

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St John Vianney RC Primary School**

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique Reference Number: 103715

Headteacher: Miss Teresa McNamara

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Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706683

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 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mount Nod Way  
Mount Nod  
Coventry  
CV5 7GX

Telephone number: 01203 464088

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Teahan

Date of previous inspection: March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Fred Riches, Rgl	Science, design and technology, music.	Attainment and progress; teaching; leadership and management
Derek Bowers, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; attendance; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community; efficiency.
Stephanie Lacey	Special educational needs; areas of learning for children under five, English; information technology; history; art.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
David Cann	Mathematics; geography; physical education; equal opportunities.	Curriculum and assessment; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

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

Good teaching leads to high standards in English, mathematics, science and music.

Quality of pastoral care ensures very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

The headteacher's sensitive, assured leadership creates an excellent ethos

All staff and governors contribute fully to a team effort.

Partnership with parents is very good and promotes pupils' learning.

Links with the Church and Partnership Centres create particularly beneficial opportunities for pupils.

### **Where the school has weaknesses**

Timetabling arrangements sometimes result in inefficient use of teaching time.

Staff do not make sufficient use of good assessment information to set targets for pupils.

Insufficient challenge for Key Stage 1 higher attainers in mathematics.

**This is a good school. Strengths far outweigh weaknesses, but the latter will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The school has overcome all of the weaknesses pointed out in its last inspection in 1996, and is better than it was. The school has improved its library and the resources and educational provision for information technology and design and technology. Teaching of children under five has improved significantly. Governors and staff are now actively involved in monitoring the school's curriculum provision. Curriculum planning and monitoring are greatly improved. The school has further raised standards and is well placed to continue making improvements and to meet its targets.

## STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests: (see table at end of summary for 1999 comparisons – just published)

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools nationally (those where under 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals)	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
English	A	A	<i>average</i>	C
Mathematics	B	D	<i>below average</i>	D
Science	C	E	<i>well below average</i>	E

The information shows standards well above average in English in 1998, both nationally and when compared with similar schools. Mathematics was above the national average, but below average when compared with similar schools. Science standards were in line with the national average, but well below those of similar schools. The school analysed 1998 results and addressed weaknesses successfully. **In 1999 the school maintained its high standards in English, while raising standards significantly in both mathematics and science. Standards in all three subjects are well above average this year.** This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. By five years of age, almost all children are achieving well in all areas of learning. By age seven, pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music are high throughout the school. Pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress at both key stages in all other subjects.

## QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Very Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Good	Good
Other subjects	Very good	Good	Good

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. This includes a majority of lessons which are good and 15 per cent very good or excellent. Five per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory or poor. Overall quality has been maintained; there is a big improvement in the teaching of children under five.

*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 overall, including some excellent. Unsatisfactory in just a few lessons.
Attendance	Excellent; well above the national average.
Ethos*	Excellent. A high level of pastoral care and very good relationships, linked to a continuing drive for high standards.
Leadership and management	Very good. The headteacher's reassuring presence and readiness to consult and take action promotes excellent teamwork among staff and the governing body. Development planning, though satisfactory, is a comparative weakness.
Curriculum	Good. Very good for the under fives. Very good planning for continuity year on year; curriculum timetable lacks balance. Assessment procedures are very good, but their use is underdeveloped.
Pupil's with special educational needs	Very good procedures for identification and well-organised support; pupils make good progress towards their targets.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision overall, spiritual, moral and social development very good; cultural development good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good staffing levels; the accommodation is good and well maintained; resources are satisfactory.
Value for money	Very 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

- Staff show real care for individuals.
- The school achieves high standards.
- All staff are dedicated to their work.
- Home/school communications are very good.
- There is a wide range of additional activities.

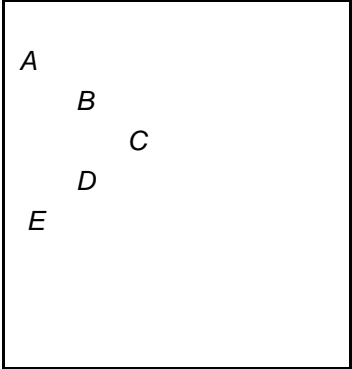
### What some parents are not happy about

All comments at the parents' evening were positive. The parent questionnaires returned were overwhelmingly positive. One or two responses contained individual grievances, but none warrant comment in the context of this report. The school is very open to all parents and has very good systems for handling individual concerns or complaints.



Comparative statistics for 1999 were published just after completion of the inspection report. The table is added here as verification of the improvement in standards between 1998 and 1999.

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools nationally (those where under 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals)
English	A	A
Mathematics	A	A
Science	A	B



**Pupils' attainment in 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was well above average both nationally and when compared with similar schools In English and mathematics.**

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on current high standards and raise still further the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff with management responsibilities should:

- Alter the school and class timetables in the light of the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies in order to:
  - avoid overlong lessons;
  - ensure a good balance between both core and foundation subjects;(Reference paragraphs 20, 26, 30, 36, 67, 93, 100, 116, 120, 124.)
  
- Improve the use of assessment information to track pupils' progress through the school and set targets for improvement; involve pupils in self-assessment, sharing with them and their parents what is required in order to meet the targets;  
(Reference paragraphs 29, 41, 55, 61, 101.)
  
- Challenge higher attainers in mathematics at Key Stage 1;  
(Reference paragraphs 9, 18, 28, 30, 94, 96, 100.)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Sharpen school development planning by using the monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress to analyse strengths and areas for development, in order to prioritise action; include a summary long-term view in the school development plan; (62)
  
- Improve the school grounds as an educational resource, also addressing the need to resurface the junior playground; (69)
  
- Include all appropriate special educational needs information in the policy and in the annual governors' report to parents; (63, 64)
  
- Improve planning for drama; (89)
  
- Improve the fiction stock in Year 4. (90)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1 There have been no changes in characteristics of the school since the last inspection. There are 218 pupils on roll, aged from four to eleven. The school serves Roman Catholic families in the Mount Nod district. It has been oversubscribed during the past few years. Governors apply admissions criteria strictly, aiming to maintain the school at 210 pupils. Children from Roman Catholic families only are admitted under initial criteria. If there is still space, the school admits children from non-Catholic families. Pupils come mainly from socio-economically advantaged backgrounds. Only 3.2 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. The number of boys and girls is approximately equal. No pupils come from ethnic minorities. The school admits up to 30 pupils annually at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. All children benefit from some form of pre-school facility, including the playgroup attached to the church and some private nurseries. On admission to school most children's knowledge, skills and understanding are above average. There are 38 pupils on the school's register of special educational need. One child has a statement of special educational need.

2 The school's mission statement is as follows: 'St John Vianney School is an academic community which is characterised by the Gospel Spirit of Peace, Justice and Love. These values should permeate the life and work of our school.' It lists its aims under the four headings of 'Faith', 'Academic', 'Social', and 'Community': To -

3 '...foster and deepen the Catholic faith, its values and practices in all individual persons in the school community; encourage the development of an environment in which the Catholic ethos of the school is expressed through all activities; provide positive role models for pupils, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ; and encourage appreciation of each person as a unique individual and to develop attitudes of justice, tolerance and consideration for others.

4 '... ensure access to all areas of the National Curriculum for all pupils according to their individual abilities; ensure that each individual pupil is provided with the learning opportunities to develop their full potential; develop a positive approach to learning in each pupil; encourage independence in learning according to each pupil's ability; provide opportunities for each pupil to develop their artistic, creative and physical skills through appropriate experiences; ensure positive staff development.

5 'provide a secure and happy environment for all those connected with the school; encourage development of a positive self-image and encourage attitudes of co-operation; encourage each pupil to take their place in society as active and responsible persons; foster and develop appreciation, tolerance and understanding of other cultures and faiths.

6 '... foster links between the school and parish; encourage active partnership between parents, staff, governors and local education authority; foster and deepen links with the wider community and local industries; provide a healthy, safe and accessible learning environment for all individuals in the school.'

7 The school's current priorities are the implementation of the numeracy strategy and the

development of information technology. It has also planned a review of the timetable in the light of the introduction of the national numeracy strategy alongside the national literacy strategy. Governors have recently agreed with the local education authority to set a target of 80 per cent to reach Level 4 in mathematics and 90 per cent in English by the end of Key Stage 2 in the year 2000.

### **Key indicators**

#### **Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	16	12	28

<b>National Curriculum</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Test/Task Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	93 (97)	93 (90)
	National	80 (81)	81 (80)	84 (83)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	97 (100)	97 (97)
	National	81 (80)	85 (83)	86 (85)

.....  
1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	15	16	31

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	13	12
	Girls	16	12	15
	Total	30	25	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	97 (91)	81 (85)	87 (71)
	National	65 (63)	59 (62)	69 (68)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	14	13
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	30	29	28
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	97 (94)	94 (79)	90 (82)
	National	65 (63)	65 (64)	72 (69)

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year: %

Authorised	School	2.9
Absence	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	0.0
Absence	National comparative data	0.5

### Exclusions

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

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	16
	Satisfactory or better	95
	Less than satisfactory	5

2

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

· **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

· **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

· **Attainment and progress**

8 Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average. Baseline tests and the school's own assessments confirm this judgement. Almost all children attain the desirable outcomes for five-year-olds, many before the age of five, in language and literacy, mathematics, personal, creative and physical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are making good progress during the reception year in all areas of learning. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection in 1996.

9 Results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 show that pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools (those with below eight per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals), pupils' attainment in reading and science was average in 1998, but in writing and mathematics it was not as good. This was because fewer pupils achieved higher than the expected level for seven-year-olds in these aspects of the curriculum. Attainment levels have remained much the same between 1996 and 1998, with the school maintaining standards reported in the previous inspection. Results in 1999 continue to show similar standards in mathematics and science, but results in reading and writing are better, because a higher proportion of pupils achieved beyond the expected level for their age. There is still only a small percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics, however. Inspection findings confirm that pupils' attainment at age seven in the current year is above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1.

