

# INSPECTION REPORT

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School  
Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique Reference Number: 103721

Headteacher: Paul Ryan

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Reporting inspector: Gloria Hitchcock

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706684

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harry Rose Road Coventry CV2 5AT
Telephone number:	024 7644 5900
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J McCann
Date of previous inspection:	December 1995

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Gloria Hitchcock Registered Inspector	Science History Geography Equal opportunities	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency
Richard Barnard Lay Inspector		
Glesni Thomas	English Art Music Areas of learning for children under five	Curriculum and assessment
Jeniffer Young	Mathematics Design and technology Information technology Physical education Special educational needs	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Staffing, accommodation and resources

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The very good teaching of mathematics produces high standards.
- Teaching overall is good and in almost a fifth of lessons it is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school.
- It promotes very positive attitudes to learning.
- It provides a caring environment in which pupils, staff and the community are valued.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- It promotes very good behaviour and relationships.

### WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- Higher attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently in English and science.
- Lesson plans do not always identify what pupils are expected to learn in the lesson.
- Standards of written work in some subjects do not reflect what pupils know and can do.
- Some of the information technology equipment is out of date.

The school provides a good quality of education. The weaknesses, which are outweighed by what the school does well, will form the basis of the governors' action plan to be sent to parents or guardians of all pupils at the school.

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

Pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching have both improved since the last inspection in December 1995. The school has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection report and has made good improvements. In particular, active measures have been introduced to improve the cultural, creative and aesthetic experiences of the pupils; provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now very good and a strength of the school. Teachers have developed policies and subject guidance and as a result have achieved greater consistency in what pupils learn as they move from class to class. The school is very well placed to improve the good quality of education it offers because of its effective leadership and management

### STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
English	C	E	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
Mathematics	A	B	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
Science	C	D	<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

This information shows that standards are average in English and science when compared with all schools nationally, but well below average in English and below average in science when compared with similar schools. In mathematics standards are well above average in comparison with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. These results reflect the standards attained in the present Year 6. In information technology standards are average overall and improve as pupils move up the school. At the age of seven pupils attain average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in most

subjects and reach appropriate standards for their age. They make very good progress in mathematics and music in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress.

#### QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Very good	Very good
Science	N/A	Good	Good
Information Technology	N/A	Good	Good
Religious education	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

Teaching is good overall and is never less than satisfactory. In 53 per cent of lessons teaching is good and in a further 17 per cent it is very good. The very good teaching takes place in the older junior classes and in the reception class. The remaining lessons are satisfactory; no unsatisfactory lessons were observed.

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

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good at all times. Pupils are polite, considerate and helpful.
Attendance	Good. The great majority of pupils attend regularly and promptly.
Ethos*	Very good. The school provides a caring environment where pupils are valued and have very good attitudes to learning.
Leadership and management	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is supported well by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and the very good range of out of school activities and educational visits enriches pupils learning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A significant strength of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good range of staff expertise. The school is well-resourced. Accommodation is satisfactory.
Value for money	Good.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*



## **THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **What most parents like about the School**

- The attitudes and values that the school promotes.
- It is very good at looking after their children.
- The good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- It generally provides good information for parents.
- Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.

### **What some parents are not happy about**

Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Inspection evidence indicates that homework is used effectively. The school has made good arrangements to deal with the large number of pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

- Raise standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in English by:
  - planning activities that specifically challenge these pupils;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in creative and extended writing;
  - ensuring that pupils know exactly what to do to move to the next stage of learning;
  - placing greater emphasis on achieving a high standard of presentation of work.

(Paragraphs 6, 10, 12, 14, 25, 27, 75, 78-9, 82, 85-6, 125)

\* Raise standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in science by:

- organising tasks in lessons so that higher attaining pupils are fully challenged;
- ensuring that pupils' presentation of their findings is of high quality and reflects more accurately what they know and can do.

(Paragraphs 6, 10, 25, 27, 35, 97, 99-100, 102-03)

In addition to these key issues, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensure that teachers' planning consistently identifies what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson ;  
(Paragraphs 27, 32, 85, 102)
- upgrade and improve the equipment for information and communications technology;  
(Paragraphs 58, 110)
- build pupils' skills in art systematically as they move through the school;  
(Paragraphs 14, 111, 115)
- improve the unsatisfactory toilet facilities.  
(Paragraph 46)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated on the eastern edge of Coventry. There are 199 pupils (102 boys and 97 girls) taught in eight classes by nine teachers, one of whom is part-time. The average class size is 28. Pupils start school in the September before their fifth birthday and at the time of the inspection very few children had reached their fifth birthday. Four per cent of pupils are registered for free school meals, which is lower than the national average. Three pupils speak English as an additional language, which is higher than most schools. Forty-nine pupils (25 per cent) are on the school's special needs register and 2.5 per cent have a statement of special educational need, which is well above average in comparison with schools in Coventry. The number of pupils attending the school has declined by 20 since the last inspection in 1995. There is a 'Pilgrim Care Club' that provides breakfast before school and a range of activities after school for children whose parents choose to join. Pupils start school with standards that are broadly average.

2. The mission statement of the school states that it :

- hopes to manage in the current climate of educational change in a manner which will speak of God's love and care of each individual
- will underpin all that takes place in St Gregory's with the love and hope of the Christian message
- the idea of Christian Community will be at the heart of school
- caring on a human scale, built on dialogue, collaboration and partnership
- committed to the development and education of the whole child
- fostering relationships of mutual respect

1. In addition the aims are:

- to integrate the Catholic ethos into the social, moral and spiritual attitude of the children by aiming to develop each child's full potential: spiritually, intellectually, morally, physically, emotionally and socially
- to be an open, living, worshipping community that fosters close links between the school, home and parish and provides preparation for entry into the wider community
- to make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences and contribute successfully to the development of faith of each individual

1. The school's key priorities in the current year are:

- to improve standards in literacy and in particular to increase standards of higher attaining pupils
- to improve the provision for information technology

1. The school has set the following targets for the year 2000 for the proportion of pupils in Year 6 to reach the level expected nationally :

English	77%
Mathematics	81%

## 5. Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	15	27

5. National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	23	25	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (93)	93 (90)	96 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)
5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	22	25	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (80)	93 (85)	97 (83)
	National	82 (80)	86 (81)	87 (85)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year: 1999	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	20	29

5. 1999 National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	25	26	26
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	86 (79)	90 (72)	90 (72)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)
5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	24	26	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	83 (83)	86 (79)	94 (83)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

5. *Figures in parenthesis refer to the previous reporting year*

5. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete Reporting year:	Authorised	School	4.7
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

5.

5. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during The previous year:			Number
		Fixed period	2
		Permanent	0

5. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:			%
		Very good or better	17
		Satisfactory or better	100
		Less than satisfactory	0

## 5. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 5. Attainment and progress

2. In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards in mathematics were well above average when compared with all schools nationally and above average when compared with similar schools. In comparison with the national average, the school's results were also well above average for the proportion reaching the expected level for eleven-year-olds and well above average for the proportion reaching the higher than expected Level 5. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average, and the proportion reaching higher levels was in line with the average. Standards in English were average when compared with all schools nationally, but well below average when compared with similar schools. The school was well above average in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4, but well below average in the percentage reaching the higher Level 5. This is because the school does well in supporting average and lower attaining pupils but higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently to reach the higher levels. Standards in science were average in comparison with all schools, but below average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for eleven-year-olds was above average in comparison with all schools and average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was average in comparison with all schools but below average in comparison with similar schools.

3. Standards have shown a steady improvement over the last three years and are better than at the time of the last inspection. In mathematics, standards have shown a significant improvement, due to the school's success in implementing the numeracy strategy very effectively. The standards seen by inspectors in Year 6 classes are similar to those attained by the previous cohort in the National Curriculum tests.

4. The end of Key Stage 1 assessments in 1999 show that standards in reading are below average; in writing and mathematics they are above average and science they are average, but a high proportion of pupils reach the level expected of seven-year-olds. Standards have been fairly steady over the last three years, although there has been an improvement in mathematics. The evidence of the inspection confirms these standards.

5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 but there are good examples of pupils reaching higher standards in some elements of ICT. For example, pupils in Year 6 use the Internet to gain important information or share the findings on their weather project in geography with schools in Spain and France.

6. Overall, in most subjects, pupils make good progress as they move through the school, though there are variations; pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in mathematics and music in Key Stage 2, due to the very good teaching they receive. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because they have clear, step-by-step plans to help them move forward and teachers plan lessons successfully to ensure that work is matched well to their needs. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics but in English and science their progress slows to satisfactory because the work they are set is not matched sufficiently well to what they can actually do and where they need to move next.

7. Overall, children under five make good progress. They enter the school as four-year-olds with standards that are about average for children of this age. Progress is good in personal and social development, mathematics and creative development, whilst in the other three areas of learning progress is satisfactory. As a result of their good progress, in turn the consequence of good teaching and the careful attention paid to children's personal and social development, children reach higher than average standards in mathematics and social and personal development by the time they are five, measured against the nationally defined Desirable Learning Outcomes. In the other areas of learning standards at five years of age match those expected. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection

8. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. They make good progress in speaking and listening and, for example,

listen carefully in literacy hours. They respond well to questions and their vocabulary develops quickly, partly because teachers plan effectively to develop this aspect of English. In the younger classes pupils contribute to whole class discussions confidently, as when Year 1 pupils suggested during a literacy lesson what Handa might have in her basket in 'Handa's Surprise'. Most pupils in Year 2 speak confidently. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and can use a range of strategies such as sounding out letters or gaining clues from pictures to read unfamiliar words. This is supported effectively by the good use of homework. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing and by the end of Year 2 most can write sentences and use full stops accurately. Handwriting is satisfactory, but insufficient care is taken in the presentation of work.

9. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in mathematics and, in particular, in numeracy. This is because the school has been very effective in the teaching of numeracy following its involvement in an early pilot scheme. Some higher attaining Year 1 pupils confidently followed the instructions of a game, substituting times on clock faces for symbols. These symbol shapes form a given pattern if all the answers are correctly placed in a tray. Year 2 pupils apply addition and subtraction rules, use number squares and blocks apparatus in order to work out missing numbers up to 50 and 100. By the end of Year 2 they have a good understanding of number and can carry out simple calculations. Pupils enjoy and are competent in carrying out mathematical investigations and use resources such as fraction number blocks confidently. In science pupils progress from simple descriptions of different materials, such as 'shiny, hard, stretchy', to knowing that water freezes when it is very cold and melts again when warm. They develop sound skills in scientific investigations. Pupils' attitudes to ICT lessons are very positive and their progress good; pupils' interest and enthusiasm helped them to conquer the intricacies of using a CD-ROM to locate information. Pupils make very good progress in music due to the good teaching they receive. In all other subjects, except art in which progress is satisfactory, they make good progress.

10. In Key Stage 2 pupils' make good progress in speaking and listening and standards are above average; this is a strength of the English in the school. Older pupils speak clearly and with a good range of expression, both in small groups and when taking a lead in large assemblies. For example, four Year 6 pupils led the whole of a Year 5 and 6 assembly on the topic of Martin Luther King with supreme confidence, including readings, prayers and requests for pupils to join in with the well-chosen hymn. Progress in writing is only satisfactory and pupils work is not always presented sufficiently carefully. This means that their written work does not accurately reflect what they really know and can do. Progress in reading is good. In mathematics pupils make very good progress, especially in the older classes. They develop an increasing strength in using and applying their mathematical skills in a variety of situations, for example Year 6 pupils use their mathematical skills to help them create orienteering course maps, providing a good link with geography and physical education. By the end of the key stage their skills in numeracy are well above average and they manipulate whole numbers, fractions, decimals and algebraic formulae with confidence. Pupils develop increasing skills in scientific investigation, for example they move from being able to describe some groups of materials in Year 3 to a sound understanding of solids, liquids and gases, as a result of their own investigations. Pupils make good progress in ICT and by Year 5 and 6 have a growing knowledge of the potential of software to handle information and manipulate data. Pupils make very good progress in music due to the good teaching they receive, but progress drops to satisfactory in art, as skills are not taught systematically as pupils move through the school. Progress is good in all other subjects.

11. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection and there has been a significant improvement in mathematics. The school has realistic, well-planned targets to raise standards further.

## 15. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

12. The personal and social development of children under five years of age is good. Children are very happy and secure in school. They are confident to try a new task, and begin to cooperate when working in a group. They enjoy very good relationships with other children and with all the adults who work in the reception class. Their behaviour is also very good. Children express their feelings and needs easily and give reasons for likes and dislikes. They ask pertinent questions, concentrate, persevere and seek help when they need it. Independence and maturity are shown when selecting equipment, in dressing and personal hygiene. They develop an increasing awareness of what is right and wrong.

13. The pupils' attitude to their work is very good throughout the school and this has a very positive effect on their attainment and progress. They are interested in their work, enthusiastic and very well motivated. Many ideas and suggestions are offered during discussions, particularly at the beginning and end of lessons when different opinions are considered and group findings are shared. Pupils concentrate hard on the tasks set for them, and persevere when not immediately successful. Those with special educational needs show considerable effort as they attempt to read and spell words correctly, or fold paper shapes in half. From an early age, the pupils learn to undertake personal study and to accept responsibility for their own work. For example, in science, history and design and technology high quality teamwork is seen in both key stages. Groups of pupils choose and use resources independently and select books in order to research for further information. Pupils are keen to improve and are rightly proud of good work, as seen, for example, when the upper juniors talk about their school website and how they intend to develop the class pages further.
14. The pupils' behaviour is very good, both in lesson times and outside the classroom, which enables them to make the most of the many opportunities, provided for them. Pupils are mature, caring and considerate and respond well to their teachers' high expectations. They are courteous and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. Dinner times are an enjoyable social occasion as pupils move about school in an orderly way and play amicably and sensibly in the playground. Whilst involved in co-operative games using the parachute, their immediate response to adult instructions was excellent, showing a sensitivity and appreciation of school rules. Pupils are extremely trustworthy. They mark some of their own work accurately and collect and return equipment from their many games activities without supervision. They take good care of the books and apparatus they use, including respecting items left on display; for example, the antique bicycles borrowed from the museum were stored near the doorway where pupils enter and leave the building and were always treated carefully and with respect. When they complete tasks, they clear away sensibly and responsibly, leave resources tidily for other pupils' use. Incidences of inappropriate behaviour are very rare but if they occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Older pupils readily assist younger ones, and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by peers at both work and at play. There have been two exclusions from school for poor behaviour.
15. Relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils are very positive, enabling pupils to work together effectively, to collaborate on joint projects, help each other to complete work and enjoy team activities. One pupil in Year 6 automatically took a chair to help another who was kneeling on the floor to use a laptop computer. These very good relationships have a significant impact on the pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. Respect is shown for the views and achievement of others, with older pupils showing they understand that others can hold valid opinions, which may be different from their own. They show good humour and tolerance towards each other.
16. The pupils respond very well to the school's provision for their personal development. They develop team spirit in their sporting activities and in particular by using their own initiative when organising orienteering activities that involve drawing routes, maps and compiling rules. The pupils are eager to help around school, collecting registers, setting up computers, preparing musical instruments and other tasks assigned by the teachers. Older pupils develop good independent learning skills when undertaking individual projects and respond very well to the opportunities to investigate issues for themselves, for example when solving mathematical problems at the start of the lessons. Overall, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and have been maintained since the last inspection. This is a strength of the school.

## 20. **Attendance**

17. The level of attendance at the school is good and is higher than the national average. A steady increase in the overall level of attendance has been maintained since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in absence levels between classes. Very few pupils take holidays during term time. The great majority of pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly. Pupils' good attendance has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.

## 21. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### 21. Teaching

18.The overall quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. In 53 per cent of lessons observed teaching was of good quality and in a further 17 per cent of lessons teaching was very good. Teaching was satisfactory in the remaining 30 per cent; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The very good teaching took place in the Reception year and in the older classes in Key Stage 2. In particular, 38 per cent of teaching in Year 6 was very good and this has a direct impact on the higher rate of progress of these pupils. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged satisfactory, with some good examples. It was judged good in Reception and this has been maintained. The inconsistencies referred to in the last report have been rectified by the introduction of consistent policies and guidance for staff.

19.Teaching in the under-fives is good overall; in 13 per cent of lessons teaching is very good. Work is planned suitably to take account of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for five-year-olds and good emphasis is given to personal and social development, underpinned by the strong Christian ethos of the school. The best teaching is in mathematics, where the teacher makes good use of routines such as calling the register to develop pupils' mathematical skills. Language and literacy teaching effectively develops pupils' early reading skills as they are encouraged to join in reading key passages from the 'big books'. Teachers prepare children well for their move to the National Curriculum. They manage children very well; the very good relationships teachers have with children give them confidence and have a positive impact on their progress. Teachers know pupils very well and use assessment information satisfactorily to develop steadily through their time in Reception.

20.A particular strength of the teaching throughout the school is the teaching in mathematics. Teachers have responded very positively to their participation in the first trials of the numeracy strategy three years ago. As a result they have gained considerable skills in combining their high expectations for the pupils with the specific tasks and approaches to teaching advocated in the pilot. As a result the quality of teaching has improved significantly; lessons are more clearly focused, the pace is brisk and very clear targets are set for pupils to let them know what they have to do next in order to improve further. This has a direct and obvious impact on the standards pupils achieve, so that standards in mathematics are well above average by the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. They use praise for good achievement effectively to encourage further progress, as when some lower attaining pupils had just discovered how to find half of a whole. There is good challenge to reach new heights, such as when Year 4 pupils were working on the equivalent meaning of fractions in decimals. This has a very beneficial effect on pupils' enjoyment and confidence in mathematics. This is especially evident in Years 4, 5 and 6. The numeracy strategy has been implemented very effectively in the school.

21.Overall, in other subjects, teachers have good subject knowledge, which is especially strong in music and physical education. This has a positive impact on the progress pupils make in these subjects. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and work hard to help them achieve their best. They plan carefully so that work is particularly well matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils. This has a direct impact on the progress these pupils make and is illustrated in the steady increase in the percentage of pupils who reach the nationally expected Level 4 by the time they leave school. However, although work is matched well to the needs of higher attaining pupils in mathematics, in English and science planning does not identify sufficiently clearly exactly what activities are designed to challenge and stretch these pupils. The targets they are set to help them improve in these subjects are not sufficiently specific.

22.Teachers manage pupils very well, which has a direct impact on the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. They use time and resources very well; in numeracy lesson teachers use digit cards in a variety of ways to help pupils conquer mental calculations, while in several lessons on ICT in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6 all the space and computers not used by pupils doing physical education were taken over and adult helpers were used effectively to make the most of these opportunities. Teachers make good use of homework, particularly in English, to further extend pupils' learning.

23.Not a minute is wasted; for example, teachers take registers quickly and efficiently, often while pupils are



preparing for other activities. Teachers' consistently high expectations of good behaviour have a very positive impact and mean that they can use the time for productive teaching. They make good links between subjects, which helps pupils understand what they are studying; for example, Year 4 pupils were taught how to make interesting tablets using new techniques in clay and a design based on Viking runes, which reinforced their learning in history. The literacy strategy has been implemented satisfactorily but does not match the success of the numeracy strategy. Planning does not identify sufficiently the tasks that challenge the higher attaining pupils specifically and their targets for improvement are too general to help them make the progress they should. There is not always sufficient emphasis on requiring pupils to produce high quality written work that reflects accurately what they understand and can do and there are insufficient opportunities for extended, creative writing. These are some of the factors that contribute to the lower than average number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in English and science.

