

## INSPECTION REPORT

**St Bernard's Catholic Primary School**

Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 109246

Headteacher: Adrian Willson

Reporting inspector: David Watson  
23494

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 246902

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Shirehampton Bristol
Postcode:	BS11 9TU
Telephone number:	0117 903 0352
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Tollerton
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Watson 23494	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Carolyn Webb 9614	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Beryl Richmond 32141	Team inspector	English Art Music Physical education Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Christine Taylor 32155	Team inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Bernard's is a primary school that serves a stable community on the edge of the City of Bristol. There are 123 pupils on roll, aged between 5 and 11, and many more boys than girls. In all classes, except that of Year 6, there are two year groups. The school roll has increased since the last inspection, but the school remains smaller than other primary schools. Levels of pupil mobility are low when compared with all other primary schools nationally. In the current reception class, attainment on entry is in line with that expected for pupils' age; it does vary from year to year and in the past it has been higher. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is close to 13 per cent and is broadly in line with the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities or who are learning English as an additional language. None of these pupils is at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 17 per cent, is below the national average, but the percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need (2.4 per cent) is above. Most of these pupils have moderate or specific learning difficulties. Over the last two years, there has been a very high turnover of teachers. Three new staff, out of a total of five class teachers, started at the beginning of this term. Two teachers are employed on temporary contracts as two members of staff (including the deputy headteacher) are on maternity leave. A diocesan inspector will inspect religious education separately.

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

St Bernard's is a good school that offers satisfactory value for money. Standards in some, but not all, subjects are good and sometimes very good and in these subjects pupils make better than expected progress. Pupils' personal development is very good. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Most of the good teaching is found in the class for reception children and in Years 3 to 6. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school and all pupils are valued. The leadership of the school is satisfactory. The constant change of teachers, however, has resulted in a few weaknesses in the management of the school and in some areas of the curriculum.

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

- Throughout the school there are significant amounts of good and very good teaching and in English, mathematics and science pupils achieve well by the time they leave school.
- The good provision in the reception classes motivates and stimulates all children to become keen learners.
- The school provides well for most areas of pupils' personal development; the provision for social and moral development is very good. This encourages the development of confident, sensible and considerate individuals.
- There are good systems used to assess pupils and this information is used well to support their learning.
- There are good links with parents.

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

- Pupils' achievements in reading by the age of seven and writing across the school.
- The standards pupils achieve in geography and history at the age of seven and in music and art by the age of eleven.
- The role and effectiveness of subject co-ordinators.
- The planning of long-term improvements to meet the development needs of all areas of the school.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness, so as to increase their knowledge of other cultures and their appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.*

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

The school was last inspected in December 1997. The rate of improvement since then has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching is better and standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have improved at a rate faster than the national trend, but standards in a few subjects have fallen. Not all the key issues identified at the time of the last report have been completely addressed. A high turnover over of staff has adversely affected the rate of improvement. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

## 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	A	D	A	A
Mathematics	A	D	A	A
Science	B	B	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The most recent test results for pupils in Year 6 were good and a significant improvement on the previous years. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are currently similar to those shown in the table, but standards in English and science, although still good, have fallen slightly. By the time they leave school, pupils have achieved better than expected results in these subjects. The school has set challenging targets for the tests in 2003 and inspection findings indicate that these are likely to be met. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good for older pupils.

By the end of Year 2, pupils who sat the national tests in 2002 made good progress and achieved very well. Their standards in writing and mathematics were well above average when compared with all schools in the 2002 tests, reading results were above average. In comparison with similar schools, standards in mathematics were very high, reading results were well above average and writing results were above average. On the basis of teacher assessments in science, results were average when compared with all schools as well as with schools in similar contexts. Standards seen in Year 2 during the inspection were lower than those achieved in the 2002 tests in English and mathematics, though they were similar in science. A significant proportion of these pupils have had numerous teachers in the last 18 months. This has disrupted their learning, and the basic skills of reading and extended writing are not now being adequately taught. For these younger pupils standards of numeracy are good, but their literacy skills are weaker.

By the end of their reception year, children have made good progress and most will either meet or exceed the expected level in all areas of their learning by the time they start Year 1.

Based on some very small groups, test results show that by the end of Year 6 girls do better than boys in English and mathematics by a greater degree than is normally seen, but there was no difference in their attainment during the inspection.

Due to a lack of evidence, no secure judgement could be made about standards in art or music at the end of Year 2 or physical education by the end of Years 2 or 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain nationally expected standards in design and technology and information and communication technology and have made satisfactory progress, but standards are below the expected standards in geography and history and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, because of good progress, pupils attain well above the expected level in history and above in information and communication technology. Standards are in line in design and technology and geography and pupils make satisfactory progress. In art and music standards are below the expected level, pupils make unsatisfactory progress and do not achieve their best.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive, although it is slower where the teaching of the basic skills of literacy is not strong.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils put a great deal of effort into their work. They are very keen and enthusiastic and enjoy their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good – pupils behave well because they know it is the right thing to do. They are well mannered, polite and play together well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils relish responsibility and are concerned for others. Mutual trust and respect are enjoyed in this welcoming community.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory but improving. It is adversely affected by parents taking their children on holidays during the term, despite being warned of the harmful effect this can have on their children's education.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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 quality of teaching is good and often very good and so is its impact on pupils' learning. The quality is not consistent, however, and this is adversely affecting standards for some six and seven-year-olds but is accelerating the learning for older pupils. In the older classes, teachers have high expectations about the quality and quantity of work produced by pupils, and the small size of these classes enables teachers to provide for the needs of all pupils. Homework is regularly set and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy, and those skills needed in information and communication technology, are good but there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing to all pupils and of reading for six and seven-year-olds. Because the teaching of literacy is not rigorous in a few lessons and subjects, teaching is satisfactory. Additionally, pupils do not achieve their best when work is not challenging and activities not sharply focused.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs by support staff is often good and this enables these pupils to make good progress; this support is especially effective in group-work. Pupils learning English as an additional language currently receive good support because of the often good quality of teaching in their classes.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets the requirements of the national curriculum and is well planned, but a change in staff has meant that not all subjects are being thoroughly covered. The provision for teaching pupils to swim is excellent. The provision for extra-curricular activities has declined and is unsatisfactory. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are included in all activities. The work planned for children in the reception class is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs in reception class and in Years 3 to 6, including those with Statements, is good and these pupils make good progress overall, although there is a weakness in teaching of the younger pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Support is well targeted and planned to ensure that pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and the spiritual provision is good. Cultural development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The approaches taken to improving attendance and promoting good behaviour are good. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. These systems have been used well to support pupils' learning and raise standards. There is no formal procedure for recording pupils' personal development but teachers, even the new ones, know their pupils well.

There are good links with parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher is committed to raising standards and has appointed high quality staff, but there has been insufficient forward planning to minimise all the disruption caused by a high turnover of staff. However, there is an ethos of strong teamwork at the school. The role of subject co-ordinators is under-developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is committed and governors make a reasonable contribution to the running of the school. It fulfils most of its statutory duties satisfactorily but the annual report to parents lacks detail.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher monitors teaching and learning satisfactorily. The school development plan identifies key priorities in the short term but does not encompass all aspects of school life or reflect long-term priorities.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are appropriately targeted on raising standards. All grants are used for their designated purposes and the principles of best value are applied appropriately. The school is well staffed. However, several recent staff changes have disrupted the co-ordination of many subjects. Resources are adequate in most subjects. The accommodation is used well and has some strengths, such as the computer suite, but is satisfactory overall as the outdoor area, although large, is not in a good condition.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The leadership of the school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework set.</li> <li>• How they are kept informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Thirty-six per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and ten parents attended the parents' meeting. The inspection team agreed with most areas that pleased parents and agreed on the points they raised that need to be improved. They found the leadership of the school to be satisfactory. They also found that a good amount of homework has been set in the past, but changes in staff have created inconsistencies.

A number of parents voiced a concern that frequent changes of teachers were having a negative effect on the quality of education provided; the inspection team agrees with this viewpoint.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Based on the assessment of children at the start of reception - the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> - their attainment in all areas of their development is close to the average in the local education authority and close to the expected level for their age. The level of attainment does vary from year to year, and has in the past been higher. Because of the good teaching and well planned learning experiences, most make good progress and the majority are expected to meet or even exceed the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning. Although a difference in the attainment of boys and girls is noted in the assessment, with girls attaining more highly than boys, this was not evident during the inspection. In the current reception class, no child was assessed as having very high attainment, although this has been the case in the past.
2. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in a similar context<sup>3</sup>, the average points score<sup>4</sup> placed the school's results well above average. Although care must be taken when studying percentages as each pupil represents 6 per cent, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) in all three subjects was considerably above the national average. However, the results in English were not as strong as those in mathematics or science. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their extended writing skills and this affects the standards they reach in the English tests. Conversely, the number of pupils achieving the lower level (Level 3) in all three subjects was much less than the national average, except in mathematics. This indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English and science. The progress in mathematics was satisfactory, but less rapid because within the year group which sat the tests last year, there were three low attaining boys with specific difficulties in English. They were given considerable extra help to overcome these and so they were successful in gaining the expected Level 4. However, they did not achieve the same results in mathematics because of the decision to target their literacy rather than their numeracy skills.
3. Standards are also much higher than at the time of the last inspection in all three subjects. This good rate of improvement is due to the good use of assessment used to target support and the constancy offered by the same class teacher, the deputy head, who has taught Year 6 over the last few years. While on maternity leave, she has been replaced by an excellent practitioner.
4. The pupils who sat the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were particularly able. When compared with similar schools, their average point scores were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. When compared with

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy, pupils should be able to write their own name and other things, such as labels, and begin to write simple sentences.

<sup>3</sup> The comparison is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's benchmark information designed to compare end of key stage tests and assessments with those of similar schools nationally. Similar schools are judged as schools who have similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals.

<sup>4</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school.

schools in a similar context, they were above average in reading, well above in writing and very high in mathematics. Pupils therefore achieved well because of the good teaching they received. However, although the percentage of pupils achieving the high level (Level 3) in reading and mathematics was much higher than the national average, not one pupil achieved the higher level in writing. Pupils with potentially higher attainment therefore underachieved in writing. This is attributed to a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of extended writing in English lessons and to use them in other subjects. Based on teacher assessments in science, results were average when compared with all schools as well as schools in similar contexts. The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level or higher was 94 per cent. A pupil with complex special educational needs failed to achieve the expected level, and this accounted for the lower average point score when compared with the other subjects that were tested. This also shows that, in most subjects, pupils with special educational needs made good progress and achieved the expected level for their age.

5. The inspection findings are that many standards are lower than those achieved in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in English in Year 2 have fallen significantly and are below the expected level for their age. Standards in science are similar to those of 2002 and, although standards in mathematics have fallen, they remain above the expected level for their age. Standards in Year 6 are above the expected level in English and science. These have fallen slightly since last year but remain above average. However, standards continue to be well above average in mathematics in Year 6. This is the result of the good teaching pupils receive in mathematics and the guidance offered by the co-ordinator for mathematics, who has been in post since September 2002. By contrast, the coordinators for English and science only took on their responsibilities in January 2003. The lack of consistent co-ordination of English and science has had a negative effect on standards in those subjects, irrespective of the quality of teaching. For example, the school was aware from June 2002 that there was a lack of opportunities for extended writing across the school. However, because of major staff changes, including the loss of the English co-ordinator, not enough action has been taken to address the issue and pupils continue to have weaker than expected writing skills through the school.
6. Staff mobility has also had a negative impact on the standards of seven-year-olds. Some of the youngest seven-year-olds moved straight from Class 1 (four and five year olds) in September 2002. In less than 18 months, these pupils are now being taught by their fourth teacher. This lack of continuity has impacted on their progress which is currently satisfactory though it was previously good. Class 2 (six and seven-year-olds) is currently the largest class in the school, with 31 pupils, and it is therefore more difficult to meet the needs of all pupils, given their wide spread of age and ability. The quality of teaching in this class is satisfactory, but it is not challenging all the pupils to achieve their best and some of the basic skills are not being adequately taught, particularly in reading and writing. Standards in reading and writing are now below the expected level for this age group and levels of underachievement are high. Because of these weaknesses in the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making unsatisfactory progress. Standards seen during the inspection in mathematics are good. Nevertheless, they are not as good as those achieved in the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds, even though they are higher than the time of the last inspection, and when compared with the current standards in English and science. Like the other subjects, standards have been adversely affected by staff mobility, though they have remained higher because of good co-ordination and the better teaching of basic skills.
7. Due to a lack of evidence, no secure judgement can be made about standards in art or music at the end of Year 2 or in physical education at the end of Year 2 or Year 6.
8. Pupils make satisfactory progress to attain nationally expected standards in design and technology and information and communication technology by the end of Year 2.

