from teachers' planning, talking to pupils and looking at their work that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers use the national guidelines well to underpin their planning and it is evident that pupils understand what they have learned and

enjoy the work. Pupils have well-planned opportunities to use ICT effectively to support their learning, both in researching information about artists' work and in using programs to draw with the computer.

85. Pupils' ability to observe and draw what they see, or express ideas imaginatively, builds steadily, as does their knowledge of artists' work. Year 2 pupils have used a viewfinder to isolate natural images and used pencil and pastel to record what they saw. The junior pupils use sketchbooks to refine their ideas and practise techniques. When Year 6 pupils drew portraits, several practised drawing the nose as they found this the hardest feature to represent because "...it is the part of the face that sticks out most and is hard to create in two-dimensions. You have to use shading to make it look three-dimensional."
86. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of a range of artists' work from different times and how to represent their own ideas in a variety of media. Year 6 pupils know, for example, that da Vinci was an exceptional artist who not only painted but also designed machines. They remember that when they looked at the way in which a range of artists used light and colour in their work that Van Gogh used bright colours, whereas da Vinci used softer hues and Malaysian art is characterised by earthy tones. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how symbols are used to evoke feelings in painting and sculpture. Although pupils have some opportunities to learn about art from different cultures, this element is not as well planned as it might be and is a weakness that has been identified by the subject manager. Students of art from a local university visit the school as 'artists in residence' and pupils benefit greatly from the experience of working with them on projects. Year 6 pupils recall a project based on the environment in which their charcoal sketches of trees were translated into a very wide range of media and they learned an impasto technique to create texture in painting. Although the school has organised exhibitions of pupils' work to which parents are invited, the school does not make the most of its local area as there are very few visits to art galleries.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. Standards in design and technology in the infants and juniors are broadly similar to those expected for pupils ages. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils make the progress expected. This is an improvement on the judgements in the last inspection.
88. The strength in the subject is:
- Good resources that are well organised to meet the requirements of units taught in the scheme of work for each year
89. An area for development is:
- Checking that teaching and learning ensure that design and making skills build year on year as pupils move through the school
90. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject manager took on the responsibility for design and technology in September 2000; although the previous report had highlighted weaknesses in pupils' attainment, little had been done to resolve the problems prior to her appointment. The subject manager has ensured that a new subject policy has been written and the scheme of work, based on national guidance for the subject, is in place. A good portfolio of work has been developed with examples of planning for each unit that give useful guidance for teachers. The development of useful resource boxes for each unit of work has been organised to support teachers planning and this has a positive impact because pupils have all materials they need to make their products. In addition, the subject manager organised support from the local education authority adviser for design and technology who has led some staff training meetings and this helped to raise teachers' confidence.

91. There was little evidence of completed design and technology work this term, as the subject is taught in blocks of time, alternating with art and design, and work was just starting on projects. However, the Year 1 class have made some moving puppets, and examples of planning to make shelters were seen Year 6. The designs for vehicles in Year 2, with models made with wooden frames, wheels and axles, show what can be achieved when pupils plan their design well and follow a systematic design and make process.
92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lesson seen, the pupils' attitudes to design and technology were good and they worked with enthusiasm, becoming absorbed by the work. However, a less developed area, with the exception of the subject manager's class, is in construction and working with rigid materials, particularly the use of a range of tools and knowledge of how to make a strong frame construction. The subject manager has not yet had the opportunity to check that teaching and learning in lessons are as effective as they should be but ensures that design and making skills are built on year on year as pupils move through the school by checking teachers' planning to see that the scheme of work is followed.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

93. Standards in history and geography are average, just as they were the last time the school was inspected. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but their skills are not as well developed as their knowledge and understanding of history and geography topics.
94. The strengths in the subject are:
- Good teaching means that pupils achieve well in Year 6.
 - Pupils enjoy their lessons, behave well and present their work neatly
 - Good use of the environment boosts pupils' awareness of environmental issues in Years 4 and 5.
 - There are valuable opportunities for writing in some classes that develop pupils' literacy skills well.
95. Points for improvement are:
- Pupils' enquiry skills are not as strong as their knowledge and understanding because there are too few opportunities for them to extend their skills through first-hand experiences.
 - Systems for checking on pupils' learning do not give teachers enough information about pupils' previous learning. More able pupils are not always challenged as well as they might be and do not do as well as they might.
96. The planning in both subjects has improved and there are agreed long and medium-term plans that highlight clearly what pupils are to learn in each year group. Teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn and activities are designed to help pupils achieve the lesson aims. This means that pupils develop a secure understanding of the lifestyles of the Ancient Greeks, Romans and people living in Victorian times by the time they leave the school in Year 6. There is a good emphasis on developing geographical language as seen in Year 6 where pupils use a wide vocabulary to describe river features, like 'estuary', 'channel' and 'weathering'.
97. The teaching in both subjects is satisfactory. Lesson introductions are particularly effective. Teachers are confident because they have good subject knowledge and their explanations are interesting and clear. Pupils listen intently and remember what they hear. A lively introduction successfully stimulated pupils in a history lesson in Year 6 so that they remembered important facts about the size of the armies that they later used to explain the Athenians' achievements in the battle of Marathon. This was a good lesson where the teacher's brisk questions and patience as pupils explained their thoughts gave everyone a deep appreciation of the feelings of those involved and how this was significant in marathon running today. When they came to write their newspaper reports they easily identified the headline and key facts because they

were clear in their minds. In this lesson the less able pupils had a simplified recording task using storyboards to write their own reports. The adults provided good support for these and pupils with special educational needs so that their learning was equally good.