10 Results of Key Stage 2 national tests in 1998 show pupils' attainment to be well above average in English, above average in mathematics, and average in science. Standards in English were also well above those of similar schools. In mathematics, however, they were below, and in science well below those of similar schools. The school analysed these results and took steps to improve them. In 1999, more pupils reached the standard level in both mathematics and science. In addition, the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels increased dramatically, by 38 per cent in mathematics and by 44 per cent in science. Attainment also improved in English. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English have been maintained since the last inspection. They have dipped a little in different years in mathematics and science, but have now improved. In the current Year 6, standards are well above average in all three subjects.

11 Pupils build on their good start in the reception year and continue to make good progress overall through Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science. They listen and speak confidently in all curriculum areas and develop reading skills well. Almost all Year 2 pupils read fluently from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils use capital letters and full stops routinely by the age of seven. Most spell accurately and write in a joined hand. In mathematics, they have a good understanding of the number system and use mental recall of a few multiplication tables and simple addition and subtraction facts. They know the names of shapes and have begun to measure in standard units. In science, they understand what plants need to make them grow, and have a good early knowledge about the properties of materials and forces. They make careful observations and set up and record the results of simple

experiments.

12 Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. By Year 6 they speak confidently and respond appropriately in discussion. They read fluently and with expression, discussing favourite books and analysing characters. They have developed good research skills, retrieving information from CD-ROMs and using non-fiction books efficiently. They write for a range of purposes, using a wide vocabulary. In mathematics, they have a thorough understanding of the number system and many work accurately with decimals, fractions and percentages. Pupils use of mental recall of number facts is good. In science, pupils show a high level of knowledge, derived from full coverage and revision of the science curriculum. They develop good understanding of how to conduct a fair test. They make good use of experimental and investigative skills, which develop particularly well through regular practice in Years 5 and 6, when they record both process and findings.

13 Most pupils throughout the school make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Attainment is good in both areas at the end of Key Stage 1 and very good at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils use and develop literacy skills particularly well in science, geography and history lessons. They also use numeracy skills to good advantage in science at Key Stage 2, when recording statistical results during testing.

14 Pupils at both key stages are making satisfactory use of information technology to support the development of literacy and numeracy. Attainment in information technology is in line with the national standard at the end of both key stages. Pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout the school in all aspects of the subject.

15 Music is a strength of the school. Pupils at both key stages are making very good progress as a result of well-organised, regular, briskly-paced lessons, led by teachers with excellent subject knowledge. Key Stage 2 pupils with particular enthusiasm for the subject make additional progress through instrumental lessons and a weekly after-school choir club.

16 Pupils make good progress in geography and history throughout the school. They make satisfactory progress in design and technology at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. The good progress in these subjects reflects the particularly strong stimulus gained from the Partnership Centres and museum visits. Progress in all aspects of physical education is satisfactory throughout the school. Progress in art is also satisfactory overall, but limited time allocation at both key stages hampers the wider development of pupils' skills in this subject.

17 Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress throughout the school in all subjects. This is largely as a result of good identification processes and good support in literacy skills, which gives pupils greater access to activities involving reading and writing in other subjects. Many of the pupils identified as having special educational needs are attaining at, or slightly below, levels expected for their age. However their attainment levels are below their peers at St John Vianney.

18 Higher attainers are doing well in all aspects of English and in science at Key Stage 1, but not so many are achieving higher levels in mathematics. In each of the past four years, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 has been below the national average. Higher attainers at Key Stage 1 do not make sufficient progress in mathematics, as they are not always sufficiently challenged in this subject. At Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils are now



making good progress. The school has successfully addressed the lack of challenge in mathematics and science, following careful analysis of its 1998 test results. It is set to meet performance targets agreed with the local education authority for the Year 2000. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls in any subjects.

· **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

19 The high standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development identified in the previous inspection have been maintained well by the school. They continue to make important contributions to pupils' attainment and progress.

20 Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and are well motivated. They almost invariably settle quickly at the beginning of lessons and are very attentive during the introductions and later discussions. They are eager to offer information or to give answers to questions. During the individual and group work they maintain very good concentration and work at a good pace. When they finish their tasks, pupils are generally keen to do additional work. In a few lessons in literacy and numeracy, when teacher-led discussions or group activities were a little long, pupils did not sustain their original levels of concentration.

21 Children starting school settle very quickly as a result of the sensitive and encouraging support given by the reception class staff. They adapt well to school routines. At this early point in the term some of the pupils in Key Stage 1 are finding difficulty in making the transition to the more structured whole class activities. A few have difficulty in sustaining their concentration throughout the lesson.

22 Otherwise, pupils behave very well in lessons and assemblies. They follow instructions well and always come to order quickly when requested by a member of staff. They are generally obedient and there is little need to apply sanctions. No pupils have been excluded from the school. Behaviour around the school throughout the day is very good. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are very pleasant, orderly occasions. Any incidents between pupils are relatively minor and the staff manage them with great consistency. During the inspection there was no evidence that bullying is a problem in the school. The pupils look after the books, resources, equipment, buildings and grounds very well. The pupils are very polite to adults and to each other.

23 Relationships between pupils of all ages and between pupils and adults are very good. Staff treat the pupils fairly and are warm and friendly. There is a 'family' atmosphere in the school. Pupils clearly respect adults. They collaborate very well under all circumstances, sharing resources and taking their turns well in group work. They help each other willingly when working on their individual tasks. Pupils show their genuine appreciation for the ideas and information offered by others in lessons and assemblies and consequently they are confident to make contributions in discussions.

24 Pupils work very well on their own, particularly as they progress through the school. They take on responsibilities as monitors or class helpers from their early years. The maturity of their responses to challenges and their capacity for self-study develop well as they become older. In each class they take some responsibility for registers and money collections and for preparing and clearing away their books and other resources in lessons. Year 6 pupils take on whole school responsibilities such as the library, hall layout and assembly arrangements. These older pupils make valuable contributions to school life by helping the younger pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

· **Attendance**

25 The excellent attendance and punctuality identified during the previous inspection have been maintained successfully by the school. Attendance is well above the national average and there are no unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive early for school and are always ready to work at the beginning of lessons.

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· **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

· **Teaching**

26 The quality of teaching for children under five has improved greatly since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. It is now very good. The school has maintained the overall good quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2. This has a very positive effect on pupils. Teaching ranges from excellent to poor, but is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. In a significant minority of lessons it is very good or excellent. Only two less than satisfactory lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, and one at Key Stage 2. Teaching of the under fives is very good, with every lesson of good quality or better. At both Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching is mainly good. Literacy and numeracy lessons occasionally lack pace, however, when they are too long.

27 The teaching of children under five is characterised by excellent teamwork. Staff provide an encouraging and stimulating working environment for the pupils. The teacher deploys the two education assistants very effectively to assess or teach small groups or individuals. Relationships between staff and children are excellent. As a result of meticulous organisation and planning, all of the children settle very quickly into the reception class routines and show good concentration on their tasks. The teacher organises a careful balance of directed and chosen activities. The team of adults promotes children's good progress by matching the activities to their capabilities and interests.

28 The very good teaching at Key Stage 1 is in music and physical education. The school makes very efficient use of teachers' expertise in these subjects and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress as a result of well-planned, well-organised and well-paced lessons. Teachers in these lessons show a high level of confidence in demonstrating skills and inspire the pupils to develop and refine their skills. In one music lesson, the teacher deployed an education assistant particularly well to note individual pupils' skills at maintaining a rhythm pattern. In a games skills lesson in the hall, the teacher interspersed short bursts of activity with short pauses for explanations and demonstrations in order to focus pupils on refining their bouncing, throwing and catching skills. Mainly good teaching in mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 stems from teachers' thorough lesson planning, resource preparation and precise use of mathematical or scientific language. In otherwise good mathematics lessons, however, teachers do not plan sufficiently carefully to extend higher attainers. In one or two lessons at this key stage and in early Key Stage 2 the teacher did not ensure a calm working atmosphere. In one literacy lesson, for example, the teacher allowed noise levels to rise too far during the activity session and pupils' progress was poor.

29 At Key Stage 2, again some of the most effective teaching is in music, and involves a subject specialist. Well-planned teaching at a brisk pace in well-organised lessons ensures that all pupils focus fully and make very good progress in singing, playing the recorder and

using musical notation. High quality teaching at Key Stage 2 always features thorough planning, very good use of resources and precise use of subject-specific vocabulary during questioning. In science lessons, teachers in each year group extend pupils' knowledge and understanding very successfully by using, and requiring pupils to use appropriate technical terms. In one particularly successful information technology lesson in Year 4, the teacher and education assistants all showed clear command of the subject and conveyed their high expectations to the groups of pupils. Through effective use of time and resources, the teacher and assistants ensured that pupils made very good progress in extending their research skills by using CD-ROMs and the Internet. In this lesson the teacher also promoted the use of self-assessment sheets by pupils. In most lessons observed, there was little involvement of pupils in assessing their progress. Teachers at Key Stage 2 regularly share their marking criteria with the class, but they do not routinely share the aim of the lesson at its outset or review the success of the learning with pupils at the close of the lesson.

30 For the most part at both key stages, teachers plan clearly what they intend pupils to learn in each lesson in all subjects. Teachers almost invariably select appropriate tasks to promote the learning and organise groups well. A number of literacy and numeracy lessons are less effective than they could be because they go on too long. In order to fill the time allocated, teachers either allow too much time for group work or spend too long talking and explaining. In both cases the result is that pupils lose concentration and application. In other respects, teaching of literacy is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well in the context of science, geography and history studies. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall at both key stages, and includes some good teaching. Teachers extend higher attainers well at upper Key Stage 2, but planning and assessment takes insufficient account of the needs of higher attainers at Key Stage 1. Teachers put an appropriate emphasis on the development and use of number skills, including mental recall.

