

INSPECTION REPORT

English Martyrs' RC Primary School

Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique Reference Number: 118766

Headteacher: Mrs C Pettit

Reporting inspector: Mr J Tyler
20506

Dates of inspection: 15th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707497

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Frindsbury Road Strood Rochester Kent ME2 4JA
Telephone number:	01634 718964
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr M Adams
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J Tyler (Registered Inspector)	Science; design and technology; music; physical education; special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; teaching; efficiency of the school.
S Ward (Lay Inspector)		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; attendance; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; partnership with parents and the community.
R Scahill	Mathematics; history; geography; under-fives; equality of opportunity.	Leadership and management.
D Mylroie	English; art.	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; curriculum and assessment.
M Milton	Information technology.	Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning.

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Those with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. This is achieved through positive, consistently applied policies.
- The good quality of teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning, particularly at the beginning and end of the school. Learning support assistants are very effective in supporting pupils.
- Good partnership with parents and the community benefits the pupils.
- The leadership and management of the school are good, which has resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection.

Where the school has weaknesses

- i. Standards in information technology are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.
- ii. Higher-attaining pupils make insufficient progress in too many lessons in most classes.

The strengths greatly outweigh the weaknesses. The governing body will draw up an action plan to address weaknesses and send a copy to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised by the previous inspection. The governing body is now more involved and better informed. Various responsibilities, previously held by the headteacher, are delegated to other members of staff and there is now a cohesive, effective management structure. The way that subjects are managed has improved and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching. The school is well placed to continue making improvements.

Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
English	A	B	
Mathematics	B	C	
Science	A	C	

Key	
<i>very high</i>	A*
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E
<i>very low</i>	E*

'Similar schools' refers to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Taking into account aspects that are not assessed in the end of key stage tests, such as speaking and listening and investigative science, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is not quite as high as the results suggest but is still above national expectations. Attainment in information technology is below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1, the balance of attainment is average, with a strength in reading but too few pupils attaining higher levels in writing. Under-fives attain standards that are at least in line with national expectations, and are above expectations in mathematics and well above in their social and personal development.

Pupils' progress is good in the under-fives and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Progress is good overall in Key Stage 2, but varies between classes. It is very good towards the end of the key stage. Lower-attaining pupils make good

progress throughout the school and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Higher attainers make insufficient progress in too many lessons in most classes, but their progress accelerates towards the top of the school.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Science	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/A	Insufficient observation made	
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 92% of lessons seen, good in 41% and very good in 15%. There was a very high proportion of good teaching near the end of Key Stage 2 and in the under-fives. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and makes a very significant contribution to pupils' good progress. There are some weaknesses in teacher's subject expertise in science and information technology. Higher-attaining pupils are often insufficiently challenged. Teachers' relationships with pupils, their management of behaviour, and teamwork with the very effective learning support assistants are significant strengths.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good in lessons and around the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are punctual.
Ethos*	Good commitment to high achievement, very positive relationships and good equality of opportunity.
Leadership and management	Good. Supportive, well-informed governors. The work of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators is helping to raise standards. School development plan does not look sufficiently beyond the current year.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced. Good schemes of work for some subjects. Lack of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good progress. Clear individual education plans and high expectations set by teachers. Very effective support from learning support assistants.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good moral and social development. Pupils learn a strong sense of right and wrong. Caring attitudes strongly promoted. Good spiritual and satisfactory cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient teachers, and a good number of support staff. Effective training. Accommodation is undergoing great improvement. Adequate resources.
Value for money	Good. Attainment is average on entry and above average at the end of the school.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
iii. The school encourages positive attitudes and values and achieves a good standard of behaviour. iv. It encourages parents to take part in the life of the school. v. Their children like school. vi. It enables a good standard of work. vii. Teachers are approachable when there are problems. viii. They feel well informed about what is taught.	ix. There are no significant concerns.

The inspection evidence supports parents' positive views of the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve the standards of work and learning of the pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- x. raise standards in information technology by ensuring that the subject development plan is fully implemented;
(see paragraphs 86-91)
- xi. enable higher-attaining pupils to make better progress by:
 - planning extension work for most lessons;
 - using assessment information effectively to identify when pupils are ready to work at higher levels.(see paragraphs 20,28)

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

- xii. further raise the overall quality of teaching by:
 - improving subject expertise in science and information technology;
 - structuring discussions so that pupils are highly involved;
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work leads to improvement;
 - consistently making effective use of previous targets in individual education plans at the start of the school year;(see paragraphs 17-22,24)
- xiii. develop a consistent approach to handwriting and spelling;
(see paragraphs 68-69)
- xiv. give pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 more encouragement to develop their initiative;
(see paragraph 15)
- xv. enrich the curriculum with extra curricular activities;
(see paragraph 25)
- xvi. ensure that skills are developed systematically in design and technology;
(see paragraph 93)
- xvii. extend the school development plan and budget forecast over a longer time scale.
(see paragraph 45)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. English Martyrs R C Primary is an average size for schools of the same type. The 201 pupils are organised into seven classes, with the youngest in a mixed age class. Pupils come from a broad range of backgrounds and some travel several miles to attend the school. About 6% of pupils take free school meals, which is below average. The number of girls and boys is broadly balanced, but there are many more boys than girls in one year group. The proportion of pupils for whom English is as an additional language is average. There are 51 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, giving a proportion that is above the national average. Pupils enter the Reception class in September or January, according to their age. Attainment on entry varies but is, on balance, average.