98. In both subjects, pupils present their work well. Opportunities like the newspaper reports extend pupils' writing skills well. However, sometimes over emphasis on factual knowledge restricts the opportunities for pupils to explore topics in depth. This particularly limits the response of more able pupils. For example, in one lesson these pupils quickly inserted words in a worksheet and then spent too long drawing and colouring. A more open-ended task might have stimulated them to find out and explain in more depth the kind of theatres and leisure activities the Romans enjoyed. In another lesson, there was a good mixture of information and opportunities for pupils to listen to a story and poetry that helped them appreciate the significance of the poppy on Remembrance Day. The pupils struggled when asked to write their reports because they had too few opportunities to talk and sort out their feelings and ideas before they wrote. Some pupils were unsure what to do, so they copied the questions from the worksheets rather than writing in their own words.
99. In geography, pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good use of the area around the school in a litter survey. They investigated where litter was found and produced detailed plans of the school, highlighting problem areas. They gained good insights into environmental issues and wrote reports outlining what needed to be done to improve the problem, such as providing more litterbins. Such opportunities to use the environment, to visit places linked to their history and geography topics and to investigate artefacts are relatively rare. This means that pupils do not develop their enquiry skills as well as they might.
100. The leadership and management of history and geography are satisfactory. A temporary co-ordinator oversees both subjects and she has identified the right developments, such as checking on teaching and pupils' learning that will move the school forward in its development of both subjects. The systems for checking on how well pupils are learning are improving, but as yet do not give teachers enough information about how well pupils are developing their skills so that they can plan activities to strengthen these.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. The pupils' work is in line with that expected of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' work did not reach the level expected by the end of the juniors.
102. The strengths in the subject are:
- The effective leadership of the ICT manager in the development of the subject is effective.
 - The teaching of basic skills in the subject is good.
 - Planning for the teaching and learning in the subject is thorough and there is a portfolio of work that pupils have completed that shows different levels of attainment.
 - There are effective links with Stockport County FC's ICT suite.
103. The area for development is:
- To increase the numbers of computer systems so that more pupils can access ICT at any one time.
104. Although the school does not have a computer suite, good use is made of the computers in classrooms where the teachers teach a skill in ICT to the whole class and then pupils practise this skill in future work. The infants have a mini computer suite of three computers that can be shared by two pupils per computer under the supervision of the learning support assistant. The junior pupils have more limited access to computers, with only one per classroom but nevertheless pupils make satisfactory progress. A number of pupils have access to computers

at home and have engaged in individual project work or researching information from the Internet. For those pupils who do not have access to a computer at home, the lack of regular opportunities to use a computer in school during the teaching day slows their progress in ICT.

105. Pupils have very positive attitudes to ICT, and show genuine excitement at some of its uses and effects. They behave very well and show respect for the equipment. A group of Year 6 pupils were able to confidently demonstrate their skills in finding information from the Internet and cutting and pasting text and pictures into a document. They were able to change size and colour of fonts prior to printing out their work. Pupils in Year 5 know how to produce a spreadsheet on the costs of a holiday. Year 2 pupils were confidently producing their pictograms of ways pupils travel to school. Good cross-curricular use is made of ICT with examples of work in history, geography, mathematics, English and art. For example, in one class pupils had been comparing the work of Jackson Pollock and Mondrian with some good examples that had been produced by pupils on display in the classroom. A good example of simulation was seen in the Year 1 class where pupils had been exploring an imaginary world. At the present time there is too little use of control technology in the juniors because suitable programs have not yet been loaded onto the system; this is planned for the near future. In the infants, the pupils know how to program a toy robot to move in a pre-determined pattern.
106. The quality of teaching is good and this was consistent in the lessons observed across the school. The basic skills are well taught, with clear explanations and demonstrations. Teachers use computers confidently and make sure that pupils are aware of how they can be used to support their learning. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject. This has been particularly successful in regards to the training that teachers have had, or are still having. The co-ordinator samples pupils' work and has produced a useful portfolio to demonstrate attainment at different levels. Good links have been forged with Stockport County FC ICT suite and a group of pupils are chosen to undertake a ten-week course, the results of which could be seen in a very effective display in the junior area. Software resources are sufficient and include a range of programs, digital camera and listening centres. However, the subject manager has identified the need to obtain more CD-ROMs.