31 At both key stages, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their comments promote improvement. Teachers make good use of day-to-day assessments during lessons, commenting helpfully to individuals or groups on points noticed, in order to ensure clearer understanding. Teachers at Key Stage 2 make good use of homework. Last year's homework club gave additional benefit to all pupils in Year 6, particularly to higher attainers. Having analysed the success of this venture, the school is to extend this opportunity to all Key Stage 2 pupils during the coming year.

32 Teachers ensure equality of opportunity in games, physical education and access to computers. Boys and girls participate in all sporting activities and extra-curricular clubs. In lessons, teachers organise mixed gender groups and in some instances, such as physical education, teachers take pains to integrate the sexes and ability levels. In their behaviour and attitudes, teachers are good role models for promoting pupils' awareness of equal opportunities.

33 Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs. Usually they work on the same tasks as their peers, but with extra support. Pupils also have special support at least once a week, when they work with one of the special educational need teachers on tasks related to the targets on their individual education plans. During the inspection the teacher withdrew pupils for start-of-the-year assessment activities and worked with them in a sensitive and patient manner. Careful planning and good support based on very good relationships have a positive impact on the progress for these pupils.

## **The curriculum and assessment**

34 The school provides pupils with a broad and relevant curriculum, which meets statutory requirements and reflects the aims of the school. It has made significant improvements since the last inspection in the development of the reception class curriculum and in the improvement of planning at Key Stages 1 and 2, to ensure pupils' learning progresses appropriately from year to year. The school continues to offer a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

35 The curriculum in the reception class is effectively based on the six areas of learning for children under five. It is balanced and relevant to children's needs. It places an appropriate emphasis on the development of the children's literacy and numeracy skills and on their personal and social development. Teaching introduces children to the National Curriculum as they demonstrate their readiness to begin more formal learning. Planning is of very good quality.

36 Curriculum planning is good overall. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. These provide valuable guidance for ensuring a clear pattern of teaching and learning which builds on each previous year's work. The school is implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies satisfactorily in the main. However, at both Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum currently allocates too much time to literacy and numeracy lessons. Towards the end of lessons lasting well over an hour, both teachers and pupils lose momentum. Timetabling also restricts time available for other subjects, although at the start of the school year, the impact of timetable arrangements on other subjects is not yet apparent. The school has recognised the problems and is already reviewing timing within the teaching day to ensure an appropriate balance across all subjects in the course of a year.

37 The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, spiritual and cultural development, preparing them well for the next stage of their learning and for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life. There is good provision for pupils' personal education through the religious education syllabus and teachers' own example. Teaching of religious education is covered in accordance with the syllabus agreed by the local Diocese. The annual retreat for Year 6 pupils makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development and their sense of achievement. The curriculum includes a programme for health education, including drugs awareness, and sex education, which has been approved by governors and is notified to parents.

38 The school is committed to providing full and equal access to the whole curriculum for all its pupils. It has an agreed equal opportunities policy and subject policies include guidance on how to promote this aspect of teaching. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils from an early age are well established and planning is good. The two special needs teachers in consultation with the special needs co-ordinator and the class teachers draw up individual education plans which are well matched to pupils' identified needs. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and carries out regular reviews in which teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator, parents and the named governor are involved.

39 There is very good provision for extra curricular activities. These include, at different times of the year, football, netball, cross-country running, badminton, choir and orchestra. Activities are well supported and all pupils have the chance to play in school teams regardless of their gender. In addition the school's homework club has been very well supported and effective in

extending the learning of older pupils.

40 The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and maintains comprehensive records of pupils' progress. Its assessment procedures are very good. The local baseline assessment has been used since 1997 to measure attainment on entry, and teachers use tests at Key Stage 1 to monitor pupils' progress in reading each year. At Key Stage 2, teachers administer annual tests for each year group, to measure pupils' skills and knowledge in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics. Class teachers pass the information on from year to year. At the end of topics they carry out testing to measure pupils' understanding in the core subjects and in history and geography. They carry out an annual formal assessment of pupils' progress in physical education.

41 The school has begun to use assessment information to set literacy and numeracy performance targets for Year 6 pupils. However, teachers make insufficient use of the very good data collected, in order to track pupils' progress through the school, to identify targets for individual pupils and to share these with pupils and their parents. Teachers at Key Stage 1 do not use all the available assessment information to guide them in order to challenge higher attainers in mathematics, for example. Pupils throughout the school amass examples of their work in records of achievement folders, but teachers do not routinely involve them in assessing their own progress and knowing what they need to do to make progress. When they do, as shown by Year 6 standards achieved last year, pupils respond very well to the challenges set. The co-ordinator recognised a weakness in pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific vocabulary. The introduction of a scientific dictionary for each year group, revision lessons to ensure recent coverage of the full curriculum, and a school-based homework club had a dramatic impact on national test results.

#### **· Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

42 The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development and very good provision for their spiritual, moral and social development. It has maintained the strong picture outlined in the last inspection. Staff and governors' belief in the importance of developing the whole child within the context of a Christian community provides a strong foundation for the school's work. Parents are very positive about the beneficial impact that the school has upon their children's values and attitudes.

43 A shared Christian belief underpins the work of all adults working in the school and this is translated in the sensitive and caring way in which they work with the pupils. Within lessons, pupils are frequently given opportunities to reflect upon spiritual values and to appreciate that real understanding lies beyond knowledge. This was evident, for example, in a Year 5 session where pupils were looking at the impact of industrialisation upon society. Both assemblies and class prayers also provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon spiritual matters. They are calm and thoughtful gatherings. Pupils are given opportunities to appreciate the values of other religions and their attention is drawn to the tenets of other faiths in corridor displays.

44 Staff relationships with pupils are very good and teachers act as good role models for the pupils. Consequently pupils are very well behaved and all clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. The sound behaviour policy is set firmly within the Christian context and has one written rule, to 'Love one another as I have loved you'. In some classrooms there are printed reminders to pupils about how to behave, but these are rarely needed.

45 Staff teach all pupils to care for each other and give increasing responsibilities to older pupils. In all classes, pupils take it in turns to help with administrative tasks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are also expected to help with tidying the dining hall after lunch and looking after the younger children during wet play times. Teachers also give pupils regular opportunities to work together on set tasks during some lessons. Opportunities for involvement in concerts, masses and assemblies, to which parents and the community are invited, also broaden pupils' experience of social contexts and boost their self-esteem. There are opportunities to take part in regular extra-curricular activities, where pupils mix with their friends from other year groups. Pupils are also encouraged to think about the needs of others and the school supports a range of charities, such as CAFOD, Father Hudson's and the Help the Aged.

46 The school has a strong musical tradition and pupils are involved in concerts, including those held with other schools. The recent arts week helped pupils to celebrate art as well as music, although generally less attention is given to the visual arts. Pupils are also made aware of the literary traditions of the English-speaking world and have opportunities to build up their own libraries at the regular book fairs. Pupils learn about other cultures within the context of geography, in work on Kenya, Ireland and Peru, for example. They also have links with a rural school outside Coventry, which helps them to appreciate cultural differences within their own locality.

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

47 The school has maintained the very good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils identified at the time of the previous inspection.

48 Good induction sessions for children starting school ensure good opportunities to provide information and address any concerns of parents at an early stage. The school admits children in three groups over the first two weeks of the school year, which helps them develop very good relationships with their peers, teacher and educational assistants within the context of a small group. Children from the adjacent church playgroup come to school for special events, such as assemblies, which helps them to develop good attitudes towards school. During the inspection the new arrivals appeared very settled during their first days at school. There are very good arrangements to provide parents with information and advice to ensure a smooth transfer of the pupils to secondary schools at the end of Year 6.

49 Throughout the school all members of staff know the pupils very well. Information is passed effectively from year to year and teachers monitor pupils' progress and development closely. Teachers are very accessible to parents at the beginning and end of each school day and will readily discuss any concerns with them. If a teacher is concerned about an aspect of a pupil's progress, parents are contacted promptly. Procedures for identifying, managing and monitoring pupils with special educational needs are very good. Teachers involve pupils well in the evaluation of their own progress. There are good links with support services which are involved in the care of pupils with special educational needs. The long-term absence of the school's attached educational psychologist has slowed some of the assessment procedures over the last year for the ten pupils at Stage 3 of the register.

50 The school's behaviour policy provides a good framework for managing pupils. Members of staff are vigilant in monitoring pupil activities and interactions at breaktimes. Relationships and bullying are addressed effectively through assemblies and religious education lessons. The staff are vigilant and always respond quickly to concerns from children or parents about relationships with others.

51 The school stresses the importance of good attendance and timekeeping. The school's efficiency and parents' support result in a high level of attendance and very good punctuality. Teachers mark registers promptly at the beginning of each session. The school has introduced optical mark registers and processes the information weekly so that any potential problems may be identified quickly.

52 Arrangements for child protection are sound. The local authority has introduced new guidelines on child protection this year. The headteacher attended a training course on the new guidelines and subsequently held a staff meeting to highlight the requirements.

53 The school's health and safety procedures are good and staff apply them well. The school receives valuable assistance from the school nurse, the dental hygienist and the police. Members of staff have attended a course on drug abuse. There are two fully-trained first-aiders and they are available during the school day to attend to illness and accidents. The school keeps records of the details of any accidents and contacts parents appropriately if there are any causes for concern. All members of staff have received training in managing emergencies. Staff conduct a health and safety check of the whole school each term and minute their findings in good detail. The removal of a potential hazard is marked on the record when it has been implemented. The fire appliances are checked regularly and there are fire drills each term.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

54 The very good partnership with parents and the community has been maintained and developed well since the previous inspection. The informative brochure and introductory booklet for parents cover key aspects of school life for children new into school. The school has excellent links with the church playgroup and staff make good contact with parents, inviting them into school with their children for an afternoon in the summer term to meet the staff and see the classroom. Very good relationships between the school and parents enable the children to settle very quickly into school life.