24. However, teachers make good use of pupils' learning in literacy to help them in other subjects, such as history, geography and information technology. Teaching in ICT is good; teachers plan interesting and exciting activities for pupils, as when pupils in Year 6 help set up the school's web page. Teachers promote pupils' skills in speaking and listening very effectively, which is reflected in the good standards pupils achieve in this element of English. For example, in one Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils were required to speak clearly as they presented their findings about algebraic symbols while others had to listen very carefully and decide what should be included in the class checklist. Assessment is used satisfactorily; teachers are conscientious about recording what pupils know but in most subjects they do not use this information sufficiently to move pupils on to the next stage. Marking is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the classroom assistants, who make a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

## 28. **The curriculum and assessment**

25. The curriculum is broad, generally well balanced and covers all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education (in accord with the school's denominational status) for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum for under fives is good, based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils of this age and leads smoothly into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. Throughout the school all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

26. The emphasis the school places on literacy is reflected in the fact that over a third of teaching time is devoted to English. The school allocates an appropriate amount of time to mathematics, science and other subjects, with the exception of art. Good provision is made for pupils' personal and social development and this includes some very good lunch time opportunities for parachute games to promote co-operation and this has a positive impact on the development of pupils' inter-personal skills. Health education, drugs education and human growth are incorporated successfully into the science and religious education provision. The governors' policy is not to provide sex education.

27. The school decided to introduce the National Literacy Strategy gradually throughout the school within the past year. Many features have been successfully introduced, but the strategy has not yet had time to fully bed down. The school has been very successfully involved in the Coventry numeracy project for several years and this has had a very positive impact on teaching, learning and attainment in mathematics. The project has paved the way for the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been very effectively introduced in the school this year.

28. Long-term plans for all subjects of the curriculum provide a sound framework to ensure steady progress as pupils move through the school. Medium term planning is satisfactory and broadly identifies what pupils are to learn over a half term period. The high quality planning in mathematics clearly identifies what pupils are to learn over time, enables teachers to specify precisely what pupils are expected to learn and promotes good progress in mathematics. A weakness in planning in some subjects is the failure to identify clearly enough what pupils are expected to learn in each element of work. Nevertheless, a few teachers clearly specify key questions to be addressed over the medium term.

29. The cultural and spiritual dimensions of the curriculum have been strengthened in response to the previous inspection report and the curriculum now reflects a greater degree of cultural diversity. For instance, in Year

Two, when the register is called, they reply in French or Spanish, in Year 6 pupils write biographies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King and, in their music lessons, hear music from China and other countries. The school has provided good opportunities for cultural and aesthetic development through work with visiting artists, including members of the Birmingham Royal Ballet and these have had a positive impact on the pupils' progress in music.

30. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which make a significant impact on the quality of pupils' education. These include a prayer group, a choir and clubs for chess, recorder players, sports, crafts, drama, and learning French. Each year, Year 6 pupils visit a residential centre in Wales, and Year 5 pupils have a residential retreat to mark the start of their Confirmation programme.

31. Assessment procedures are good throughout the school. Local education authority base line assessments are used when pupils enter school and the school makes good use of standardised tests, optional national standards assessment tasks and school based tests to track pupils' yearly progress throughout the school. During the year, regular, carefully recorded assessments are made of progress over the short term. For under fives, information from assessments is well used to inform curriculum planning. For example, in the reception class during the week of the inspection, the teacher used her knowledge of the words pupils could already recognise to plan an enjoyable and productive word matching bingo game which provided different learning targets according to what the children already knew. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good and contribute to the good individual education plans prepared for the pupils. In general, in Key Stages 1 and 2, appropriate use is made of assessment information to help teachers plan for the next stage of learning. In mathematics good use is made of the information gleaned from assessment to set well-focused learning targets and this enables pupils to make good progress in mathematics. However, information from assessments is not consistently well used to ensure that what is being taught builds on what pupils already know understand and can do and this holds back the progress made by higher attaining pupils.

32. The school has a sound assessment policy and good arrangements for collecting a portfolio of moderated work across the curriculum. Evidence of pupils' attainment is gathered in individual portfolios and a Record of Achievement folder includes work selected by pupils. There are good procedures to pass on information about pupils' performance as they move from class to class and as they transfer to other schools.

### **36. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a significant strength of the school. The school has addressed very effectively the key issue in the previous report to extend and enhance the cultural, creative and aesthetic experiences of the pupils.

34. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered very well through the school's ethos, through assemblies and in lessons. The school places a strong emphasis on Catholic ideals but balances this with a spiritual environment where pupils are encouraged to reflect upon a range of views and the wonders of life. There is often a real sense of awe and wonder in lessons, as in one science lesson when Year 6 pupils gasped at the sight of their lighting system illuminating a building constructed from card.

35. Assemblies cover a very good range of topics and provide pupils with very good opportunities for reflection, awe and prayer. For example, a story based on Chinese culture was used very well to emphasize the theme of sharing. Music and singing are used very well in assemblies to create a spiritual atmosphere. Opportunities are provided to reflect upon aesthetic questions and the wonders of life in art, history, science and literacy. Displays around the corridors give very good encouragement the development of pupils' spiritual awareness. The photographs showing 'prayer partners' are a good example of how pupils are encouraged in their approach to spirituality.

36. Provision for moral development is very good and is an integral part of school life. The staff provide a very good moral framework for pupils. They are taught the difference between right and wrong in a sensitive and effective manner and are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their own behaviour and that of others. Loyalty, working together and trust are essential ingredients of the school's ethos and are consistently

encouraged by all staff in lessons, assemblies and throughout the school. Pupils are valued and their achievements celebrated, for example in weekly class awards for good work and behaviour and in the many displays of sporting and cultural achievements.

37.The school's provision for social development is very good. Very good relationships between staff and pupils are encouraged; for example, the caretaker assists extra-curricular activities such as chess and football. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively or in groups; in music Year 6 pupils work well to compose and perform their compositions in small groups. Pupils are made aware of others less fortunate than themselves by contributing to a range of charities. They are encouraged to develop social skills well through a wide range of day and residential visits, and a full range of sporting fixtures with other schools.

38.The school makes very good provision for pupils' cultural awareness and this is an area of significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils study other faiths, are told stories from a wide variety of cultures and traditions and study art, artists, music and musicians from a range of countries and backgrounds. Pupils are made fully aware of the cultural diversity of the society in which they live. Particularly strong is the emphasis the school places on pupils' developing an awareness of the culture and heritage of the local area. The richness and diversity of the opportunities available locally are made full use of by the school, through visits to sites of local historical significance and through strong links with Coventry City Football Club and Birmingham Royal Ballet. The school's involvement in the Comenius European project gives pupils an insight into the life and culture of children in France and Spain. The provision makes a significant and positive impact on pupils' personal and social development.

#### 42. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

39.The provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is good, maintaining the standards detailed in the previous report. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well and provide very well for their personal needs. Parents find that members of staff are approachable, supportive and take good care of their children. Particularly good care is taken by teachers of the youngest pupils to ensure they are collected by a responsible person at the end of the school day. Arrangements for supporting pupils' academic and personal progress are good and allow appropriate support to be given to pupils as they move from class to class. The school makes very good arrangements to support pupils on their entry to school, including good liaison with local pre-school providers and home visits by the reception teacher, ensuring that pupils settle quickly and happily into the reception class and helping them to make good progress. Pupils are given good support and guidance to prepare them for their move to secondary school.

40.Procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very effective and have a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes, relationships and standards of behaviour. Teachers and other staff have very high expectations of how pupils will behave and respond, and consistently use praise and rewards to promote very good standards. Procedures to deal with bullying are sensitive and appropriate, although very rarely required.

41.Arrangements to promote regular attendance and punctuality are very effective and have helped the school to achieve a steady increase in levels of attendance. Registers are well kept and regular analysis ensures that patterns of attendance are carefully monitored.

42.Child protection procedures within the school are good. The headteacher, as the designated person, is well aware of issues, ensures staff are appropriately informed and trained, and liaises well with local agencies. Fire drills and tests are recorded regularly. Health and safety issues are monitored and identified thoroughly. The unsatisfactory toilet facilities for pupils remains an outstanding issue which has been identified by the school. The school is clean, tidy and secure. It effectively promotes pupils' health and well being, including drugs and sex education, with good support from local agencies.

#### 46. **Partnership with parents and the community**

43.The school works hard to maintain and further develop good partnerships with parents and the local community. The success it achieves has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, attainment and progress. The school

provides good information for parents. They receive full and helpful information through the school prospectus, which is helpful to new and prospective parents, regular newsletters, which give good information on school life, events and topics to be covered by pupils, and the governors' annual report. Arrangements for reporting on pupils' attainment and progress are good. The quality of annual reports are good overall. They give very good details on pupils' achievements and progress in all subjects, and very good comments on pupils' personal development. Some give good indication of areas for future improvement of development but this is not a consistent approach.

44. Parents feel that they are welcome in the school and are encouraged to support their children's education. Their involvement is good and they respond well to this encouragement. The quality of parental support in the classroom is good with a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and attainment. Parents give good support to the school's homework policy, with the homework diaries providing a very good method of two-way communication between teachers and parents. Parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and promptly and are very good about informing the school promptly about absences. They support functions and performances well; a few have responded positively to the school's good recent initiative to set up a parents' association.