However, levels of attainment in geography and history are below those expected for their age and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop in-depth knowledge or refine their skills in these subjects.

9. By Year 6, pupils achieve well and attain well above the expected level in history. The good co-ordination of history has given it a high profile in the school. They attain above the expected level in information and communication technology because good use is made of the computer suite to develop skills that they then use in a range of programs. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and in geography, reaching standards in line with those expected for their age. However, they make unsatisfactory progress in art and music, and their levels of attainment are below those expected. In art, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills. A lack of a knowledgeable co-ordinator in music is having a negative impact on both standards and the quality of provision in the school.
10. The high turnover of staff has had a negative impact on those subjects where standards are lower than they should be, with the result that pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Although most of the new staff do have the knowledge and experience to teach these subjects and there are plans for them to follow, disruption in the co-ordination of certain subjects and a lack of monitoring of the curriculum has meant that these plans have not been rigorously followed.
11. By the time pupils leave school, their standards in literacy and numeracy are good. There is, however, a weakness in the literacy skills of the youngest pupils.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most achieve the targets set in their individual education plans and many achieve the expected level in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. This shows that they make good progress, which reflects the good quality support that most of them receive from both teachers and support assistants. This is particularly so in relation to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in Years 3 to 6. Although younger pupils have made good progress in the past, they are presently making slower progress because of the lack of rigour in the teaching of reading and writing.

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

13. Attendance is unsatisfactory. However, the overall figures are affected by one family with four children whose attendance is poor and another pupil with special needs who does not attend school full-time. Once these pupils are removed from the statistics, the attendance rate is better. However, it is still unsatisfactory and is adversely affected by a number of parents who persist in taking their children on holidays during the term despite being warned of the detrimental effect this can have on their children's education.
14. Registration provides a very good start to the school day and enthusiasm for learning is evident from the moment pupils arrive. They often think for themselves and are well motivated; pupils regularly take the initiative and bring into school additional work that they have completed at home. When lessons capture their imagination, such as when Year 6 pupils studied inscriptions in Greek, they try very hard and work very well together, exceeding the teacher's expectations of what they might do.
15. Behaviour is good. Children quickly learn right from wrong and develop a strong sense of natural justice. Parents report that any verbal bullying is quickly 'nipped in the bud'. House points and stickers are eagerly sought and are very effective in promoting effort and rewarding achievement in all areas. Pupils feel these 'mean something'. Sharing good work with the headteacher is important to pupils and they are very proud when he gives

them a special certificate to recognise this. There has been only one exclusion in recent months. Pupils play and work together very well. They show sensitivity to the needs of others, for example in circle time or in the playground, where a young pupil fell and hurt himself. An older pupil put an arm around him, offered support and took him to receive attention from the first aider.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good. St. Bernard's encourages the development of the individual and fosters a community feeling. Pupils respect and care for each other and relationships with their peers and with adults are very good. The school is a very orderly community and lunch is a sociable occasion. Members of the school council work well for the community they serve. They want to improve their environment, such as the redecoration of the toilets that they consider to be 'not very nice'. Although few are formally appointed as monitors, there is a corporate sense of responsibility. Pupils approach the headteacher with ideas to raise money for particular causes they have identified. There is a rota for such tasks as the setting and clearing of tables at lunchtimes, and pupils carry out these tasks cheerfully and well. The secondary school comments favourably on how well pupils from St. Bernard's settle and on their mature attitudes. As pupils are encouraged to be mature and responsible, they are well prepared when they transfer to their next school. Pupils are reflective and are well aware that their actions have consequences. In a meeting, they voiced the opinions of their peers in wondering whether frequent staff changes were pupils' fault. 'We no longer have music, swimming galas, choir or Stages (drama club)', they reported, 'because the teachers have left', and these activities are missed.
17. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding. Pupils are well behaved and respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps to boost their confidence and enable them to take pride in their achievements.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching across the school is good overall as is pupils' learning. Teaching was at least good or better in 67 per cent of all the lessons seen during the inspection; of these, 28 per cent of lessons were very good and 6 per cent were excellent. Thirty-three per cent were good, 25 per cent satisfactory and 8 per cent unsatisfactory. Parents commented on the level of good teaching at the school in the responses to the parents' questionnaire. Although care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points, it is clear that the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, especially in the reception year. The last inspection judged teaching satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in reception. During the week of the inspection, no teachers present had been at the school during the last inspection. Teaching has improved due to the good choices made by the headteacher and governors in the appointment of new staff. The percentages, however, also indicate quite clearly that the level of good and very good teaching is not consistent across the school and this is slowing the rate at which pupils learn. The excellent teaching was concentrated in Class 5<sup>5</sup> and most of the very good teaching in Class 4 and Class 3. Although the good teaching was observed in every year group including reception, the lowest proportion of teaching that was better than satisfactory was in Class 2, which is the largest class in the school. The number of pupils in this large class makes it difficult for the teacher to meet the needs of each individual. As a result, the teaching of literacy in particular is a cause for concern. By contrast, the teaching of numeracy skills is good, in this class and throughout the school.

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<sup>5</sup> At St Bernard's there are five classes. Class 1 is for reception and Year 1 (pupils aged between four and five years); Class 2 is for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils (pupils aged between six and seven years); Class 3 is for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils (pupils aged between eight and nine years); Class 4 is for Year 4 and 5 pupils (aged between nine and ~~10~~<sup>ten</sup>); Class 5 is for pupils in Year 6 (those aged ~~11~~<sup>eleven</sup>).

19. The quality of teaching in Class 1 is good and this has a considerable impact on children's learning in their first year at school. The teaching is based on good planning that identifies clear outcomes in all areas of learning. There is a good balance between teacher-led and independent activities that ensures that all children are included in the full range of class activities. Classroom organisation is good and children have good access to resources. Relationships between staff and the children are very good, as is the management of all children. This fosters a purposeful working atmosphere and positive developments, especially in children's personal and social development. Staff use frequent and thorough assessment to track children's progress and use this information successfully to plan for the next step in children's learning. However, support staff do not use all opportunities to engage with the children and this slightly limits the progress they could make. For example, during an activity of ball throwing in the outside area, the classroom assistant watched what the children were doing rather than engaging them in conversation or teaching them specific ball throwing or catching skills.
20. From Year 1 the quality of teaching in mathematics is better than in English because the daily mathematics lesson is more structured and supported well by the use of a commercial scheme. Teachers' technical competence in the teaching of basic skills of numeracy is also good and they therefore teach the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. English lessons are not as well structured. The younger pupils do not benefit from guided reading sessions or writing at length. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy to the older pupils is good because they have more opportunities, in subjects such as history, to read and write at length. This lack of structure means that the National Literacy Strategy, although well implemented in Years 3 to 6, is less secure in place in Class 2. Handwriting is not taught in a uniformly agreed way through the school.
21. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of most subjects. This enables them to answer pupils' questions accurately and teach with confidence. This in turn extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work that they complete. This was evident in a very good mathematics lesson in Class 4 on angles in which the teacher demonstrated good subject expertise. This was visible in her clear explanations and the way she encouraged all pupils and used mathematical language appropriate to the topic. However, in Class 2, the explanation and examples given of adjectives and nouns was unclear and pupils were left unsure as to what type of words they should use to describe a teddy bear.
22. Teachers' planning is good and they have good subject knowledge overall, with very good examples seen in some lessons for older pupils. However, there are some exceptions, especially in the teaching of literacy to younger pupils. The school has recently adopted national guidance for the teaching of all subjects. This ensures that lessons are appropriate to the age and often the ability of pupils and that they build upon their previous experiences. Teachers plan well. Planning is better in mathematics than English as lesson objectives are precisely written. For example, in the Class 2 lesson on describing a teddy bear, the lesson's objectives were insufficiently focused to provide a clear direction to the lesson and this confused and hindered pupils' learning. Objectives are usually shared with the pupils at the beginning and end of lessons. This strategy enables pupils to be fully aware of the learning for each lesson, for them to be focused on their learning and for teachers to assess their progress. However, targets are not always returned to during the course of the lesson.
23. Most teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce, especially in Class 5. This is a very good improvement upon the findings of the last inspection where it was considered weak. In the very best lessons, this challenge is very high and pupils are clearly motivated to learn. This was seen in a very good Class 4 science lesson on different ways in which the brightness of a bulb could be altered. The extremely high quality input from the teacher, plus her own enthusiasm, resulted in pupils making very good gains in their scientific understanding and also generated a high level of interest amongst all pupils.

24. In most classes, teachers manage pupils well and their expectations of behaviour are high. As a result, little time is wasted and pupils have more time to work hard. However, on occasion class control is insufficient and pupils become restless and inattentive. They therefore waste time and are not as productive as they could be, as in the case of a Class 2 physical education lesson. This adversely affected the standards that they reached.
25. A strength of most of the teaching is the very good relationships between staff and pupils that ensure that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, are fully included in lessons and feel valued. This greatly enhances the quality of pupils' learning. Many staff only started teaching at the school this term, but most have established a positive rapport with the pupils and this results in a good atmosphere for learning. All pupils respond positively to this and, as a result, their behaviour in lessons is mostly good or better. In a few lessons, such as the Class 5 drugs education lesson, it was excellent.
26. A wide variety of teaching methods is used effectively across the school. A strong feature is the use of relevant and practical activities to ensure lessons are made interesting. Teachers are careful to use the most appropriate language and visual displays to support pupils' learning. Because of these strategies, good learning takes place for all pupils. For example, the excellent start of a mathematics lesson in Class 5 used a number of different sized containers to help pupils develop concepts of capacity and estimation. In a good physical education lesson in Year 3, a very well organised lesson had aspects of individual as well as group work, and whole-class evaluations and demonstrations. This enabled all pupils not only to be involved, but also to make good progress. Teachers often plan for activities where pupils work in pairs or in small groups; such activities add considerably to pupils' personal development, as does the emphasis placed on independent research using the computers.
27. In most instances, teachers use questions well. They often encourage pupils to think and explain their answers. Well-paced questioning adds to the brisk start to many lessons and the probing nature of many of the questions deepens pupils' understanding and the development of their verbal skills. A particular strength is the way that pupils of different ability are asked different types of questions so that they are all included. On a few occasions, however, teachers talk too much, as in the case of the Class 2 lesson in the computer suite when the teacher asked too few questions. Even when pupils were asked questions, they were not given enough time to think of their answer and the teacher answered for them. This greatly reduced pupils' ability to participate in the lesson.
28. Teachers make effective use of resources, either commercial or home-produced. For example, because of a lack of adequate three-dimensional shapes in the Class 2 mathematics lesson, the class teacher made her own and these were used well to recap on previous learning at the start of a lesson. Teachers use the computer suite well, especially as a source of information. In a Class 3 history lesson, a very good range of material that included telegrams and letters from World War II, was instrumental in gaining pupils' attention and in developing their literacy skills as well as their skills of historical enquiry.
29. The greatest asset that teachers use very well in most cases is their support staff. Classroom assistants are deployed to great effect, often working with small groups. For example, a group of Year 3 pupils received good additional support from a classroom assistant. The range of activities she used engaged the pupils in the learning and her questioning ensured that they understood; if they did not, further activities were used well to help. This was also true in a Class 4 mathematics lesson, where the classroom assistant took a group of pupils to the computer suite to follow up their work on angles. However, on some occasions those working with pupils in Classes 1 and 2 do not interact

with pupils sufficiently during the start of the lesson, or sometimes during the main activities.