2. The aims of the school, which are set out in the prospectus, are to:

- encourage tolerance and respect for the right to be different;
- provide equality of opportunity for all children;
- create a secure, happy environment in which each child can reach his/her full potential;
- encourage each child to strive for academic excellence through the school's delivery of the National Curriculum;
- develop partnership with parents, parish and the wider community;
- foster self respect, independence, self motivation and co-operation with others.

1. The school development plan sets out priorities on a termly basis and includes:

- improvements to the curriculum, including the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and some nationally produced schemes of work;
- introduction of a home/school contract;
- the start of a major building project which includes new classrooms, hall and offices.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	16	16	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	29	31	31
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	91	97	97
	National	82	83	87

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	29	30
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	91	91	94
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84	84	91
	National	70	69	78

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	27	28	30
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84	88	94
	National	68	69	75

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.0
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :	%
Very good or better	15
Good or better	41
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

- **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**
- **Attainment and progress**

1. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies widely but is, on balance, average. Children make good progress overall. By the age of five, their attainment is at least in line with the national expectation in all areas of learning, above expectations in mathematics and well above expectations in personal and social development. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their language and literacy skills. They enjoy looking at books and higher attainers read simple texts.

2. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is average overall. In the 1999 national assessments at the end of the key stage, results were average for writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was below average. Results were above average for reading, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining higher levels. The teachers' assessments for science were also above average. These results were below the average for similar schools (those with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals) except for reading, which were average. Relative to national averages, there was a downward trend in results from 1996-98. However, this was reversed in 1999 and standards are now higher than in 1996, except in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the key stage. Lower attainers make good progress and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Higher-attaining pupils make insufficient progress, which is why too few reach higher levels in writing and mathematics.

3. Overall, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. Results in the 1999 national assessments were well above the national average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, they were above average for English, and average for mathematics and science. Taking into account aspects that are not assessed in the end of key stage tests, such as speaking and listening or investigative science, attainment is not quite as high as the results suggest, but is still above national expectations. Relative to national results, attainment in English, maths and science has fluctuated since 1996 but has remained above average overall. Pupils make good progress across the key stage as a whole, though it varies. Progress is satisfactory in the first half and very good in the upper half. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress but, during the first half of the key stage, higher attainers make insufficient progress.

4. In English, current attainment at the end of both key stages is above average, but with too few pupils in Year 2 attaining higher levels in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2, then very good progress towards the end of the school. Good progress in speaking and listening is maintained throughout the school and this leads to above average attainment. Older pupils discuss issues in depth and respond to the opinions of others. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils attain beyond the national expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress developing a wide sight vocabulary and using phonic knowledge and contextual clues. The oldest pupils read aloud with good expression and discuss favourite authors knowledgeably. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is above average. Older pupils use a clear, cursive style of handwriting and their work is punctuated correctly. Spelling is taught to pupils of all ages, but some teachers do not follow the school's policy. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 spelling is taught systematically in accordance with the policy and the standard of spelling is noticeably higher.

5. The National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect in raising standards since the last inspection. The school has carefully considered its strategy beyond the literacy hour. Pupils are given good opportunities to use English skills in other subjects. For example, they write about science investigations, carry out research in history and, in many subjects, are expected to read instructions in order to complete tasks.

6. Attainment is similar in all aspects of mathematics. Current standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Key Stage 1 pupils set out work appropriately and show different ways of working. Overall progress from the start of Key Stage 1 to the end of the school is good. It is satisfactory until near the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils make very good progress. Older pupils benefit from the brisk pace in lessons. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are developed well in other subjects of the curriculum. For instance, in an art lesson they talked about horizontal and vertical lines. Some Year 6 pupils used information technology to investigate the correlation between the areas and perimeters of rectangles. Pupils record the results of scientific investigations in tables and graphs, and use measuring skills in physical education and design and technology.

7. In science, attainment is average at the end of k1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress over time, though it is inconsistent, being unsatisfactory in one year and very good in the top half of the key stage. Pupils' knowledge is stronger than their investigative skills, which was also reported following the previous inspection. The school's recent adoption of a nationally recognised scheme of work has already led to some improvement in the standard of investigative work. Throughout the school, lower-attaining pupils make relatively better progress than the higher attainers. They are expected to achieve the same levels as average pupils and given support to do so, while the higher attainers are often insufficiently stretched in investigative work.