45. The school makes very good efforts to be an integral part of the community. The considerable success it achieves has a very positive impact on pupils' progress, attitudes and personal development. The before and after school care club provides a very good child care service for parents. A guitar club for parents and a drop-in centre for parents of children with special educational needs are good examples of the school's positive approach. The school plays a very active part in the life of the parish. Strong links with a local college has resulted in the placement of students whose work in the classroom has a positive effect on lessons.

46. Very good use in the local area to support pupils' learning especially in history and geography. Links with a very wide range of local business and organizations provide pupils with a wealth of experiences and make a significant contribution to their personal and social development. The involvement of a local business in relationship to a project on weather has very positive benefits for pupils' attitudes and attainment not only in geography but also mathematics, science, art and English. Links with local Catholic schools are very good, with especial benefits in physical education through regular sporting events.

## 50. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 50. **Leadership and management**

47. The leadership and management of the school are very good. In particular, the new headteacher has a clear vision for the future educational direction for the school and is supported well by the deputy headteacher and staff. Governors also give good support to the headteacher and are well informed about the school's work. Together, staff, governors and headteacher are successful in creating a very good ethos, where pupils are encouraged to develop very positive attitudes to learning and which provides a caring environment in which pupils and staff are valued. Governors are well informed about the work of the school; the chair of governors visits the school weekly and other governors visit regularly, for example to work in the library, to help in classrooms or to observe lessons. The parish priest is a governor and chaplain to the school and visits frequently to provide pastoral support for staff and pupils. The very good working relationships between governors, headteacher and staff have a positive effect on the ethos of the school and the standards pupils achieve.

48. Governors and the headteacher review the school development plan regularly and governors receive reports from co-ordinators on subject developments. There are clear and realistic targets for future improvement. This has a positive impact on pupils' education. The steps necessary to achieve each target are identified well but it is not always easy to recognise which are the main priorities for the school. Despite this, all staff are clear that the priorities this year are literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The school's aims and values are implemented very effectively and reflect the strong community spirit that exists. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the school meets its legal requirements.

49. Subject co-ordinators and the special educational needs co-ordinator lead their areas of responsibility well. Teachers' plans for all subjects are monitored regularly by co-ordinators and the senior management team. Lessons are observed according to the school's priorities; for example, numeracy was the last focus and is superseded this year by literacy. There is a strong tradition of teamwork in the school, which means that all staff make a valued contribution to decisions.

50. Management overall has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. The school has taken positive and effective steps to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, which focused on improving the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and developing policies and schemes of work to provide guidance for staff in teaching all subjects. The leadership and management of the school are good enough to ensure that the good quality of education it offers can be built upon very effectively in the future.

#### **54. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

51. The school has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. All the staff have clear job descriptions and are encouraged to use their expertise effectively in the areas which they co-ordinate. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the school. They are appropriately trained, and this enables them to have a very positive impact on the standards achieved in class throughout the school and supporting pupils with special educational needs. Secretarial, caretaking, canteen staff and lunchtime supervisors work as part of the staff team and their extra contributions add much to the community dimension of the school. Their efforts are valued by the headteacher, teachers and pupils who all benefit significantly from what they do.

52. There are good systems for staff development, which successfully address the needs of the school and individual staff members. Training the teaching of numeracy and literacy has been organized successfully. There is a sound system for the appraisal of teachers, which takes the form of annual professional interviews with the headteacher. Personal targets for development are set at this time. Arrangements for the induction of new teachers are particularly effective because of the close informal support network that exists between the staff. This meets the needs of newly qualified and more experienced staff fully whilst enabling co-ordinators to gain more knowledge and understanding of the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school.

53. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is clean, tidy and well maintained by the caretaker. Some classrooms are quite small in Key Stage 2, but the timetable is organised to enable classes to 'spill' into two rooms whilst the other class is using the hall, playground or information technology room. The corridors and open areas provide valuable space for the teaching of small groups and displaying larger objects, such as a collection of bicycles through the ages. The attractive outdoor environment supports the curriculum well in science, geography, history and physical education. The school grounds and new assault course enable pupils to play energetically and harmoniously. The spacious grassed, tree-lined areas are used for sports and orienteering activities, scientific research and playtimes, whenever the weather conditions make it safe.

54. Resources are sufficient for the effective delivery of most subjects of the curriculum. The newly constructed library is a positive feature of the school, containing a good range of fiction and non-fiction books and reference materials. There is a good range of information technology software but insufficient modern technological equipment and this needs to be updated. Everyday resources are stored effectively in classrooms and are easily accessible to the pupils and staff. The central resource room and its management are strengths of the school and a useful asset for the teachers. The hall offers a pleasant facility for a range of activities, during, before and after school. The quadrangle is used for outdoor play and environmental activities when the weather allows. The school has good plans to develop and extend the unsatisfactory toilet facilities.

#### **58. The efficiency of the school**

55. The school is run in a very efficient manner. The quality of financial planning is good. The educational aims of the school are supported well through careful and thorough financial planning which is linked well to the

priorities detailed in the school development plan. Full account is taken of known commitments and projected income levels are securely based on future pupils numbers. The school has well developed plans to fully reflect the issues in a three year forward financial plan. Governors are fully aware of the financial constraints on the school and have approved a carefully balanced budget with an appropriate, sensible level of reserves.

56. Financial administration and budgetary control are very effective. The headteacher, budget holders and governors are provided with up-to-date and accurate monitoring information.

57. No significant issues were raised in the recent, very positive auditor's report. Administrative support is of a very high standard ensuring the smooth running of the school. The very effective use of time, for example, in preparing resources for teachers and monitoring attendance ensures teaching staff are employed for the maximum time in working with pupils. The school takes very good steps to ensure good value in purchasing materials, equipment and resources.

58. The school makes good use of teaching and support staff time. For example the flexible use of teachers' expertise in areas such as music, physical education and mathematics has a positive effect on standards. Good use is made of time, for example, when teachers take registers in the hall at assembly time. Very good use is made of accommodation and resources throughout the school. For example, very good timetable organisation allowed a Year 1/2 class to use equipment in two classrooms for an information technology lesson as a parallel class was using the hall for physical education.

59. Taking into account:

- funding at a level just above the national average for primary schools
- the good quality of education offered by the school
- the generally good progress made by pupils throughout the school
- the high standards reached in mathematics and the generally satisfactory standards in other subjects
- the efficient way the school conducts its business
- the school provides good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

1.Children start school in the September before their fifth birthday and spend their first year in a dedicated reception class with a teacher and full time classroom assistant. On entry most have already attended a nursery or playgroup and their levels of attainment are as expected for an average class of four year olds. At the time of the inspection only a small minority were five years old. By the time they are five most reach standards above those expected for this age group in mathematics and in their personal and social development and in these areas children make good progress. They settle into school well as a result of the school's careful procedures, which include home visits before children start school. They meet the Desirable Outcomes expected for children of this age in language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development. They make satisfactory progress in these areas of learning with the exception of creative development in which their progress is good. The attainment and progress of the under-fives is the same as at the time of the last inspection.

#### **64. Personal and social development**

2.Children make good progress in their personal and social development and by the time they are five their personal and social skills are above average. Their behaviour is good and they respond well to their teacher's expectations of good behaviour. They can take turns and know, for instance, that two children only are allowed to work in the sand tray. They show a growing independence as they routinely help themselves to protective aprons. Most pupils are curious and keen to learn. They co-operate with one another; of their own volition during the inspection week, a trio made music, one singing a song while the others provided a delicate accompaniment with percussion instruments. The majority work with confidence and are secure in their environment. The Christian ethos of the school underpins the strong and well planned provision for personal and social education. Children's progress is regularly and appropriately assessed. Teaching and non-teaching staff treat children with respect and good humour and this is mirrored in the respect with which children treat one another.

#### **65. Language and literacy**

3.By the time they are five, the language skills of most children are average. Speaking and listening skills are above average and children make good progress in using language across the curriculum. They listen attentively in assembly and in large and small group situations in their classroom. At news time they are eager to talk about events of significance in their lives; one child shared his amusement that a birthday card had been sent too soon and another described with delight the Christmas decorations at home. Most make good progress in using their speaking skills, for instance in role play, pretending to be fire fighters discussing the details of a rescue operation. Children attain average standards and make satisfactory progress in reading. Their literacy development is firmly based on the National Literacy Strategy and they join in 'reading' key sentences from the big book, match letters and sounds, and learn to recognise words on sight. They make satisfactory progress in learning to write letters of the alphabet.

4.Children have positive attitudes to language activities and respond well in their lessons. They enjoy joining in stories and poems and, when they act out the story of 'Farmer Duck', performers and audience are equally delighted with the outcome. Most are keen to talk about their experiences and to express their ideas and are listened to attentively by other members of the class. Their good listening skills are a positive attribute in all curriculum areas. They have opportunities to exercise choice and usually do so appropriately.

5.Language and literacy teaching is satisfactory overall and has many good features. The National Literacy Strategy is effectively incorporated into the daily activities in a manner appropriate to the level of maturity of the children and this promotes the satisfactory progress made. A range of appropriate methods is used and includes opportunities for choice and some directed activities. Class teaching is very effectively used to encourage children to join in reading key passages from big books and effectively helps to develop in children a confident approach to reading. Teaching also makes good provision for children to learn to

recognise letters and sounds. An area of relative weakness is that children are not given sufficient encouragement to use their developing skills to express their own ideas in writing.

#### **68. Mathematics**

6. In mathematics children make good progress and attain standards above those expected for the age group. By the time they are five, they have well developed counting skills and can give the next number in a sequence. Some have a secure understanding of the language of capacity and can reliably use terms such as 'empty' and 'nearly full'. They make good progress in developing an awareness of mass and as a result of well focused teaching, know that boxes which appear to be the same may feel heavier or lighter because of their contents. Most progress well in learning to write numerals.

