

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Longton, near Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119637

Headteacher: Mr B Walmsley

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 15-18 January 2001

Inspection number: 187144

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

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chapel Lane  
Longton

Postcode: Preston  
PR4 5EB

Telephone number: 01772 613402

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Father B O'Sullivan

Date of previous inspection: 4 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Physical education (PE) Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19365	G Stockley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17685	L Spooner	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Music	
30559	J Taylor	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology (DT) Special educational needs (SEN)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Oswald's is an average sized primary school, and serves the Catholic parishes of Longton and Tarleton. It draws its pupils from a wide area. It is part of a complex of parish amenities close to the church of St Oswald. There are 207 pupils on roll, 108 boys and 99 girls, and the school admits up to 35 pupils into its reception class. Attainment at entry varies year-on-year, but was above average this year. Some classes have far more boys than girls, and some far more girls than boys. Both the reception and Year 2 classes exceed the recommended infant class size of 30. Extra teaching support is provided through government grant for the over-size classes. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds on the school's roll, below average nationally. There are 27 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), which is also below average. There are two pupils with statements of their needs, and the pupils' special needs cover a range from specific learning difficulties to autism. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Two temporary teachers had been sharing the teaching of the Year 1 class for only one week before the inspection, covering maternity leave. The temporary reception class teacher, also covering for maternity leave, had agreed to remain with the class for a further term following the subsequent resignation of the permanent teacher.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils, whose attainment at eleven is well above average in reading, and generally above average in other subjects. A significant minority of pupils achieve very high standards. The quality of teaching is good, having improved since the last inspection. It is strongest from Year 2 to Year 6. The headteacher leads the school well, supported strongly by governors and staff with management responsibilities. The parents think very highly of the school, and the care and educational support their children receive. The staff successfully help all the pupils to grow as members of a shared community. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, and the school continues to give good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve well above average standards in reading, and above average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), and art and design.
- The headteacher leads the school well, ensuring that high standards are maintained in line with the school's mission statement.
- The quality of teaching is good, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 1, and at Key Stage 2.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good; for social development it is very good.
- The pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good.
- The staff provide an exciting range of extra-curricular activities, supported well by parents.

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

- Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage in the reception class.
- Standards of attainment in writing across the school.
- More consistent marking of pupils' work, and the use of the information gained to better inform lesson planning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Two of the issues for improvement have already been identified in the school improvement plan.*

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

All the issues identified in the previous inspection report in 1996 have been successfully dealt with. The governing body now has a good committee structure, and is better informed about the work of the school. The present headteacher is closely involved in the work of the whole school, and in enabling other staff with management roles to fulfil their responsibilities. This has included the establishment of

schemes of work for all subjects. Teachers who are subject co-ordinators do their jobs well, including monitoring teachers' planning and pupils' work. Lesson planning overall is now more effective, particularly at Key Stage 2, although better use could still be made of what the teachers know about pupils' prior attainment. Standards of attainment for those with special educational needs, including high attainers, have improved. Other aspects of the school, not key issues from the last inspection, have also improved. Chief amongst these is financial accountability, and closer monitoring of the funds available to the school. The headteacher and governors have ensured that a deficit budget has been turned round by judicious limits on spending, so that it is now in surplus. Standards in numeracy and ICT have improved, and pupils' achievement and progress are more consistent at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching has improved, helped by the successful adoption and adaptation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers now plan more appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs, helping them to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Overall, good improvements have been made since the last inspection, and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	C	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	B	D	
science	B	A	B	D	

A\* in English in 1998 represents results in the highest five per cent nationally.

The school's results fluctuate year-on-year because the attainment at entry to school of the small cohorts of pupils varies. The trend in the school's results over time has kept pace with the national improvement, and there has been significant improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels in the tests. Inspection results confirm the high levels of achievement by age 11. Comparisons with results in similar schools are close to the average, taken together across the three tested subjects. The school's targets this year in English and mathematics seek to improve appropriately on the prior attainment of the pupils, and were achieved last year. The pupils generally achieve as could be expected of them in all subjects by 11 years of age, and some pupils with SEN exceed these expectations. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there were fewer attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics. Consequently, the school's comparative results against other schools were above average in reading, but below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. The trend in reading matches the national improving trend over four years, but it has fallen against the improving trend in writing and mathematics. The action taken by the school has already improved attainment in mathematics towards the end of Key Stage 1. From teacher's assessment, standards in science are high, particularly in investigative work, confirmed by inspection findings. Children in the reception class currently make sound progress in some aspects of their work, but insufficient progress in others. They are on track to attain the nationally expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, language skills, mathematics, and creative and physical development, and to exceed these expectations in speaking and listening, and knowledge and understanding of the world.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good, supported well by the good relationships that have been established.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

The pupils bring a real sense of purpose to their work. This is because they are valued as individuals in the school community, and they respond well to the high expectations of them by staff and parents. Parents feel that the school fosters this aspect of their children's development well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. It was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons, good or better in 60 per cent, and very good in 10 per cent. During the inspection, teaching was strongest towards the end of Key Stage 1, and at Key Stage 2. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and art and design was good, and occasionally very good. In these lessons the pupils developed and extended their skills and understanding well. Literacy and numeracy are well taught, leading to good progress in pupils' learning of basic skills, particularly reading. In only one lesson was the teaching ineffective, and this was late in the afternoon, when the young pupils were tired, and uninspired by a writing activity. In general, the activities prepared by the teachers meet the learning needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, pupils have also been more effectively challenged to achieve at higher levels.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It makes good provision for the personal, social and health education of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, enabling them to take a full part in all activities, and make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: the few pupils learning English as an additional language are fully integrated into all aspects of the school's life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Spiritual education underpins everything that the school does and permeates the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, an improvement on the position at the time of the previous inspection. Assessment of pupils' progress is good; the information gained is not always used consistently to plan further work.

Teachers and support staff present very good role models. The care and concern they show, based on mutual respect, make a significant contribution to the pupils' social development. Staff have a genuine concern for the well-being of their pupils and have created a supportive environment in which pupils feel safe and are valued and respected. The school's partnership with parents is very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has developed a good ethos for learning, supported well by staff in management roles. He enables the teachers to teach, and the pupils to learn, and is well respected by the whole school community.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed about the school, and support its development well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This has improved since the last inspection, and is now intrinsic to all the school's work. Action is swiftly taken based on the evidence of performance review.
The strategic use of resources	The school's resources are effectively deployed to improve the pupils' learning opportunities.

Staffing is adequate for the number of pupils. The accommodation is adequate; good improvements have been made to the older building, and the newer infant block is sound. The school grounds are extensive, and a real asset. The school also has adequate learning resources in most areas, although some equipment for the younger pupils is worn and should be replaced as soon as funds allow. The headteacher and governors understand that they should secure the best value from the resources available to them. They check the standards achieved against those in other schools, and try to ensure that they provide the highest quality possible when making resource decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is very approachable</li> <li>• It is well led and managed, and the teaching is strong</li> <li>• Their children are keen to come to school, and it helps them become responsible and mature</li> <li>• Behaviour is good, and the school expects the children to work hard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the information they receive about their children's progress</li> <li>• closer working relationships between the school and parents</li> </ul>

Parents are very supportive of the school. They consider it to be a good school that serves their children well. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns or problems and that these will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire considered the school to be well led and managed and that it works closely with parents. Inspection evidence supports the positive features identified by parents. The information provided by the school through reports and parents' meetings is good, and inspection evidence suggests that the school takes its role in working closely with parents seriously.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The trend in the school's results in the national tests for 11 year-olds over time in English, mathematics and science has kept pace with the national improvement, and there has been significant improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels since the last inspection. The pupils achieve well above the national average standard in English, and above average standards in mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. These results, taken together, are in line with those achieved in schools in similar circumstances. Standards in speaking and listening have been maintained at high levels, and reading is also well above average. Standards in writing have been identified by the school as not high enough at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, and this is now rightly identified as a priority for improvement throughout the school, as it is nationally.
2. The school's targets seek to improve appropriately on the prior attainment of the pupils, and last year's targets in English and mathematics were achieved. The pupils generally achieve as could be expected of them, and some pupils with SEN exceed these expectations. In a Year 3 English lesson, for example, the teacher helped a group of pupils having difficulty in writing to correctly change the spelling of words ending in -y to -ies in the plural. A child with a statement of special needs in the same lesson was skilfully supported by a teaching assistant. She sat with him during a whole class oral session, quietly explaining to him what the teacher was saying, and checking his understanding. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are making good progress in their learning, and take a full part in all activities. Three pupils who are at an advanced stage of learning English in addition to their home language, for example, are securely equal members of their classes, and are well-supported by the staff and other pupils. More girls attain at higher level than boys, in line with the national pattern. The staff are aware of this, and actively seek ways to improve boys' achievement, whilst also maintaining high standards for girls.
3. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there were fewer attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics. The school's results compared with those in all other schools were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, however, reading results were above average, writing below average, and mathematics well below average. This is because the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels in 2000 was significantly lower than in similar schools. The trend in reading matches the national improving trend over four years, but it has fallen against the improving trend in writing and mathematics. The swift action taken by the school after analysing these results has already improved attainment considerably in writing and mathematics towards the end of Key Stage 1. This also reflects the good quality of the teaching for the Year 2 pupils, which enables them to make good progress in their lessons. For example, during a good English lesson, the teacher questioned the pupils skilfully to help them develop further detail in their oral descriptions, and gave them good guidance when writing so that they wrote well-formed sentences using appropriate punctuation.