55 Parents' consultation evenings in the first two terms each year and a summer open evening offer good opportunities to share information. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and covers statutory requirements. The annual pupil reports cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Hand-written comments are specific to the individuals and give qualitative information on progress and attainment. Occasionally, reports include comment on areas for development, but they do not routinely include a section on specific targets for improvement. The school holds information evenings for parents on the curriculum and this year is proposing workshops on the numeracy strategy and parental support for homework. The good information provided by the school documents is supplemented well by regular letters and newsletters. There is a very good partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully involved in the reviews of their children's individual education plans and staff are happy to discuss pupils' progress with parents at any time.

56 Parents give their children very good support at home for reading and topic work. They have given their enthusiastic support for the home-school contract and are very supportive at consultation meetings and school productions, assemblies and masses. The Friends' Association is very active in fund-raising and organising social events. It makes substantial

contributions to the financing of resources such as the Partnership Centres. A number of parents help in school in lessons on a regular basis and provide valuable assistance on school visits.

57 There is very close liaison with the parish church. The priest is a regular visitor for mass and assemblies. A joint planning initiative by the school and church has resulted in a thriving playgroup adjacent to the school. The school and playgroup derive mutual benefits from this collaboration. School fund-raising and social activities are shared or co-ordinated very well with the church. The school nurse, police, fire brigade and parish priest give active support to the school.

58 The school undertakes initial teacher training in collaboration with Warwick University and pupils derive additional benefits from visits to the University for technology and science projects. Visiting teachers and lecturers take science and technology sessions at the school. Governors, staff and parents are enthusiastic supporters of local school and industry partnership schemes. The science, history, geography and technology projects provided by these centres provide experiences of high quality which are well beyond the resources of a primary school. All classes have at least one visit a year and most visit two centres.

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

### **Leadership and management**

59 Very good leadership by the headteacher, newly-appointed deputy head, and governors is providing the school with a clear educational direction. Following the last inspection, the governing body developed a very carefully considered action plan and has successfully addressed all of the weaknesses highlighted. More recently, the school put into place strategies to raise attainment further in mathematics and science. The improvements in 1999, particularly for higher attainers, show their effectiveness. The very good quality of leadership has been maintained since the last inspection.

60 There is a clear commitment to improving academic standards, but the school sees its prime commitment as providing a rounded education for every child. Following negotiation with the local education authority, the school has set challenging targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 in the year 2000. The school's aims, values and policies are well documented and publicised. They are clearly reflected in its work both within the school and in its community and parish activities. Every member of staff has a clearly defined and clearly understood job description. Under the sensitive leadership of the headteacher the school's ethos is excellent.

61 The school's development plan recognises the need to develop further the steps already taken towards improving monitoring roles. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has led a gradual development of subject co-ordinators' roles. Each co-ordinator now reports annually to governors on action taken to develop each subject. These reports feature changes in curriculum or teaching strategies, but do not cover the impact of the action on standards. There is insufficient emphasis on monitoring pupils' attainment and tracking their progress, with the result that co-ordinators lack a school overview of standards and progress in their subjects. The headteacher has begun monitoring the quality of teaching and the current school development plan includes the further development of systematic monitoring within



classrooms.

62 Some current individual monitoring, analysis and action planning is very successful, as when the school improved standards in science after the co-ordinator's recognition of weaknesses and appropriate action. Governors and staff are aware of the success of the strategies used in this situation. They are building on this knowledge, but neither co-ordinators' action plans nor the school development plan contain a format to encourage measurement of the success of actions against targeted outcomes. As a result, development planning lacks clarity of focus. Although comprehensive, and effective through the informal procedures used, the development plan does not present a clear overview of priorities, timescales, responsibilities and success criteria. The school has chosen to focus on a one-year plan, arguing that national changes are driving priorities to the extent that time committed to long-term planning is time wasted. The result, however, is that the school lacks a long-term view of where it would like to be in a few years' time.

63 The school's special educational needs policy is underpinned by the local authority's own policy. The school's policy is clear and broadly meets legal requirements, although there are some minor omissions, such as the arrangements for teachers' professional development. Similarly the annual report to parents lacks detail about the success of the special educational needs policy and the allocation of resources to this area. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and this reflects the good picture outlined in the last inspection of the school. The governor responsible for special educational needs works closely with the co-ordinator and headteacher to monitor pupils' progress. The special educational needs governor, for example, analyses the statutory tests and assessments to ascertain the progress made by pupils against national expectations.

64 The governing body gives very good support to the school. It has effective procedures, planning its meetings and subcommittee schedule for a full year in advance and minuting decisions efficiently. Several governors make very good use of their personal expertise in supporting the school. Except for the minor omissions of special educational needs details in the policy and the annual report to parents, the school fulfils all statutory requirements.

#### • **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

65 Overall, the school has improved its staffing, accommodation and learning resources since the last inspection. There are sufficient teachers with a wide spread of relevant qualifications and a good range of experience to meet the requirements of the pupils and the curriculum, including the under-fives. All teachers co-ordinate at least one area of the curriculum and their expertise and interest are generally well matched to their responsibilities. Education assistants are well qualified and provide valuable support to teachers. They work closely with teachers and attend staff meetings and training days where appropriate. Due to the recent ill-health of the school administrator, the headteacher has had to undertake extra responsibilities in this area. However, the school has appointed a part-time administrator on a short-term contract and, with the help of volunteers, school administration is being satisfactorily managed at present. There are an appropriate number of lunchtime supervisors who regularly liaise with the headteacher and teachers.

66 Staffing for pupils with special educational needs is adequate. Two designated teachers work with pupils for a day and a half in total and an educational assistant works for a few hours a week with these pupils. Staff are well qualified. The co-ordinator, for example, has taught in

a school for pupils with learning difficulties and has undergone further training since she has been at St John Vianney.

67 The school places appropriate emphasis on the continuing professional development of all staff and has an effective programme for promoting this. An induction process for new teachers is in place. Annual professional interviews provide the basis for identifying the individual development needs of all teachers. These are drawn together and matched against the priorities agreed in the school development plan in order to establish the staff training programme. This process has been particularly helpful while the appraisal system awaits national developments. Training for literacy and numeracy has taken place in school and through attending locally provided courses. The dissemination of information has been mainly effective, although the school is still addressing the timing and length of literacy and numeracy lessons.

68 The accommodation is attractive and of sufficient size to provide a stimulating environment for teaching. The school is well maintained by the caretaker and assistants. Corridor and entrance hall space has been well adapted to provide library, resource and learning areas for pupils. Staff have set up attractive and stimulating displays both in classrooms and common areas to celebrate pupils' achievements and promote further learning. The children under five work in a light and airy room, with its own small courtyard. They also have access to a home corner in the corridor outside their room. Although they have no large wheeled toys or permanent climbing apparatus, they happily join in more rumbustious play in the infant playground. They use the apparatus in the hall during designated physical education lessons.

69 The school has spacious grounds which are satisfactorily maintained. The playgrounds are adequate in size but the surface of the junior playground is being disturbed by tree roots, which will present a hazard in the near future. Although the school has good playing surfaces for football and netball, there are no facilities to promote pupils' learning through a nature or garden area, for example. Pupils take great care of the school and its resources. There is no evidence of graffiti or litter.

70 The school is appropriately resourced to meet the demands of all subjects. There is satisfactory provision for pupils under five. Significant spending on books has provided a good range of literature to support the development of literacy skills. The school has purchased books and resources which use role models from both sexes and a range of ethnic minorities for the reference library and for classroom fiction material. Since the last inspection, staff have created a well-stocked reference library and improved the organisation and display of books. Carpeting and seating has improved the attractiveness of these areas. Resources for mathematics have also been increased to support the numeracy framework.

71 The school has improved resources for design and technology and information and communication technology significantly since the last inspection. Resources are well stored, labelled and accessible to staff. The school makes effective use of learning activities with other schools in subjects such as design and technology and visits to places of interest in geography.

72 Resources for pupils with special educational needs are adequate. There is no designated area for teachers to work outside the classroom and at the moment groups are taught in the Key Stage 1 library and home corner and the information technology suite. This restricts the use of these areas for other work and will become more problematical once the computer suite

is fully operational.

· **The efficiency of the school**

73 The school has made improvements in standards of attainment since the last inspection and has maintained its efficiency well. Financial planning is very good and takes good account of the school's priorities in the annual development plan. Planning is an evolutionary process and adjustments are made to the rolling development plan each year through the work of the committees. The staff and governors look at the future costs of any new initiatives. They try to budget within the annual income and maintain a small reserve for contingencies or future projects. Service contracts are reviewed regularly and the school seeks value for money in its purchases. The budget plan is concise and provides an accessible summary of planned income and expenditure.

74 The use of the local school and industry partnership schemes is very effective in enhancing the curriculum in science, technology, history and geography at a relatively low cost. The diocese is generous in providing its share of external maintenance costs. The Friends' Association makes very valuable contributions to the school for purchasing resources and services such as those offered by the local Partnership Centres.

75 Financial controls in the school are very good. The records of the main accounts and school fund are fully in order. Governors are given regular financial statements to enable them to monitor expenditure effectively. The most recent audit of the accounts was completed in June 1999. The overall judgement found the accounts to be in good order. The school has already addressed most of the issues raised by the auditors for changes in procedures. The school fund accounts are audited satisfactorily each year. The administration of the school is efficient with all records accessible to the relevant staff and in good order. The administration gives very good support to pupils, staff and parents and the school had organised adequate cover for the absence of administrative staff during the inspection week. The overall deployment of staff, accommodation & learning resources is very good.