7. Pupils approach mathematics activities with confidence. They enjoy the incongruity of objects which look the same but which have a different mass. They co-operate well, for instance by reorganising themselves, without fuss, to sit in a circle on the carpet for a mathematics game. They use resources with respect, sensibly and with a good degree of independence.

8. Mathematics teaching is good and is characterised by high expectations to which the children respond. The teacher makes good use of class routines, such as calling the register, to promote mathematical skills and as a result pupils use mathematics well to solve problems. Effective use is made of resources including a number line. A weakness in teaching is in the provision made for unsupported group work activities during numeracy lessons. At present the range and quality of these activities is not strong enough to fully interest the pupils. Planning for all other elements of mathematics is of a high standard and learning objectives are well focused. Assessments are good and well used to plan for future learning.

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

9. In their knowledge and understanding of the world children make satisfactory progress and are in line to attain the expected standards by the time they are five. In science they learn about their senses and they gain information technology skills, using a mouse to create pictures. They learn about people who help in the locality and know how the police, fire service and road traffic patrol can give help. They understand that some dangerous objects can be found in the home and that, in an emergency, help can be summoned by telephoning 999. They make sound progress in learning about the roles of different workers in the community because of effective direct teaching and class discussions. Good imaginative play resources, which includes outfits for fire fighters and police, allow children to explore the roles and hastens their progress in this area of the curriculum.

#### **72. Physical Development**

10. In their physical development children make satisfactory progress and are in line to meet the required standard by the time they are five. They have sound fine motor skills and can handle a pencil and paint brush appropriately. A few can play Indian bells with a good degree of control. The majority make satisfactory progress in developing large motor skills. The opportunities afforded by the indoor physical education lessons and regular supervised periods in the outside adventure play area help pupils develop an awareness of space and a developing confidence in their physical skills. Teaching in this area is satisfactory.

#### **73. Creative development**

11. Attainment in creative areas of the curriculum is satisfactory and children make good progress. Because of the good provision for role-play children make good progress in sharing the imaginary worlds of the fire-fighters and the police. Attainment in music is in line with expectations for children in this age group and they make good progress in making music together during their choosing time. Attainment in art is satisfactory and children make sound progress in developing painting skills, which they use expressively in their paintings of fire fighters at work. An area of relative weakness is that pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use a



range of materials, such as collage, to express their own ideas rather than to make large class pictures.

## 74. THE CORE SUBJECTS

### 74. English

12. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 assessments, pupils attained standards which were average for eleven year olds nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher standards ( level 5 ) was well below average compared with similar schools and with schools nationally. Following the last inspection, there was a marked rise in standards which, despite a steady decline over the last three years, remain significantly higher than in 1995. However, the year on year increase in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard for eleven year olds has not been matched by an improvement in the results of higher attaining pupils and this is confirmed by the findings of the inspection. In end of Key Stage 1 assessments, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard for seven year olds in reading and in writing was above average. In comparisons with similar schools, writing standards are average, and reading standards below average. These results are largely borne out by the findings of the inspection. However, the improvement in the proportion of seven-year-olds attaining higher writing standards revealed in the test results was not confirmed by the inspection. This is mainly because there are reduced opportunities for story writing. At the time of the previous inspection in both key stages, speaking and listening standards were good and reading and writing standards were satisfactory. The school has maintained these standards and has raised reading standards in Key Stage 2 following the successful introduction of measures to improve performance, including the National Literacy scheme.

13. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have good speaking and listening and skills and the high standards noted in the last inspection have been maintained. Listening skills are a strength. Pupils listen closely to their teachers' instructions and explanations and, in class discussions, they listen attentively to one another. Their speaking skills are average and higher attaining pupils have good skills which are well used to talk to pupils in their own and other classes. For instance, during the week of the inspection, in a joint assembly for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, a group of Year 6 pupils spoke confidently about the life of Martin Luther King. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing speaking and listening skills throughout the key stage.

14. Reading standards in Key Stage 2, which at the time of the previous inspection were satisfactory, have improved to above average and pupils of all abilities make good progress. By the end of the key stage, most pupils enjoy reading for pleasure, and develop the critical capacity to evaluate a book, for instance by comparing it with others they have read. Most have good dictionary and library skills and can locate information in the school library. Above average pupils make good use of their reading skills to obtain information from a wide range of sources including newspapers, encyclopaedia, dictionaries and the internet. A minority of lower attaining pupils have below average reading skills but the good progress of most in this group is such that they attain standards approaching those expected for eleven-year-olds. This is because of the good provision made by the school for below average pupils. Good progress in reading starts early in the key stage. For instance, during the week of the inspection well focused questioning enabled a group of pupils to develop a better understanding of their fairy story text. As pupils proceed through the key stage, the majority develop a good understanding of homophones and their use in newspaper headlines. For example, in the week of the inspection, after studying a local newspaper report of Christmas illuminations being switched on by local football heroes, the very good headlines for the report suggested by pupils included " Stars light up the town". In Year 5, good progress continues and pupils articulate their developing reading preferences. Some higher attaining pupils, while enjoying fiction, express a greater interest in non-fiction texts, for instance on the development of the Morse code, and some lower attaining pupils read favourite poems accurately, with delight and enjoyment.

15. Overall, writing standards, as in the 1995 inspection, are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can write in a range of forms including plays, instructions and letters. Most write book reviews and some have had opportunities for biographic writing. The majority have well developed spelling and handwriting skills. However, a weakness is that pupils' expressive writing skills are underdeveloped because they lack the opportunity for extended and imaginative writing. This has an impact on the attainment and progress made by all pupils and particularly on that made by higher attaining pupils.

16. Writing progress is steady throughout the key stage. However, higher attaining pupils do not always make progress commensurate with their abilities because, except in Year 4, they do not have scope and opportunity to build on their existing writing skills. At the start of the key stage pupils write for a range of purposes and their early punctuation skills are consolidated and extended. They begin to practice writing in a joined script during handwriting lessons but its use is not established on a day-to-day basis. In Year 4, pupils of all attainment levels and especially higher attaining pupils make more rapid progress in developing their descriptive and imaginative writing skills because they have more opportunities to practice these skills and because the work they are given to do is better matched to their learning needs. As pupils move towards the end of the key stage, most make satisfactory progress in mastering the use of reported speech and confidently use a dictionary to check the meaning of more unusual homonyms. Their knowledge of sentence structure develops appropriately and they are able to select a verb which correctly agrees with the subject, but cannot always give a reason for their choice. Throughout the key stage, pupils make good progress in developing spelling and handwriting skills. Nevertheless, work is often marred by careless presentation.
17. In Key Stage 1, the higher than average standards in speaking and listening, which were noted in the 1995 inspection, have been maintained. By the end of the key stage the vast majority of pupils have very good listening skills and this has a positive impact on their learning across the curriculum. Most have above average speaking skills and can ask appropriate questions, offer explanations and discuss alternatives. Throughout the key stage pupils of all abilities make good progress. The above average skills developed in the reception class are built upon well. For instance, during the week of the inspection, Year 1 pupils used puppets well to act out a story being read by their teacher.
18. Reading standards in Key Stage 1 are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards remain as they were at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils read accurately, confidently and with a good degree of expression. They know how to make sense of unfamiliar words by using clues in the text or by building up the letter sounds. Higher attaining pupils make perceptive comments when comparing features of books they have read. For instance one child, when comparing the book, 'The Big Bad Pig and the Three Little Wolves' with the traditional tale of the 'Three Little Pigs' said " This is a better ending because the wolf dies, but the big bad pig doesn't - he gets his manners back". Reading progress is steady throughout the key stage. By the time pupils leave the reception class most have a secure knowledge of initial letter sounds and phonic skills are effectively extended as pupils learn to blend words containing three and more letters. The effective use of texts in the Literacy Hour results in pupils being able to anticipate what might happen next in the story, to imagine how characters might feel and to identify with the events of the story. This has a positive impact on the progress they make.
19. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils in Key Stage 1 attain average standards and make satisfactory progress in writing. Most can identify words associated with time, such as 'before' and 'later' and use these words appropriately in sentences. Most have clear and well formed handwriting and accurately spell simple, common words. Most make steady progress in developing spelling skills and lower attaining pupils make good progress in being able to blend sounds together to write words. In Year 1, pupils make good use of initial letter sounds to compile their own fruit and animal alphabet. However, higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they are capable of because the work they are given to do does not build sufficiently well upon what they already know understand and can do. Despite good handwriting skills, the presentation of work in pupils' books often lacks care.
20. Pupils in both key stages make good use of their literacy skills in other subjects. Regular library sessions give pupils opportunities to use their information retrieval and reading skills effectively. In history, pupils write accounts of events which occurred in Victorian times and in science they write up the results of their observations. In Year 4, pupils write clear instructions for using springs to make toys such as a jack-in-the-box. In Key Stage 1, pupils write prayers and read and write about African fruit and animals. Their well developed listening skills feature significantly in the progress they make across all subjects throughout the school.
21. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and respond well in English lessons. They listen very well, concentrating on what is being said by their teachers or by other pupils in the class. They show care and respect for one another during whole class discussions when even the youngest wait their turn

to speak. In some classes pupils respond very well and their ideas come tumbling out in response to good questioning from their teachers. They are well motivated and most work diligently, even when the work they are given to do is not very interesting. They work independently and make good use of learning resources such as dictionaries. Their developing enjoyment of literature is evident in their good response to shared texts and their evident disappointment when the session ends.