4. In the Foundation Stage, attainment in speaking and listening, and in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are above average. In these areas of learning the large majority of children in the reception class have made satisfactory progress, and achieve as might be expected of them. Attainment in personal, social and emotional development, other language skills, mathematical, creative and physical development is similar to that found in most reception classes. Bearing in mind that the attainment on entry to the class was generally above expectations, progress is slower than might be expected in these areas of learning, especially in personal, social and emotional development, and in reading and writing. This is partly because the class is taught by a member of staff covering for maternity leave who has not taught the age group for a long time. The routines and practices she has established ensure that the pupils are safe and well cared for, but the teacher and support staff do not always teach the children effectively, or provide them with tasks and activities which interest them and build appropriately on their prior learning. The teacher greeted the pupils warmly at the beginning of one session, and made the opening of the day a shared special occasion. The children were encouraged successfully to take part in an act of worship that helped in the fulfilment of the school's Catholic mission. However, during the subsequent lesson, children who were supposed to practise handwriting skills, for example, were allowed to sit with poor posture at the table, to hold their pencils awkwardly, and to form their letters incorrectly. This encourages poor development of an important skill, which could result in pupils being unable to write for sustained periods as they progress through the school.
5. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are identified early in their school career and receive good additional support. This enables them to participate fully in all subjects, support for them being particularly good in science, mathematics and English. Consequently, pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The introduction of the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy is having a positive effect on their attainment because the teaching is more focused on their needs.
6. The Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on standards in English at Key Stages 1 and 2, and standards of literacy are high. Most pupils gain new skills at a satisfactory pace and extend and use their new vocabulary effectively. This is because the teachers have made good use of the training they have received in delivering literacy lessons. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson using a children's story, 'Tom's Midnight Garden', the teacher managed a good class discussion as to whether the garden actually existed. He used the correct terminology well as a model for the pupils, which encouraged them to use it effectively themselves. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is also very effective and this is reflected in the good quality of lesson planning, and above average standards of numeracy. Good improvements have been made in pupils' standards of numeracy since the last inspection through a greater emphasis on oral work, and the development of problem-solving strategies. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher used a counting stick to help the pupils move easily between positive and negative numbers, and encouraged them to relate their understanding to their work in science, using thermometers to measure temperatures below zero.
7. Attainment in science has improved since the last inspection, and is now well above average towards the end of Key Stage 2. This is because the staff have improved their teaching, particularly the management of experimental and investigative work. The influence of the two enthusiastic co-ordinators has also been influential in raising the staff's confidence, so that pupils have a range of experiences that support their growing understanding well across the school. In a good lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, the

teacher provided a variety of effective activities to extend the pupils' understanding of pushing and pulling as forces, encouraging them to describe their findings with a wide range of descriptive ideas, using words such as 'squash', 'stretch', and 'squidge'. In Year 6, pupils experimented using forcemeters to test the effects of immersing a variety of objects in water on their apparent weight. The pupils could describe the effects of gravity and upthrust as forces acting on the objects, and the difference between weight and mass. This illustrates well the progress made in the pupils' understanding of forces as a topic as they move through the school.

8. Good improvements have also been made since the last inspection in pupils' progress and attainment in ICT by seven and eleven, and they achieve above average levels for their age. This has been a priority area for staff development, and the effects of this are now showing through in teachers' increased confidence in allowing the pupils greater access to computers. It is also as a result of the school's increased investment in hardware and software to support pupils' learning. For instance, during the inspection, a group of pupils worked together to produce a newsletter for parents, combining skills in the manipulation of text and graphics to impressive standards.
9. Standards in art and design, geography and history are above average by eleven. High quality work took place during the inspection in Year 5, for example, where pupils were inspired by examples of Kenyan art to produce beautiful printed patterns. This extended other good work completed as part of a topic linking art, design, geography and history, leading to above average standards of attainment and good progress in all these areas of learning, built on appropriately in Year 6. Standards in music are similar to those found in most schools. The older pupils sing well, and talented pupils have the opportunity to develop their instrumental skills to good levels with the help of visiting music teachers. There are also good opportunities for talented pupils to develop games or computer skills in after-school clubs, and for elected pupil members of the School Council and head and deputy head boy and girl to achieve well in aspects of citizenship. In physical education standards are average at the end of both key stages, although many pupils exceed the expected standards in swimming. Levels of attainment in gymnastics are barely as expected, partly due to the poor indoor accommodation in the school hall. The subject is an appropriate priority for staff training in the current development plan. Insufficient work was seen in design and technology to make firm judgements about standards, but teachers' planning shows that the subject is fully covered during the year. A very good range of extra-curricular activities extends the pupils' achievements in a number of areas, and includes sports clubs, booster classes in English and mathematics, and Latin and French clubs.

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

10. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their learning, and they are well motivated. Those who have particular responsibilities such as setting up the Church for Mass carry out their duties in a mature and responsible way. In lessons, pupils generally work hard with sustained interest and enthusiasm, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils' positive attitudes are also evident in their attendance at extra-curricular activities such as choir, and computer and Latin clubs.

11. Behaviour is generally good in classrooms and around the school. Pupils know and follow the school rules for behaviour, and are polite and kind to each other. They respond well to the good example set by adults in the school and are courteous and helpful to staff and visitors. Pupils are expected to behave well and trusted to do so. They repay this trust by acting responsibly. In the playground at break and at lunchtime they play well together and in the dining hall there is a pleasant atmosphere where pupils chat happily together, showing respect for the supervisors who care for them. A good example of the pupils' good behaviour in different situations occurred when pupils in a Key Stage 1 class worked outside during a history lesson. However, there were also occasions when these pupils did not behave properly during class discussion time. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection and parents and pupils do not regard it as a problem. There were no exclusions in the previous year.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. The school's good provision ensures that pupils develop into mature and sensible young people as they progress through the school. This starts in the reception class where children are encouraged to leave their parents behind in the cloakroom area and to manage their own coats, hats and gloves, putting them in their tray or on their peg. However, progress here is hampered for the reception children by the insufficient attention paid by staff to this aspect of their development in class. In lessons, pupils work well together in pairs or in groups, as in a Year 4 science lesson whilst measuring and recording temperatures. Pupils with SEN, both learning and behavioural, have positive attitudes to their work. They benefit from the high standard of care provided and from the very good relationships, both staff and pupil, which exist within the school.
13. Throughout the school, pupils have a range of responsibilities that help them to develop good attitudes and to take personal responsibility. In addition to the usual range of classroom duties such as taking registers to the office and handing out books, pupils have a number of other responsibilities that become progressively more demanding as they move through the school. Older pupils, for example, undertake altar duties in the Church each day on a rota that is organised by one of the pupils. Once the rota has been set up, individual pupils are expected to follow it without reminders from adults, thus developing individual responsibility. Other duties include looking after the school office at lunchtime, printing and laminating the achievement certificates, and writing and producing the attractive regular newsletters for parents. Pupils make the most of the opportunities provided for them to accept responsibility and develop their independence, carrying out their duties with enthusiasm and pride. The residential visits during Year 5 and Year 6 also make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Relationships throughout the school are good and make a significant contribution to its effectiveness.
14. Pupils' attendance is very good, well above the national average. There have been no unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive punctually and registers are completed quickly, enabling a prompt start to be made to lessons. One teacher makes the most of the opportunity to encourage the pupils to practise their linguistic skills by responding to the register in French.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Two temporary teachers had been sharing the teaching of the Year 1 class for only one week before the inspection, covering maternity leave. The temporary reception class teacher, also covering for maternity leave, had agreed at short notice to remain with the class for a further term following the recent resignation of the permanent teacher. This was potentially unsettling for the youngest pupils in the school, and it is to the credit of the staff in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 that they were able to establish and generally maintain effective working relationships with the pupils, and also cope with the demands of the inspection.
16. The quality of teaching in the school overall is good. It was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons seen, good or better in 60 per cent, and in 10 per cent it was very good. During the inspection, teaching was strongest towards the end of Key Stage 1, and at Key Stage 2. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and art and design was good, and occasionally very good. In these lessons the pupils developed and extended their skills and understanding well. Literacy and numeracy are well taught, leading to good progress in pupils' learning of basic skills, particularly reading. In only one lesson was the teaching ineffective, and this was late in the afternoon, when the young pupils were tired, and uninspired by the opportunity to write. During this lesson many pupils became distracted by other activities in the room, although a number of them produced effective written work by the end of the session. In general, the activities prepared by the teachers meet the learning needs of all pupils. Since the last inspection, pupils have been more effectively challenged to achieve at higher levels, and more pupils attain the higher than expected Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2.
17. Teachers provide good support for pupils with SEN in both Key Stage 1 and 2, and their strategies are successful. Work is planned to enable pupils with SEN to participate as fully as possible in the same activities as the rest of the class. If necessary, additional support teaching either in a small group setting or individually is provided to ensure they fully understand the skills or subjects being taught. In a science lesson, for instance, the teacher had set up a spreadsheet on the computer to enable a group of Year 6 pupils with SEN to take measurements and find the average of their results through the computer program, whilst the rest of the class had to work this out without this support. This was a good technique to enable those pupils who would have found difficulty with the mathematics to keep up with the pace of the class in science. It also made very good use of the pupils' ICT skills, and showed them what a powerful tool this is to support their learning. Support staff provide effective help for pupils to work towards the targets in their individual plans, and have developed good working relationships with them.
18. All the teaching staff are trained to teach in primary schools, and have a good range of subject expertise between them to more than adequately cover the curriculum. There are clear strengths in literacy, numeracy, science, art and design, ICT and RE which are reflected in the work planned and taught in these subjects. Good use is made of further training opportunities to update skills. The headteacher also releases all staff in turn by teaching their classes to enable them to observe teaching and learning in other classes in the school. From this, discussions in staff meetings, and regular checking of other teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books and on display, those staff with management and subject responsibilities gain a useful overview of the quality of provision and standards of achievement across the school. These co-ordinator activities are also helpful to other staff in developing their skills across the whole subject range, and in planning their lessons more effectively to promote pupils' learning. Further improvement is needed however in the development of an appropriate

curriculum in the Foundation Stage, and in teaching gymnastics. These are both highlighted in the current school improvement plan.

19. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well, leading to rapid acquisition of knowledge and understanding for pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, the class teacher used the end-of-lesson feedback for pupils to read out their written conversations between Joseph and his brothers, composed with the aid of word lists. She skilfully advised them how to improve their reading, and made further helpful suggestions as to how they might improve the sentences they had written. This built well on their previous learning, and also made good links with RE. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher challenged the pupils to write increasingly larger numbers on their individual whiteboards, so that very quickly almost all accurately wrote and read out seven digit numbers. This tested their understanding of the numerical value of each digit, and she also successfully encouraged them to check their own work, to further their understanding of their own learning.
  
20. Teachers' lesson planning is well founded in a set of subject policies and schemes of work, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Occasionally, in other subjects, there is some inconsistency in the way that teachers use the guidance, but as many of these schemes of work have recently been adopted, the school plans to review how they are used at the end of the year. Lesson planning generally identifies what groups of pupils of different prior attainment will be expected to achieve, particularly in English and mathematics. It is clear from this planning that teachers consider the needs of pupils who are having difficulty in learning, or who will need to work at a higher level than most of the class. Teachers carry these expectations forward into lessons, and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to their work. In a very good Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, the lesson plan showed what the different groups of pupils would be expected to achieve. This was evident in a lesson of good pace, where each group could report back on successful and challenging work, and explain the strategies they had employed. The deployment of support staff was particularly effective here in providing support to individuals and groups in the practical tasks. The quality and effect of the planning was sound for the reception and Year 1 pupils, and good from Year 2 to Year 6. There were also good examples of teachers using their knowledge of the pupils to plan appropriate work for them, and to adjust the required tasks in the light of further assessment. For example, pupils in Year 6 discussed with the teacher the quality of their observation and response during an art and design lesson, and used this to evaluate their work, and make changes and improvements. There is often high-level discussion between pupils and staff, which is both evaluative and forward-looking, where closely observed assessment of what has been achieved leads to fresh learning targets and longer term aspirations. This was the case during a whole class evaluation of a science topic in Year 5, where the teacher and the pupils reflected on their joint learning, and looked forward to further exploration.
  
21. Good opportunities are provided in the reception class for language development through the provision of interesting resources and the teacher's clear questioning and explanations. This is evident in the children's response to story and in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Good relationships and some well-established routines help to ensure that the children feel secure and know how the school day operates. However, the teacher and support staff do not always push the children on in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that they make satisfactory progress towards attaining and in the case of some higher attaining children, exceeding, the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.



22. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, and most lessons proceed at a good pace because the teachers and pupils are able to perform their respective tasks without unnecessary interruption. This was not as effective in lower Key Stage 1, however, where the inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils during class discussion time was not dealt with effectively. There were also occasions in otherwise effective lessons when the teacher did not insist that the pupils follow basic routines in answering questions, or in moving from one activity to another, resulting in time wasted. Teachers generally manage their teaching time effectively, and most lessons begin and end on time. Most lessons have good pace, so that pupils have timed targets to complete their tasks. As a result, pupils work productively and lesson objectives are almost always achieved. For example, investigative activities in science lessons were always well planned, and the teachers generally established good systems and routines to enable pupils to conduct active experiments within clearly defined behavioural boundaries. Here, the use of resources such as magnets, thermometers, forcemeters and a wide variety of wet and dry materials pushed the pupils' learning forward well because the teachers managed the whole situation skilfully. Occasionally, the whole class sessions in literacy and numeracy lessons last too long, and some pupils become distracted. Good use is made of the recently established ICT suite to develop pupils' skills. This resource, combined with the additional training undertaken by teachers and the effective implementation of the recently revised ICT curriculum and national guidelines, have had a positive impact on raising standards. For example, the coordinator teaches the Year 5 class in groups in the ICT suite, and uses her subject expertise well to demonstrate new programs and techniques. However, there is some time lost in PE lessons when the teachers do not insist on the pupils following good routines, and maintaining a quiet working atmosphere.
23. Assessment during lessons is mainly through observation and discussion, although the pupils are also guided to assess their own progress when they are in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers regularly share the focus for learning in lessons with the pupils, often referring to these as targets, checked with the pupils in lesson summaries. This is good practice in helping the pupils to be more aware of their own learning, but is not yet consistently followed by all staff. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is some inconsistency in marking, particularly in the correction of spelling errors. In marking work other than English, teachers do not always insist on high enough standards from the pupils. For instance, in the Year 6 science books, whilst the marking of the scientific content is effective, mis-spellings such as 'investagation', 'travells' and 'speakes' are ignored. Some teachers use their questioning skills well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding during lessons. In two mathematics lessons seen, good use of individual whiteboards was made to provide the teacher with an overview of pupils' learning. However, in mathematics, teachers' marking does not always give pupils a clear understanding of how they might improve their work or what they need to do next.

24. Reading homework, supported well by the parents, contributes successfully to the high standards achieved. There were also outstanding project folders completed at home during the Christmas holidays by pupils in Year 5 to develop their work in science. In general, homework is used effectively to complement and extend the work in lessons.

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

25. The curriculum is sound, and meets statutory requirements; it is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The staff make good provision for all pupils' personal, social and health education. There are good links with the community and with other schools. All pupils have equal access to all the learning opportunities offered.
26. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is broad and balanced and is planned to the six areas of learning. Long- and medium-term planning provides for the children to attain the early learning goals and prepares them for starting National Curriculum subjects. However, lesson planning often leads to insufficiently challenging activities for the children, leading to insufficient progress being made in some areas of learning.
27. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been successfully implemented and lesson planning for English and mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. These strategies provide a useful framework for teachers' long term planning and the associated schemes of work are adapted successfully by the staff to identify how skills in each area of learning should be taught at different ages, together with the development of knowledge and understanding as pupils progress through the school.
28. Since the last inspection, policies and schemes of work have been implemented in line with the key issue from the last inspection to provide guidance and support for all staff. Some subject areas, for example art and design, and design technology, are dependent on policies published by the national curriculum body. These published schemes of work have recently been adopted and it is planned to review them after one year in operation so that, if necessary, they can be adapted to match the needs of the pupils more closely. Teachers have already begun to draw links between different subject areas, so that the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, for example, are emphasised in such subjects as geography and science. The establishment of policies and schemes of work has resulted in an improvement in planning, particularly long and medium term. There remains some inconsistency between classes in using this information to plan lessons, however, and in the implementation of the school's marking policy.
29. The school includes all its pupils in all the activities it offers, as far as is possible according to their age. Girls and boys have equal access to the full curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. Staff follow the national Code of Practice for pupils with SEN effectively, and provision for these pupils continues to be good. Pupils are mainly supported in class by teachers and support staff, so that they can follow the same curriculum as the rest of the class. Some pupils are withdrawn from class, however, to receive additional, specialist teaching to enable them to develop literacy and numeracy skills according to their need. This is effective in helping them make good progress towards their targets. All pupils with SEN have the same opportunities as other pupils to take part in every aspect of school life. Individual education plans usually refer to specific targets for each pupil, but occasionally these are not sufficiently individualised. There is increasing provision in the present curriculum for talented and

gifted pupils. Teachers often plan extended activities for the more able pupil. However, this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

30. Extra-curricular provision is very good, including the enrichment provided by visits and visitors. A number of clubs and activities take place during lunchtime and after school, such as football, cricket, netball, athletics, and choir and instrumental tuition. There is also a computer club, and clubs to introduce the pupils to other languages, for example Latin and French. Members of staff lead most of these activities. A team of four Year 6 pupils takes it in turn to produce a newsletter using the school's information technology equipment. There is also an after-school club organised and run by a team of parents, which other parents find very helpful. The choir takes part in musical activities with other schools and organisations. For example, the pupils are currently rehearsing to join two other local schools in the 'Choir of a Thousand Voices' to be held in Blackpool in the near future. Examples of pupils' art work are displayed in the local community centre. Year 5 pupils are taken on a residential visit to Hawkshead in the Lake District to further the development of their personal, social and health education and Year 6 pupils benefit from visiting the Kingswood Centre so that they can experience outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils are also taken to places of local interest and to the theatre. Visitors to school include theatre groups.
31. There are strong links with the local community and local schools and educational establishments, particularly the local comprehensive school. Many of the Year 6 pupils continue their education at this school and there are opportunities for staff to make exchange visits. There are links with local 'cluster' schools to discuss issues that affect them all, to plan joint events, including sport and quizzes. Contacts have widened to include a school in Wisconsin USA. Links have been established by e-mail and through the interchange of 'culture boxes'.
32. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Sex education and drugs awareness is woven into the school's life and all aspects of the curriculum. There is a good policy for the teaching of sex and drug education which was discussed by the governors and includes advice from the school nurse. Issues relating to sex and drug education are dealt with as they arise and drugs education forms an important part of the science curriculum. If parents give their consent, there are also opportunities provided for each girl to talk individually with the school nurse. It is planned to extend this facility to include boys if they and their parents would welcome it. The nurse also talks about maturation and physical development with Year 5 and Year 6 girls.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The very good provision for spiritual education underpins everything that the school does and permeates the school. Opportunities to reflect on moral and spiritual issues are incorporated into the daily act of collective worship, when a lit candle is used as a sign of contemplation. Pupils are asked to reflect how their actions may affect the behaviour or feelings of others through issues arising in their reading, and whether the way of life has changed for better or worse since Victorian times. There are many cross-curricular links such as when pupils are reminded to reflect on their own emotions and feelings and how they can be portrayed visually. The end of morning and afternoon sessions conclude with a short prayer. The school celebrates the Christian festivals as they occur throughout the year, for example at Easter and Christmas, and these are shared occasions within the two parishes served by the school. There are also effective opportunities for pupils to consider the beliefs of other faith communities such as Judaism and Islam.

34. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The whole school ethos promotes pupils' moral development well. The staff provide good role models here. Pupils are encouraged to understand the difference between right and wrong and teachers reinforce this through the use of praise and reward.
35. There is very good provision for the pupils' social development. Teachers and support staff present very good role models. The care and concern they show, based on mutual respect, make a significant contribution to the pupils' social development. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport and in music festivals, and to experience living away from home as part of a mixed social group. In many lessons there are opportunities for pupils to work in co-operative pairs and small groups to enhance their learning. As the pupils progress through the school there is a growing number of opportunities for them to accept responsibility: there are many examples of spontaneous and mature behaviour stemming from these responsibilities. The school takes a positive role in promoting good citizenship. For example, there is an active School Council involving pupils from Years 3 to 6. The Head Boy and Girl and their deputies also take their responsibilities very seriously. The focus on social development and responsibility is principally on older pupils, however. There are some missed opportunities to encourage greater pupil responsibility for their own learning, such as in choosing their own resources and materials to support their work.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They gain an understanding of local culture as shown in their study of the poem 'Albert and the Lion'. They communicate with a school in Wisconsin, and exchange 'culture boxes' that contain artefacts and examples of everyday living in the two diverse communities. There are many examples of the study of different cultures, the study of African and Indian art, the study of farming in Kenya. A visit to the Hindu Centre in Preston as part of a geography topic allowed pupils to contrast living in the village of Longton and living in a village in India. This also allows pupils to develop an understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.

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

37. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, an improvement since the previous inspection. Staff have a genuine concern for the well-being of their pupils and have created a supportive environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and respected. Health and safety is given a high priority and this contributes well to this being a safe and caring school. The governors and headteacher conduct regular inspections of the building and grounds and governors are kept informed of any health and safety concerns. All routine safety checks have been carried out effectively. The governors review the health and safety policy regularly and risk assessments have been undertaken for all the significant risks in the day-to-day life of the school. Several members of staff are trained in first aid and a letter informs parents when their child has sustained a more significant injury. The school nurse, community police officer and other support services all play an active part in promoting the welfare of the pupils.
38. The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and he has attended training. He attends refresher courses from time to time and shares the information with staff, including mid-day support staff, who are aware of their responsibilities. The headteacher has made arrangements for update training to take place in the near future.

39. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance. Any absence not supported by a note or telephone call from the parent is followed up promptly and any problems or concerns are referred to the headteacher. The school's Education Welfare Officer visits the school termly and checks the registers. The school is able to call on these services where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality, although this is rarely necessary. Punctuality is rewarded, and this helps to reinforce its importance.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and help to make the school an orderly and pleasant community. The focus is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour, which encourages the majority of pupils to behave well and has a positive effect on the quality of their learning. Pupils know the school rules and are aware that good behaviour is rewarded. There is an agreed range of rewards and sanctions, which have been shared with support staff. This ensures that they are used consistently. There is good supervision of pupils at lunchtimes, both in the dining hall and in the playground. Pupils are encouraged to tell a teacher or other adult if they are being bullied and this successfully eliminates oppressive behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs, both learning and behavioural, have a positive attitude to their work. They benefit from the high standard of care provided and from the very good relationships, both staff and pupil, which exist within the school. Occasionally, however, some teachers do not intervene swiftly enough to remind pupils of the expected standards, which leads to unnecessary delays later in a lesson to gain the class's attention. For example, during gymnastics lessons, there are often long periods when pupils are inactive whilst the teacher deals with routine organisation, or strives to gain pupils' full attention.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good, as is the use of this information to guide curricular planning. In the Foundation Stage, satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and include baseline assessment and records of the children's progress in reading, knowledge of letters and mathematics. However, these need to be further developed to ensure that children's progress is rigorously tracked in all six areas of learning. This would provide a clearer focus on what children know and understand. In English, assessment during lessons is mainly informal, through observation and discussion. Scrutiny shows that there is some inconsistency in marking, particularly spelling. Good assessment procedures are in place in mathematics. In addition to statutory testing at the end of both key stages, the school uses a range of tests and assessments throughout the year to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment information is used well to inform teachers of the next steps in planning and to identify attainment groups in classes. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the use of assessment was found to be a weakness.
42. Assessment during lessons is mainly through observation and discussion, although the pupils are also guided to assess their own progress when they are in Years 4, 5 and 6. The teachers help the pupils to evaluate their own work by making it clear to them what they should learn from a lesson, and discussing with them at the end of the lesson how far they have progressed. There is some inconsistency in marking, particularly in the correction of spelling errors. In marking work other than English, teachers do not always insist on high enough standards from the pupils. Some teachers use their questioning skills well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers and support staff monitor the pupils' personal development well in the main. However, in their drive to raise the achievement of boys, teachers sometimes give boys an unequal share in answering questions in lessons and in assemblies.

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

43. Parents are very supportive of the school. They consider it to be a good school that serves its pupils well. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns or problems and feel that these will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire considered that the school is well led and managed and that it works closely with parents. Inspection evidence supports the positive features identified by parents. However, about a quarter of the parents who completed the questionnaire feel that they are not well informed about how their child is getting on at school. The school provides three detailed written reports of good quality each year, together with an interview with the teacher during the spring term. This is good practice, welcomed by most parents.
44. The school has good links with parents that enrich pupils' education. Parents and grandparents are welcomed into school and encouraged to help in classes if they can. Some good examples of such support were seen during the inspection, including one of two parents who are librarians and who assist with library routines on a fortnightly rota, and a grandparent who was providing valuable help during a dance lesson. One parent has organised a football club for several years. On a more general note, an enthusiastic and supportive parent, teacher and friends association (PTFA) organises a wide range of events that raise a substantial amount of extra money for the school. This additional funding has recently provided big toys for Key Stage 1, the refurbishment of the library and additional computer equipment. In addition to social and fund-raising activities, the PTFA meets monthly as a forum for discussing educational and other school issues.
45. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. There is a prospectus and a separate booklet for parents whose children are about to enter the reception class. Whilst both contain a lot of useful information, there is only a small amount of curriculum information in the prospectus and no information about the early learning goals in the pre-school booklet. On the other hand, parents are provided at the start of each term with detailed written information about the curriculum to be covered by their child's class. This allows parents to prepare for any help their children may require in connection with topic work and homework.
46. Regular informative newsletters for parents are well planned and attractively produced. They include items written by pupils, and some Year 6 pupils produce the finished product using desk-top publishing software. These newsletters are supplemented by regular letters from the headteacher and class teachers about particular matters that parents need to know, and by occasional meetings for parents on such matters as the Numeracy Strategy and other curriculum initiatives. Pupils' annual written reports are produced three times each year and provide appropriate information about what pupils have done and how well they have done it. They also state how the child's standard of work compares with age-related expectations.

47. There are regular formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress or to share any concerns with the teacher or the headteacher. Staff make themselves available to parents at the end of the school day and if a quick word is not sufficient, arrangements can be made for a longer discussion. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning varies according to their personal circumstances, but overall it is good, particularly in supporting pupils' reading development. The school quickly establishes effective links with parents and is successful in maintaining these links throughout the child's school career.

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

48. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully promoted a good ethos for learning, supported well by all staff, and particularly those in management roles. At the heart of the school's aims is its Catholic mission, and this guides the drive to achieve a high quality of education for the pupils in a good learning environment. The parents are rightly satisfied that this is achieved. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. The staff and governors work closely as a team, skilfully guided by the headteacher, and the school is well placed to continue to improve.
49. Financial control and administration are good, much improved since the last inspection. The many recommendations in the auditor's report have been implemented, and the budget now carries forward a useful surplus from having been in deficit when the present headteacher was appointed. Routine administration and school organisation are efficient, and the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Specific grants and additional funding are used to meet identified priorities, such as those for staff development or for computer equipment.
50. The headteacher enables the teachers to teach, and the pupils to learn, and is well respected by the whole school community. Since his permanent appointment, having taken charge of the school temporarily following the last inspection, he has worked assiduously to put the school's finances on a sound footing, and to establish effective team and individual responsibilities. The school has no deputy headteacher, which is unusual for a school of this size and type. However, the management structure in place works in practice, with two senior teachers in Key Stage 2, and a teacher with responsibility for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. The leader of Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage is newly appointed since September, 2000, and has not yet had time to influence the work of that section of the school as she wishes, particularly as Year 1 and the reception class are currently taught by staff in temporary charge. However, in her teaching she provides a very good role model, and leads the drive to improve standards of attainment very well. The senior management team has a good overview of the school, and the two senior teachers are shaping their roles and responsibilities with the headteacher's agreement effectively. Their current job descriptions no longer capture accurately the scope of their work, and are due to be revised. Other staff with responsibilities in the school perform their duties well, and the headteacher ensures that they have time to monitor work in their area of responsibility across the school on a rolling programme of release from classes.
51. Governors are well informed about the school, and support its development well. Since the last inspection, they are much more knowledgeable about the school and its finances, and ensure that it meets its statutory responsibilities, including for performance management. The headteacher's reports to governors are thorough and informative, and individual governors visit the school regularly to monitor its work, and to keep themselves up-to-date with developments through a series of committees. The

school's development plan has highlighted appropriate areas for improvement, confirmed by inspection findings. Plans made are put into action, and the governors seek to improve the quality of education, and the school environment, by any legitimate means at their disposal. For example, with the help of the parents, a computer suite has been fitted in the stage area, and other areas of the school have been refurbished. They monitor the school's results, comparing them with other schools nationally, and with schools in similar circumstances. This year, they acted swiftly in agreeing a plan to improve results at the end of Key Stage 1 after analysis of last year's results, and this is already achieving a successful outcome in higher standards in the current Year 2 class. The headteacher and governors understand the need to secure the best value from the resources available to them. They check the standards achieved against those in other schools, and try to ensure that they provide the highest quality possible when making resource decisions.

52. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has improved since the last inspection, and is now intrinsic to all that takes place. Action is swiftly taken based on the evidence of performance review. The headteacher takes the lead here, but is required by the governors to account for the results achieved. He empowers other members of staff to be involved in reviewing all aspects of the school, and the process of setting the annual development plan includes full review of the previous plan by the whole staff and governors. The governors have rightly identified the further development of provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage in the reception class in the current plan, and this should be accelerated. They also decided, from staff feedback, to continue the drive to raise standards in writing, confirmed from the inspection as an important issue. There is no current specific focus on teachers' marking, nor on the consistent application of the behaviour policy, which have been highlighted as areas for improvement from the inspection.
53. The school's resources are effectively deployed to improve the pupils' learning opportunities. Staffing is adequate for the number of pupils. Teachers and support staff work together effectively to meet the pupils' needs, although time is wasted in gymnastics lessons. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well by the headteacher, who is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. All information is quickly accessible electronically. The recommendations of the Code of Practice for SEN is closely followed and the provision detailed in statements of need are fully met. All pupils with special educational need have full access to all the school's activities and learning opportunities provided. The level of classroom support is good, and support staff and volunteer helpers work closely with the class teachers. This co-ordinated approach contributes to the good progress made by pupils who have special needs.
54. The accommodation is adequate; good improvements have been made to the older main building, and the newer infant block is sound. The main hall is small for a whole class involved in physical education lessons, and the range of equipment is limited. The school grounds are extensive, and a real asset. They include a wild area, and a fenced pond, used to support learning in environmental science. The fence around the grounds is damaged in a number of places, and there is no fencing between the school and the open area behind the community centre, leading to the cemetery. The school has adequate learning resources in most areas, although some equipment for the younger pupils is worn and should be replaced as soon as funds allow.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to further improve the quality of education offered, and the pupils' standards of attainment, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- a. Ensure that the planned curriculum in the reception class matches the children's prior attainment, helping them to achieve the learning outcomes set out in national guidance for the Foundation Stage, and leading them where appropriate into the early stages of the National Curriculum, as highlighted in the school improvement plan. (Paragraphs 4, 21, 25, 49, 51, 56, 59, 65, 66, 67)
  - b. Continue to implement the agreed plans for the improvement in standards of writing at both key stages, and consider how writing can be further developed through all the subjects of the curriculum. (1, 3, 16, 27, 51, 73, 76)
  - c. Ensure that the school's marking policy is consistently followed, and that the information gained about each pupil's level of attainment is used effectively by all staff in planning lessons. (22, 41, 51, 78, 87)

Governors may wish to consider the following minor points when drawing up their action plan:

Ensure that all staff understand and implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. (11, 12, 21, 51)

Ensure that the boundary fence is in good order around the grounds, and consider extending it along the open area on the church side. (53)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	50	38	0	2	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	208
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	27

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	93 (94)	96 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	96 (97)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	18	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	17	14	15
	Total	31	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (77)	81 (83)	86 (97)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	17	14	16
	Total	31	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	81 (91)	89 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	207
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.7

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	372,473
Total expenditure	364,123
Expenditure per pupil	1,619
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,499
Balance carried forward to next year	14,849

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	203
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	15	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	71	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	41	9	6	6
The teaching is good.	50	47	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	50	26	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	38	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	53	12	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	41	3	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	44	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	29	9	3	15



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. At the time of the inspection there were 32 children in the Foundation Stage. All were in the reception class under the overall responsibility of a teacher, supported by a nursery nurse. When the children are admitted to the reception class, their knowledge, skills and understanding are generally above national expectations for children of their age. This is particularly so in the children's use of language, reading and number knowledge. The results of assessment at entry and the school's own assessments in the early weeks reflect this judgement. This was also the finding at the time of the last inspection.
57. Attainment in speaking and listening, and in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are above average. In these areas of learning the large majority of children are making satisfactory progress during their time in the reception class. Attainment in all other areas of learning is similar to that found towards the end of the Foundation Stage. However, bearing in mind that attainment on entry is generally above expectations, this indicates that not enough progress is being made, especially in personal, social and emotional development, and in reading and writing.

### **QUALITY OF TEACHING**

58. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory overall with evidence of some good practice but also some areas for development. Good opportunities are provided for language development through the provision of interesting resources and the teacher's clear questioning and explanations. This is evident in the children's response to story and in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Good relationships and some well-established routines help to ensure that the children feel secure and know how the school day operates.
59. Insufficient challenge is provided in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that children are making satisfactory progress towards attaining and in the case of some higher attaining children, exceeding, the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This partly reflects the findings at the time of the last inspection when some under-achievement was identified. Although long term and medium term planning is of a good quality and has been reviewed to take account of the recent curriculum changes, individual lessons and activities are not planned to take account of the learning needs of all children. This results in higher attaining children not being provided with enough challenge in their work. The behaviour of a small minority of children is sometimes inappropriate and immature. This is because they are not provided with clear and consistent rules that they are expected to follow. In some of the lessons observed, this led to interruptions in the flow of learning.
60. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is planned to the six recommended areas of learning. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and include assessment of children's attainment at entry and records of their progress in reading, knowledge of letters, and mathematics. However, these need to be further developed to ensure that children's progress is rigorously tracked in all six areas of learning. This would provide a clearer focus on what they know and understand. There is no Foundation Stage policy in place to provide an agreed framework for teaching and learning.

61. The responsibility for co-ordinating the Foundation Stage is part of the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator's role. The co-ordinator has been in post since the beginning of the school year. Currently, the role is not yet fully developed and insufficient opportunities have been available for her to monitor and evaluate standards and practices in the Foundation Stage. Parents are provided with satisfactory information before their children start school and during their time in the reception class. The parents' information booklet is friendly and provides satisfactory general information. However, it does not currently give parents enough information on all six areas of learning. The accommodation is spacious and light and makes effective provision for all areas of learning to be taught. Plans are in place to design an outside hard surface activity area. Resources in the classroom are generally adequate to support learning. However, some of the small apparatus is worn and in need of replacement.

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

62. Teaching is satisfactory, but has some areas of weakness. The majority of children settle into the established routines at the beginning of sessions. They relate confidently to adults they know, and many are keen to talk to visitors about what they are doing. Most are attentive and willing listeners, but a significant minority finds it difficult to maintain concentration for a sufficient length of time. Some have not yet learned to wait their turn during class or group discussion times. As a result, they sometimes miss information and the opportunity to take a full part in the lesson. During classroom activities, most children play well with others and demonstrate appropriate skills in sharing apparatus and toys, and in listening to other children. They follow adults' instructions, know the routines of putting things away and are well behaved. However, during the inspection, a small number of children demonstrated immature and often inappropriate behaviour during lessons and outside in the playground.

#### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

63. Teaching is satisfactory, but has areas for improvement. By the age of five, the attainment of the large majority of children is above that expected for their age in listening and speaking and they have attained many or all of the recommended learning goals for this aspect of their learning. They listen attentively to stories, join in with familiar parts and are keen to offer ideas and answer questions. Most express themselves in whole sentences and often use good levels of description to describe what they are doing, and what they know and understand. Attainment in reading is similar to that expected for children of this age. All children handle books with care and most know how they are organised. The large majority recognise some letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make. Higher attaining children know all of their letter sounds and identify them at the beginning of words. The majority of children are reading from the early books of the reading scheme and read a range of familiar words. Higher attaining children, when reading aloud, are beginning to respond to the punctuation in the text. For example, they pause before reading a new sentence. Although standards in reading are broadly in line with the expectations for children of this age, many come into school with reading attainment levels above what might be expected. This indicates that the majority of children are not making enough progress towards attaining, and in some cases exceeding, the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage.



64. Insufficient progress is made in writing. Although the overall attainment is broadly similar to that seen in other schools and children know what their writing means, they are mainly expected to copy adults' writing. Many are capable of working independently, but do not have sufficient opportunities to do so. Higher attaining children are not yet using their knowledge of letters and sounds to attempt to write words to describe what they have drawn or attempt to write a simple story. Pencil control is generally satisfactory and writing is legible. However, children observed in a handwriting activity were not taught to practise correct letter formation, nor correct posture.

#### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

65. Teaching is satisfactory, but does not always expect enough of the children. The attainment of the majority of children on admission to the reception class is above expectations. Attainment by five years of age is broadly in line with expectations. Children match objects by shape and colour and can identify squares, triangles and circles; many count objects to ten and beyond. Skills in investigating number and talking about what they observe and have found out are not well developed. Higher attaining children are not yet working with the idea of 'less' and 'more' in relation to addition and subtraction and problem solving.

#### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

66. Teaching is satisfactory, with good features, leading to good progress in this area of learning, and by the age of five the majority of children have attained or exceeded the early learning goals. In their dinosaur sand play activity, the children talk about the past and know that dinosaurs lived a long time ago and describe some of the reasons why they became extinct. When looking at and discussing a toy teddy bear in their work on 'Goldilocks' they can identify the main body joints and can compare the appearance of old and new bears. In a role-play activity, children were able to retell the story using puppets and demonstrating a good understanding of past and present. There are opportunities to develop ICT skills, and teacher's planning indicates that this aspect is appropriately covered.

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

67. Teaching is satisfactory. By the age of five, children's physical development is in line with national expectations. They play confidently with large, wheeled toys outside with satisfactory skills in controlling speed and direction. Most are able to manage buttons and zips on their outdoor clothes. They explore 'play-dough' by squeezing, rolling and making it into recognisable shapes. Skills development in using scissors, paint and a range of other materials and resources is satisfactory.

#### CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

68. Teaching is satisfactory. By the age of five, the majority of children have attained the early learning goals for this area. They recognise colours and paint and draw with appropriate skills levels. In assemblies they join in with the singing appropriately.