8. Attainment in information technology matches national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make sound progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils do not reach the required standard in control work, data handling and sensing physical data in science. The overall standard is therefore below national expectations. Pupils' progress during the key stage is unsatisfactory. However, their rate of progress is improving because the direct teaching of skills has been introduced and the school has recently adopted a good scheme of work. During the inspection, pupils did not have enough opportunities to work with computers.

9. In the work seen in design and technology, geography, history and physical education, standards were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. Attainment was above expectations in the art seen, and well above expected levels in music.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

10. Behaviour in the playground and around the school is very good. It was very good in almost all lessons seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when behaviour was judged to be good. A very high proportion of parents express satisfaction with the behaviour of their children in school. There has been only one exclusion over the past year. Children of all abilities have a positive attitude to their work. Most listen carefully to the teacher, understand and follow orderly classroom routines and settle quickly to task. Even the youngest pupils work with sustained concentration. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and are very keen to volunteer answers to teachers' questions. Occasionally they are so keen to contribute that they put up their hands to answer before they have thought about what their answer might be!

11. Relationships between pupils and with adults in the school are very good. Pupils are polite and friendly to adults. When asked to work in pairs or groups, pupils collaborate well together and organise their work without fuss. They listen to and value each other's contributions and are mutually supportive, readily offering help to one another in lessons and around the school. Boys and girls mix and work well together. Pupils with special educational needs have high self-esteem.

12. Although pupils take their work seriously and are keen to complete individual assignments both

in class and as homework, many in both key stages show a reluctance to take the initiative. In lessons, pupils frequently seek reassurance on routine matters such as which pencil should be used or whether or not a title should be underlined. This is not the case for the under-fives, who work and play independently following the initial guidance of their teacher. Their understanding of the classroom routines enables them confidently to share resources. Overall, the under-fives make very good progress in their personal and social development.

Attendance

13. Attendance is good, being above that of most primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is low and almost all pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils' regular attendance and punctuality contribute positively to their progress and attainment. 95% of parents indicate that their children enjoy coming to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

14. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 92% of lessons seen, good 41% and very good in 15%. There was a very high proportion of good teaching near the end of Key Stage 2 and in the under-fives. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress.

15. Teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching. This enables them to give clear explanations and ask good questions that check and extend pupils' understanding. In a literacy hour, some younger pupils made very good progress as the teacher demonstrated how to move the mouth correctly to make particular sounds. She questioned pupils differently, according to their level of attainment, and so they were all challenged appropriately. In the under-fives, the teacher's understanding of how young children develop is the key factor in their very good personal and social development. Subject knowledge in science is a weakness and sometimes leads to pupils being taught incorrect facts and misleading approaches. Teachers also lack expertise in information technology. However, teachers make good use of the schemes of work to plan lessons and so, to some extent, overcome this problem. The quality of planning is sound, with most lessons have clear learning intentions. In some lessons, these are shared with pupils effectively so that everyone keeps focusing on the right issues.

16. Expectations of behaviour are high throughout the school and teachers are consistent in their approach to discipline. They are also positive in their attitudes to learning, have very good relationships with pupils and treat everyone with respect. This sets a very good model for pupils, who respond accordingly. These strengths in teaching contribute greatly to pupils' progress.

17. Teachers' expectations of what should be achieved are satisfactory for the majority of pupils. Throughout the school, there are high expectations for the lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. They are often expected to attain similar levels as all other pupils, and given the support to achieve success. Good teamwork with the talented learning support assistants is especially effective in helping these pupils. Expectations of the higher attainers are appropriate at the top of Key Stage 2, but in many classes too little is expected of these pupils. In a mathematics lesson, some higher attainers drew a graph that was at a much lower level than their degree of understanding. After several lessons, teachers suggested that, though the work had seemed too easy for the higher attainers, they would go on to more challenging work the following day. It would have been more effective to have challenged them every day, which is what happens for other pupils.

18. Most lessons are well structured. For example, many lessons include direct teaching of the

whole class, group or individual work and closing discussions when pupils' understanding is checked and extended. In whole-class lessons, such as physical education or music, teachers include a range of activities which helps maintain pupils' concentration and interest. In some lessons, opportunities for group work are missed. In one science lesson, for example, pupils became bored with long class discussions that relied on the teacher as the source of facts about food. They had insufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas in groups, use reference materials, and share their findings with the class. Time is generally used well. There is little time wasted in sorting out resources, clearing away or rearranging seating. The under-fives are clear about what they should be doing, when and where. In Year 6, pupils change from class sessions into well organised groups very efficiently, because they have been taught effectively how to do so.

19. Pupils' work is marked satisfactorily. They know whether they have been successful or not and receive praise for good work, to which they react positively. However, there are few helpful comments and, in some cases, corrections or requests to finish are not completed. The most effective marking leads clearly and directly to improvements in the pupils' work. Homework is relevant to lessons, often reinforcing learning or preparing for future work.