22. English teaching is satisfactory in both key stages and in almost half the lessons observed, teaching was good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of attainment. Their good management of pupils creates a positive climate for learning. Good knowledge and understanding of the subject is underlined in the well chosen shared texts, particularly in Year 4 when the effective use of a relevant story in a local newspaper enabled pupils to make good progress in their understanding of homophones. In most classes questioning is effectively used to probe for meaning and to deepen understanding. On the whole group reading sessions are well focused and, for instance, in Key Stage 1 successfully helped pupils to make progress in reading more expressively. Planning is generally sound but a weakness, more common in Key Stage 2, is that precisely what pupils are expected to learn in the lesson is not spelt out clearly enough. Another, more generally seen, weakness is that the work given to higher attaining pupils fails to stretch them sufficiently and therefore their progress is curtailed. The methods and organisation used by teachers are sound but a weakness is that pupils are not given sufficient opportunity for creative and extended writing and their work includes too much copying from text books. As a result progress, especially of higher attaining pupils, is too slow. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory.

23. The subject leadership is sound. The National Literacy Strategy was introduced effectively during last year and has not yet had time to fully bed down. The school has a sound policy and its scheme of work is based on the National Literacy Strategy. In addition, daily literacy hour sessions are supplemented by extra time for creative writing and handwriting. Good assessment procedures are outlined to cover the various elements of the subject but, in some instances, need more qualitative observations. Assessment findings are not yet used effectively enough when teachers plan for the next stage of learning. Parents are encouraged to be involved well in their children's learning and pupils take their reading books home regularly and do written homework connected with their spelling lists. Each week the school provides information for parents about what their children will be learning in English. The subject is well resourced and the new library provides a good additional facility, which enhances the quality of learning experienced by the pupils.

## 86. **Mathematics**

24. The pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved well above the national average in their National Curriculum tests in 1999. Their achievement was also above average in comparison to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The results at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high in comparison to the national average. Performance was also high in comparison to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and in Key Stage 2 very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, but especially good progress in Key Stage 2.

25. There has been a significant improvement in this area of the curriculum since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved over the last three years. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been maintained at their high levels for the last two years. They have consistently been well above the national average. This reflects the findings of the inspection. This improvement is a result of the school's successful participation in the pilot scheme of the National Numeracy Strategy prior to its implementation nationally last September.

26. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils of all attainment levels have a good knowledge of place value and can use the four basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division competently. They have a sound grasp of spatial concepts and can use an acceptable variety of methods to collate and represent the data they have collected. The higher attaining pupils use a wide variety of methods to collate and represent data. The lower attaining pupils apply the four rules of number effectively, use a wide range of units of measure competently and construct simple graphs to illustrate data they have collected.

27. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can use mathematical vocabulary competently and their understanding of numbers is

developed successfully by the teachers through well-planned activities that encourage links across the curriculum. Suitable reinforcement is provided through activities that improve the knowledge and understanding of patterns, numbers and shapes. They make good progress, demonstrating their ability to use appropriate mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. By the end of the key stage, they carry out simple calculations accurately and have a good working knowledge of number facts. They understand two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties and appreciate number patterns and measures. They develop good skills of data handling. Standards of numeracy across the school are very good and pupils have a good understanding of the number system. Their skills in mental arithmetic are very good.

28. In both key stages, pupils use appropriate mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Their use and application of mathematics is particularly good throughout the school. They use and apply what they know, frequently in mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of the lesson each day, as well as in their group tasks. Some higher attaining Year 1 pupils confidently followed the instructions of a game, substituting times on clock faces for symbols. These symbol shapes form a given pattern if all the answers are correctly placed in a tray. Year 2 pupils apply addition and subtraction rules, use number squares and blocks apparatus in order to work out missing numbers up to 50 and 100. Pupils continue to develop their understanding of the number system and how to apply their learning in practical situations very well. By Year 5, pupils show their good problem solving skills as they use patterns and symbols to estimate numerical equivalents. Good use is made of mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum as pupils are introduced to the relevance of mathematics in their daily lives. Thus, pupils in Year 6 use mathematical skills in order to complete and compile orienteering course maps for geography and physical education.

29. Throughout the school, pupils use skills of measuring and calculating to support their work in science and design and technology with increasing aptitude and ability. They record this data using information technology, with increasing sophistication as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their earlier achievements due to the effective support offered by both class teachers, support staff and parents. They progress very well at Key Stage 2.

30. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are extremely positive about their work in mathematics. They co-operate well with their teachers, sustain concentration for long periods and take pride in their work. They co-operate and collaborate effectively with other pupils, sharing ideas and equipment sensibly. They behave very well and respond enthusiastically to challenge, for example in one Year 6 lesson pupils cheered when told the task and eagerly chose their own mental arithmetic challenge.

31. The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2, particularly in the classes of older pupils. It is never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and structured, with clear aims. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour. They build effectively on pupils' knowledge and understanding from previous lessons. For example, in Year 2 when pupils with special educational needs were investigating how to find half of a whole, the teacher skilfully chose different resources to enable practical tasks to reinforce the previous work on whole numbers. This encouraged the pupils to investigate, question and find out for themselves, as when pupils in Year 3 compared and consolidated their understanding of fractions by sharing a packet of kit-kat chocolate bars. This learning was extended and developed in Year 4 as they examined equivalent fractions and checked their findings using fraction block boards. Classroom management skills are good and this enables teachers to use a range of teaching styles, including whole class, group and individual tuition, very effectively.

32. Teachers in both key stages make very good use of a range of mathematical apparatus to help pupils gain knowledge and understanding. A good example of this was seen in both key stages when pupils used their number digit cards in a variety of ways to show their speed in mental calculations. Homework is used very effectively to support and reinforce classroom mathematics and pupils learn multiplication tables and number bonds. The teachers have developed very good questioning techniques to assess and develop what the pupils of different abilities know. Good feedback is given during lessons, through verbal comments and written marking. There are regular assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and teachers make good use of these to set individual and group targets for pupils of different ability levels, as well as to aid the planning of future work.

33.The school is following the National Numeracy Strategy very well and teachers' are skilled in adjusting their planning where necessary to fit the needs of groups or individual pupils. Assessment results are monitored regularly to ensure that standards of attainment are maintained and improved. A wide range of resources is available to support teaching and learning in the subject. The subject fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinators provide very good leadership and provide very effective support and guidance to their colleagues, which makes a major contribution to the standards achieved.

## 96. Science

34.In the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds standards were in line with the national average in comparison with all schools but below average in comparison with similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 was above the national average and average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 5 matched the national average, but was below average in comparison with pupils from similar schools. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards have risen steadily over recent years. In particular the school has been successful in raising the standards reached by lower attaining pupils, which accounts for the high proportions reaching the levels expected of pupils of this age. Teachers' assessments for pupils aged seven judged pupils' attainments to be broadly average. Inspection evidence supports the findings that standards are broadly average at the end of both Key Stage 1 (when pupils are aged seven) and Key Stage 2 (when pupils are aged eleven). This is similar to the last inspection report.

35.In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and by the time they are seven know that 'pushes and pulls' are forces and that gravity is a force. Pupils make a sound start to investigations and experiments, as when Year 1 pupils carried out simple tests to discover whether plastic, paper, different types of fabric and balsa wood were waterproof or not. They are confident in identifying simple groups of living and non-living things and can use their own ideas confidently in grouping similar living things. For example, one pupil in Year 2 drew a selection of insects and birds with the heading 'all my group have wings'. They have a basic understanding of the fact that materials can change, for example one higher attaining pupil described how water freezes when it gets very cold, but can be returned to water when it melts. Infant pupils talk about their work well and record their findings with simple drawings and writing, but they know more than their recording actually indicates.

36.In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. Year 3 pupils can describe the properties of different materials, such as 'shiny, hard, soft, stretchy'. Year 4 pupils know the conditions plants need for life and carry out experiments in which they explain clearly that 'green plants' leaves turn brown and yellow in the dark'. By Year 5 Pupils have a sound understanding of the difference between solids, liquids and gases and carry out some detailed investigations into the effect of exercise on human heartbeats. They make good use of their competence in information technology as when some Year 5 pupils downloaded information on the skeletal system from a CD-ROM. In Year 6 pupils understand many of the elements of electricity well, as demonstrated in a good Year 6 lesson where they had to solve a challenge to create circuits and to vary the level of brightness in the bulbs. Pupils have a sound understanding of other work on physical processes such as magnetism and can explain how lift and thrust operates when an aeroplane takes off. A weakness of the pupils' attainment in science is the quality of the recording of their findings; written work often does not reflect what pupils actually know and can do. A strength of pupils' attainment in science is their work on investigations. They work like 'young scientists' to find solutions to the problems that they are set, and by the time they reach Years 5 and 6, this is an automatic part of their science work. This is due to their teachers' emphasis on the importance and excitement of investigation.

37.Although overall the progress in science is good, there are variations. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science due to the teachers' careful planning of work that matches their level of understanding well and takes them on to the next stage of learning. Average attaining pupils make good progress, but higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress they should, because they are not set sufficiently challenging tasks, geared specifically to what they need to do to take them on to the next stage of learning.

38.Pupils' attitudes to learning and their response to lessons are very good. They have very positive attitudes to learning, share their ideas and are considerate of each other. For example, in one lesson in Year 6 a pupil

brought a chair unobtrusively for another who was kneeling on the floor to use a laptop computer. They listen very carefully to each other's ideas and collaborate together very well; for example, in one Year 4 lesson pupils investigating the effect of friction on different surfaces shared ideas and were then very keen to explain what they discovered. Behaviour is very good and relationships are harmonious. This has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make.

39. Teaching in science is good overall. Of the science lessons observed 60 per cent were good and 40 per cent satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils, but the lesson planning often does not have clear targets showing what pupils need to do next in order to move ahead and does not identify activities designed specifically to challenge the higher attaining pupils. As a result higher attainers do not make the progress that they should in science. On the other hand, teachers' planning for pupils with special educational needs and the majority of pupils in the class is good. They match the work closely to what pupils can do and this has a positive impact on their progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good as in the Year 6 lesson on electricity where pupils continually sought additional knowledge from the teacher. Introductions to lessons are clear, for example in Years 1 and 2 the initial explanation and questioning about materials helped pupils make good progress in testing their ideas.