30. Overall, the quality of marking is inconsistent and it is cursory in some subjects. Marking in English and mathematics informs pupils of their achievements, but it is not very informative as written comments do not always focus on how pupils could improve upon their work or deepen their understanding. In most other subjects, pupils' work is ticked but very rarely do teachers write comments. However, a good system has been recently introduced in Class 5, where pupils actually evaluate their own effort and progress, thus involving them directly in their learning. In most cases, teachers provide reasonable opportunities for homework, which often concentrates on the basic skills and thus is used well to support pupils' learning in class. Records indicate that homework has been more consistently set in the past.
31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because teachers plan work for them that is appropriate and most learning support assistants give effective help. They often sit close to these pupils at the start and end of the lesson, encouraging their participation and concentration. Their files often show that they have annotated the teachers' plans and identified the key aspects of the lesson on which they are to concentrate while working with small groups. In these group sessions, the questioning and support that they give is good and encourages pupils' self-confidence as well as the development of skills. However, on a few occasions, support staff are not deployed or directed well by class teachers and they sit passively, monitoring the pupils but rarely engaging with them in an attempt to extend their learning. Most teachers use a range of successful strategies to motivate, involve and challenge pupils, and regularly monitor the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. Individual class records are usually very detailed but, due to a high turnover of staff and a lack of monitoring, they have not been regularly updated to enable teachers to carefully track progress or write precise targets. The quality of pupils' targets has improved with the appointment of a new special needs co-ordinator and most are now specific, suitably challenging and achievable, although a few remain too general to be very useful or measurable.

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

32. The school meets all the requirements of the national curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory as they were at the time of the last inspection. The quality of learning experiences for children in the reception class is good. The provision for pupils' extra-curricular provision is unsatisfactory, although the curriculum is enriched through links with the community and partner institutions. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
33. The school has attempted to strengthen its curriculum since the last inspection but has been thwarted by its high turnover over of staff. It had securely established both the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy. In the past, both of these have had a positive effect on standards and in numeracy are continuing to do so. However, the effectiveness of the literacy strategy in teaching younger pupils is being weakened as there are insufficient opportunities to teach pupils the skills of reading through guided reading sessions, or to develop their writing skills. The school has also adopted national guidance on the teaching of many subjects to allow pupils to build on knowledge and understanding gained earlier in their school life. This guidance also ensures that all pupils receive a similar experience, and one that meets their needs. However, due to staff changes and a short-term development plan, not all subject polices have been regularly reviewed or the curriculum sufficiently well monitored. The school places a high priority on teaching English and mathematics. It dedicates a significant amount of time each day to teaching literacy and numeracy. This has an adverse effect on the time available for teaching other subjects. All subjects are taught regularly within each class but not enough time is devoted to music and

art. The school has also taken account of pupils' needs through the good use of assessment. This has identified the need to concentrate on word problems in mathematics and writing in English. The provision for swimming is excellent.

34. The quality and range of children's learning opportunities in the reception class are good. The curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and covers the six areas of learning. Children are given good quality, first hand experiences, with a strong emphasis on talk and on the development of independence. Well-planned play opportunities are a feature of the curriculum. The staff plan the curriculum well, taking account of the early learning goals and the stepping-stones that reflect children's development needs. There is a good range of interesting activities and experiences that helps most children achieve or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It is based on the Catholic schools' programme, 'Here I am'. It includes opportunities for sex and drugs awareness education. An excellent lesson on drugs awareness was observed during the course of the inspection. It clearly placed an emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of the associated dangers.
36. The school actively promotes equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum for all pupils and this is reflected in the school's vision, documentation and practice. The school aims to include all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or background, and evidence gained during the inspection showed this to be the case in most aspects of the school. In most cases teachers, learning support assistants and other staff usually work well together to ensure that all pupils are included in lessons. The school's provision in class for pupils with special educational needs is good and many of them achieve the expected standards for their age. Although the school does not have a policy related to gifted and talented pupils, or a register for them, they are identified and provided for. Pupils are entered for the very demanding Level 6 papers in the national tests for mathematics at the end of Year 6, and are provided with the support to develop their sporting and musical gifts.
37. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, although there is a weakness in the teaching of the younger pupils. The school provides good support, either in class or in small groups out of the classroom, depending on the needs of the individual pupils. Teachers have copies of pupils' individual education plans and regularly use them to plan suitable work to meet the needs of individuals. The school ensures that the provision outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need is in place and is reviewed annually in line with Code of Practice guidance. Although the provision in the classroom continues to be good, many of the required administrative duties, undertaken by the headteacher, have not been rigorously maintained due to the difficulties of appointing a special needs co-ordinator.
38. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum well. Pupils have used the village as a learning resource in relation to their work in history, geography and information and communication technology. A local historian, the fire and rescue service, police, a nurse and dental technician have been into school to work with the pupils. In addition to links with St. Bernard's and St. Bede's, there have been links with other local churches in connection with the Millennium video, the Open Air Campaigners and carol services. There have been field trips to two contrasting locations in connection with geography work. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to attend a residential trip in the summer term and other pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest, such as Wookey Hole. There are many good school links with other primary schools, for example during the science and national construction weeks. Pupils take part in fund raising for both national and local charities, and this makes a good contribution to their social development.

39. There are good links with partner institutions. There are good working relationships with local Catholic schools that provide support for teachers and opportunities for pupils to involve themselves with a wider group. This helps their social development. There are good links with local secondary schools, both state and independent, and these help pupils achieve their best and transfer to schools that meet their needs. Local secondary schools and centres within the City of Bristol also provide good opportunities for pupils to develop skills and ensure that the national curriculum is being covered. For example, all pupils are soon to visit a local technology centre to develop their understanding and skills in programming and data collection.
40. Staff have provided pupils in the past with a good range of extra-curricular opportunities including choir, football, computer, netball and swimming. Although there are still some extra-curricular activities, the provision is currently unsatisfactory due to the many changes in staff that have occurred recently. The school hopes to improve this situation in the near future.
41. The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development is a strength of the school. Since the time of the last inspection, moral development has been maintained as a significant strength. Social development has improved; it was previously judged as good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good overall, as it was at the last inspection. Cultural development is unsatisfactory and provision has declined since the last inspection. The ethos of the school is visible in the concerns of staff for the rounded development of the pupils as confident young people.
42. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The links with the Catholic Church and the Christian values that are embedded in the school's aims and reflected in all of its work add a good level of spirituality to the school. Quiet reflection is often encouraged and teachers make a great deal of effort to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence. There are numerous opportunities to promote spiritual development in other areas such as the appreciation of literature or empathy in history, but as the provision for music and art at the school are not strong, not all opportunities are sufficiently well planned.
43. The very good provision for pupils' moral development is founded on the school's high expectations of behaviour and relationships. All staff provide very good role models for the pupils and are consistent in the way they show respect for both pupils and other adults. Very good relationships between staff and pupils create a climate in which pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and behave naturally in harmony with one another. 'Circle time'<sup>6</sup> sessions, timetabled once or twice a week, enable disputes to be aired and resolved and other matters to be raised and discussed sensibly. The school has a positive approach to the management of behaviour. Pupils behave well because they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Class rules are displayed in the classrooms. A strong emphasis is placed on achievement. Effort and success are celebrated and rewarded by the whole school in the achievers' assembly or through certificates and praise.
44. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. There is a strong sense of identity that pupils, parents and staff are a family in which everyone is respected and supported very well. Pupils are helped to develop personal qualities that are valued in a society, for example honesty, respect and independence. Pupils are democratically elected onto the school council, where they propose and discuss a wide range of issues. Through circle time, pupils have an opportunity to share views and opinions with each other, and resolve conflicts. They are tolerant of each other. There are numerous

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<sup>6</sup> During cCircle tTime, pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

opportunities for corporate experiences. Assemblies, such as the sharing one observed during the inspection, are used to celebrate all achievements and recall fond memories of important shared events in pupils' lives at school, including the science and art weeks. In lessons, teachers encourage co-operative working and pupils learn to work well with each other. Through their charity work, pupils develop an understanding of those less fortunate than themselves and can appreciate that these other people are also part of their world. They have responded to the Christmas in a Box appeal and collections after concerts have been sent to the Lord Mayor or to the Bristol Christmas Appeal.

45. Cultural development overall is unsatisfactory. Pupils are given limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own culture through the curriculum, for example through art, literature, music and dance. In rare examples, pupils in one class used a range of other languages to answer the register and in another they had visited a Sikh temple which provided them with an insight into the beliefs and artefacts of that faith. However, there are few opportunities to appreciate the art or music of other cultures and a lack of multi-cultural resources means that the school is not preparing pupils to live in the diverse multi-ethnic British society of today.

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

46. The overall provision for child protection and pupils' welfare is satisfactory. Health, welfare and safety are high priorities for the school. In many areas there are good procedures to ensure pupils' well being. Risks are continually assessed, personnel trained in first aid are on site at all times and security is reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures are appropriate, although the headteacher, as the designated teacher, has not undergone recent training. He is now booked onto further training, which will be shared with staff, and a second member of staff is also to be trained. Although the school has an Internet Access policy, parents have not signed it. The amount of jewellery some pupils were wearing in school is a cause for concern.
47. The school follows good procedures for recording and monitoring absence, and parents are aware of the need to contact the school if their child is away. The education welfare officer visits regularly and is appropriately involved when necessary.
48. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and these, coupled with the well-known and comprehensive policy, result in effective behaviour management. Rules are understood and followed. All pupils relish their rewards and are proud to talk about them. Pupils eagerly await the weekly house point announcement to see which is the best for the week. Sanctions are few and effective. Exclusions are very rare. Bullying and racist remarks are not tolerated and their incidence is minimal. Parents and pupils alike commented that should they occur the school deals with them promptly and firmly.
49. The procedures for assessing the children's progress and attainment in Class 1 are good. Children are assessed when they first start school and are regularly assessed throughout the reception year. Through a careful analysis of the results, teachers are able to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development and use the information to plan what the children are to learn, based on what they know and can do. Pupils with special educational needs may also be identified and support for them is targeted accordingly. The records of children's achievements are shared with parents and carers.
50. The school has developed a range of good procedures for observing, measuring and recording what pupils know, understand and can do, and is using the information collected well. These procedures are more effective than at the time of the last inspection and have been instrumental in raising standards. There are now good procedures in place for most subjects. Teachers have a useful bank of information gathered from statutory and other test results and assessment tasks. The school has started work on putting into place a

target setting system. Pupils' targets are often attached on a card to their books or displayed on pupils' tables in the classrooms so they are part of their everyday experience. However, the school recognises that more work still needs to be done on the wording of the targets to ensure that they are always meaningful to the pupils. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is usually good. This means that teachers usually plan work well for pupils as their prior learning has been assessed and taken into account. In particular, work is currently being done to ensure that the needs of gifted and talented pupils are met through a programme of enrichment and extension. Teachers plan extra support for pupils identified as needing additional support after the analysis of test results. Statistical information is provided to the school on National Curriculum test results and consequently the school is aware of those areas that it needs to focus on in order to improve attainment. This enabled the headteacher to review and make the necessary adjustments in planning and to organise in-service training where needed, especially in English and mathematics. For instance, this year the school has attempted to target pupils' writing. However, subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in this process. There is a good record keeping system that records pupils' progress through the school. This system is very good for mathematics, English and science but lacks uniformity in some of the other subjects. A computer program is used to record and update this information.