The curriculum and assessment

20.The curriculum is broad and balanced. The curriculum for the under-fives is appropriate and leads smoothly into the early stages of the National Curriculum. English and mathematics are given appropriate priority and all classes have a literacy and numeracy session each day. Other subjects are taught for a suitable amount of time. Statutory requirements are not met in physical education because swimming is currently not taught. The school proposes to pay for all Year 3 pupils to have swimming lessons on Saturday mornings in order to improve this situation. Personal, social and health education is taught effectively through other subjects and special events. Pupils receive sex education and are made aware of the dangers of drugs. The school nurse and police support the school through visits.

21.Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well through good curriculum planning. Individual education plans are clear and precise, which enables teachers and learning support assistants to focus on the most important issues for that individual. Plans are reviewed termly. In some classes, the targets from the summer term are not used effectively to plan work at the start of the following school year.

22.The curriculum is enriched by various school visits, which include an annual retreat/field course. Currently there are no extra curricular activities and so pupils have less opportunity to extend their interests and skills than in many schools.

23.In English and mathematics lessons the school is following the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In all other subjects the school has either adopted or plans to adopt nationally recognised schemes of work. There are annual and termly plans to ensure a reasonable balance within subjects, and to help teachers plan for the systematic development of knowledge and skills. Where these are supported by schemes of work they are effective: where they are not, such as in design and technology, skills are not developed methodically. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in its continued development of the curriculum.

24.The school has a satisfactory homework policy, which identifies the minimum homework that should be set in each year group. The tasks to be set are based around reading and spelling activities. Teachers in Key Stage 2 use their discretion as to any extra work to be set. Parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive.

25.Procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory. Baseline assessment is carried out on entry to the Reception class. Various forms of standardised testing take place at the end of each year in Key Stage 2. The school has recently begun collecting data from these tests in a systematic way and is using a computer software package to help identify the progress being made by individuals and groups of pupils. Staff are beginning to identify trends over time in particular aspects of English and mathematics. As at the time of the last inspection, there is still too little use of assessment information directly to influence curriculum development and for planning future work for pupils. It is used very well to plan the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, but not for others.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

26.This is a notable strength of the school, which has further improved since the previous inspection. 98% of parents express particular satisfaction with the positive values promoted by the school. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are well planned and include an opportunity for quiet reflection as well as formal prayer. Prayers at the start and end of the day and at lunch time are made relevant and reinforce the ethos of the school. Pupils respond with reverence and conviction. The headteacher and her staff have created a strong sense

of caring and mutual respect, which leads to a very positive atmosphere and a feeling that everyone is part of the school family.

27.Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Adults in the school provide very good role models in how to treat others. Pupils are taught a strong sense of right and wrong. Even the youngest children gain an understanding of the importance of helping others and older pupils are taught about moral choices and conscience. Pupils in all classes are involved in drawing up their own class rules. The school supports a number of charitable appeals, with some activities suggested by pupils themselves. For example, pupils raised money having seen the suffering of less fortunate children on the television news.

28.The school encourages good relationships, with some older pupils helping infants. Children take on responsibilities as monitors in all classes, with pupils in Year 6 assuming broader responsibilities, including answering the telephone and taking messages. Older pupils also benefit from the opportunity to take part in a residential trip, which contributes to their social development.

29.The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities to learn about Western art and music. For example, they learn about and imitate the styles of some impressionist and post-impressionist artists. Although there is some focus on other cultures in geography and music, as well as through the school's reading books, the school recognises that its provision for raising pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of society is less strong.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

30.The school has maintained its overall good provision since the last inspection. The school has satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring pupils' progress in their work. In some classes the pupils are given short-term targets in order to help them improve their work. These are reviewed regularly but have little influence the planning of future work, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Great stress is placed on positive day to day relationships between all members of the school community. There are appropriate systems to help prepare pupils for the move to secondary school, though sustaining links can prove difficult as they transfer to a wide variety of schools.

31.Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well. Those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are given good guidance, which helps them fit in with other pupils. Whatever their needs, pupils are included in all activities and given the support they need in order to succeed. In many lessons it was difficult to identify some pupils who have quite serious needs. This indicates the success of the school's policy of inclusion.

32.The school is a caring and supportive community. Pupils' welfare is viewed as a corporate responsibility and the good behaviour policy is well structured and applied consistently by all staff. The school has a very positive approach to conduct, which is supported by a system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are made aware of what is expected of them and they behave very well. Bullying and racist behaviour are not tolerated by the school. It has very good systems in place to deal with such incidents if they do take place.

33.The school is good at promoting both attendance and punctuality. Registers are consistently and accurately maintained. They are monitored regularly by the headteacher. Parents are informed of their legal responsibilities regarding attendance.