MUSIC

107. The pupils' attainment overall is as expected for their ages at seven and eleven; their singing reaches a good standard in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities and ages do well in music and enjoy performing.
108. The strengths in the subject are:
- Good standards in singing.
 - Good teaching that promotes pupils' interest and enjoyment in performing.
 - A high level of expertise by the subject manager.
109. Areas for improvement are:
- More opportunities for listening and appraising.
 - To better promote pupils' awareness of music from different cultures.
110. The Year 2 pupils know how to vary the pitch and tempo when they sing and can find the high and low notes on glockenspiels and xylophones. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher asked them to compose short pieces using tuned percussion instruments to reflect particular moods. Pupils responded very well, with some creating calm pieces, with soft notes and a slow tempo, whilst others decided to zip up and down the notes on a xylophone to represent happiness. Pupils sing sweetly, with good expression, and start and finish pieces together. In Year 3, pupils can interpret musical notation when clapping a rhythm together. They sing rounds in four parts and keep to their part well and come in and drop off at the right time. Pupils enjoy learning new skills in composing and extending their repertoire of songs. In a Year 6 lesson, for

example, pupils quickly learned a new song with two parts and were delighted when the teacher said that they would learn the third part next week. Pupils' pleasure in singing carries through to assemblies, where the singing by the whole school reaches a good standard.

111. The teaching is good in most aspects of the subject. Staff share their skills and so those teachers who are less confident learn from those who have a high level of expertise. Lessons have a good pace and pupils know what they are going to learn and enjoy working together to improve their performance. Teachers achieve a very good balance of encouragement and rigorous coaching to improve pupils' performance.
112. The subject is well led by a manager who has a good level of expertise and knows what needs to be done next to further improve the pupils' attainment. Since her appointment last year, she has ensured that the national guidelines for the subject have been implemented and that there is more emphasis on composing and playing instruments. At present, there are too few opportunities for pupils to listen to music and think about how it is made or how it makes them feel. In addition, the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about music from different cultures. These areas have been identified by the co-ordinator and included in the subject's action plan. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm is reflected in the pupils' obvious enjoyment in making music. The school's performance of *Oliver* last term was a source of great pleasure to many pupils and parents. A choir of some 30 girls and boys, started last year, performs at local events and their singing reaches a good standard.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. By the age of seven and eleven, standards of attainment in physical education are similar to those expected of pupils of a similar age. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
114. The strengths in the subject are:
- The leadership of the subject manager.
 - Links with other schools, in completing the *Top Sports* programme.
 - Links with Stockport County FC for football training.
115. An area for development is:
- To develop opportunities for residential visits and outdoor pursuits.
116. The subject manager has worked hard to improve the planning for the subject. The action plan is very focused on areas that are aimed to raise standards, such as monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and arranging staff training to increase teachers' confidence in delivering physical education lessons, with an aim to make the lessons challenging yet fun.
117. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes gymnastics, indoor athletics, dance and swimming. Pupils also learn ball skills, starting in the infants and gradually developing by putting these skills into action as they get older in a variety of team games that include basketball, short tennis, rounders, cricket and hockey during the academic year. These skills are enhanced by the *Top Sports* programme linked with the feeder high school. At the present time there is a netball club which meets regularly during the term with the subject manager and Year 6 teacher. However, there is not a regular football club, although some support is given by Stockport County FC in developing pupils' football skills.
118. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan well and ensure that pupils understand the importance of exercise and safety in all activities. The issue of safety was particularly noticeable with the poor floor surface and teachers gave clear instructions in lessons as to where pupils could or could not go in the hall. The attitude and behaviour of the pupils in lessons were very good and they thoroughly enjoyed taking part and interacting with

their peers in the activities. There is some good work in gymnastics; for example, Year 3 pupils were successfully combining a sequence of travelling, balance and jumping, often in very individual and creative ways. In addition, pupils get out and put away apparatus very sensibly and extend their travelling sequences to up and over the apparatus. In a dance lesson, Year 6 pupils were learning the dance steps to perform a country dance. In this lesson the teacher had taught the pupils to walk the steps of dance, first with a tambour beat and then to extend to dancing to the beat. Finally the teacher played the dance live on her violin when all the pupils were able to perform the dance to a high standard. The quality of the planning and teaching of this lesson was very good and was enhanced for the pupils by the opportunity to be able to dance to live music.

119. The subject manager has specific expertise in the teaching and learning of physical education and manages the subject well. In addition to ensuring that the scheme of work is followed, she has promoted a greater awareness of the need for fair play, co-operation and focused tasks in lessons. The subject manager has devised playtime boxes for pupils to use, which also promotes pupils' personal development through encouraging responsibility for looking after the equipment. At the present time the school does not offer residential trips or outdoor pursuits, but this has been highlighted in the subject manager's action plan for development. Resources are sufficient to teach the subject and the subject manager is at present updating all equipment to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study.