76 There is no additional income for pupils with special educational needs. All funding for the statemented pupils is administered directly by the local authority. The school allocates an appropriate part of its own budget to support pupils on the school's register of special educational need. The school accounts fully for use of income for staff training and uses its allocation for the purposes intended. The teachers pass on information and experience to others effectively at staff meetings.

77 Taking into the account above average attainment of the pupils on entry to the school and average unit costs, set against pupils' good progress and high levels of attainment, their very good attitudes, behaviour & personal development, and the good quality of education provided, the school is giving very good value for money.

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

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

78 At the time of the inspection eighteen four-year-olds had begun school in the reception class. The school has a sensible policy of admitting new children in three groups during the first two weeks of the autumn term, with the youngest pupils beginning first. A further ten four-year-olds were due to begin after the inspection had finished. This staggered start to the year for the reception children means that they are settled into school in small groups and helps staff to develop good relationships with individual children. Consequently, children settle very quickly into school routines. Baseline assessment undertaken in 1998 indicates that overall children's skills, knowledge and understanding are above average in comparison to other children in Coventry. Although baseline assessment has not been completed this year, children are also showing above average abilities. The reception year are taught together with one full time teacher and two part-time education assistants. Children participate fully in all aspects of school life and join their older friends for assemblies, play times and lunch. There has been considerable improvement in the provision for children under five since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now very good, where it had been unsatisfactory before. As a result, standards have risen in the reception class and most pupils make good progress in all aspects of their learning. Most reach the desirable learning outcomes for five-year-olds in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development well before their fifth birthdays.

#### **Personal and social development**

79 Staff provide a secure and safe environment for the children, which helps them to settle very quickly into school. There is a great deal of emphasis placed on celebrating what individual children achieve and so children feel valued and successful. In the first few days staff work very hard to explain school routines and set high expectations for children's sensible behaviour. As a result, in their first week at school, children already line up in an orderly manner when they need to leave the room and sit quietly on the carpet to listen to the teacher. The teacher and assistants place great emphasis in the first few days on helping children to look after themselves. Regular class trips to the lavatories, for example, help children to familiarise themselves with the geography of the building. Children are also expected to change for physical education lessons and manage this well with help. They are building up good relationships with the adults and other children in the class and clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

#### **Language and literacy**

80 Children make good progress in language and literacy because the work is carefully planned to develop early phonic and writing skills. An appropriate emphasis on encouraging children to develop their spoken language underpins the work in this area. Consequently by the time that they leave the reception class children have made a start on reading and are beginning to write in simple sentences. In one session, for example, the youngest children practised writing from left to right by tracing over patterns drawn by the teacher and assistants in their writing books. Most managed this very well, concentrating successfully on the task. They then went on to learn an alphabet song and it was evident that many children already knew some letters. Many children recognise their own names and enjoy reading the names of

labels in their 'chocolate' book.

- **Mathematics**

81 Children make good progress because of the interesting and relevant activities planned. In one session, for example, there was a sensible balance between class and individual activities with a range of tasks planned to reinforce what was being taught. Time on the carpet with the whole class recognising numbers up to five moved quickly to a table top activity where children matched numbers to sets of objects. After using sand and play dough to form the numbers one, two and three, the children then moved back to the carpet to learn a number song. Work undertaken by reception children last year shows that by the age of five they are working towards level 1 of the National Curriculum.

- **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

82 Children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are beginning to understand that time passes and are made aware of the yearly cycle by a class display, which marks their birthdays. Staff help pupils to learn about the world by setting up interesting activities for the children. The courtyard has been used to grow plants. Children's work from last year shows that they learnt about many living things, for instance, the life cycle of a butterfly. In one session children looked carefully at themselves in mirrors in preparation for painting self-portraits, discussing the possible colours for hair and eyes. They apply their knowledge and understanding to new tasks. One little girl used play dough to make a whale and talked about it 'diving in and out'. Children work on the class computer and are very enthusiastic about this. In one session, they enjoyed working with an assistant on an 'early bird' painting programme.

- **Physical development**

83 Children make good progress in their physical development. The small courtyard outside the classroom is too small for running and jumping, but children have sessions on the playground and in the hall. In one outside session, children worked with balls to develop hand and eye co-ordination. They used the space well and improved their skills with practice. In another session pupils moved to music in the hall and followed instructions, which involved curling up like a spider and running quickly. Children make good progress in the development of fine motor skills. Most children already have good pencil control. They work with play dough and tiny plastic shapes, which they successfully combine to make small creatures.

- **Creative development**

84 Children make good progress overall in their creative development. Opportunities to experiment with a range of media are provided and, in one session, children enjoyed working with paint to make self-portraits. Children are also given opportunities to use the sand tray in order to experiment with texture and work happily alongside each other in shared enjoyment. Children use the equipment to make their own stories. One boy, for example, slid the beads on the abacus to represent trains rushing along a track.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

85 In the 1998 assessments of seven-year-olds, pupils attained standards which were above average when compared to all schools. This maintained the standards of the previous two years. Compared to schools similar to St John Vianney, in terms of eligibility for free school meals, pupils' attainment was average in reading, but below average in writing. Attainment levels rose in 1999, with more pupils attaining the higher level 3 in both reading and writing. The school has successfully targeted the higher attainers and in 1999 half of the pupils reach a higher level in reading and about a fifth reach a higher level in writing at the end of Key Stage 1.

86 The results of the 1998 national tests for eleven-year-olds were well above average, maintaining the previous two years' standards. Results were also much higher than those in schools similar to St John Vianney. In 1999, standards rose further, with many more pupils attaining the higher level 5 than previously. This marks an improvement from the attainment levels noted in the last inspection. The school has built still further, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, on the good standards reported,

87 Inspection findings confirm the picture of rising standards. Pupils' attainment is now above average in all areas of English at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is good throughout the school in all areas of English because of the good teaching. Most pupils identified as having special educational needs are attaining at levels expected for their age. They make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

88 The school has adopted the national literacy strategy and is allocating a high proportion of curriculum time to English. Teachers are now beginning to adapt some aspects of the strategy in order to blend it with teaching methods which they know work well. Pupils develop literacy skills in many curriculum areas, such as history, geography and science, as well as in literacy sessions. In addition, time is allocated specifically to reading.

89 Throughout the school, pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and each other. They contribute confidently to class discussions, which often take place at the beginning of lessons. Pupils also speak together sensibly about their work when working together in class. This was evident in one lesson when pupils worked in pairs to write a playscript. Pupils speak clearly in a range of situations. In discussions with inspectors younger and older pupils talked enthusiastically about what they had learnt and experienced. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, described visits to the partnership centre to work on their Tudor topic with great clarity. In class prayers pupils are given the opportunity to make up their own extempore prayers and at these times use appropriate language and timbre. Class assemblies give pupils the opportunity to speak to a larger audience. Although pupils occasionally have the opportunity to take part in debates, interview people and engage in drama activities, these are not systematically planned into the programme of work for each year. Drama was an area highlighted for development in the last inspection and the current provision means that pupils take part in class assemblies, encounter some role play within history and are involved in school productions. However, the lack of a specific plan for the development of speaking and listening, and particularly drama, means that this area sometimes lacks sufficient attention.

90 Younger pupils build up a range of strategies in Key Stage 1 and understand how to use context, phonic and picture clues to help them read simple texts. They follow structured reading schemes and talk with obvious enjoyment about the characters that they read about. Alongside the reading schemes, pupils are taught phonic skills and reinforce what they learn by recording this in writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop reading skills in both the literacy hour and during group reading sessions. They approach their work sensibly. In one session, for example, a group of Year 4 readers were not sure about the meaning of the word 'commentate' and so made a point of asking their teacher. The school promotes a love of literature by providing good quality texts in classrooms and library areas. Fiction collections are kept in the classrooms. These are generally adequate, except in Class 4, where the stock is insufficient for the number of pupils. In Class 1, an attractive display of bear books brought texts to pupils' attention, but otherwise there are few displays to celebrate the work of particular authors. The school organises book fairs when pupils have opportunities to buy books to build up their own libraries. As a consequence of the generally good provision, most pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They describe their favourite authors and enjoy talking about their work. Teachers generally select good texts to work on in the literacy hour, but there is no whole school agreement on books and authors which pupils should experience within each year. Since the last inspection of the school the library has been improved and is a useful resource. Good progress in reading is fostered by the support which pupils, especially younger ones, receive from their parents and carers. Pupils take books home on a regular basis and parents note the date and page read. In some classes pupils record what they have read in an attractive booklet entitled 'Feed you brain', which serves as a useful record of books read. Parents also encourage their children to visit local libraries, reinforcing their research skills.

91 In the literacy hour, pupils work on developing specific skills related to grammar, handwriting and spelling as well as writing independently. Teachers also use other subjects, such as history and geography to develop pupils' independent writing. Consequently, pupils have many opportunities to develop their writing skills and attain good standards. Generally, pupils' independent writing is lively and imaginative. They progress from writing simple sentences in Year 1 to lengthy stories by the end of Year 2. They use language sensitively. In a piece about a cat, for example, one girl wrote 'Deep in the city a black and white cat lived.' In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in the mechanics of writing underpins their independent work. They use language well and develop a wide vocabulary. In one Year 3 session, where pupils were working on a shared poem entitled 'My ideal home', for example, one boy suggested 'Home, you guard my precious things' as a possible line. Pupils have the opportunity to write for a range of purposes, including poetry, playscripts, accounts, stories and descriptions. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils are writing at length in a joined and legible style. Several pupils have been successful in a poetry competition and are to have their work included in a millennium poetry book. Homework is used well to support pupils' progress in spelling and older pupils are frequently asked to undertake a piece of writing at home.