34.The health and safety and general well being of the pupils are effectively promoted. Staff have good relationships with the pupils and much time and effort goes into making them feel happy and secure. Pupils who are ill are treated with care, patience and understanding by all the staff,

including midday supervisors. The school has two first aiders, who have received the necessary training. Risk assessments, concerning health and safety issues in the school, are carried out regularly and pupils are taught about health and safety in such subjects as science. Caring for each other is often a topic in assemblies and is well emphasised by the general ethos of the school. There are good procedures in place for child protection and these are well understood by staff.

Partnership with parents and the community

35. Information provided by the school to parents is satisfactory. Reports on pupils' progress are personal to each pupil and give detailed information about attainment and progress in the core subject of English, mathematics and science. The setting of targets for improvement is inconsistent. In other subjects, some reports include comments that are too vague to be helpful to parents. Pupils' progress is discussed at parents' evenings, when targets for improvement are agreed with the parents and their help is sought in supporting their children. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well involved in reviewing progress and supporting their children at home. There is a good flow of communication to parents through newsletters and most parents are satisfied that the school keeps them well informed.

36. Parents are very supportive of the school and of their children's education. A number assist in classes or with activities such as school visits. There is an active parent/teachers association which organises social and fundraising events and has successfully raised worthwhile sums for the school. 95% of parents expressed the view that the school encouraged them to get involved.

37. There are very close links with the neighbouring church and the local parish, and the school has built strong links with its local community. English Martyrs participates alongside other local schools in festivals and events in the locality and gives much valued support to a range of local, national and international charities. Good use is made of local amenities for a range of trips and visits.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

38. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides positive and purposeful leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, senior management team and other staff with key responsibilities. She promotes good relationships and communication between the school and governing body and this fosters effective teamwork. The governing body is very supportive and committed to helping the school improve.

39. In response to the recommendations of the previous report, the governing body is more involved in decision making and monitoring. Governors regularly visit, which gives them a good opportunity to gain direct knowledge of the school and the necessary information to make informed decisions. There is an effective committee structure in place and all committees have their responsibilities clearly defined. Curriculum developments are monitored closely and governors kept well informed about all school initiatives. The curriculum committee produces an annual report for parents on curriculum development.

40. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science monitor the curriculum and quality of teaching effectively, and have a termly meeting to evaluate their observations. Other subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' plans and samples of pupils' work. Some staff meetings involve the whole staff sharing expertise as they assess the standards attained across the school. The school has close links with the local education authority advisor who also monitors lessons and submits a written report. These developments since the last inspection have led to improvements in teaching and helped to raise standards. For example, last year a weakness in boys' writing was identified and the focus on this led to improved results in the national assessments.

41. The school's mission statement and aims are well implemented. Relationships in the school are very good. Particular emphasis is placed on equal opportunities. For example, all pupils learn to play the recorder in Year 4 and both boys and girls are involved in all sports. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which have already had a positive impact on pupils' progress. The headteacher, governors and all staff are committed to the pupils achieving high standards. Statutory requirements are not being met in respect to swimming.

42. The school development plan gives details of planned improvements for the current year. It is useful in giving all staff clear direction and giving a consistent approach to school improvement. The list of areas for development beyond 2000 lacks enough detail and is of little value in helping the school to make systematic improvements. Some aspects are not included, such as notional funding for computer and buildings' maintenance. This weakness in longer-term planning has led to the school, to some extent, being driven by national initiatives rather than using them to further its own aims. Nevertheless, there is a shared sense of purpose and the school has also made some good improvements on its own initiative. Satisfactory arrangements have been put in place for the school to run as smoothly as possible during the building works.

43. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised by the previous inspection. The governing body is now more involved and better informed. Various responsibilities, previously held by the headteacher, are delegated to other members of staff and there is now a cohesive, effective management structure. The way that subjects are managed has improved and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching. The school is well placed to continue to make improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

44. There is a sound match of the number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff to the needs of curriculum. There is an above average number of learning support assistants who are very effective. Many have completed a good range of training, including additional literacy support. They have attended staff training for literacy and numeracy, which has improved their effectiveness. The learning support assistants have half-termly meetings with the deputy headteacher, who is the staff development co-ordinator. Some mid-day supervisors have had first aid training and training for playground activities, which is good.

45. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a better staff development policy and much training is now linked to the priorities in the school development plan. There are clear systems for identifying whole-school and individual training needs. There are sound procedures for the induction and mentoring of new staff although there have been no new teachers during the past two years. There was an up-to-date system of appraisal until the start of the current school year, and the school is ready to respond to the awaited new guidance. Satisfactory steps have been taken to remedy the weaknesses in staff expertise that were identified in the last report, although there are still some weaknesses in science and information technology.

46. The weakness in accommodation identified in the previous report still exists but a major building plan has just started. This will give purpose-built classrooms for Key Stage 1 and the under-fives, a school hall appropriate for physical education, and an information centre comprising the library and a computer network. It is necessary to check and clear up the playing field regularly as there is frequent trespass by members of the public. The school is unable to use the field this year because of the building work and this will have a temporary, negative impact on pupils' progress in physical education.