## **ENGLISH**

69. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments for Year 6, pupils' attainment was well above the national average, and average in comparison with pupils' performance in schools in similar circumstances. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 was well above the national average for pupils of this age, and close to the average in comparison with pupils' performance from similar schools. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys. The results overall show clear improvement since the last inspection.
70. Results in National Curriculum tests and assessments in 2000 for those pupils in Year 2 show that their performance in both reading is well above average, and in writing is above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher than the expected Level 2 in reading is well above the national average in reading, but in writing the proportion attaining Level 3 is close to the national average. Over the previous three years both reading and writing show continued improvement in comparison with the national average. Girls performed slightly better than boys, in line with the national pattern. When compared to similar schools, results for reading are above average and below average for writing.
71. Most pupils in both key stages make sound progress, and made good progress during the inspection. The school has recognised the need to raise attainment further in writing and is revising strategies to help pupils improve. These results maintain the high standards seen in the last inspection at Key Stage 1, and have improved in writing at Key Stage 2. There is better provision made now for pupils with SEN.

### **Speaking and listening**

72. By the end of both key stages standards are well above average for most pupils in speaking and listening. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to other pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils confidently use a wide range of vocabulary. They demonstrate their reasoning and opinions succinctly when replying to probing questions. For example, when discussing 'Tom's Midnight Garden' in Year 6, the comment was made 'If you go back in time, then you bend dimensions, which would make people have green tongues.' At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen critically to stories such as 'Little Red Riding Hood'. They describe whether the story makes them feel happy or sad and give their reasons. The pupils also explain how different actions, for example 'giving' rather than 'throwing' flowers could affect behaviour.

### **Reading**

73. By the time pupils are seven they achieve well above average levels, and by eleven they achieve standards above the national average. The majority of pupils read accurately, fluently and with understanding. At Key Stage 1, pupils know how to break the word down into parts when they are unsure of it or try to understand its meaning in context. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read with maturity and understanding. They identify significant characters within the text, and compare and contrast similar texts. Pupils at the end of both key stages enjoy reading and a significant majority have favourite authors and stories. Most pupils read regularly at home and many use the school and local libraries. Pupils are fortunate to have access to two libraries, which are supplemented as required by loans from the County Library Service. The school library uses a simplified Dewey system to classify books and as the pupils grow they receive tuition in research skills, enabling them to make better use of books and libraries. Resources for teaching reading are up-to-date, accessibly stored, in good

condition and appropriate. The majority of pupils know how to use word banks, dictionaries and a thesaurus. By the end of both key stages pupils have made good progress. Pupils targeted for additional support for special educational needs make good progress towards the reading targets in their individual education plans.

## Writing

74. Pupils' attainment in writing by the ages of seven and eleven is above average. During the course of the inspection, however, most teaching in the Literacy Hour focussed on the development of reading skills and speaking and listening. The writing seen emphasised the technical aspects of writing. Consequently, there were few occasions when pupils could practise and demonstrate their creativity and writing in depth. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils' writing is often limited to recording directed responses on prepared worksheets. This slows the pupils' development of independent writing in a narrative form. Scrutiny of previous work shows that younger pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly, and that the older pupils are becoming competent in the use of more complex punctuation. Pupils' attainment in handwriting and the presentation of their work is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1 there are signs that all pupils are beginning to transfer to a cursive form of handwriting and by the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils use a joined, neat and consistent script. The development of handwriting has been a priority for the school this year and standards of presentation are beginning to improve.
75. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Teachers plan carefully to provide appropriate work for these pupils in line with their individual education plans. They also plan to meet the needs of high attaining pupils more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. The few pupils at an advanced stage of learning English as an additional language receive good support, and make good progress in all aspects of the subject.
76. The Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on standards. Most pupils are gaining new skills at a satisfactory pace and are extending and using their new vocabulary. All lessons seen followed the format of the National Literacy Strategy with satisfactory planning for pupils of different levels of attainment. Teachers maintain the structure of the Literacy Hour, with most lessons having a balance of whole class teaching, group and individual work. When teaching is good, teachers combine effective questioning to promote pupils' thinking about the reading text being used and the responses required. However, greater use could be made of the plenary session at the end of each lesson to review the stated learning objectives and to provide an opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own work. Standards of literacy are high at the end of both key stages. The skills learned are used effectively in other subjects, but teachers could identify more often aspects of literacy to be reinforced in other lessons such as RE, history and geography.
77. The quality of teaching is good overall, including some very good teaching. There was one instance of poor teaching in Key Stage 1. When teaching is good or very good, lessons have been well planned taking into account the needs of all pupils and providing appropriate challenge for the more able pupils. Through their questioning, teachers stimulate and sustain pupils' interest. The teachers' enthusiasm and interest in the lesson is communicated clearly, and helps develop and maintain good pupil teacher relationships. Pupils have a generally good attitude to their work, but some teachers have a high tolerance of persistent, higher than necessary noise levels. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sharing and discussing the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' begin to understand how external issues can affect feelings and how they can change

them by changing their own attitudes and actions. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show through discussion that they understand the concept of time travel in relation to the text being studied and other well-known literature. Reading is developed well by applying the pupils' previously learnt skills to new texts. However, insufficient evidence was seen of teachers giving the pupils direct examples of how to write using a variety of styles. This lack of clear guidance fails to match the writing requirements of, in particular, more able pupils who are sometimes insufficiently challenged.

78. Pupils respond well to teachers in the whole class sessions of lessons. They are enthusiastic learners, keen to contribute, make suggestions, and apply previously learnt knowledge and answer questions. The lessons are well-prepared and organised to challenge and support pupils' language development. Support staff make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with SEN. The lessons are well organised and resourced, presenting appropriately challenging learning opportunities for the pupils. Pupils learn very well in these highly focussed lessons, becoming familiar with the grammar and structure of the language. In a significant majority of the lessons, teachers explain the group activities clearly to the pupils; matching the learning resources and activities to individual needs. Where the learning objectives have been clearly identified by the teacher and work and behaviour expectations made clear to the children, pupils settle to good quality and sustained work. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour successfully by the use of praise and their good relationship with them. However there is often a low level of disturbance created by off-task talking, and small movements of furniture and equipment that is sufficient to disturb concentration.
79. Assessment of pupils' learning during lessons is mainly informal, through observation and discussion. Scrutiny of saved work in pupils' books shows that there is some inconsistency in marking, particularly spelling, and there were few instances when assessment was obviously used to inform short term planning.
80. The subject co-ordinators have effectively managed the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy throughout the school. There is no common short term planning format for teaching the subject which leads to some inconsistencies. Support staff are not always sufficiently involved in planning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. In the latest national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards in mathematics were above the national average. When compared with those of similar schools, results were marginally below average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was also above the national average but in line with the average of similar schools. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together the performance of both girls and boys in mathematics has exceeded the national average, although girls have slightly outperformed boys. The results from 1996 to 2000 match the national trend of improvement.

82. The previous inspection reported that attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average but found that a significant minority of pupils underachieved. Significant improvements have been made since then. Pupils in the current Year 6 attain above the national average, and most have made good progress during their time in Key Stage 2. All groups of pupils are achieving at least in line with might be expected of them and as a result of good levels of support in lessons, pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. During the inspection there was no evidence of any significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
83. At the end of Key Stage 1, the findings of the previous inspection reflected those for the end of Key Stage 2 in that although attainment was broadly in line with national expectations, some groups of pupils underachieved. The results of the tests for seven-year-olds held in 2000 indicated that attainment was in line with the national average but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. Standards were below those of similar schools. Over the three years 1998 to 2000 combined, standards have been above the national average although girls have outperformed boys. The school responded to the dip in results in 2000 by analysing and addressing the areas for improvement and providing greater challenge for higher attaining pupils. This has been successful. The findings of this inspection are that towards the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above national expectations, especially in the pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of number.
84. By the end of Key Stage 1, the large majority of pupils have a good knowledge of number and number operations. They understand and work easily with doubles and near doubles. They are developing good mental strategies for finding answers to problems and are very confident when asked to explain their methods and reasoning. Previously completed work shows, for example, that most pupils have a good grasp of number values to 100, odd and even numbers, and simple inverse operations. They measure accurately using standard units of measurement and make simple interrogations of graphs. Higher attaining pupils can multiply by 2, 5 and 10, whilst lower attaining pupils use tallying as a method of collecting data.
85. Pupils currently in Year 6 achieve high levels of numerical knowledge and understanding. A large majority already work confidently with number at the expected Level 4, with some higher attaining pupils working at Level 5. In the lessons observed, pupils were quick and confident when mentally adding and subtracting numbers greater than 100. They worked successfully with complex inversions of number using all four number operations. Work previously completed indicates that the large majority of pupils understand long multiplication, decimal and fraction equivalence and can round numbers to, for example, the nearest 10,000. Lower attaining pupils are making equally good progress and demonstrate that they understand positive and negative numbers, fractions and mixed numbers. Work in the pupils' books indicates that when provided with the opportunity, they make good use of their number skills in problem solving and mathematical investigations. Standards of numeracy are above average.

86. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are good across both key stages. Most work is satisfactorily set out. In lessons, most pupils are attentive; however, a significant minority of pupils in Year 1 find difficulty in listening and sustaining concentration during class discussion time. Most pupils behave well and co-operate with their teachers and with each other. They listen to others' answers to problems and are willing to learn from their mistakes. Occasionally, when activities are not accurately matched to pupils' abilities, they lose concentration.
87. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was good or very good in half of the lessons observed and never less than satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate a secure level of subject knowledge. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is very effective and this is reflected in the good quality of lesson planning. Good levels of improvement have been made since the last inspection when it was found that too much emphasis was placed on published materials and there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise mental mathematics. Lesson objectives are clear, tasks and activities are almost always well thought out and provide a good match to the range of pupils' abilities. Teachers in both key stages teach mathematical skills effectively. This is evident in the high quality of number skills demonstrated by the large majority of pupils. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. This was not as effective in lower Key Stage 1, where the inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils during class discussion time was not dealt with effectively. Good use is made of time and resources, particularly at Key Stage 2 and in upper Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils work productively and lesson objectives are almost always achieved.
88. In both key stages there were examples of very effective teaching methods. Where teaching is very good, teachers use a variety of activities. Explanations and questioning are clear and the attention of all pupils is fully engaged. Some teachers use their questioning skills well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. In two lessons seen, good use of individual whiteboards was made to provide the teacher with an overview of pupils' learning. Evidence from previously completed work in books indicates that marking is not well used to provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they might improve their work or what they need to do next. Teachers make effective use of mathematics to support science. For example, pupils in Year 4 used their knowledge of negative and positive numbers in their work on temperature, recorded on the computer, and Year 5 pupils made good use of graphs to show the effects of exercise on the body.
89. A clear mathematics policy is in place and provides a good framework for teaching and learning. The school fully addresses the National Numeracy Strategy in its planning. Good assessment procedures are in place. In addition to statutory testing at the end of both key stages, the school uses a range of tests and assessments throughout the year to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment information is used well to inform teachers of the next steps in planning and to identify attainment groups in classes. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the use of assessment was found to be a weakness.
90. The co-ordinator for the subject provides effective leadership, shared with a colleague recently taking maternity leave. She monitors planning although opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching are limited. A strength has been in her input into staff training for the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. There is a good level of resources to support the subject. These have been purchased partly through funds provided by the parents and are of a good quality. Teachers make good use of resources, although occasionally, lower attaining pupils were observed struggling as

they were expected to work out problems without the availability of mathematics equipment. The school is well placed to meet its agreed targets for 2001.

## SCIENCE

91. Standards have been maintained at high levels over a number of years, and have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost half the pupils achieve the higher than expected Level 5 in the national tests. Last year's results fell slightly from the well above average levels achieved in 1999, but this year's Year 6 group is on track to achieve at well above average levels. Compared with results in schools in similar circumstances, last year's results were slightly below average, although the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels was in line with the average in similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessment shows that all the pupils achieved the expected Level 2, very high in comparison to the national average. The number achieving at higher levels was above the national average, but in line with those in schools in similar circumstances. The current Year 3 pupils attain above average levels, with a good proportion working at higher than expected levels, confirming the levels from Year 2.
92. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of how scientific investigations should be carried out. They appreciate the need to keep elements of the tests they conduct the same, and to make careful observations and measurements, recording and analysing their results systematically. Pupils took part in a very good lesson to assess the effect on the apparent weight of a variety of objects by immersing them in water, measuring the respective forces using a Newtonmeter. They conducted their own experiments with care, discussing during careful observation what the results were telling them, and recording and averaging their results to look for patterns in them. Higher attaining pupils used the correct subject vocabulary with real understanding, and extended their ideas into general theories related to gravity, mass and weight. From their work in books over the past year, standards of attainment in all the areas of the subject are well above average overall, with high levels achieved in the study of the likely effect on food webs of removing one creature from the system. Their work is presented neatly and systematically, as they are taught good habits and routines by their teachers. In Year 2, many pupils have a good understanding of the effects of pushing and pulling different objects, explaining that these are forces that move and sometimes change the shape of materials such as dough and plasticine. Some higher attaining pupils know that some changes are reversible and some are not, describing their understanding in simple terms. Much of the work saved has been recorded on worksheets, which occasionally limits the pupils' opportunities to express their findings in their own way. They show, however, that pupils have conducted a range of experiments at above average levels covering electricity, healthy eating and animal life cycles.
93. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities, often well-supported in completing the experiments by the teacher or support staff. They made good progress in their scientific understanding and recording skills in the lessons observed, and used the specific vocabulary for the topic appropriately in many cases, because the teacher stressed the importance of this.

94. Pupils are excited by their work, and have very good attitudes to the subject because the teachers plan interesting lessons, often involving well-organised investigative activities. They work sensibly, treating resources and equipment with care, and co-operate in mixed pairs and groups very well. In a Year 4 lesson, higher attaining pupils assisted lower attaining pupils in recording their findings, whilst in a Year 6 lesson, a group of pupils with special needs worked together very well to record their findings using a spreadsheet set up by the teacher. Because the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and response to their work, they settle to the set tasks quickly and eagerly, and work at a good pace. A group of Year 3 pupils tested materials in their classroom for magnetic attraction, and because the teacher had provided a good variety and quantity of different magnets, all the pupils could be fully involved and made good progress in their understanding of magnetism, and in conducting investigations.
95. The quality of teaching was always at least good, and occasionally very good, significantly improved since the last inspection. The teachers have good understanding of the topics they teach, and use this well in planning appropriate tasks and activities for the pupils. Because there are clear expectations set out by staff, often including shared learning targets, the pupils know what is expected of them, and work hard to achieve the expectations. Proper scientific method is at the heart of lessons, and the teachers guide the pupils well in conducting tests and experiments. In a very good lesson with Year 4 pupils, the teacher's very good subject knowledge was clear in the arrangements for pupils to test the changing temperature of water at different intervals, and to record their findings accurately. Very good links were drawn by the teacher with literacy and numeracy, as she expected the pupils to use the specific vocabulary, and to prepare clear graphs and charts, and read scales accurately, including negative numbers. This very good teaching led to very rapid gains in knowledge and understanding for the pupils, tested skilfully by the teacher in the summary by the use of a line graph, expertly read by the high attaining pupils. However, seldom did teachers emphasise sufficiently the importance of prediction, even when this was an important aspect of the tests. Year 5 pupils had very good opportunities to use and develop their research skills in a topic on the earth in space. The teacher set out her high expectations, and many of the pupils rose to them superbly. The quality of much of the work, completed as a homework project, was very high. Pupils had made good use of information from lessons, and had researched using texts, CD-ROM and the internet.
96. The subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and well-organised. They oversee the subject's development well, and help their colleagues supportively. They monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and ensure that the subject makes a very good contribution to the school's high quality of education.



## **ART and DESIGN, and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. During the course of the inspection no teaching of design and technology was seen, therefore judgement is based on scrutiny of pupils' work displayed about the school and in classrooms, together with discussion with pupils, the co-ordinator and staff. Design and Technology is taught in time blocks alternating with art and design or as part of other subjects. There is a policy and guidelines for design and technology that was reviewed recently. Consequently, it was decided to implement the national guidance for teaching Design and Technology. The work on display indicates that the above average standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained by the end of both key stages.
98. Pupils' attainment in art and design is above average at the end of both key stages. The previous inspection showed that standards in art were good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2 with some evidence of very good teaching and learning. These standards have been built on and improved. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Standards in art and design are better than those seen in most primary schools, and there is exceptional work by pupils in Year 5.
99. Throughout both key stages the pupils build on the skills and techniques that they have learnt earlier, particularly in colour mixing. Pupils in Year 2 were endeavouring to match the colours they had mixed to those created by the artist Robert Delauney. Year 4 pupils were trying to re-create the subtle tones of colours they observed in natural objects, whilst Year 6 pupils study the technique of colour mixing to enable them to capture the tones and shades of colours found in pictures by famous artists using a 'key-hole' frame. After looking carefully at the painting they endeavour to reproduce the sophisticated tones and shades used. They clearly enjoy their work and are keen to improve showing a good level of interest and enthusiasm. Art and design often supports other subjects such as history and geography. Support of other areas of the curriculum provides consolidation of learning in these areas and opportunities, as in science, for pupils to develop their representational drawing skills.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes very good. When teaching is very good the subject has been carefully planned and the lesson introduction includes clear objectives and high expectations. The staff have sound, and sometimes very good, subject knowledge and show interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Usually the pupils are given the resources to work with and there are limited opportunities for them to choose which medium or technique to use. This inhibits their opportunities to show creativity and imagination.
101. Work in the school is displayed appropriately and when the pupils talk about their work it is clear that they are proud of it and enjoy seeing it displayed. Displays are attractive, carefully mounted and show a variety of skills using a range of media. There are examples based on the work of the tribes of North West Nigeria, Adire prints on fabric, three-dimensional puppets, decorative boxes, and good examples of paper collage of 'Poppies', chalk drawings of 'Snow' scenes and finger painting.

102. The scheme of work for art and design has been reviewed in the light of the new requirements of the curriculum. It has been decided to adopt the recommendations of Q.C.A. initially for one year. It will be evaluated in June 2001. There are several areas suitable for practical work, in or adjacent to most classrooms. The resources for art are good and there are good facilities for storage of paper and materials. Resources are easily accessible.
103. Assessment of pupils' development was identified as an area for further development in the previous report. Steps have been taken to improve the situation, but a more structured approach towards assessment and monitoring achievement is required.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. Standards by the end of the school have been maintained at above average levels since the last inspection. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have studied in depth an area of Kenya, comparing it with aspects of Britain, including the locality of the school. In this, all the areas of the subject have been covered, and pupils have developed their map-reading skills, and the skills of geographical enquiry to good levels. Little evidence was available, and no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. From a scrutiny of Year 2 pupils' work, mainly on worksheets, standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in map-reading are above average.
105. In the one lesson observed, the teacher concluded a study of Baricho in Kenya. This has been used very well to develop pupils' cultural understanding in a number of areas, including art and design. The pupils have considered the way land is used, contrasting this with land use locally, the weather, and have begun to think about economic considerations from data about this region of Africa. During a high level debate led by the teacher, pupils discussed the effects of a changing climate on an economy dependent on cash crops. High attaining pupils contributed thoughtful ideas here, but many pupils found the topic difficult to understand. It is clear, however, that the majority of pupils have developed a good understanding of patterns and processes in living and farming in different parts of Kenya, based on the effects of the climate and physical features of the land.
106. The pupils were very interested in the topic, but were also keen to move to the next part of the lesson, involving the tasting of a variety of fruits native to the region. The teacher had ensured throughout the project that the resources she used brought the place alive for the pupils, so that the classroom was well-displayed with photographs, text and artefacts to represent the lifestyle and culture of the local people.
107. Teachers' planning indicates that the subject is taught according to the new national guidance at different times of year. From the evidence in pupils' books and on display, the subject does not have high profile currently. However, older pupils have opportunities for fieldwork during residential visits later in the year, and there is some opportunity to use and refine literacy skills.