92 Pupils enjoy English and are generally positive about their work. They listen carefully to their teacher and are keen to contribute to class discussions. They settle to work quickly and concentrate well on the work set. Most are enthusiastic about reading and enjoy books at home and at school. In one lesson the pupils were inattentive and did not concentrate well.

93 The quality of the teaching ranges from good to poor, but is predominantly good. One poor session was seen, but the good progress that pupils usually make indicates that this is not typical. This presents a similar picture overall to that found in the last inspection, when teaching was also felt to be strong. Teachers' planning is generally good. Learning objectives for lessons are clear and work is adapted well for pupils of different attainment levels within each class. In the best sessions, teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils at the

beginning of the lesson. Teachers have worked hard to adopt the content and the structure of the literacy hour. Staff have successfully incorporated the main strands within the programme for each year group into the planning for English, choosing to undertake group reading, for example, at a separate time. Some teachers spend an overlong time on the introductory class session, which slows the pace of the lesson overall. This tendency for extended teacher talk is exacerbated by the extended lengthening of the literacy hour on some days. Teachers are clear in their explanations, which helps pupils to progress well. Most teachers are working with a new group of pupils at this stage in the term, but nonetheless involve them appropriately in class discussion. The activities set are relevant and interesting, particularly in Key Stage 2 and so pupils concentrate well on the task in hand. In the poor lesson seen, the teacher did not manage the pupils well. Consequently they were noisy and did not work sensibly on the work set for them. Teachers generally pull the sessions together well at the end of the lesson and give pupils good feedback on how they are doing, both verbally and through written comments in books.

## **Mathematics**

94 Results of 1998 tests show that pupils' attainment was average at Key Stage 1. Compared to similar schools, however, it was below average. This was because comparatively fewer pupils attained the higher level 3. In 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the national standard was similar, but still fewer pupils attained the higher level 3. Over the past four years, the school has maintained standards at the end of Key Stage 1. From 1996 to 1998 the percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 was above average, but the percentage attaining the higher level has always been below the national average.

95 Results of Key Stage 2 tests in 1998 show pupils attaining above the national average, but below average when compared with similar schools. As at Key Stage 1, the percentage attaining the expected Level 4 is well above average, but the number attaining the higher Level 5 is below average. In 1999 the school achieved a dramatic improvement, with a ten per cent increase in pupils attaining at least the standard level 4 and a 38 per cent increase in pupils attaining the higher level 5. Standards had previously varied a little between 1996 and 1998, when they dipped a little.

96 Attainment in the current year is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress through the school is generally good, including the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Higher attainers in Key Stage 2 are also making good progress, particularly at the end of the key stage. In Key Stage 1, however, higher attainers continue to make unsatisfactory progress as there is insufficient challenge for them.

97 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value up to 100 and understand patterns such as odd and even numbers. They have a good knowledge of shape and space and use their number skills effectively in measuring. They identify a broad range of two and three-dimensional shapes and describe the faces and edges using appropriate language. Many pupils accurately tell the time from a clock-face. They have a good understanding of money, how to add prices and give change in a shop. Pupils use block graphs to represent and interpret data such as birthdays and favourite hobbies. Current pupils have good mental arithmetic skills and easily recognise bigger and smaller two-digit numbers. Through regular oral sessions, they are developing the ability to count on and back in tens. Pupils apply their number skills in science and the vocabulary which they use is sound. Pupils have only limited opportunities to devise their own methods of measuring and recording data.



Many have good ideas about number patterns but higher attainers do not regularly have tasks to help them investigate in depth.

98 At Key Stage 2 pupils are highly competent at number work. They recognise and use numbers up to seven figures and accurately solve problems with two places of decimals. They use and apply their knowledge in creating and identifying different number bonds and most work very accurately. Pupils are used to making estimates of calculations and are good at checking their work for accuracy. Pupils understand and apply fractions to solve problems and many know the relationship between percentages, fractions and decimals. They are good at solving money problems. They are competent at measuring and understand standard measures of length, time, weight and volume. Pupils' knowledge of shape and space is above average. They understand the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and have a good knowledge of the names and properties of triangles. They are competent at measuring angles. Pupils plot co-ordinates on axes which include negative numbers. They have a good knowledge of symmetry and how to rotate shapes. Pupils are competent in handling data and display their findings through block and line graphs. They make satisfactory use of information and communication technology. Throughout the key stage, current pupils are developing confidence in mental arithmetic. They are keen to describe and compare their methods with the class.

99 Pupils' response is generally good and sometimes very good. Their attention and concentration reflects an interest and enthusiasm for the work. During mental arithmetic sessions pupils are keen to answer and quick to put up their hands. They sustain their application well throughout activities. In discussions, they are keen to answer questions and contribute ideas. Pupils generally work well on their own. Older pupils are often good at developing their own personal ways of working. In shared activities, pupils work effectively together.

100 Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Currently, teachers are adjusting to the national numeracy framework, for which they have not yet completed training. Their subject knowledge is good and teachers explain methods clearly. They conduct oral sessions well and most provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss their individual methods of doing mental arithmetic. Teachers manage their classes well and give plenty of guidance and encouragement to pupils. They maintain a good pace in most sessions and are learning to allocate an appropriate amount of time to the different activities. However, some lessons are overlong and the impact of teaching is diffused. Teachers have developed effective long-term plans which maintain an appropriate balance across the subject. In their daily plans, teachers do not always identify the exact skill they want pupils to develop in order to provide a precise focus for the lesson. Extension work for higher attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 1, does not always encourage them to investigate underlying patterns and concepts.

101 Teachers carry out and record regular assessments of pupils' progress which include a good range of standardised tests. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are identified and well supported in their learning. Teachers provide supplementary resources, adapt work appropriately and make good use of educational assistants and volunteers to provide individual help. Assessment information is not yet fully used to identify and challenge higher attainers, especially at Key Stage 1. Appropriate attainment targets have been set for the school but they have not been identified for individual pupils with a view to promoting their progress.

102 The school has adopted the numeracy framework, which, except for the timing of lessons,

is developing satisfactorily. Teachers are well supported by the co-ordinator and share ideas and good practice effectively. However, while teachers have been observed by the headteacher, there is no regular programme of lesson observations to improve practice and provide further advice. The school has a good level of resources which teachers are learning to adapt to meet the new requirements of the framework. While a few computer programmes are available to help pupils' learning, there are currently insufficient in regular use.

## **Science**

103 Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 show standards to be above average when compared with the national picture and in line with those of similar schools. Results of 1999 assessments show that standards have been maintained and inspection evidence confirms that attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils of all abilities make good progress through Years 1 and 2 in all aspects of the subject.

104 Results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 show average standards, but these were well below those of similar schools. The school analysed shortcomings and addressed them very successfully, with the result that pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests improved considerably, with almost half of the pupils attaining above the national standard, compared with none in the previous year. The school continues to build on the new strategies developed. Increased focus on precise understanding and use of scientific vocabulary, a regular, short, weekly revision lesson in Year 6, and additional challenges set at the school's homework club, all ensure that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are currently well above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through Key Stage 2. Higher attainers are making very good progress, especially in the later years of the key stage.

105 The improved levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 match the improvement in the curriculum. As a result of the co-ordinator's leadership in developing schemes of work and monitoring and supporting planning, there has been considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory at both key stages.

106 This term, pupils in Years 1 are discovering about their five senses and use vocabulary to describe objects in the context of touch. Pupils in Year 2 name bones in the human skeleton, identifying and labelling them. Exercise books from the previous academic year show full coverage of all aspects of the science curriculum in each yeargroup. Pupils use a variety of ways of recording, including diagrams and tables. Their books are well presented and give pupils, parents and staff a clear record of good progress and of the range of work covered. Pupils in Year 1 observe coloured water carried through stems to carnation petals and set up a class experiment to see how roots search for water. They investigate materials used in house-building, establishing an initial understanding of the importance of choosing those with appropriate properties. Year 2 pupils make very good use of literacy skills, for example in a full page of writing describing the head, including information about the brain's links to the eye and ear. They investigate pushes, pulls and friction. They make electrical circuits and label their circuit diagrams.

107 At Key Stage 2, pupils gain knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level by carrying out observations and completing experiments, as well as by recording information researched. In accordance with a thoroughly well-planned scheme of work, pupils in the four yeargroups build on knowledge gained and skills developed in the context of each half-termly

topic. The school's focus on regular use of scientific vocabulary is reflected in pupils' work over the past academic year. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make very good use of both literacy and numeracy during their recording of scientific pursuits. Year 3 pupils show good knowledge of healthy eating and the digestive system. In Years 3 and 4 they build a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test in the context of dissolving substances, for example. They record the purposes of parts of plants and discover what plants need for growth. They investigate light and shadows. In Years 5 and 6, pupils across the full ability range present their work extremely well. They understand food chains, investigate fibres and weaves to discover the most hardwearing, and record pulse rates in the context of studies on circulation and breathing. Year 6 pupils use terms such as photosynthesis accurately and acquire a good understanding of air resistance and gravity.

108 Pupils throughout the school show very positive attitudes to their science lessons. Behaviour in most classes is very good, occasionally excellent. In just one or two lessons, pupils' talkativeness led to a loss of focus, but in the vast majority of lessons, pupils sustain concentration when tackling activities or recording. In all classes, pupils listen well to each other and to the teacher during introductory sessions and class discussions. They handle equipment carefully and older pupils in particular show a good sense of responsibility in carrying out organisational tasks to assist the smooth running of lessons.