47. The provision of learning resources is sound. The previous inspection identified some weaknesses. The shortages of resources for history and art have been remedied but there are still some shortages in physical education for certain activities. The library is well stocked but inconveniently located. However, the new information centre will be readily accessible. The book corners in classes have improved, and many new books have been purchased. A few classes still display some old, unattractive books. There are good resources for the under-fives except that there is a shortage of equipment for outdoor play, which will be addressed when the new classrooms are built.

The efficiency of the school

48. The school makes good use of teaching staff. Class teachers and specialists make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. The particularly effective teaching at the beginning and end of the school ensures that pupils make a good start and then, near the end of Key Stage 2, make very good progress leading up to the national assessments. Specialist teaching in music leads to very positive outcomes. Learning support assistants are very effectively deployed to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The accommodation and learning resources are used efficiently, except that computers are underused. The school has carefully considered how to minimise disruption during the major building works this year.

49. Finances are planned soundly for the current year but there is insufficient planning for the future based upon clear priorities for development. This is not as positive as was reported following the last inspection. There is presently a large sum set aside for specific purposes related to current building and resource developments. There are good systems for financial control and administration. Governors monitor spending regularly. Administrative staff are efficient and share

responsibilities appropriately.

50. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is, on balance, average and leave with above average attainment. Their good progress, together with the many positive aspects of provision that lead to it, demonstrate that the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

51. Children are admitted into the Reception class in September or January depending on the time of their fifth birthday. At the time of inspection, there were twelve children under five. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely but is, on balance, average. Children make good progress overall. By the age of five, their attainment is at least in line with the national expectation in all areas of learning, above expectations in mathematics and well above expectations in personal and social development.

52. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They are happy and content to be in school. They are encouraged to form positive relationships and care about others. They make good progress in developing self-confidence and independence, are keen to learn and take pride in their achievements. They listen to adults and other children, follow simple instructions and work independently after initial guidance from their teacher. They are very well behaved and clearly understand classroom routines and adults' expectations. Children play co-operatively, take turns, share resources and toys, and help to tidy up.

53. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their language and literacy skills. They listen attentively to stories. They speak confidently with each other and adults, and many express their opinions using good vocabulary. Most children are happy to share their own experiences with the whole class and to ask questions. They enjoy looking at books, and higher attainers read simple texts. Children retell stories through pictures and talk about events in stories in the correct sequence. The teaching of reading is well structured and systematic, and is well supported by parents, who are invited to a talk explaining how best to help their children at home. The weekly focus on a letter of the alphabet is effective in developing both their reading and writing. Most children write their own names.

54. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are developed effectively. Children name simple shapes and use appropriate language to describe them. Lower-attaining children match similar shapes and higher attainers identify shapes by counting the number of sides, write the number and then colour identical shapes. Most children count up to ten objects confidently and can hold up the appropriate number of fingers quickly when practising counting.

55. Progress in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Children know the parts of the body, and can say how they have changed since they were babies. They talk about their journeys to school and compare the seasons and the weather. In play activities, children explore sand and water. Children use computers often and are confident with both the keyboard and the mouse. They type in their names and use the mouse to find shapes.

56. The development of children's physical skills is satisfactory. They play hand games to strengthen their fingers and make good progress with fine movements, such as using scissors, pencils and crayons. They are taught how to hold a paintbrush correctly and are encouraged to

work carefully. At the moment there is no outdoor area in which to climb or to ride wheeled toys. However, this has been planned for when the new building is completed and, in the meantime, lessons in the school hall develop children's balance, agility and co-ordination.

57. Creative ideas are satisfactorily developed in a range of activities such as drawing, painting, collage and printing. Children have good art skills and look carefully at the colours as they paint portraits of members of staff. Children enjoy singing, recognise familiar songs and sing with enthusiasm. They enjoy playing musical instruments and can play at the appropriate time when accompanying a song.

58. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is good, with a particular strength in the development of children's personal and social skills. Children are introduced to the routines and expectations of the school in a warm and sensitive manner and taught how to establish effective relationships. The teacher has a clear understanding of how children learn and so provides activities that motivate them to accept responsibility for their own learning. There is a good structure to each day with a good balance between the direct teaching of skills and opportunities for the children to develop their understanding through practical activities. The teacher gave clear explanations and demonstrations, such as how to make a capital letter when children wrote their names using the computer. Activities are planned carefully to match to the children's needs. Adults work together very well. This ensures that all children are given appropriate support. For example, while the teacher introduces a new topic to some children the learning support assistant helps others with a different task. Good provision is made for children who have difficulties in their learning or social development. They are quickly identified and individual support is planned and provided.

59. The curriculum successfully integrates the desirable learning outcomes for children of this age with the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Baseline assessments, when the children first enter school, are used effectively to help plan work that suits individual children. Daily assessments are also used effectively. The classroom is organised well, with stimulating displays and readily available resources.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

60. Results in the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average in reading, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Results were in line with the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools, attainment was average in reading but below average in writing. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in writing was above the national average, the proportion attaining higher levels was well below average. From 1996-98 there was a downward trend in results for reading and writing. In reading this was reversed in 1999, when standards returned to levels similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Standards of writing did not make the same improvement.