51. The school cares appropriately for pupils with special educational needs. The tracking of their work and progress has in the past been unsatisfactory but under the leadership of the new special needs co-ordinator their work is now being regularly monitored to ensure their progress. Regular reviews of pupils' progress help to ensure that most work is suited to their needs and this is to be strengthened by the introduction of a summary document. Outside agencies are involved, as required, to help meet their specific targets.
52. This is a small school with a good ratio of adults to pupils. As there is a strong emphasis on building relationships and offering a caring and supportive atmosphere, all the staff, including those who have very recently joined the school, have very quickly got to know their pupils well. As a result, they give their pupils good personal support and guidance. However, other than as part of each pupil's annual report, the school does not keep written records of pupils' personal development and this needs to be addressed, especially in view of the recent frequent changes in staff.

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

53. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are pleased with most of what the school does.
54. Effective links and a good relationship have been established with parents, who support the school's aims and ambitions for their children and value their Catholic education. School productions are very crowded with all wanting to celebrate what 'their' children can do. Where they can, parents help their children with work at home and a small number assist in classrooms or on visits. Their help is much appreciated. Almost all have signed the home/school agreement. Parents appreciate that there is always the opportunity to meet the headteacher or other teachers on an informal basis to talk about their child's progress. Parental attendance at the two consultation meets is good, but many indicated that two is insufficient. The inspection team would agree with this and that the timing of the second meeting, at the end of the summer term after reports have been sent home, is too late in the year to be useful.
55. There is an enthusiastic Friends Association that has organised numerous events including a barbecue, skittles and Summer Fair, which are well supported by relatives and the local community. Through all these activities significant amounts of money have been raised and used well, for instance to fit out the new kitchen and the computer suite. The Friends also

add to the curriculum and pupils' enjoyment at the school. The Father Christmas that they arranged to ride around the school playground on his pony and trap is still talked about by the pupils.

56. There are many good informal channels of communication between school and home made possible by the nature of the school, its size and its importance in the community. The school secretary, who is seen by parents as a 'mine of information' and is always happy to give any assistance in form filling or to explain documentation, often provides a lot of information. Homework diaries and the contact link book are also used well by both parents and teachers to communicate between home and school. Information is displayed on class windows and parents receive curriculum information every half term so that they know what is happening. However, some of the information sent to parents, such as the prospectus, although providing all the necessary information, is rather unappealing to read and does not communicate the essence of the school. Annual reports provide a basic account of a pupil's learning and identify targets for their future, but not all the information is accessible to parents. The school includes the results of standardised tests in English and mathematics but with no explanation for parents. The governors' annual report to parents, while missing some statutory information, is also unappealing to read. The governors' annual report to parents does not mention the annual general meeting, actions taken since the last inspection, the admission of disabled pupils, a review of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs or details the school's budget.
57. The reception class teacher ensures that good relationships and contacts are made with parents. Parents are encouraged to help their child settle and regular informal and formal meetings with staff ensure that the children's first experience of school is a good one. There is a home/school book to foster communication with parents and they are encouraged to read with their child at home.
58. Links between home and school for pupils who have special educational needs are regular and constructive, and this helps to ensure that they receive the appropriate support and make good progress. The school informs parents at an early stage if their child has special educational needs. Parents have copies of pupils' individual education plans where pupils are receiving extra support. Parents are invited to all reviews and can make an appointment at any time.

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

59. The leadership of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school. He has identified and focused on the greatest priorities at the school; its standards. These have improved because they have been clearly identified in the school's development plan. To achieve the better than national rate of improvement in the national tests, he has also successfully created a positive climate in the school where all who work there show care and respect for pupils and work hard to help them progress. By the good choice of replacement staff, the high turnover of staff has been managed well and this has, in some year groups, minimised the disruption to pupils' learning. However, not all disadvantages of the high turnover of staff have been foreseen and corrected, particularly the impact that the change of subject co-ordinators has had on standards in some subjects.
60. The management of the school is sound overall. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and they work effectively in partnership. They each play important roles in supporting the drive for improvement, by supporting other colleagues and developing their professional skills. A strong emphasis is placed on achieving consistently good quality teaching in English, mathematics and science. The head and deputy headteacher monitor and evaluate teaching regularly. This, coupled with the tracking and analysis of pupil progress, helps identify key areas for development in the school and

amongst individual staff. A high priority is given to the professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff. Performance management has been appropriately introduced for all teaching staff although, because of staff changes and temporary contracts, there are only two teachers to whom this currently applies. There are, however, some weaknesses. The practice of monitoring of performance has not yet been extended to staff on temporary contracts or classroom assistants and although individual teacher targets have been linked to the whole-school focus on writing these targets are too broad and it is difficult to evaluate their impact.

61. Subject co-ordinators are generally effective in the main subjects of mathematics and science. Historically the leadership has been good, and for mathematics that is still the case. However, the lack of an action plan for science means that the temporary co-ordinator does not have a clear sense of direction in which to lead the subject. The co-ordination of English is unsatisfactory, not because the current co-ordinator is new to the post, but because there has been insufficient progress on addressing the weakness in writing.
62. The leadership and management of other subjects of the curriculum are less well established. The way in which the management of these subjects has not been changed to meet the demands of a high staff turnover in a small school is a weakness. Each teacher is responsible for several subjects and this means that, when a teacher leaves, the difficulties of co-ordination become acute because the remaining staff are not able to support additional subjects or the newly appointed staff. In some of the foundation subjects of the national curriculum<sup>7</sup>, the monitoring of teaching and learning and evaluation of pupils' attainment are not well developed. Due to financial constraints, most co-ordinators have not had a budget that they could use to develop their subjects. As part of the school's review of the foundation subjects, it has been recognised that the role of the co-ordinator needs to be developed.
63. There has been difficulty in recruiting a suitable special needs co-ordinator and, until recently, the headteacher has been carrying out the required duties. But due to his commitments as headteacher, the administrative and management role of the special needs co-ordinator has suffered and has been unsatisfactory. The new co-ordinator, appointed in January 2003, is now ensuring that all pupils are accurately assessed, using outside agencies when necessary and ensuring that pupils have relevant achievable targets. The school has not yet reviewed the policy for special educational needs to ensure that it reflects the 2001 Code of Practice. The school is aware that there are still areas for development and these have been incorporated into a development plan that should see them addressed in the near future. The school provides a good level of resources, especially staffing, to meet the needs of this group of pupils. Many of the staff, especially support staff, have received specific training and this has added to their effectiveness. The school does not have a plan to improve the accessibility of the school for pupils with special educational needs. However, the building is appropriate for pupils with some physical disabilities as it is all on one level, and a disabled toilet is soon to be built.
64. The quality of whole school self-evaluation and development planning is unsatisfactory. There is a school improvement plan that identifies the key areas for development for this current year. Now and in the past the priorities chosen by the school have been appropriate and good progress has been made in raising standards. But current action to improve standards in writing has been unsatisfactory and the current action plan reflects a narrow vision of the school's work and even these are not clearly costed. The rationale for short term planning was to accommodate the high turnover of staff. However, it has meant that the school's vision and longer-term priorities for development are not well

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<sup>7</sup> The foundation subjects of the national Curriculum include art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and physical education.

documented, and new staff entering the school do not share this valuable insight, or know where they need to channel their energies. There is a danger that, without careful management, the capacity for the school to improve could be put at risk, though it is currently good due to the commitment of current staff.

65. The procedures for the induction of staff new to the school and for the training of new teachers are adequate. Nevertheless, these procedures have been sorely tested by the demands of so many staff joining the school at one time. Newly qualified staff receive appropriate support from a mentor.
66. The governors provide satisfactory support for the school. The chair of governors is knowledgeable about the school, as are the several members of staff on the governing body. The governors appreciate the impact that staff changes have had on the leadership and management of the school and on continuous school improvement. They are aware of the strengths of the school, particularly the rise in standards in English, mathematics and science, and of the short-term areas for development, such as writing. The governing body is committed to the success of the school and has established an appropriate committee structure and good working relationships. However, the governors are not sufficiently involved in formulating the school development plan. They monitor the effectiveness of decisions mainly through reports received from the headteacher and the co-ordinators. They rely heavily on the headteacher and senior staff in the formulation of policies. The governing body is largely fulfilling its statutory duties. However, as at the time of the last inspection, there are shortfalls in the information that it sends to parents in its annual report.
67. The school's finances are satisfactorily managed. Following the Bristol City Council financial audit in 1999, the school has successfully implemented the recommendations and follows the internal finance policy. The school works hard to make best use of the money it receives, including specific grants and additional funding. The school ensures that it is used for its designated purpose and that the outcomes of the expenditure match the objectives: that is, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Day-to-day administrative management and financial control are good. The experienced school secretary has effective systems for recording and tracking expenditure and the overall financial system is up to date and efficient.
68. Principles of best value are applied appropriately. Spending decisions relate well to the school's improvement priorities. They are informed by a detailed analysis of the school's performance that includes comparisons with other schools. Purchase procedures ensure that good value for money is obtained. The school occasionally seeks the views of parents about school issues. This includes the use of questionnaires. The school has appropriately invested resources on targeted professional development for staff.
69. St Bernard's is a small school and the ratio of pupils to teachers is favourable. Most classes are of a reasonable size except for Class 2, which has over 30 pupils. Despite a number of staff leaving for promotion or being on maternity leave, the school is fully staffed with appropriately qualified teachers, some on temporary contracts. There have been some very good appointments and this has helped ease the disruption to pupils' learning that changes in teacher can cause. All subjects have a co-ordinator, although out of nine National Curriculum areas, seven are being co-ordinated by teachers who either started at the beginning of this term or who are in their first year of teaching. This is having an impact on the quality of leadership of some subjects. Currently, the quality of music at the school is suffering because there is no-one with the expertise in this area to lead it. There are a reasonable number of support staff, many of whom have received additional training. On most occasions they are deployed well, although in a few classes teachers do not provide sufficient direction. As a consequence, opportunities to develop pupils' learning are not taken. The support staff in reception are also new to the school. They are

appropriately trained and qualified and on most occasions are well deployed but currently lack the experience, or direction, for them to be fully involved with children on all occasions.

70. The buildings, altered and added to over a long period, are adequate for the numbers on roll. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection with the building of a new classroom, a good computer suite and a new kitchen area that will provide very good opportunities for pupils when studying food technology. There is a small library. The school is used in the evenings for lettings, making it a focus of community use. The hall is large enough for all pupils to attend an assembly, but its high vaulted ceiling makes it a difficult area in which to teach as noise echoes badly. All areas are well cleaned. However, there is little storage space in the school and this makes storing equipment difficult. Because of this, several areas appear cluttered. Good examples of pupils' work cover corridor and classroom walls. Outside, the rather bleak playground has been enhanced by the creation of the 'train' and other wooden play equipment in one area. However, markings for playground games are very faded and of little use. Trees growing on the other side of the school fence are causing the playground to be uneven; it is therefore unsuitable and unsafe for the playing of games during physical education lessons. The outdoor area for children in reception is unattractive and barely adequate in size.
71. The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects of the national curriculum. There are good features, such as the good ratio of computers to pupils, and this has had an impact on standards. However, due to a lack of storage many resources are not easily accessible or well maintained. The limited and worn equipment for gymnastics hinders pupils' progress in this subject. The range and condition of books in the library are not adequate for the needs of the pupils. Around the school, there are few resources, books or posters representing other cultures or religions and this hinders pupils' cultural development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the school, governors, the headteacher and staff should:

- raise pupils' achievements in reading by the end of Year 2 and writing across the school by:
  - improving the range and frequency of opportunities to undertake extended writing;
  - teaching handwriting uniformly across the school;
  - providing regular opportunities for the teaching of reading, for instance in guided reading sessions;

*(Paragraphs 2, 4-6, 20-22, 33, 61, 85-95, 114, 117, 121)*
- raise standards in geography and history by the end of Year 2 and music and art by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that the planned activities set out in the medium term plans are taught thoroughly;  

*(Paragraphs 8-10, 33, 109-112, 118-124, 125-130, 136-140)*
- improve the role and effectiveness of subject co-ordinators by:
  - allowing them to monitor and evaluate both the teaching and learning in their subjects, as well as curriculum coverage;
  - providing them with a budget;
  - the headteacher monitoring and supporting the work of the co-ordinators;

*(Paragraphs 33, 61-62, 69, 94, 102, 113, 123, 140)*
- develop plans for the long-term improvements that meet the development needs of all areas of the school by having a strategic school improvement plan that covers all aspects of school life and is fully costed and evaluated;  

*(Paragraphs 33, 64, 66, 69, 108)*
- improve the opportunities for the development of pupils' cultural awareness, including their knowledge of other cultures and their appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society by:
  - providing more resources of a cultural and multi-cultural nature;
  - planning opportunities in all subjects and in other aspects of school life to develop cultural awareness.