40. A weakness in the teaching is that teachers sometimes do not require a sufficiently high standards of presentation of pupils' work, which means that their written work is of a lower standards than their scientific knowledge and understanding and does not build sufficiently on pupils' work in literacy. However, they use pupils' skills in numeracy very effectively, for example in using graphs to record data from their investigations into the effect of exercise on heartbeat. They also use information technology effectively to encourage pupils to research information and to record information. Homework is used effectively to reinforce pupils' learning in school. A strength of the teaching in science is the fact that pupils are managed very well. Teachers use resources and the space available in school very effectively, as when Years 5 and 6 share or exchange classrooms to provide more opportunities for group work. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress they make. Co-ordinators manage the subject well and there is a good range of equipment for science.

### 103. **Information and communication technology**

41. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in information technology are average and in line with that expected of pupils of a similar age. Progress in both key stages is good. At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils' attainment in this subject was judged as above average. Since that time, the status of information technology has changed; it has become a core subject and this affects the overall judgements of the subject. It is for this reason, rather than a fall in standards within the school, that the present judgement on standard appears to indicate a lowering of attainment.

42. Standards in some aspects of the subject are good; for example, most younger Key Stage 2 pupils are confident when loading a program and choosing a border for their page, before beginning to write their story. The pupils are able to enter commands confidently to control actions and monitor events, such as in a Year 4 mathematics lessons when remote controlled devices such as 'Pip' and the roamer are used to investigate directions and angles. Most pupils use computers effectively to communicate in writing and edit, check and change the appearance of their work. They load and enter programs, find their way successfully through the options available and print their work. Many older pupils have an increasing awareness of the potential of software to handle information, model and investigate relationships and engage in real-world applications such as Year 6's use of the internet for information retrieval concerning other schools' websites. They compare their web-page ideas with other schools' completed work already on the net.

43. The standards pupils reach at the age of seven is also in line with average. The pupils engage in a range of interesting activities on the laptop and other computers that relate to and reinforce learning in other subjects and develop their skills. They are aware of the potential to communicate ideas and most use the keyboard and mouse confidently. Reading skills are reinforced through programs linked to the pupils' reading books and numeracy is promoted when simple mathematical activities are undertaken.

44. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning as they move through the

school. During their time in school the pupils gain an increasing understanding of the characteristics of equipment and software. Their confidence and independence in using computers is well developed by the age of 11. They move from using a mouse confidently in Year 1, working out instruction and angles to program a floor robot in Year 4 and using the Internet to create their own web page in Year 6.

45. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, respond very positively to the subject and are extremely enthusiastic when engaged in computer activities. For example, one pupil in a lesson in Year 2 was delighted to conquer loading a CD-ROM and burst out 'I'm really getting the hang of it!' There is a high level of co-operation as they work together and consideration for others is shown as they take turns to input and search for information. The resources are treated with respect and from an early age, the pupils take responsibility for looking after equipment.

46. The quality of teaching is good and often very good at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers place sufficient emphasis on providing a balanced programme to ensure that all the pupils use computers in a range of applications. General classroom organisation and management of pupils is very good and offers many opportunities to use computers, which means that there are usually pupils operating in pairs on appropriate tasks. Teachers ensure that these normally relate directly to the main teaching focus as well as making maximum use of computer resources. This allows time for the pupils to gain 'hands-on' experience, for example, when Year 6 play a complicated mathematics game to raise their awareness of both problem solving and random mental calculations, or Year 1 use 'Treasure Chest' to further investigate and improve their understanding of the alphabet. The teachers have good subject knowledge and know how to develop their pupils' different competencies. The long-term skills development plan is very well thought out and used extremely effectively throughout the school. The teachers support each other very well and readily call upon the subject co-ordinators for assistance and advice whenever they need it. Throughout school, adults support pupils very well. This has a significant impact on their attainment and progress.

47. There is sufficient software for information technology but the range of different types of computer, many of which need to be updated, inhibits the progress that pupils could achieve, given the good teaching

## 110. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### 110. **Art**

48. During the inspection there were few opportunities to observe art lessons. Judgements are based on the limited number of lessons seen and evidence of pupils' work and displays. Some of the weaknesses noted in the last inspection pupils have been improved and progress is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school progress is satisfactory; pupils do not progress as well as they should because they do not make sufficient progress in systematically developing basic skills. They do not have enough opportunity to build up skills in the subject as they move through the school.

49. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils generally use materials and tools appropriately to express their ideas and a small minority draw well on previously learned skills, for instance in the use of a craft knife, when making symbolic pictures for a religious education display. Pupils do not build up skills of observing and recording from experience, or of experimenting with media sufficiently systematically. However, in one lesson in Year 4, inspired by a lesson on Viking runes and by very good teaching, pupils made very good progress learning a new technique and in using material to express their ideas creatively. They drew on ideas from their sketchbooks, and handled their tools well to shape, join and decorate the clay. Earlier and later in the key stage pupils make satisfactory progress with malleable materials. In Year 6 pupils produced sound collage work related to a visit of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

50. In Key Stage 1, pupils can use objects to make printed patterns. However, sometimes they do not make as much progress as they should because the limitations set by the task do not allow more than a small minority to fully explore the patterns they are able to create for themselves. In Year 1, pupils paint appropriate self-portraits and decorate patterns with glitter and colour to celebrate Divali. In Year 2, pupils print, paint, and make collage for a class picture but have not been given the opportunity to make a full contribution to all the significant features of the picture.

51. Pupils respond well in their art lessons and try to do their best. They use tools responsibly and are prepared to take turns and to wait, for instance, if someone else is printing with the colour they need. They help one another and, particularly in Key Stage 2, make affirming and positive comments about the work of others. When the work they are given to do is sufficiently challenging and well focused, they derive a great deal of satisfaction from their good results. However, even when work fails to fully challenge, they remain well behaved and good-humoured.

52. Teaching observed in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory and there was one instance of very good teaching in which the teacher had very clear aims and a good focus on skills development linked to good opportunities for individual creativity. The planning for art outlines activities to be covered and does not do enough to support the steady development of skills. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

115.

#### 115. **Design and technology**

53. No lessons were observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Discussion with pupils about their work and evidence in school indicates that pupils make good progress in both key stages in a range of activities linked carefully to the long-term plan. In order to make the most opportunities for links with other subjects, design and technology is often taught within mathematics, science, history and geography.

54. In both key stages pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as the products of their work develop in range and purpose. They employ an appropriate range of materials and utilise an adequate selection of tools in their tasks. In Key Stage 1 the youngest pupils make cakes and design decorations for them competently. They prepare dough and design different shapes for biscuits and cookies. Older infants design and make moving vehicles, land yachts and catapult cars. To facilitate the movement of the car, an elastic band is fastened to one of the wheel axles before the chassis is completed. Pupils explain how they modify their original design to improve the parts that need to move. They have a clear idea of how to improve the design further. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils have regular opportunities to design and make models using a range of construction apparatus, including junk materials.

55. In Key Stage 2, pupils are involved successfully in various problem-solving tasks. For example, when Year 3 construct pots they take account of appearance, function and safety. Whilst selecting the most appropriate tools and techniques, their first attempt in plasticine is then modified and they refine their design before the final clay product is made. Year 4 pupils follow instructions carefully to make a spring toy. They adjusted the original box design in order that the shape of the toy is a better fit. By Year 6, the pupils make their own inventions, which include three-dimensional mathematics games, models from papier mache and experiment with food. They investigate different kinds of fastenings used at home and at school. To conclude, they design a toy that will teach a small child how to use a range of fasteners. The finished products show the accurate use of scissors and sewing to cut, form and make the desired shapes. Most pupils understand the purpose of design. They represent their ideas and plans on paper, sometimes identifying the materials to be used. There is usually sufficient emphasis on producing an attractive finish by decoration. The pupils are extremely confident when experimenting with different options and often depart successfully from a conventional approach.

56. The pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject throughout the school. They enjoy the practical element and their finished products show they work with concentration and care. They have sufficient opportunities to work independently, develop their ideas and clarify misconceptions. The teachers with responsibility for co-ordinating the subject have a good knowledge. The overall provision for the subject is satisfactory in relation to the time allocation and resources. Sufficient emphasis has been placed on developing the range of skills and applying them effectively and this is evident in the pupils' progress. Activities are purposeful and integrated well into other areas of the curriculum. The tools, construction kits and consumable materials are well managed and of satisfactory quality.