61. The results in the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the national average and much higher than in the previous year. Pupil's performance was average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well above average nationally and above average when compared with similar schools. Although there are variations between years, the general trend since the last inspection, in 1996, has been of rising standards.

62. Current attainment at the end of both key stages is above average, but with too few pupils in Year 2 attaining higher levels in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2, then very good progress at the top end of the school. Progress from the

beginning to end of the school, therefore, is good overall. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. Their positive response contributes significantly to their progress in English.

63. When pupils start in Key Stage 1 they are able to speak clearly and are good at listening both to their teacher and each other. Good progress in speaking and listening is maintained throughout the school and this leads to above average attainment. Older pupils discuss issues in depth and respond to the opinions of others. They answer questions articulately and enjoy expressing their own points of view. They listen carefully to instructions and follow them accurately. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in many lessons. In a Year 5 history lesson pupils discussed the similarities and differences between life in Tudor times and the present day. Pupils take part in regular plays and concerts and read aloud during assemblies, and class and school masses. The literacy hour is also providing pupils with good opportunities for listening to each other and discussing opinions.

64. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils attain higher levels. The school's strong emphasis on this aspect of English is successful. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils read fluently and with expression. They discuss what they have read and correct themselves when they make mistakes. They make good progress developing a wide sight vocabulary and successfully use phonic knowledge and contextual clues to read unknown words. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read aloud with good expression and discuss favourite authors knowledgeably. They read a range of literature of different types. Pupils are good at predicting what might happen next in a story or giving an alternative ending. They are able to infer meaning beyond the written text and can discuss how to use appropriate reference books in their research. Some parents and volunteers come into the school to help with reading. Parents support their children's learning effectively by hearing them read at home. This has a very positive effect on standards. Pupils make good progress in reading.

65. At the end of Key Stage 1, too few pupils attain higher levels in writing. Pupils retell and write stories and poems and follow written instructions. Pupils are taught to put loops on their letters in preparation for joining them together. However, what has been learned during handwriting sessions is not successfully transferred to pupils' free writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average. Pupils re-write stories from the point of view of a different character or changing between the first and third person. Their work is punctuated correctly. Older pupils use a clear cursive style of handwriting. They are sometimes encouraged to draft and re-draft their work. There are weekly sessions of sustained creative writing for all classes. Lower-attaining pupils are supported effectively by learning support assistants who work well with class teachers. These pupils make good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also suitably supported.

66. Spelling is taught to pupils of all ages, but some teachers do not follow the school's policy. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 1 and in the early part of Key Stage 2, spelling is not as accurate as it should be. Few pupils attain higher levels in spelling assessments at the end of Key Stage 1. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 spelling is taught systematically in accordance with the policy and the standard of spelling is noticeably higher.

67. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory in both key stages. Previously completed work shows that there are considerable strengths in teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2 and so the overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the correct vocabulary. This enables them to give clear explanations and ask

searching questions when, for example, pupils are splitting words into phonemes or thinking about characters in a book. Teachers use the structure of the literacy hour successfully to give a good pace so that pupils remain interested and challenged. They have good relationships with pupils and are particularly supportive of those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and so pupils work well in groups without direct adult involvement.

68.The National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect in raising standards since the last inspection. The school has carefully considered its strategy beyond the literacy hour. Pupils are given good opportunities to use English skills in other subjects. For example, they write about science investigations rather than filling in worksheets. Some Year 1 pupils used a computer to write about themselves. Pupils carry out research in history and, in many subjects, are expected to read instructions in order to complete tasks. In one lesson, older pupils read a tourist guide, commented on it and drew conclusions from the text, which helped them to write their own ideas. There is a good emphasis on using the correct subject vocabulary.

69.Teachers' weekly plans identify what is to be taught, with precise targets for lower-attaining pupils. They do not sufficiently identify extension work for higher attainers. The school is beginning to track individual pupils' progress using annual assessments, which is a good development. Some lessons are monitored, following which teachers receive useful feedback to develop their skills. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been effectively led and managed by the subject co-ordinator, and has been strongly supported by the governing body. The literacy target set for 1999 was exceeded. There are sufficient resources of good quality. Each class has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. The school library is currently out of use due to the building works.

Mathematics

70.Results in 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with the national average but below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was well above average, but the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was below average. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Work from last year shows that pupils have good understanding. Pupils set out work appropriately and show different ways of working. Attainment is similar in all aspects of mathematics. The work of pupils currently near the start of Year 2 is broadly average.

71.The 1999 results at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average and in line with standards in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 was well above the national average and it was above average at Level 5. Standards have varied since the last inspection, but have never been less than average. The work of the current Year 6 pupils indicates that last year's standards are being maintained in the different aspects of mathematics.