109 Whilst the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, it is good overall at both key stages. The one unsatisfactory lesson was because the focus was mathematical rather than scientific. Particular strengths in teaching are thorough planning and use of displays and resources, and the agreed school focus on precise use of scientific vocabulary during question and answer sessions. In most lessons, teachers set and maintain a good pace. Only in two did the teacher continue the introductory talk and discussion for too long, losing the attention of some pupils as a result. Teachers mark work regularly and during lessons they circulate well to make effective observations and assessment comments alongside pupils, again focusing on thorough understanding and use of the 'science dictionary' prepared for each yeargroup. Teachers exercise good control in the main and are establishing good relationships and a calm working atmosphere in almost all classes in the second week of the new school year. All teachers adhere carefully to the school's scheme of work and this ensures good continuity and incremental building on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

110 Teachers are closely aware of pupils' individual abilities and use assessments at the end of each half-termly unit of work to establish who needs more support and who has really grasped concepts or used skills well. The extension of the school's weekly homework club, including an appropriate proportion of science, to involve all Key Stage 2 pupils in turn, shows continued, very good, analytical leadership in the subject. Teachers do not use their very good assessment information to set targets for pupils, however. Although they share the marking criteria being used for each piece of work, they do not share with pupils either the whole class target for the lesson or individual targets to help them make progress. Overall, however, science is a strength of the school. The visits to partnership centres stimulate excellent extension work and the planned links with design and technology benefit pupils' learning in that subject.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

## **Information technology**

111 At the end of both key stages pupils reach levels expected for their age in most aspects of information technology. Pupils now make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school as a result of the developments in this subject since the last inspection. This found that although standards were high in some areas, progress was inconsistent because skills were not systematically developed. One of the main reasons for this was the lack of suitable equipment and the need to improve resources was a key issue from the last inspection. The school has worked hard to address this issue. Initially they upgraded the equipment and are now involved in a Coventry project, which will result in the development of a computer suite, with further computers in classrooms. They are currently in year two of this four-year project. The computer suite already houses two computers, with one of these linked to the Internet.

112 In both key stages there is a combination of class lessons followed by opportunities for pupils to consolidate the skills which they have been taught. Each year group works through six study units a year in this way. This provides a firm basis for pupils to develop their skills. In Key Stage 1 they use the mouse and keyboard accurately and with increasing fluency. In Year 1 pupils enjoy 'dressing teddy' while developing good control of the mouse. They are developing sound word processing skills. Pupils in Year 2, for example, know how to change the font and change colour. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their skills further. In Year 3, for example, following an introductory session, pupils wrote sentences using the backspace to delete, 'shift' for capital letters and the tabs key. Pupils use a word processing program to present the final draft of accounts and poems and Year 6 pupils compose poems using the program. Pupils also use computers to develop their research skills by using the Internet and CD-ROMs. In one class session, pupils in Year 4 made very good progress in this area.

113 Pupils' skills in control and modelling are also systematically developed, although currently a little under-represented in Key Stage 2. Teachers' records show that pupils in Key Stage 1 have used a programmable vehicle to trace a route. Pupils in Year 2, for example, build on their good control of the mouse to use a modelling software programme and work confidently through the options. In Key Stage 2, pupils move onto tasks that are more complex. In Year 6, for example, pupils work on a modelling and decision making programme which involves them in making and modifying decisions in order to progress through the simulation.

114 Pupils enjoy work in information technology. They listen closely to the teachers' instructions and concentrate very well when they work on computers. Pupils often work in pairs and are mutually supportive at these times. Some pupils have access to computers at home, helps them to build up their confidence in this area.

115 The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Staff expertise in information technology varies, but they are very supportive of each other and the decision to have the co-ordinator role shared between two teachers and an educational assistant has helped these staff to disseminate information and offer effective support. Planning is based on some very useful guidelines and there are clear objectives set for all sessions. The present strategy of class lessons supplemented by small group work is working well, although the number of computers available currently limits the time available for practical work. However, during the inspection the computers were under-used, but this was partly because it was very early in the term and pupils were involved in introductory class work. In these class sessions teachers established clear guidance to pupils about the use of specific programmes and in some classes also explained the good self-assessment and recording systems for the year. Staff offer good support to individual pupils working on computers and

are available to them at lunch and play times, when older pupils continue to work on individual tasks. The school plans to develop these opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils by offering a homework club after school. Work in the local partnership centre also enhances pupils' skills.

· **Art**

116 There has been improvement in some aspects of art since the last inspection. There is now more written guidance for teachers in planning for the development of skills and staff have worked hard to develop observational drawing, especially in Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Sound standards are apparent in drawing and collage work throughout the school and pupils are developing an understanding of the work of famous artists. Painting, printing, clay and fabric work are not so well developed. This is partly because the school has concentrated on work in the core subjects and has restricted the time allocated to art.

117 In several lessons during the inspection, pupils were working on observational tasks and made good progress during these particular lessons in developing skills. In Year 1, for example, pupils worked with a range of media, including paint, to make self-portraits. Some were very lively and imaginative. In Year 6, pupils used pencil, pastels and paint crayons to draw flowers. They worked hard and made good progress within the lesson. Some produced pleasing work, but the general level of their drawing skills suggested a lack of attention to this aspect of art in the past. A scrutiny of work indicates a step forward in observational work over the last twelve months. Sketch books are introduced in Year 4 and during an introductory session during the inspection the teacher explained to the pupils the purpose and use of these sketch books in a clear manner.

118 The school values the place of art in the curriculum and is striving to develop this area so that pupils experience a balanced and yet stimulating curriculum. Staff feel that it is important that pupils develop their creative skills and take pride in their achievements. A recent initiative has been the introduction of an arts week during the summer term in which pupils have the opportunity to work with artists and musicians to develop their skills. This year's week was on the theme of cats and the whole school was involved in workshops. Much of the work was based on fabric and paper collage and some lively work was produced. It was evident from looking at work and talking to pupils that the experience of working together on a common theme was extremely beneficial to pupils.

119 The quality of the teaching in the lessons seen was predominantly good. As a result, pupils show enthusiasm and concentrate well. Teachers plan interesting activities and during these particular lessons give pupils good guidance on the development of skills. Insufficient guidance is given overall to the development of painting and printing skills and pupils have relatively few opportunities to work with a range of media within these particular areas. There is some evidence of work related to a study of famous artists, such as Picasso and Van Gogh, but overall this area is also under emphasised.

· **Design and technology**

120 As only one group activity was observed, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. Photographs, teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils constitute the evidence base for other judgements. Design and technology and art timetable slots alternate. Time allocated to both has been cut during recent re-timetabling.

121 Pupils are making satisfactory progress at this early stage in the term in Key Stage 1, but only a little photographic evidence of last year's work was available. Pupils at Key Stage 2 clearly make good progress during work linked to partnership centre visits. They are clearly stimulated by the challenges set during these individual units of work. In some, particularly in Year 6, the process of designing, making and evaluating involves groups of pupils negotiating and collaborating with each other and with their parents to produce some impressive models.

122 On partnership centre visits, pupils work with their teachers and teachers at the centre to investigate materials used in car manufacture, for example. On other visits they set up working traffic lights and make wind turbines. They follow up these activities with their teacher at school and it is during this process that the best learning occurs. One example of pupils collaborating well as a result of a well-planned activity was in the production of a marble run, with the slowest being the winner. Photographs show a range of completed designs from the previous year, including models of birds which had to balance and a selection of wind-powered and elastic band-powered vehicles. Pupils had also clearly learned the function of cams and gears. It is clear that in the context of these visits, pupils become very enthusiastic about their designing and making. They collaborate very successfully and sustain concentration and efforts to produce some well-finished working models.

123 Following the previous inspection, which highlighted a lack of resources, the school has developed a resource base and a full range of design and technology resources. In consultation with staff, the co-ordinator has drawn up a scheme of work for each year group, from which teachers select appropriate activities in order to develop pupils' skills year on year. The science scheme of work also has some carefully planned design and technology elements. There is currently no assessment system to track pupils' progress, but teachers use their own assessment notes to inform annual reporting. Because of other priorities, the major developments in resourcing and production of a scheme of work occurred over the past two years. The impact of the changes cannot therefore yet be measured. From the limited evidence seen, standards of work have been maintained and the school has improved its provision by addressing the resource issue.

## **Geography**

124 Overall, pupils make good progress throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, however, this progress is more uneven. In Years 3 to 5 they make particularly good progress in the development of geographical skills, whilst progress is slower in Year 6, because less time is allocated to the subject.

125 At Key Stage 1 pupils describe their own locality and identify the different areas used for housing, commerce and manufacturing. They develop an appreciation of distance by visiting local areas, observing the locality from a nearby vantage point (the Massey Ferguson tower) and comparing what they see with maps. They are well informed about the characteristics of hot and cold regions like the Arctic and the Sahara. They describe the landscape well and understand the impact which the climate of these regions has upon farming, animals and plants. They effectively carry out research on Japan and China and use appropriate vocabulary to describe their findings.

126 At Key Stage 2 pupils acquire a very good understanding of distant localities through their studies of Kenya, Peru and Ireland. They develop an insight into the way localities have

changed and the different effects of physical and human processes. They know the principal towns, rivers and hills of the United Kingdom and record them accurately on maps. They visit a neighbouring locality, Princethorpe, and compare housing, commercial activities and the landscape with their own immediate area. They gain a good appreciation of the way settlements have developed and the characteristics which differentiate towns from villages. Pupils read maps well and understand a range of symbols. They study rivers and their effects on landscape and use technical vocabulary accurately. They have a sound understanding of how to observe and record the weather. They present their findings well, although they do not use information and communication technology extensively in their work. Pupils' understanding of environmental change is sound.

127 Pupils are keen to discuss their work in a way which reflects a good level of interest. They listen to each other in discussions and respond to different points of view. They present their findings thoughtfully and with care. They are sensitive to issues such as poverty and the lack of education in parts of the World.