*(Paragraphs 45, 110, 112, 136)*

Governors may like to consider the following points for inclusion in their future development plans:

- improve the quality of information sent to parents and the ways in which the school informs them about their child's progress.  

*(Paragraph 54)*

  - improve the resources for the library, gymnastics, design and technology and mapping, and the outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.  

*(Paragraphs; 83, 90, 112, 117, 120, 141, 144)*
  - improve the condition of the outside area.  

*(Paragraphs 70, 83, 144)*

    - develop a formal system for recording and helping to support the progress of pupils' personal development.  

*(Paragraph 52)*
  - ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all the statutory information.  

*(Paragraph 56)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	9	11	8	2	0	0
Percentage	6	28	33	25	8	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 three percentage points

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	123
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	9	8	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	16	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (89)	88 (89)	95 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	94 (95)	94 (100)
	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	13	4	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	16	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (64)	82 (64)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (64)	88 (64)	88 (64)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

The test results of boys and girls have been omitted as the numbers are too small for comparisons to be made.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
114	2	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	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: Y R – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5:1
Average class size	24.6

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	304,679
Total expenditure	294,577
Expenditure per pupil	2,415
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,205

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Number of questionnaires sent out	123
Number of questionnaires returned	44
Percentage of questionnaires returned	36

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	23	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	50	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	39	9	2	5
The teaching is good.	64	36	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	32	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	25	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	55	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	34	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	41	23	5	6

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**

72. Overall, the provision is good. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection when the provision was a weakness at the school. With the appointment of new staff, both the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved.
73. Children are admitted to the mixed reception/Year 1 class (known as Class 1) full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. There are currently 23 children in this class, of whom 16 are of reception age. Most have attended local pre-schools before they come to school. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class is in line with the local education authority average.
74. The quality of learning opportunities provided for the children is good. There is a range of interesting, challenging activities and experiences planned which cover all six areas of learning. The classroom is spacious and well resourced and provides an attractive learning environment, although outdoor facilities are limited. The teaching in the reception class is good overall, with some very good features. This has a positive impact on children's learning and they achieve well.
75. Children are expected to meet and, in some cases, exceed the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported and are fully included in all areas of learning; they also make good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

*Personal, social and emotional development*

76. By the end of the reception year, children have made very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are achieving above the expected levels of the early learning goals. This shows very good achievement and reflects the good teaching in the reception class. Children are confident and friendly, have good relationships with adults and are developing good relationships with each other. They listen well, are attentive and are able to sustain concentration. Children have a very positive attitude to school. They are enthusiastic about what they do and are proud of their achievements. Their behaviour is very good, due mainly to the very good behaviour management skills of the teacher. The daily act of choosing the 'leader' and the 'happy helper' and the tasks that they undertake together creates and supports co-operation and independence.
77. Because the teacher provides a range of interesting activities, children develop a good level of independence and the ability to make choices. As much of their work in undertaken in pairs or groups, they also learn to cooperate, for example when using the computer. They are also developing an understanding of their own feelings and the feelings of others, for example showing consideration and kindness when a child falls over during outdoor activities. Due to the good choice of books and activities, children are developing a good sense of right and wrong. For example, when sharing the book, 'Play dough Cat' children suggested that it was wrong to steal and that the child in the story should give back the play dough.

*Communication, language and literacy*

78. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy. The majority are on line to meet or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children in the reception class speak clearly and with confidence in a range of situations. A good role-play area is based on a theme that relates to the weekly topic. Adults also encourage

pupils to play in them and at times work with them, developing their speaking skills by engaging them in conversation. Children use the role-play area with confidence, for example in the 'Garden Centre' or when re-enacting the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. In a lesson on materials, pupils in a circle knew that they could speak only when they held the object. They listen attentively when it is not their turn and, when they hold the object, all children speak clearly and audibly.

79. Reading is given a high priority in the reception class with stories being regularly read to the class as well as the basic skills of phonics being formally taught and regularly reinforced at every opportunity. Therefore children develop an increasing knowledge of letter sounds and interest in books. High attaining children show an understanding of character and sequence of events in a story. They are able to read a simple text, recognise many words and, when reading aloud, employ their knowledge of sounds to decode as well as using picture cues. Average attaining children know individual letters and the sounds they make, and read simple key words with help. Lower attaining children identify many letters, read a few words and use picture cues mainly to decode. Children are encouraged to take reading books home daily. The teacher keeps a set of good reading records that help guide the appropriate support needed by each child.
80. Throughout the reception year, there is evidence of children's progress in writing. Higher attaining children spell simple key words, write their own names and captions, and form letters independently, many with correct orientation. Average attaining children are happy to 'write' but they do not form letters so well. Words are attempted with some sound links. Lower attaining children make very good progress in understanding initial sounds. They show evidence of progress from marks to some 'letter like' shapes to attempts at correctly formed letters. Overall pupils make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. They have many opportunities to write in a range of subjects and teachers and support staff model the work that they have to do well.

#### *Mathematical development*

81. Children are on track to achieve and some to exceed the early learning goals in the mathematical area of learning. This is because the teacher sets high expectations and plans carefully for different abilities. This has a positive impact on children's learning. In the reception class, children frequently use the language of adding and subtracting and have a basic understanding of the processes involved in these two operations. They are able to relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to taking away. They understand simple graphs about snowflakes. They use the computer within the classroom to reinforce their counting skills. Higher attaining pupils can count numbers one to 20 or beyond, and know that if you have 19 stars on your star chart that you need 'one more' to make 20 stars. They are able to write numbers up to 10 legibly, and are able to find many different ways of making nine. Average attaining children work on numbers one to 10 with support, can add two single digits to five and find different ways to make seven. Lower attaining children develop counting skills and find work more challenging but, with support, make good progress with numbers up to five. All children can name the flat two-dimensional shapes and the higher attaining children can confidently name some of the three-dimensional shapes, including spheres, cubes and cylinders. They can also use the correct language of faces and corners.

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

82. As the teacher provides a good balance between well-organised activities that include both teacher-led and independent activities, all children are included in the full range of class activities and they all make good progress. It is likely that children will achieve above the expected levels in this area of their learning. They are confident in using the computer. They are able to use the mouse effectively, select from a menu and work on simple

rhyming, sequencing, phonic and number programs. They are encouraged to be observant and to be aware of living things. Children use a magnifying glass to look at different seeds and use their senses to investigate and explore the seeds, with a four year old saying, 'the seed is like a diamond'. Sitting in a circle, they are able to pass around hard and soft objects and say whether they can make them change shape. There are opportunities for the children to make their own models out of recycled materials and they have access to an increasing range of materials so that they can apply the skills and techniques they have been taught. However, there are few books, resources or displays in the reception class to support their cultural development.

### *Physical development*

83. In physical development, children are on line to achieve and most to exceed the early learning goals for this area. Activities are well planned and practitioners have a good knowledge of children's development, which enables them to make good progress. Children are provided with many opportunities to handle small items, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. Their manipulative skills are developing well. In their physical education, children generally move around the hall with an awareness of space and each other. They show increasing control and co-ordination when learning how to do a pin roll. They are mostly able to change their clothes independently. Good quality feedback by the teacher on the quality of movement, together with effective use of praise and encouragement, ensure that children make good progress in their learning. Teachers set high expectations and children respond by achieving well. Assistants provide good support for children with special educational needs. However, the outdoor space and the resources for this area are limited. The teacher arranges for this space to be used as much as possible, but this lack of resources and a lack of involvement of support staff hinders pupils' development in this one area.

### *Creative development*

84. Children make good progress in creative development and are in line to achieve and some to exceed the early learning goals. Good teaching and effective questioning strategies encourage children to develop their imagination and use their senses to investigate and explore. They are curious and interested to discover, for example, what is in the feely box. They feel the objects and discuss a range of possibilities, giving reasons for their choice. Due to the very good management of the teacher, great excitement is shown when she reveals the contents. Because of good intervention and preparation by the teacher, children's imagination is developing well. When playing in the 'Garden Centre' area, children act out the part of the gardeners or visitors. A four-year-old girl explains that in the Garden Centre she is the head gardener and she directs others to water the plants. Children have a growing awareness of colour and develop increasing control with a paintbrush, adding detail to paintings of themselves. They work well together, sharing out the clay with enthusiasm, and use the tools and their fingers to make pots for plants. The teacher has made music an important part of the day and because of this children enthusiastically sing songs and rhymes with actions. Children use role-play with confidence and readily act out stories using props from the story sacks that the teacher has carefully prepared.

## ENGLISH

85. Inspection findings are that standards in English are below the expected level at the end of Year 2 but above at the end of Year 6. By the age of seven, standards in reading and writing are below what is normally expected and these pupils are underachieving. They are above average in speaking and listening. By the age of 11, standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are above average.
86. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress, although even greater progress could be made if more opportunities for extended writing were being planned. Learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in these classes. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition. Although younger pupils have in the past made good progress and achieved good results, pupils currently in Class 2 are making unsatisfactory progress and not achieving their best.
87. Until recently, there has been a good improvement in the attainment of pupils since the time of the last inspection as shown in the test results of 2002 for both seven and 11 year-olds, and as seen in the attainment of pupils now in Year 6. These pupils are benefiting from the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with good teaching. However, the attainment seen during the inspection of seven-year-olds indicates a significant drop that places current levels of attainment below those of the last inspection and much lower than those achieved in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 2. This drop has been caused partly by a change of staff, which has disrupted pupils' learning as well as the co-ordination of the subject. This is further compounded by a weakness in the teaching of reading in Class 2 where, for example, there is a lack of guided reading sessions and too few opportunities for pupils to write because they complete too many work sheets.
88. The results of the National tests for both seven and 11 year olds in 2002 showed a difference in the attainment of boys and girls in writing; this was not evident during the inspection. However, the inspection did find that standards are lower than those achieved in 2002.
89. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and are interested in what others have to say. Good teaching at an appropriate pace encourages pupils to listen well. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to speak during all parts of the lessons. Pupils give good answers to questions that need an explanation as well as to those that need only a quick one-word answer. For instance, in an art lesson in Year 6, they were able to explain how they had done something, why they had chosen particular materials and evaluated their own and others' work in a reasoned way. Teachers create good opportunities for all pupils to have the chance to practise speaking. For instance, at the end of a physical education lesson in Class 3, pupils worked in groups to evaluate their work in the lesson following some key questions given to them by the class teacher. In paired work in lessons, teachers give pupils the opportunity to discuss their ideas with a partner. In a Class 3 writing lesson, pupils were keen both to share their work on adjectives and then listen to the work of other pupils. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate.
90. Standards in reading in Year 2 are below average though they are above average by the age of eleven. Following discussions with pupils, it is clear that they enjoy reading. Some read regularly both at home and at school and have access to a wide range of fiction books. Younger pupils are not currently being taught reading frequently enough; there are too few opportunities for guided reading sessions that would teach them the strategies necessary for reading. In Year 6, pupils' good speaking and listening skills enabled them to recount the story so far in the book they were reading in an informative and interesting

way. They were also able to give a plausible, well thought out prediction of how the story might continue. Some pupils in Year 2 link letters with their sounds well but others are still struggling with this. They usually use this strategy when they are unsure of a word. They are less used to using other strategies, for instance reading the whole sentence through and then making an informed guess of an unknown word. In Year 6, pupils read fluently and with expression and have a wider range of strategies at their disposal. In a Class 4 poetry lesson, the teacher used an effective strategy to give pupils confidence in reading aloud to the class by first allowing them to read in pairs or groups. The range of books available to pupils in the school library needs to be improved but the school has already identified this need and is addressing it. Pupils are familiar with the library system and can confidently explain how to locate books. However, they admit to not using the library often, preferring to use computers, due to the lack of good books in the library.