## **HISTORY**

108. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected at the end of both key stages, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining high levels at the end of Key Stage 2. This maintains standards since the last inspection. In a lesson observed for Year 6 pupils, they developed their research skills in finding out what they could from a variety of information sources how schools in Ancient Greece compared with their school now. In discussion, pupils understood clearly the difference between primary and secondary sources, and how evidence of the past can be interpreted in different ways. Higher attaining pupils draw links between the current system of schooling in this country, and the development of the idea of education in the past. In their saved work, they have learned about gods and mythology, and used their growing knowledge of Greek beliefs and culture to write plays with a chorus, illustrating well the belief in the will of the gods affecting human lives. This is good work that links well with literacy.
109. Pupils enjoy their work, and respond to the teachers' generally lively approach with enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on invaders and settlers, the pupils were keen to draw links between this work and the RE theme of journeys. Here, they also handled artefacts borrowed from the museum service with care. Year 1 and 2 pupils behaved well during an outdoor session to look at the old houses close to the school. Even though the weather was very cold, the pupils persevered in their attempts to draw the houses, in order to talk about what they had found out back in class.
110. The teaching observed was generally good. Teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of the topics they teach, and take every opportunity to bring the past to life for the pupils by letting them handle artefacts, and by taking them on field trips and visits to places of historical interest. These include good resources from the local authority museum loans service, the school's own developing collection, and visits to a Roman site, the Beatrix Potter museum and the Manchester Museum for further study of Ancient Greece. This approach helps the pupils to develop a good understanding of how we find out about and interpret the past. The teacher with the Year 1 and 2 pupils successfully helped the young pupils to learn some of the common features of houses now and in the past, and how to record their first-hand observations in pictures and writing, because she planned the lesson well, and made it clear to the pupils what they were expected to do. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher varied his style of questioning skilfully until the pupils understood the nature of the inquiry. They then responded imaginatively to the research idea, and swooped on the texts, photographs and computers to pursue their study with great enthusiasm.
111. The co-ordinator oversees the subject effectively. It is clear in the work and lessons seen that the subject is enjoyed by both pupils and teachers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Significant improvements have been made in information and communication technology (ICT) since the time of the last inspection when attainment was found to be below the national expectations. A major weakness was identified in the provision of computers and this was judged to be a contributing factor to the low standards. The school now has a computer suite in place with up-to-date resources. In addition, classes have at least one computer. This organisation of resources, both centrally and classroom based, provides good opportunities for pupils to have flexible access. The findings of this inspection are that standards are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one ICT lesson. However, discussions with pupils in both key stages, skills demonstrations by

Year 6 pupils, observation of individuals and small groups of pupils working on computers as part of lessons, analysis of previously completed work and displays around the school provide a secure evidence base. Pupils with SEN and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

113. Good use is made of the recently established ICT suite to develop pupils' skills. This resource combined with the additional training undertaken by teachers and the effective implementation of the recently revised ICT curriculum and national guidelines have had a positive impact on raising standards.
114. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use their word processing skills well to edit text. They are confident in using a mouse to control events on the screen. They use the toolbar efficiently to click onto the correct buttons to change the appearance of text. Year 2 pupils working in the computer suite were provided with good opportunities to make their own decisions on how they were going to change a piece of text. They type directly onto the screen, and are confident when explaining, for example, the difference between the effects of the delete button and the cursor buttons. They know how to open a particular file, know how to save a file into a specific folder and can explain simply the process for using a digital camera. In a science lesson observed, good use was made of ICT for data-handling in their topic on food. In their work on 'Joseph's Dreamcoat', pupils have produced interesting and colourful designs demonstrating good levels of mouse control.
115. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils work with spreadsheets to a good skills level. This was observed in a Year 6 class where a group of lower attaining pupils demonstrated good, independent skills in recording measurements using a spreadsheet. Effective use is made of ICT to support other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils in a literacy lesson demonstrated good skills in word processing to record a story directly onto the computer. A small group of Year 6 pupils, in an art and design lesson, were able to produce a slide show using the program 'Power Point' and integrate text and graphic images. By Year 6, pupils can use a digital camera, combine multi-media, including sound to create a finished product; and, produce publishing style layouts. Examples of completed work include the school newsletter, menus and certificates. Lower attaining pupils used a spreadsheet very well in science to record and order the data from an investigation.
116. Attitudes to the subject are very good. Pupils are keen to demonstrate and talk about their work. When working together in pairs and small groups they are happy to help each other. Observations of individual and groups indicate that pupils are developing good levels of independence.
117. Only a very limited amount of direct teaching was observed during the inspection. However, pupils' skills are now being developed systematically from year to year. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teachers' ability to support the development of computer skills was identified as a weakness. Monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress is being developed well.
118. A subject policy is in place and provides a satisfactory framework for teaching and learning. However, it does not specifically address access to ICT by all groups of pupils. Planning addresses all aspects of the programme of study; however, the use of ICT to develop decision-making skills is limited. The subject is well managed and led by two knowledgeable co-ordinators. They are enthusiastic and share a clear view on the priorities for continuing improvement. These include extending the pupils' access to the internet and email facilities, continuing with the training programme for staff and

providing more software to support other subjects of the curriculum. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards.

## MUSIC

119. No music lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on standards by the end of the key stage. It was possible to observe only one lesson in music in Key Stage 2. This, combined with a small amount of singing observed in assemblies, indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in singing are similar to those found in most schools. The school makes effective provision for gifted and talented pupils to develop their personal skills in singing, instrumental work and music theory. This ensures that these pupils make good progress. At the time of the last inspection, standards were reported as in line with national expectations at both key stages.
120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing tunefully and with satisfactory levels of clarity. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 joined in with pre-recorded singing. They are developing an understanding of musical terminology such as 'diminuendo' and 'crescendo'.
121. The school provides good opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to play a musical instrument through financing tuition by a member of the Music Support Service. Pupils were observed playing violin, cornet and saxophone in addition to a number of other instruments. They are developing good skills in reading standard music notation, learning and responding to technical language, and playing together as an ensemble. Good progress is being made towards the fulfilment of the school's plan to set up an orchestra.
122. A good number of pupils from all years in Key Stage 2 are members of the choir. In the rehearsal observed during the inspection there were 31 pupils, mainly girls and some boys. The practice was very well led by a non-teaching member of staff and accompanied by a volunteer member of the community. Pupils demonstrated good skills in singing two part songs, both accompanied and unaccompanied. They sing clearly and very tunefully, and are developing a good understanding of pitch, expression, tempo and duration. The choir is preparing to take part in 'The Sound of a Thousand Voices' concert in Blackpool in support of a children's hospice.
123. There is currently no music co-ordinator. There is no policy to support teaching and learning in the subject. Planning is satisfactory and addresses the programme of study using recent curriculum guidelines and through the use of pre-recorded radio programmes. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. In addition to instrumental lessons and the choir, pupils are offered opportunities to learn to play guitar, percussion and recorders.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Attainment is broadly in line with the expected average by the end of both key stages, maintained since the last inspection. Attainment in swimming meets the national expectation, and some pupils achieve high standards, supported by private tuition in some cases. All the elements of the subject are taught, and it is reported by staff and parents that the extensive grounds are used very well in the summer for athletics and outdoor activities. The older pupils also take part residential visits in Years 5 and 6, when they have good opportunities to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities. There is a good variety of games clubs, and high standards were achieved during a netball session observed during the inspection. School teams compete in local netball and football competitions against other schools. Attainment in gymnastics is average, but little high attainment was observed. This is partly due to the unsatisfactory accommodation in the hall, the lack of a wide enough range of equipment, and to the teachers' insufficiently high expectations of the pupils' potential achievement. Pupils and staff all change into suitable clothing for active work, and good consideration is given to safe practice.
125. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. In a good Year 2 dance lesson, the pupils responded well to the teacher's suggestions about how they might interpret the shape of mountains or the movement of a river with their bodies. Those chosen to demonstrate did so well, helping other pupils to extend their ideas. In gymnastics lessons with Year 1 and year 4 pupils, however, the pupils' enthusiasm became more exuberant than was consistent with the need to maintain an effective working atmosphere. This slowed the lessons down unnecessarily, as the teachers tried to work over the pupils' noisy voices.
126. In the few lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory overall. Teachers follow an overall scheme of work to guide their lesson planning, but need more effective individual lesson plans. The subject co-ordinator feels that the teaching of games, not observed during the inspection, has improved since the staff took part in the 'Top Sport' training. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher had sound subject knowledge, and encouraged the pupils to use different spaces to work in, and to change the speed, direction and level of their movements. The pupils made some progress in floorwork in creating a sequence of linked movements, but the teacher did not help them to improve when they demonstrated their work by suggesting changes, or asking them or other pupils to consider how the sequence could be improved. A Year 1 lesson was slowed by the long time taken to cordon off potentially dangerous obstacles such as the piano and a supporting pillar. When the pupils began to work, they were very excited, and it was difficult for the teacher to help them to achieve higher standards in using space, and avoiding other pupils when moving round the room. However, Year 2 pupils listened very carefully to the teacher, who had planned a good lesson in dance. They made good progress in controlling their bodies to represent landscape, and in using their imagination to create different ways of moving.
127. The co-ordinator has recently assumed responsibility for the subject, which is rightly due for further development soon. She herself is a trained tennis coach, and intends to run an after-school club to coach pupils in the summer. The school is right to identify this subject as one requiring further development, and a focus on how to teach gymnastics effectively within the limits of the school's accommodation and resources would be useful.