128 No lessons took place during the inspection. From a study of teachers' plans and the work of pupils, teaching effectively extends pupils' skills. Teachers make good use of visits and fieldwork at both key stages. They encourage pupils to interpret maps and plans of different scales. They draw on pupils' mathematical skills in map work through measuring distances and identifying locations. Use of information and communication technology is not well integrated into studies as yet. The school has maintained similar standards to those achieved at the last inspection although the time allocation at Year 6 has been reduced by the current emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills.

## **History**

129 Throughout the school pupils make good progress in history as a result of the interesting work planned. Staff have continued to teach the full National Curriculum programme of study and pupils work on relevant topics in reception and Year 1 and on one study unit a year from Year 2 to Year 5. In Year 6 they look at both Britain since 1930 and Ancient Greece. The positive picture identified by the last inspection has been maintained.

130 There is a good emphasis on the development of historical enquiry. Consequently pupils are aware with the ways in which historians find out about the past. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils explained that buildings, pictures and books are useful sources of evidence. In Year 6 pupils also included diaries, photographs, letters, paintings and memoirs, when they talked about sources. Staff use first hand experiences well to foster pupils' understanding about the past. In Year 1, for example, pupils look at teddy bears to understand the changes in design and materials over time. In one Year 6 session, pupils had the opportunity to look carefully at artefacts, which their friends had brought from home, in order to find out about life in the 1930s. Good use is made of trips and visits to bring the past alive and children talk with enthusiasm about their trips to places like the Black Country Museum and the partnership centre at Cheylesmore.

131 Pupils are developing a good sense of chronology. This is encouraged by the use of class and individual time lines throughout the school. In Year 6, for example, there is a time line identifying major events since the 1930s. Older pupils also have a clear understanding of the chronology of the periods which they have studied. Pupils are enthusiastic about history and concentrate well in lessons. Older pupils are keen to undertake work at home and this term some pupils in Year 6 have chosen to study a famous person from the past for their home

project.

132 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to good, but is predominantly good. In their planning teachers take care to put appropriate emphasis on the key elements and take care to develop historical skills alongside a growth in knowledge about important events in the past. Teachers enjoy history and use it well across the curriculum to develop work in other subjects. This is particularly so in the literacy hour. In a Year 5 session, for example, pupils wrote letters based on Bertie Doherty's '*Streetchild*' in relation to their work on Victorian Britain. In Year 6, pupils are studying the diary of Anne Frank in the literacy hour, which fits in well with their work on Britain since 1930. There are also links with art and in Year 4, for example, pupils looked at Tudor portraits and discussed how artists had decided to portray their models.

### **Music**

133 Standards throughout the school are high. Pupils make very good progress in singing, performing listening and appraising music and in composing. Standards were already high at the time of the last inspection. These high standards have been maintained.

134 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from an exchange of teacher, so that each class receives lessons in music and physical education from a teacher with particular subject expertise. In the lesson observed, the teacher's confidence in her subject led to a very well-planned and executed lesson, in which pupils made very good progress. Year 1 pupils listened intently to the teacher before echoing a line at a time. They then sang the newly learned song tunefully and in time with each other. When the teacher introduced percussion instruments such as an ocean drum, the whole class sat mesmerised by the sound. This quiet focus ensured that pupils readily volunteered ideas when asked to consider the kind of sounds needed to accompany the song and which instruments were best suited. Children recognised and enjoyed creating the regular chuff-chuff of a steam train by turning a rainstick rhythmically. The teacher's meticulous preparation included the ready accessibility of a range of instruments and the deployment of an education assistant to make assessment notes on a number of pupils as they attempted to maintain a regular rhythm. The various elements of the lesson all proceeded at a pace that sustained pupils' interest and the teacher's calm, assured manner ensured excellent control and full involvement.

135 At Key Stage 2, teachers often use a recorded series of cassettes together with pupil pamphlets effectively to link work across subjects on a single theme. In Year 5, the teacher introduced a series of songs on David Copperfield, linking music lessons with both the history project and studies in the literacy hour. All pupils throughout Key Stage 2 benefit from crisply-organised lessons from a visiting music teacher. Each half-class attends a 30 to 40 minute session, during which all pupils learn to sing, play the recorder, read and write music using correct notation, and perform as part of a group. The focus on listening, appraising, composing and performing varies during the year, with each element well covered, as seen in the music books of the previous Year 6. During the inspection, each lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. The teacher exercises excellent control and settles pupils quickly so that no time is wasted. He shows his high expectations in the way he relates to the pupils, expecting full concentration and ready response. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the lessons and work with sustained effort throughout the lessons. Pupils in Year 4 play simple recorder tunes confidently, using mainly left hand fingering. They read the range of notes on the staff and half of the group manages to keep an accompanying line going while the other half sings the tune and the teacher accompanies further on the keyboard.



136 The teachers' expectations are particularly challenging for groups from Years 5 and 6, who clearly enjoy rising to the challenge. They understand and use musical notation accurately, holding notes and sustaining rests for the correct number of beats and using musical terminology when asking or answering questions. Year 5 pupils exchange roles without pause as half the class sings while the other half plays. Year 6 pupils recognise and use time signatures, play a recorder accompaniment arrangement of 'Bugsy Malone', while a group sings and the teacher plays a boogie rhythm. Within twenty minutes of the second lesson of the year, one group was singing the melody verse, while a second group played an accompaniment arranged in crotchet beats and a third group sustained a line of semibreves. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge, thorough preparation and high level of challenge result in very high standards of behaviour and performance.

137 As a result, many pupils in Key Stage 2 wish to build on their musical skills and take additional keyboard, violin, cello or woodwind lessons. The school orchestra accompanies assemblies. The choir, which meets weekly after school and benefits from the leadership of two class teachers, also performs at school, church and community events. Already in Year 2, pupils participate in an annual day of music, working together with other local schools to learn, perform and enjoy making music. As a result of very good leadership and teaching, coupled with staff enthusiasm and commitment, music is a strength of the school.

### **Physical education**

138 Pupils make satisfactory progress across both key stages. They achieve satisfactory standards in all year groups in gymnastics, dance and games skills. Pupils also make good progress during swimming instruction, which they receive at Key Stage 1, but there is no procedure for measuring their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

139 At Key Stage 1 pupils work safely in gymnastics with an awareness of one another. They perform simple movements on the floor and apparatus with confidence. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good sense of balance and are beginning to create sequences in their floor exercises. Pupils have good games skills. They catch balls well, throw accurately and consider how to improve their actions under instruction.

140 At Key Stage 2, pupils choose a very good variety of positions to demonstrate symmetrical and asymmetrical postures. They work to improve and refine their positions, noting and commenting on each other's achievements. Pupils carry out moves such as forward rolls and cartwheels effectively. They respond to instructions well and move with a good understanding of safety and balance. Pupils support one another and work effectively in pairs and groups. In dance, most pupils interpret rhythms well and work at perfecting their steps. Some strive to interpret the patterns imaginatively in their own way, but a few do not make satisfactory progress in this aspect of the subject.

141 Pupils respond well to lessons and the many extra-curricular activities. They work together positively in group activities such as badminton and gymnastics. When required, they willingly demonstrate positions or skills to the rest of the class. In dance, most pupils are keen to achieve a polished and co-ordinated performance. However, a few cannot sustain interest and attention and become distracted.

142 The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 teaching is mostly sound but with some shortcomings. In a very good Year 1

lesson, the teacher had organised a range of appropriate activities to develop pupils' running, jumping, throwing and catching skills. By involving pupils in demonstrating their success and stopping regularly to highlight skills, the teacher ensured full involvement and successful progress for all pupils. At both key stages, teachers generally explain to pupils the lesson objectives and organise sessions with pace and purpose. Teachers plan their lessons well and their subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and often good. They prepare and use resources well. Shortcomings arise where an activity does not engage the interest and attention of all pupils and instruction does not explain the precise skills to be developed. Teachers often involve pupils in demonstrating movements and skills but they do not regularly ask others to comment or evaluate what they see. Teachers organise warm-up sessions well at the beginning of lessons but do not always manage time to ensure there is a period for cooling down.

143 The school arranges a good range of sporting activities for both boys and girls. Badminton takes place at lunchtime and pupils participate in training after school for football, netball, cross-country running and athletics. Matches are organised against other schools. The school has maintained standards noted at the last inspection.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

144 The team consisted of four inspectors, spending a total of 15 days in school over a four day period. During the inspection 58 teaching sessions, several registration sessions, all assemblies and a range of other activities were seen. The team spent 48 hours observing lessons, attending assemblies, hearing pupils read and talking to them about their work. A further 10 hours was spent looking at pupils' work. This included all the available written work from a representative sample of pupils from each of the previous year's classes. Inspectors spoke to several governors, including the chair, about their roles. All subject co-ordinators were interviewed and inspectors spoke to other members of the school staff about their work. Considerable documentation provided by the school was analysed, both before and during the inspection. Before the inspection, 21 parents attended an evening meeting held by the registered inspector to seek their views. There were 73 responses to a questionnaire sent to them, seeking their views on specific issues.

· **DATA AND INDICATORS**

· **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	218	1	38	7

· **Teachers and classes**

· **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26.3

· **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	83.5
Average class size:	31.1

• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1999
	£
Total Income	374778
Total Expenditure	370009
Expenditure per pupil	1705
Balance brought forward from previous year	10095
Balance carried forward to next year	14864

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent 140  
 out:  
 Number of questionnaires 73  
 returned:

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	53	44	0	1	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	64	30	1	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	42	36	15	6	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	36	47	14	1	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	44	48	3	4	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	64	30	3	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	46	43	8	1	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	44	52	0	3	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	70	29	0	0	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	68	27	3	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	71	25	1	1	1