91. Standards in writing in Year 2 are below average but above average in Year 6. Pupils do not take pride in their work and frequently it is not well presented. This is because the teaching of handwriting is inconsistent across the school and teachers themselves do not model good handwriting. By contrast, though, the basic skills of spelling and grammar are taught progressively and consequently pupils are able to demonstrate in their work a good knowledge of the conventions of English. Nevertheless, they do not have enough opportunities to use this knowledge in extended pieces of writing.
92. In Year 2, the teaching of the basic skills of literacy is unsatisfactory. Currently there are too few opportunities to write at length both in literacy lessons and in other subjects for pupils to reach the expected standard or better. Across the school there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to develop their spelling and there is little evidence of pupils using their word processing skills. The satisfactory lesson observed in Class 2 was well resourced but the objective for the lesson was not expressed clearly enough and consequently pupils did not make as much progress as they ought to have done. A review of their work this year shows that pupils of different ages and ability have often been set the same task and this does not ensure that they make their best progress.
93. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching of literacy is good. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of learning experiences. Pupils write for different audiences and purposes, usually independently. For example, pupils in Class 3 planned their traditional story using a writing frame and were writing the beginning, focusing on the quality of the adjectives needed to set the scene. In Class 5, pupils brainstormed the vocabulary they would use for their poem before starting writing. In Year 6, pupils were learning about the difference between opinion and argument. This lesson contributed well to pupils' spiritual development, not only because of the teacher's good questioning but also because of the moral issues posed for the pupils to think about. They were writing their opinions as to whether animals should be included in circus acts. In lessons, teachers ensure a good balance between enriching writing through a wider use of vocabulary and descriptive language and encouraging the use of these skills in a finished piece of work. There are numerous examples of pupils using their word processing skills, as in the multi-media presentations on the Ancient Greeks, but far fewer examples of pupils editing or drafting their work on screen. Although writing is an identified school focus, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to write more frequently, even for the older pupils. There has been insufficient development on this priority because of the change of staff and in particular the temporary absence of the English co-ordinator on maternity leave.
94. Teaching in English is satisfactory overall. Relationships in English lessons are good. This enables pupils to have the confidence to try out new ideas and to share them with their fellow pupils. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils enthusiastically shared their work, which was listened to attentively by other pupils. Lessons are usually well managed and move along at a good pace. Very little time is wasted so that pupils work hard and are productive. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed, but the weaker teaching in Class 2 was

characterised by a lack of focus and a weakness in the teaching of the basic skills of grammar.

95. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is on maternity leave and the responsibility for the subject is currently with the headteacher and a newly qualified teacher. In the past, however, the co-ordinator has clearly identified priorities for the raising of attainment and this has been reflected in a development plan. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well in the past, but currently there is a difference in its implementation between the older and younger classes. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects, such as history, but this needs to be developed further as there is often very little recorded work in other subjects, such as design and technology or in the work of the youngest pupils. There has been little monitoring of teaching and learning but planning has been checked and pupils' work has been looked at to ensure it is both challenging and assessed at the right level. The procedures to assess pupils' attainment and monitor their progress are good. Because of this, targeted help is given to groups of pupils. All pupils also have their own targets, although they do not always fully understand them. The headteacher undertakes much of the analysis of test results. This means that the co-ordinator does not have a full picture of their implications, but the insights gained into pupil progress have enabled the school to raise standards in the past. The school has been aware that writing standards were not good enough since last summer but progress in tackling this recent issue has been unsatisfactory. This was because of staff changes and a lack of co-ordination of the subject and direction provided by the leadership of the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

96. Standards of work in Year 6 are very good and similar to the well above average results achieved in the 2002 national tests. The oldest pupils at the school are achieving very well because of the very high quality teaching they are receiving. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 are not as high as those achieved in last year's national tests; although they are good, they are no longer very good. This drop is the result of disruption caused by changes in teachers and the sound teaching that they are currently receiving. These pupils are achieving well due to their prior experiences and the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Although a difference in the attainment of boys and girls was noted in test results of 2002, this was not evident in during the inspection. In most classes, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the small classes in which they are taught and the good support they receive from classroom assistants. Those few pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress because the basic skills of numeracy are taught well. Standards in numeracy are above those normally expected, especially in Years 3 to 6.
97. Although there was little evidence in their books of pupils in Year 6 undertaking practical or investigative work, pupils demonstrated a good level of ability in this aspect of mathematics in an excellent lesson. At the start of this lesson, pupils made sensible estimates of the capacity of a range of containers. Then, by using their very good knowledge of numbers, all pupils were able to alter a recipe to cater for eight people rather than four; the more able pupils modified another recipe to provide 'Welsh Rabbit Potatoes' for three people. In calculating the new quantities, pupils developed their own strategies and used all four operations of number in calculating new weights. These often included decimals to one and two decimal places. Pupils accurately estimated and then competently used a calculator to check their written calculations and knew that applying the inverse operation would also confirm their accuracy. The written work that expressed their thinking was reasonably clear and when asked they could explain their methods precisely. Many of the high attaining pupils also provided a general statement with which they would be able to solve similar problems. A significant proportion of pupils were working at the higher level (Level 5). Lower attaining pupils, because of the good support

they received from a learning support assistant, not only contributed to all parts of the lesson but achieved standards in line with those expected for their age. In their books, pupils had accurately calculated the mean of a set of data, often based on football results. Further work on handling data included using simple distribution lines to compare the frequency of brothers and sisters in the class, and all were confident in using the probability scale; a girl said it would be impossible for her 'to be younger tomorrow', although likely that she would 'watch TV tonight'.

98. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of number. All pupils are aware of numerical relationships (such as odds and evens) in their work and can often continue these patterns. Most have a secure knowledge of place value; high attaining pupils can decide upon the value of a digit up to 100 confidently, although average attaining pupils are more uncertain, while low attaining pupils remain confused by the concept. However, most have a good knowledge of the basics of addition and subtraction and regularly apply these methods to solving money problems. Many seven-year-olds have a sound understanding of division and have a simple understanding of fractions. In a lesson seen, pupils were confident in using the mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes, accurately describing their properties, including the number of sides, corners and surfaces. In doing this, they could easily classify different objects and explain their criteria for doing so.
99. Based on work seen and lessons observed, the overall quality of the teaching of mathematics is good. In the sessions seen in Years 3 to 6, all lessons were very good or excellent; this is why pupils achieve so well and high standards have been maintained. The one lesson seen in Class 2 was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers show very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use this to plan detailed lessons based on the National Numeracy Strategy. They all deliver interesting and fast paced lessons that are well organised and prepared. Pupils enjoy the challenge offered in such lessons and concentrate well, making significant gains in their mathematical skills and understanding. The three parts of the daily mathematics lesson were very well developed in most of the lessons seen. The very imaginative start to the Year 6 lesson made a significant impact on pupils' understanding of estimation and volume. The very good plenaries in the other two lessons observed provided opportunities for teachers both to consolidate pupils' learning and extend it with further challenges. In the very good lessons, teachers were highly observant and used their assessments well to modify the activities and target questions. In the Year 6 lesson, some good assessment from earlier in the week had been used very well to set some homework. It was observed that pupils were having difficulty ordering the weight of different potatoes and therefore homework was set on this to improve their knowledge about weight. Marking is adequate overall, although there are some very good examples in Year 6. In this year group, a system has been introduced by which pupils grade their own work, have a written dialogue with the class teacher who then writes suggestions as to how work can be improved. Despite this, however, the presentation of much of the work in pupils' books is untidy.
100. The quality of relationships in the classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good and is helped by the relative low number of pupils in each class. This also enables the class teacher to provide work for pupils of different abilities and to maintain good order. In all three lessons in Years 3 to 6, very good use was made of classroom assistants. They were involved in all stages of the lesson, often sitting with pupils at the start and end of the lesson, encouraging both their concentration and participation. Their own files showed that they were well briefed by the class teacher and that they also annotated the class lesson plans to identify their specific focus or questions they were to ask. By doing this, they gave very good support to low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

101. All lessons seen built carefully upon pupils' prior learning. For example, two-dimensional work built upon three-dimensional work in Class 2 and estimating acute and obtuse angles extended earlier work on right angles in Class 4. In all lessons, teachers ensure that they identify mathematical words for the lesson and often provide pupils with sufficient time to explain their work; they are thus providing appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. However, pupils in Class 2 were not focused on their work sufficiently, although the practical activity was planned well with a series of activities and there was a steady pace of learning. There was more of a struggle in this large class to gain and keep pupils' attention. While the work was planned for pupils of different ability, the classroom support assistant was not always deployed well, sometimes sitting passively with the pupils and not engaging with them. Information and communication technology is used well on some occasions, for example by pupils in Year 6 when using spread sheets and developing fields for data handling. In one lesson on angles, computers were used very well to provide good imagery to support pupils' learning. However, the school has too few programs that can be used across the whole range of mathematical subjects or to teach skills.
102. Over recent years, there have been four mathematics co-ordinators. The most recent was appointed to the post in September 2002 and she is in the second year of her teaching career. Her leadership of the subject is good. She has a clear idea of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and, with the support from a mentor from another school, she has translated this into a short-term development plan that gives mathematics a high profile in the school. However, the management has been and is still unsatisfactory. There is no separate budget for the subject and this limits the co-ordinator's ability to develop the subject. The present co-ordinator attempts to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by looking at teachers' planning, but there has been minimal formal work in this area, especially in relation to the observation of lessons. Nevertheless, the National Numeracy Strategy has been securely implemented and most of the current staff deliver it exceptionally well. They use commercially produced study units to support them in their work.
103. Pupils are assessed through a good range of regular assessments. Information from teacher assessments and results from standardised tests are used well to monitor and support their progress. Each pupil has his or her own target and predictions are set and revised for their performance in national tests. Test results are analysed to compare predictions with performance and to review the performance of boys and girls. However, much of this analysis is undertaken by the headteacher rather than the co-ordinator who does not therefore possess all the facts and insights into the subject that she is managing. From these assessments and teacher observations, a few pupils have been identified as being talented mathematicians. They have been offered extension work and the opportunity to sit the advanced Level 6 national test, though none has yet achieved it. The analysis of test results in the past also indicated the difficulties that pupils have experienced with solving word problems. Tackling this problem is a feature of the development plan for the subject and evidence during the inspection indicates that teachers are remedying the problem through lessons that concentrate on word problems and how to solve them.

## SCIENCE

104. Standards in science in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were in line with the national average, but they were well above the national average at the end of Year 6. These results are similar to the findings of the inspection by the end of Year 2, but are lower at the end of Year 6; they are, however, still above the expected level. The slight drop has been caused by changes in teachers. Overall pupils make good progress, though it is faster for the older pupils because of the quality of teaching they receive. Standards since the last inspection have improved at a rate greater than the national

trend, because of good teaching and detailed planning which emphasises a clear progression of skills. There were no significant differences in the performance of boys or girls based on school data. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in science lessons and make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language also achieve well because of the quality of the support they get from their class teachers.