#### 119. **Geography and history**



57. Only one lesson of geography was observed in geography and three lessons in history, due to the way the timetable was organised during the inspection. In addition to these observations, judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. In both subjects pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress due to the well-targeted support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants in class. Geography and history have not been priorities for the school since the last inspection, but judgements about what pupils can do and the progress they make are similar to those in the last report.
58. In geography the younger children study the immediate locality of the school, and with help can complete simple accounts of their route to school. They can explain in simple terms how they get to school and this develops into a study of transport, starting with how they travel to school. By the end of Year 2 pupils can decide whether land, air or water transport is most suitable for a particular journey. As they move up the school pupils gain a sound understanding of the idea of different countries, for example pupils in Year 4 prepared colourful information about the temperature, population and continent for their 'passports' to Spain, Australia and India. The comparison of near and distant localities is enhanced by effective work arising from the older pupils' residential visit to Dol-y-moch in Wales.
59. A strength of the geography is the whole school involvement in weather projects. The school has developed a close link with Powergen, the electricity company, which has provided a total of three weather stations. These are placed in the school grounds, where all pupils from Reception to Year 6 have access. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in this aspect of their work; the youngest pupils look at the instruments, talk about the weather each day and update their own simple weather charts. Younger juniors use the station to extend their work on wind speed and the Beaufort Scale, while older juniors take daily readings and compare them effectively with statistics for Kenya as part of their topic. One of the most exciting developments is the links that have been made with schools in France and Spain. The three schools e-mail weekly record sheets to each other, which results in greatly increased understanding of Year 6 pupils of the relevance of their investigations, creates cultural links with other European countries and reinforces the use of information technology. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and the progress they make in this aspect of geography.
60. In history younger pupils gain a sound understanding of how time passes and things change. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 can explain that bicycles changed over time as the early boneshaker and pennyfarthing developed rubber tyres, brakes and springs to make travel safer and more comfortable. They can sort different bicycles into different ages, helped by the very good resources provided by the teacher, using real examples of old machines borrowed from the transport museum. In Year 3 pupils gain a clear understanding of life in Roman times, helped particularly by the involvement of a visitor dressed in Roman clothes who brought the subject to life for the pupils. Older pupils spent the day dressed as Tudor children, with teaching and non-teaching staff dressing up and joining in the spirit of the day, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils produce sound arguments for and against living in the time of the Aztecs, but the quality of pupils' written work often does not match the level of their understanding of geography and history.
61. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen and involved, as illustrated in one Years 1/2 lesson where the old bicycles from the museum fascinated pupils. In another lesson in Year 4 pupils concentrated with great intensity as they worked out why Vikings settled in specific areas of Britain in their work on 'Invaders and Settlers'. Pupils' interest and commitment to their studies is evident in their involvement in the weather project, which does not peter out once the novelty has worn off, but is sustained over several years. This has a very positive impact on pupils' progress.
62. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching in geography, but teaching in history is good. A particular strength is the way staff use resources very effectively, drawing on original historical objects, role-play and visits to museums. This has a direct impact on pupils' progress. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and good subject knowledge helps them to instil a similar enthusiasm into the pupils, which has a positive influence on progress. Teachers' plans and their introductions to lessons are clear and they use homework effectively to reinforce learning in school, as when pupils are encouraged to research historical figures at home, using information technology and books. A weakness in the teaching is the fact that there is not always sufficient attention to producing high quality written work that accurately reflects the level of pupils'

understanding. Teachers manage pupils very well, which in turn has a positive effect on relationships and pupils' desire to do well.

63. The co-ordinators for both subjects are enthusiastic, hardworking and produce useful guidance for staff. There is a good range of resource for learning history and geography, which are supplemented very effectively by the wide range of visits to places of interest that help bring the subjects to life.

## 126. **Music**

64. During the inspection, no music lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and judgements are based on lessons observed in Key Stage 2 and on the music content of assemblies and hymn practice. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 make very good progress. The school has addressed weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection successfully and music is now a strength of the school.

65. By the age of eleven pupils have very well developed performance skills. Their singing is of a very high standard; it is accurate in pitch, well controlled and sensitive to the mood of the song. The majority work together successfully in small groups using tuned and untuned percussion to compose music which expresses contrasts between city and country life. They make very good progress in listening to and distinguishing between sounds. Because of very good teaching, with clear aims that promoted confidence, the majority of pupils in one Year 5 lesson were able to correctly identify the notes in a sequence of twelve sounds played to them. In hymn practice pupils throughout the school make very good progress in quickly and accurately learning new songs. In both key stages they make good progress in learning to play unpitched and pitched instruments including the recorder.

66. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and respond very well in music lessons; their sense of enjoyment in music making is evident. Throughout the key stage pupils' good listening skills are well used and are a significant factor in the good progress they make in developing a sense of pitch. Their choral singing is confident; even when performing without an accompaniment, they begin a song together, at the right pitch and without hesitation. A small instrumental group of staff and pupils often accompanies the worshipful singing in assemblies in which music making is spirited, joyful and often moving. It makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension of the school's provision.

67. Music teaching is consistently very good and this is a marked improvement to the standard of music teaching noted in the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident about teaching the subject. They have very high expectations and as a result pupils make very good progress in developing an accurate sense of pitch and in singing. Provision is good and is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. In addition to class lessons and the very good quality teaching in hymn practice, the school has a choir and clubs for recorder playing. The local authority music service provides teaching in guitar and woodwind. Adults within the school provide good role models as music makers. A class of adult learners that includes parents and part time members of staff meets in the school for guitar lessons each Monday morning. Teachers, in particular, provide good role models as they join pupils in an ensemble to accompany assembly singing. The school has a good scheme of work, which includes music from a range of cultures and ensures progression. Appropriate assessments of pupils' progress in the subject are made. Resources are good and the school has successfully ensured that resources now include instruments from other countries and cultures.

## 130. **Physical education**

68. The previous inspection report stated that pupils' standards were in line with national expectations. Now, there is a notable improvement and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and attain above average standards in both key stages.

69. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils plan and perform simple skills with appropriate co-ordination during their warm-up routines. They use space in the school hall well and generally perform safely, with good awareness of others. They know that the warm-up is to prevent injuries during exercise. In their gymnastics work, Year 2 pupils

learn about 'travelling by rolling' in different ways, using hands and feet and different body parts. They put together appropriate sequences of movements and use the apparatus successfully whilst making a range of gymnastic poses. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate good skills whilst following a straight pathway. They improve their own skills by watching the teacher and appraising each other's performances. Many show agility as they move in different directions and use a variety of body parts during gymnastics work. They show an increasing awareness of safety aspects of their work.

70. The pupils in Key Stage 2 show above average gymnastics skills. They work with imagination in creating 'Super Hero' sequences whilst other older pupils demonstrate balancing on body points. Through repeated practice of their different movements good levels of control and agility are shown. They perform sequences involving jumps, stretches and curling while moving confidently over a range of gymnastics equipment. While carrying out their performances pupils sustain vigorous rates of activity. They make significant improvements by critically appraising each other's work.

71. Years 5 and 6 develop a range of team building skills very well. Year 5 concentrate on group physical challenges as they follow their teacher's instructions and complete team tasks whilst balancing on benches of different widths. They show high levels of collaboration and self-control as they move carefully, passing each other to arrive in the correct order. Year 6 use problem solving and mathematical skills to complete their teacher's orienteering courses before planning, finalising and performing their own. The pupils show a high level of efficiency in getting out and assembling the gymnastics equipment under the teachers' careful supervision. There is a clear progressive development of pupils' skills as they move through the year groups. This good progress is due to the challenging tasks provided by teachers and the brisk pace of the work in lessons.

72. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning; most work with maximum effort. They listen carefully and carry out instructions promptly and carefully. A notable feature of the work of the older pupils is the high level of co-operation and collaboration shown whilst participating in different activities.

73. Teaching is good at both key stages. The lessons are carefully planned and provide activities that match closely with pupils' current skill levels. Clear instructions are given for all tasks. In all the lessons observed, teachers paid very close attention to safety and provided pupils with a clear idea of the effects of exercise. Pupils have been very effectively trained in assembling the gymnastics equipment and this means that the time in lessons is used to maximum effect. Tasks, particularly at upper Key Stage 2 are particularly challenging and teachers' monitor pupils' work precisely, which ensures that each pupil works to a high level.

74. Because physical education is extremely well led, all aspects of the programmes of study are carefully planned at both key stages. The school provides the pupils with an excellent range of extra-curricular sporting activities. This has a significant effect on the attainment and progress achieved.

## **Swimming**

75. The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming, which is reported below. Whilst no swimming was observed during the period of the inspection, scrutiny of records of pupils' achievements showed that many pupils are attaining swimming standards that are above the nationally expected level.

76. The school makes good provision for swimming. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils can swim at least 25 metres competently and safely. No lessons were observed because this aspect of physical education takes place during the summer term. All Key Stage 2 pupils participate in swimming. The school shares a pool close by, which belongs to a local secondary school. The expectation is that all pupils will learn to swim 25 metres by the time they are in Year 6, unless a pupil has a specific special educational need that impedes attainment and progress in this area. The long-term subject plan identifies how and when extra lessons will be provided for any pupils who experience difficulties.

77. Individual pupils' progress is assessed during each lesson and details are written in the class teacher's record book. This ensures that the next lesson is planned to meet individual as well as group learning needs.

Individual pupil records exist and older pupils confirm their positive attitudes to this subject by the comments they include in their records of achievement.

140.

140.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **140. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

78. Four members of the inspection team spent a total of 14 days in the school. Fifty-two lessons or parts of lessons were observed and work in all subjects of the National Curriculum was inspected. There were eight inspector observations of assemblies and three of registration periods. Informal discussions were held with a large number of pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes. In addition 15 pupils were heard reading and a wide range of pupils' work was examined.

79. Thirty-three planned meetings were held, including meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and parents. The inspection team studied policy documents of the school, the school development plan and budget figures. Attendance records, records kept on pupils and teachers' planning documents were also examined. The Registered Inspector held a meeting prior to the inspection that was attended by 26 parents. Eighty-six parents' questionnaires (43 per cent) were also analysed.

142.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### 142. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	199	3	49	7

### 142. Teachers and classes

#### 142. Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	22.9

#### 142. Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	142
Average class size:	28.4

### 142. Financial data

Financial year:	1999
	£
Total Income	367,111
Total Expenditure	370,107
Expenditure per pupil	1,797
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,040
Balance carried forward to next year	12,044

142. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 199

Number of questionnaires returned: 86

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	43	52	3	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	49	1	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	54	16	5	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	38	55	6	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	43	48	7	1	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	61	35	2	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	52	34	13	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	44	48	3	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	58	40	2	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	63	37	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	31	1	0	0