105. Because pupils in Year 6 undertake many experiments, they have a good sense of scientific enquiry. They have a good understanding of the need to hypothesise, conduct a fair test and why they may need to repeat a test. They use this approach in many aspects of their work. For example, in their work on filtration, they successfully investigated how to separate clear water from dirty puddle water. In another on materials and their properties, they carefully investigated why some substances dissolved better than others did, which built on previous work on using and reading thermometers. In their work on micro-organisms, pupils investigated food decay and sources of infection with great interest. They can confidently and knowledgeably describe what they know about micro-organisms and the harmful and beneficial effects they have. The pupils use their previous knowledge well to decide on the method of recording their work. Pupils use their literacy skills well in the wide variety of ways in which they record their work.
106. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to make simple generalisations about physical phenomena. For example, they are able to explain that sound travels away from its source and becomes fainter. Teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves in order to develop skills of scientific enquiry. As a result, most pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to conduct an experiment and are beginning to understand the principle of a fair test. Pupils observe carefully, collect information and record their observations using scientific vocabulary, graphs and charts. Most pupils can recognise and name parts of flowering plants and know that plants require water and light for growth. In discussion, a small group of pupils could describe in detail how plants grow from seeds, from their own first hand experience of planting seeds at school. They also knew that children and adults need food and water to grow.
107. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. Teaching is now nearly always good and sometimes very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully, with high expectations. The best science lessons have very clear learning objectives and tasks matched well to the varying needs of all pupils. Most teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities, so that some pupils can record their work in diagrams while others are expected to write a commentary aided by a writing frame or to work unaided. A particular strength of the teaching is the effective use of challenging questioning which encourages pupils to explain their thinking and use the correct scientific terminology. This deepens their knowledge and understanding. This was evident in the very good Year 4 lesson on thermal conductors and insulators. The pupils were able to use their previous knowledge to investigate and plan a fair test on how they could change the brightness of a light bulb. Pupils were attentive and motivated by the pace of the lesson and the class teacher's enthusiasm. Resources support the teaching of the subject appropriately and are at times used very well. The Class 5 teacher ingeniously only provided a few of the resources necessary to conduct an experiment using circuits; the pupils then had to choose for themselves what else they needed. Teachers use behaviour stickers and reward points to maintain high levels of interest and good behaviour. The high level of practical work in many lessons adds considerably to pupils' learning. In these activities, they co-operate very well and can work collaboratively, as seen in the Class 2 lesson on roots and the Year 6 lesson on sound travel. There is a good working atmosphere in most lessons because of the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Good role models and high expectations ensure that pupils are on task and lessons proceed smoothly.

108. Progress since the last inspection has been good due to the good leadership offered by the co-ordinator, the deputy head. Although there is no action plan, she has a good understanding of the subject, although the lack of a plan has hindered the efforts of the temporary co-ordinator in developing the subject. A suitable scheme of work and a policy are in place and, because of this, progress throughout Years 1 to 6 is much less varied than it was at the time of the last inspection. The scheme of work now includes scientific investigations, which was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. This scheme is supplemented by a list of skills that pupils are to acquire at certain ages and while undertaking specific topics. Pupils' learning experience is enriched by whole school science weeks. Last year's theme 'The Earth and Beyond' was also closely linked to other subjects such as music, poetry and art. Opportunities for pupils to use the computer suite are very carefully identified and there are many opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills, as in the case of measuring temperatures in Class 3. Procedures for assessing pupils are now good; pupils' scientific experiments are assessed twice a year and the work samples are moderated. In some classes, this information is used well to set targets, but such use is not consistent across the school so a few pupils are less focused on what they need to do to improve. The co-ordinator has used her non-teaching time well to observe teaching and learning, and monitors teachers' half-termly planning. Teachers have observed each other teaching science and peer observation has supported staff and contributed to raised standards of teaching.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

109. Evidence from work seen on display and in the one lesson observed indicates that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is below the expectations for their age. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the attainment of pupils in Year 2. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection for those in Year 6. The school did try to improve standards in art after the last inspection. They organised staff training and had support from the local education authority. However, nearly all those teachers who received this training have now left or were on maternity leave during the inspection. Although there is a plan that ensures pupils have experiences that develop their skills and knowledge of art and design, they do not make satisfactory progress because of changes in teachers and a lack of monitoring of the curriculum. This has meant that art activities have not been provided for on a regular basis. All pupils, therefore, irrespective of gender, ability or background, make unsatisfactory progress. Improvement in this subject since the last inspection, in spite of the school's efforts, is unsatisfactory.
110. In discussion, a group of pupils from Year 6 knew the names of very few famous pieces of artwork and artists; Van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci were the only two remembered with ease. This clearly indicates deficiencies in their cultural development. In a lesson where they were making a collage of 12 panels depicting the legend of Herakles, they used paint and glue sensibly, although a few pupils had difficulty threading a needle. All of them could, however, explain their choice of material and suggest different techniques that would provide different effects.
111. In the only lesson taught during the time of the inspection, the teaching of art was good. The class teacher had planned and prepared the lesson well, which was the fifth in a series of lessons planning, developing the necessary skills and making a collage that told the story of Herakles. This linked well to the pupils' history topic. Pupils worked cooperatively and independently. The teacher used the summing up part of the lesson well to encourage pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. This was done in a supportive, open way so all pupils felt that they could contribute to the discussion, and many of them did so.

112. The co-ordinator for art, who is a temporary teacher at the school, has only recently taken on the role. National guidance is used to plan pupils' learning experiences but the art policy does not reflect this. Sketchbooks are underused. Teachers' plans, both short and medium term, rarely identify the specific skills to be taught. This therefore limits pupils' progress. Similarly, there are few explicit links made to English or mathematics and opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills are therefore not fully used. Historically, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity of monitoring this subject and this is unsatisfactory. There is some evidence of information and communication technology being used in art, for instance in relation to patterns and the work of Matisse in his painting, 'The Snail'. However, it is underused, especially in relation to paint programs. There is no consistent method of recording pupils' experiences or the skills that they have developed. Therefore, teachers cannot ensure that pupils have a full range of experiences and develop their skills. It also means that the co-ordinator cannot monitor effectively. The school has a good range of resources in terms of paint, pastels and charcoal, but a lack of storage space means that some resources, such as paper, is poorly stored so it gets damaged and is shabby in appearance. The art that is displayed is done adequately; there is an appropriate range, but there are few examples of art work from around the world. Even the posters that are displayed, such as 'Sunflowers' by Van Gogh, are not labelled so pupils do not have the opportunity to learn about this work. There is very little art in either two or three dimensions that reflects a range of different cultures.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. No design and technology was taught during the week of the inspection but discussion with pupils and an examination of their past work indicate that standards are in line with the expected level in both Year 2 and 6 all pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards at the age of 11 were below the expected level at the time of the last inspection. They have improved steadily because the school now plans using the national guidance for the teaching of design and technology. However, not all aspects of the subject are equally secure; construction is the weakest element
114. Pupils in Year 6 have used their skills in design to consider carefully the decoration of a box for friends and for famous footballers. In their deliberations, they purposefully chose colours and designs that made them both appealing to the eye and personal to the chosen recipient. Their skills in decorating their boxes were appropriate to their age but the boxes used were pre-made and the opportunity to construct their own box and use their numeracy skills was missed. In discussion, pupils described the research they carried out last term into different types of breads and which they preferred. However, they did not make any bread as the kitchen area was being renovated. They also described in detail how they used tools such as saws and drills to make moving toys with different sorts of cams. They said this required them to measure accurately. There was evidence in their books of how they had evaluated their work, but generally there was little recording of other work they had undertaken that reflected the whole of the 'design and make' process. Not all opportunities to use their literacy skills are therefore used.
115. In the last academic year, pupils currently in Year 6 had successfully undertaken 'Operation Renovation'. This relevant activity was born out of the need to improve their cloakroom. Pupils used a wide range of numeracy and literacy skills to redesign this area. For example, they produced scale drawings and wrote formal letters to the governors and local businesses requesting funds and donations – all of this written work was word-processed. Teachers' planning in other year groups showed that pupils had used the World Wide Web and CD-ROMs to research their designs on toys and to find out how different lights work.
116. By the age of seven pupils' knowledge of design is better than their skills at making. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the different puppets that they had studied. They

could name different types of puppets, such as finger, string and sock puppets, and describe how they were made to work. In their books they had drawings and labels to show how they intended to decorate their own sock puppets and with which materials. In doing this, they described what they liked and disliked about their designs. However, not all pupils had the opportunity to translate their design into reality. For those who did, their methods of joining were simplistic, often relying on sticky tape to do the job in a rather untidy fashion. However, all pupils did use split pins to make the moving joints of a paper clown cut out from a photocopied sheet.

117. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching as no lessons were observed. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, currently the headteacher, is aware that an aspect of the subject, especially construction, is not as strong as the design and evaluation of their work. Design and technology does not have a high profile in the school. There is a whole-school system for assessing pupils' attainment against key objectives. However, due to the frequent changes in staffing, the recording of any assessments has not been regularly undertaken and therefore their use to inform future planning or to set challenging activities has been limited. Due to financial constraints resources are barely adequate, especially tools to make things.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

118. Because of the way the cycle of topics is planned, no geography lessons in Years 3 to 6 were observed during the inspection, and only one was seen in Class 2. Judgements are therefore based on an analysis of pupils' work from previous topics, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff.
119. At the time of the last inspection, pupils in Year 6 were making unsatisfactory progress and did not achieve the expected standard for their age. However, due to the adoption of national guidance on the teaching of geography, pupils now in Year 6 make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. Nevertheless, due to the disruption caused by numerous staff changes, younger pupils have made unsatisfactory progress and their standards have fallen; they no longer achieve the expected standard for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress and achieve similarly to other pupils. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.
120. By Year 6, pupils have good skills in carrying out geographical enquiries, for instance when using computers to undertake research. In their physical geography topic on mountains and climates, they are able to confidently collect evidence, analyse it and draw conclusions from it. They therefore can name most of the physical features of rivers and mountains and understand how the climate and the physical environment interact. Information and communication technology, especially the Internet and CD-ROMs, have been instrumental in this work as there is a lack of maps and books in the school. This has an adverse affect on pupils' mapping skills that are below those expected for their age. In discussion, a group of pupils were able to debate environmental issues, arguing from different points of view whether the high street in the local village should be closed to traffic.
121. Pupils aged seven in Class 2 have very little recorded in their books. They have been studying the school and its immediate locality. They can recognise and name photographs of significant places in the area, but cannot locate them or where they live on the aerial photograph of the school and its surrounding area.
122. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. It was a well-planned and orderly lesson where the teacher's high expectations of pupil behaviour ensured that they were attentive and completed their work. The lesson also contained good links to other

subjects. Pupils effectively used time in the computer suite to plot the class results of places that they might visit locally onto a graph. They interpreted these results in a discussion that followed. However, in their books there was a limited amount of recorded work indicating that their literacy skills are not fully utilised.

123. Leadership and management of geography are satisfactory and there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has been in post for five terms and is currently on maternity leave. The adoption of national guidance on the teaching of the subject has ensured that through a four-year cycle pupils should cover all the appropriate themes and topics, thus giving them a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, its relatively recent introduction and a lack of monitoring by the co-ordinator due to changes in staffing and a lack of time has meant that it has not been adhered to closely. There is insufficient coverage of the subject, especially by younger pupils, and this is slowing their progress.
124. At the end of each topic, pupils are assessed on the basis of their skills, knowledge and understanding. In some classes, this information is clearly recorded but this is not consistently done throughout the school. Therefore, there is no complete picture of pupils' learning or a set of useful information that could be used to inform future planning. Currently there is no specific budget for geography and resources do not fully support the teaching of the subject. The teaching of geography is currently being reviewed as part of the whole school evaluation of the foundation subjects. The subject co-ordinator has already identified what is required for standards to improve but, due to her maternity leave, has not yet instigated these changes.

## **HISTORY**

125. Because of the way the cycle of topics is planned, no history lessons in Class 2 were observed during the inspection, but there were three lessons observed in the rest of the school. Judgements about the attainment and progress of the younger pupils are therefore based on an analysis of pupils' work from previous topics, the scheme of work, wall displays and discussions with pupils and staff.
126. Standards of attainment have risen strongly from being in line with the expected level at the time of the last inspection to well above for pupils in Year 6. However, they have fallen from satisfactory to unsatisfactory for pupils in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, progress is at least good. These good standards are due to the very good teaching and effective planning. However, the indication is that pupils in Year 2 make unsatisfactory progress and they are therefore underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make the same progress and achieve similarly to other pupils. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.
127. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an appropriate understanding of the importance of original sources. They compare a range of sources such as CD-ROMs, websites, census data, books and video material to study the way of life, beliefs and achievements of people at different periods of history. The use of key questions and testing of the reliability of data demonstrates good levels of attainment. Their written work demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the Ancient Greeks and how their civilisation has influenced the whole world. Pupils have also used this knowledge to produce multimedia presentations on their favourite Greek god, setting their work to music.
128. By the end of Year 2, it is planned that pupils should have covered a range of topics but to date they have not had sufficient opportunity to develop their historical skills or acquire new knowledge. The amount of work recorded in their books is limited to a few pieces based on old toys. The opportunities for them to use their literacy skills are also limited. In

discussion, pupils can identify toys that were 'made long ago', but their sense of chronology is weak, as is their factual knowledge about events or famous people.

129. The quality of teaching seen in Year 3 to Year 6 was very good. In these classes, teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions well to challenge the pupils and sustain their interest levels. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of a variety of resources. Teachers share their enthusiasm for the subject. Good links with other subjects are made. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson on evacuees in World War II, pupils studied copies of original letters and telegrams, and intended to tape-record questions that were to be answered by a member of the local community who had been evacuated. Pupils could describe the reasons for evacuation and had a good opportunity for extended writing. Pupils apply themselves well to their historical investigations and show enthusiasm. To sustain pupils' interest and motivation, teachers use a variety of methods including role-play; for example, the pupils had a visit from 'Queen Victoria'.
130. The leadership and management of history are good. The co-ordinator has been in post for one year and is in her second year of teaching. She is keen, enthusiastic and well qualified, and has already had a positive impact on standards from Years 3 to 6. Currently she monitors the medium-term plans and discusses ideas with colleagues. She has collected samples of pupils' work, taken photographs of historical displays and introduced an historical enquiry sheet. All of this is helping give the subject a high profile in the school and has helped raise standards. Since the last inspection, satisfactory improvements have been made in the curriculum and how pupils are assessed. The national guidance on the teaching of history has been adopted and a series of objectives for each unit has been developed, against which pupils are assessed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

131. At the time of the last inspection, standards for pupils in Year 6 were in line with the expected level for their age; they are now above and these pupils have made good progress. A particular strength is how they use computers to assist in their research. Standards have improved due to the quality of teaching and access to a computer suite that is frequently used for the development of skills by using a variety of programs in a range of subjects. Standards attained by those pupils in Year 2 have not improved to the same extent, but they are currently making satisfactory progress and achieving the expected level for their age. There was no notable difference in the attainment of boys and girls, and all pupils, irrespective of ability or background, made progress similar to the rest of their class.
132. Pupils in Year 6 are competent technically and confident in applying their skills to new situations or solving problems. A few high attaining pupils could even describe why 'scan disk' was in operation when the computers were turned on and what its function was. All pupils have used a wide range of skills and experiences to make multi-media presentations. Their work on the Ancient Greeks contained detailed information that they had researched on the World Wide Web, graphics that they had imported from other programs and well chosen music clips. However, there was a lack of more sophisticated visual imagery such as moving text. In their explanations of their work on birthdays and colours, they demonstrated a good understanding of the use of both databases and spreadsheets. In a lesson, under careful guidance and supervision from their teachers, pupils were very competent in their ability to use the World Wide Web. Their evaluation of a series of web pages on potatoes, linked to their mathematics work, was perceptive. However, although the pupils spoken to stated that they had used email at home, they had not done so at school. Their knowledge of how to use computers to control events in a predetermined manner and to monitor the environment is currently limited.

133. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident in logging on and finding the correct programs from the desktop. They thoroughly enjoy using the paint programs and demonstrate a good control of the mouse, although they cannot name the different tools that they use. Out of a group of three, only one boy could add text to their work, although the others quickly acquired the skill once he had told them how to do it. They were, however, more confident and skilled in copying and pasting artwork into word-processed documents. Although these pupils knew how to use the cursor, back key and shift keys they did not know how to highlight the text or change the font. Pupils understand that computers store information. They know why they should handle CD-ROMs with care and do so when they load them into the drive. In an observed lesson, all pupils were very confident in searching for information on plants, animals and transport using an encyclopaedia. However, their knowledge of control technology is weak; when asked, they did not know how to use a programmable floor robot, even though the school possesses one.
134. At both seven and 11, pupils do not demonstrate a sound knowledge or understanding of control or monitoring. The school lacks much of the equipment to undertake activities that involve monitoring or more complex aspects of control such as simple robotics. To compensate for this, it is planned that each class will visit a local technology centre for a day to cover this part of the curriculum. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be given as only two lessons were observed; one was good, the other satisfactory. The good lesson was well structured and thought out. It carefully built upon pupils' earlier experiences so they developed the skills by which to evaluate a web site. The good pace of the lesson and carefully chosen web sites meant that the activity was not only safe but kept pupils' interest. The teacher's very good questioning continually probed pupils' thinking and encouraged them to explain their views so that they made good gains in their learning. In the satisfactory lesson, pupils remained well behaved and used their computers well because they enjoyed searching the computerised encyclopaedia. However, the activities planned for them were not challenging and, as the teacher over-directed many of the activities and discussions, pupils did not achieve as well as they should. In both lessons, working with partners encouraged good social development.
135. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, currently the deputy head, has made a significant impact on the provision. Her drive and enthusiasm, as well as her own knowledge, have been influential in establishing the computer suite, a good ratio of computers to pupils and planning the use of computers in many other subjects. Pupils' learning experiences have been carefully planned to ensure that they develop their skills and broaden their experiences progressively as they move up the school through a series of mixed age classes. The system for assessing pupils' attainment is detailed, but the records have not been consistently completed and therefore some activities do not match pupils' abilities. However, it is hoped that a new approach to begin this year, based on a series of tests provided by the local education authority, should provide more comprehensive information that teachers can use to plan work. As part of a national initiative, all staff received training to develop their computing skills, but most of these staff have now left the school. All teachers at the school appear to be technically competent and the co-ordinator offers one-to-one training if specific requests are made. This has helped several staff become more competent in the use of the school network. Although there has been little formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, the nature of such a small school has ensured that the co-ordinator appreciates the development needs of the subject. These insights have been translated into a good long-term development plan, although it has not been adequately costed. Teachers are very careful when leading lessons that require pupils to use the World Wide Web and continually reinforce the benefits as well as the dangers of the Internet. Nevertheless, the school's Internet Safely Agreement has not been sent home to be signed by parents and this is unsatisfactory.

## MUSIC

136. There was very little evidence of pupils' performance in music. Evidence to support the inspection judgements comes from discussions with pupils and from the one lesson that was taught during the time of the inspection in Class 4. Based on this evidence, attainment in music is below the level expected for pupils in Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about attainment in Year 2. Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and standards have fallen since the time of the last inspection. According to parents and the school, standards have been higher and progress better but, with the departure of the very experienced musician who has been the co-ordinator, the quality of the music provision at the school has suffered. She had not been replaced by anyone with similar skills. Although the medium-term plans indicate that pupils should be taught the full range of the curriculum, this is not done frequently enough for them to make satisfactory progress. This also limits pupils' cultural development.
137. No judgement about the quality of singing can be made as no singing was heard. There was no singing in assemblies and, although music was playing as the pupils entered and left the hall, this opportunity to develop pupils' appreciation and knowledge of musical styles and different composers was not used. This limits both their spiritual and cultural development.
138. In discussion with pupils in Year 6, it was apparent that their knowledge of music was limited. They could name only a few composers such as Mozart and were unsure of musical terminology. They did report, however, they had composed some music using symbols and that they had listened to an extract from the opera 'Aida' and wrote down how it made them feel.
139. Teaching in the one lesson observed was good. There was thorough planning and preparation. The lesson was well resourced with appropriate instruments, recorded music and teaching prompts. Care was taken to ensure that all pupils had an opportunity to participate. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good. They enjoyed this relatively short music lesson. Good use was made of the summing up part of the lesson in order to assess how much pupils had understood. Good support was given to pupils with special educational needs in this lesson to enable them to make satisfactory progress. In particular, good support for behaviour enabled the lesson to continue without interruption. Good feedback sheets from the learning support assistants enabled the class teacher to have a clear picture of all pupils' understanding in this lesson.
140. A new teacher at the school has just taken on the co-ordination of music and, although willing, the co-ordination of the subject has been unsatisfactory due to a lack of continuity and expertise. Although the subject is part of the school's review of all foundation subjects, there is no development plan for the subject and there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning, and this is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is not as enriched as it used to be as the teacher who provided much of the extra-curricular activities has now left. However, the school does provide well for its talented musicians, arranging for them to have peripatetic support; a pupil now plays in the Bristol Youth Orchestra. The use of information and communication technology is under-developed. A recently purchased program, aimed at improving the quality and quantity of teaching, is not being widely used. There is no specific mention in teachers' planning of how pupils' numeracy or literacy skills are to be used.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Only a very limited range of activities in physical education could be seen during the inspection and these all related to gymnastics. No overall judgement can therefore be made about standards. As no lessons in Year 6 were observed no judgements about pupils' attainment have been made. However, pupils' performance in gymnastics in Year 2 is below the expected level for their age and pupils make unsatisfactory progress because

of worn equipment, for example mats. At the time of the last inspection, the judgement was that pupils' achievement was in line with the expected level for their age but, as this was based on dance, gymnastics and games, no direct comparison can be made with the present judgement. However, the provision for swimming is very good and has improved since the last inspection. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to swim on a weekly basis and they achieve very well.

142. By the age of seven, pupils can only perform the most basic actions that include travelling, turning, rolling and jumping. Most can combine these into a series of linked movements but these are simplistic and do not flow easily. Because of unsatisfactory behaviour, they do not always conduct themselves safely. In a lesson observed in Class 4, pupils' skills had developed little and, although they could explore a variety of combinations that included twisting and rolling in a series of balances and travelling, this lacked the sophistication or control normally expected of pupils of this age. Although older pupils understood the need to warm up and cool down, because they were not given the opportunity few could offer meaningful evaluations of their own or others' work or, based on this, improve their own performance.
143. The teaching of physical education ranges from unsatisfactory to good; it is satisfactory overall. In the good lessons, there were well-focused objectives for what the pupils were to learn and the teachers made their objectives and expectations about pupil behaviour very clear. Consequently, pupils made at least satisfactory progress, although their attainment was sometimes below average. In a lesson in Class 3, there was a very good emphasis on quality and improving performance. Pupils worked together well independently and worked hard. All pupils were included very well in this lesson. This was because the class teacher had planned the lesson well and a learning support assistant gave very good support to a pupil with special educational needs. The two adults worked together well as a team. In all three lessons observed, pupils knew the reason why they were warming up and could explain this well. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, there were far too many objectives for the lesson and they were not specific enough. The class teacher did not check pupils' understanding sufficiently before setting them off on a task and consequently many pupils were inattentive. Coupled with this were low expectations about pupils' behaviour and insufficient classroom control. Therefore, progress was unsatisfactory. In general, teachers did not provide pupils with an opportunity to evaluate or improve their efforts and this limited their progress.
144. The current, temporary co-ordinator is very well experienced and enthusiastic, but he has only been at the school since January 2003 and has therefore had minimal impact. The school has recently audited this subject as part of its foundation subject review. It has already identified that some gymnastics equipment needs to be replaced as this is hindering pupils' progress and there continues to be a problem with the surface on the outdoor games area which limits pupils' opportunities to practise their games skills safely. There is a reasonable whole school plan that ensures pupils have a wide range of experiences and progressively build up their skills. In the past, this has been well supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities, but recent changes in staffing have meant that many of these activities have stopped. There has been no systematic monitoring of this subject or assessment of pupils' performance and this is unsatisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. A diocesan inspector will inspect religious education separately.