72.Overall progress from the start of Key Stage 1 to the end of the school is good. It is satisfactory until near the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils make very good progress. Younger pupils made sound progress overall as they practised using a number line to help solve problems with numbers to 20. The lower-attaining pupils were well supported by a learning support assistant and made good progress but the work was too easy for the higher attainers, whose progress was unsatisfactory. In another lesson, most pupils made satisfactory progress because the teacher's clear explanations enabled them to identify different types of rectangle by their properties, using appropriate mathematical language. However, the higher attainers made insufficient progress; they could have completed the work planned for the next day. The lower attainers made good progress because the work was appropriately challenging. Older pupils benefit from the brisk pace of lessons. In one lesson, they learned the relationship between fractions and percentages and went on

to find percentages of different numbers. Pupils were expected to answer challenging questions quickly and were invited to show their workings on the board so that ideas were shared effectively. Lower attainers were supported well by the use of extra resources, and the higher attainers were set further work that extended their understanding and skills.

73. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are developed well in other subjects of the curriculum. For instance, in an art lesson they talked about horizontal and vertical lines and the rectangles that they could see in paintings by Mondrian. Some Year 6 pupils used information technology to investigate the correlation between the areas and perimeters of rectangles. Pupils record the results of scientific investigations in tables and graphs, and use measuring skills in design and technology. In a physical education lesson, older pupils recorded athletic performances in order to measure improvements.

74. Pupils are very enthusiastic, keen to answer questions and enjoy working on the tasks prepared for them. They concentrate well and work carefully, but often lack the confidence to suggest different methods of working. Pupils in Key Stage 2 present their work in an organised and methodical way.

75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection. It ranges from unsatisfactory to very good, with particular strength near the end of Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning intentions. Teachers usually tell the pupils what they expect them to learn by the end of the lesson and this helps them to remain focused on the most important issues. When the pupils did not understand the object of the lesson, progress was reduced. In some lessons, there was not enough time at the end for summing up, discussion and reinforcement of the main points. However, most lessons have an effective structure and time is used well. The whole-class mental mathematics at the beginning of many lessons improves pupils' speed in mental recall, such as using number facts when solving problems. Short written sessions ensure that pupils concentrate and work quickly to a time limit. In a very good lesson, the teacher's high expectations, lively questioning and clear instructions motivated the pupils to work quickly and accurately. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are given very good support and, as a result, make very good progress. In too many lessons, the higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.

76. With the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy a good emphasis has been placed on mental mathematics, number work and developing the pupils' mathematical vocabulary. The subject is well managed. Effective monitoring of pupils' attainment and support of colleagues has helped to raise standards since the last inspection. Teaching, especially at the top end of the school, now provides more interest and challenge. Test results are analysed to identify areas for development and to set targets. Teachers keep their own records of day-to-day assessment but these are inconsistent and not always used effectively for future planning. There are sufficient resources and they are used well to support learning.

Science

77. In the 1999 national assessments for Key Stage 2 results were well above the national average and broadly average when compared with similar schools. These assessments do not measure attainment in all aspects of experimental and investigative science. Work from last year shows that pupils were in line with national expectations for this aspect. Overall attainment, therefore, was above average. Since 1996, standards have remained consistently above average. In the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 attainment was above the national average but below the average for similar schools. Taking into account samples of work and discussions with pupils, standards were in line with national expectations. Pupils presently near the start of Year 2 are

working at levels that match national expectations, and those in Year 6 are above expectations.

78.The relative strength in pupils' knowledge compared with their investigative skills was also reported following the previous inspection. The school's recent adoption of a nationally recognised scheme of work has already led to some improvement in the standard of investigative work. The school has, therefore, maintained its strengths and is now building upon them.

79.Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. When asked to investigate how to make an electric circuit work, some Year 2 pupils made sensible observations and began to use the correct vocabulary. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress over time, though it is inconsistent, being unsatisfactory in one year but very good in the top half of the key stage. In one lesson, pupils worked hard while recording foods they liked or disliked. However, they lost concentration during slow class discussions and, throughout the lesson, had insufficient reference information from which to draw ideas about which foods are required for a healthy diet. Overall, they made unsatisfactory progress. In another lesson, pupils made good progress as they answered rapid questions about previous work and then carried out a focused investigation of shadows. Throughout the school, lower-attaining pupils make relatively better progress than the higher attainers. They are expected to achieve the same levels as average pupils and given support to do so, while the higher attainers are often insufficiently stretched in investigative work. In parts of some lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, pupils are misled by wrong approaches to experiments or by misinformation. In such cases, corrections are usually made when pupils revise work at the top of the school.

80.Pupils have positive attitudes to science. They enjoy investigative work and collaborate well when asked to work together. They generally concentrate well when working individually or in small groups but become restless when class discussions are too long. Pupils use equipment sensibly, sharing with others and clearing away quickly at the end of lessons. They use skills learned in other subjects effectively. For example, pupils recorded work in tables and drew graphs to show their results. Investigations are usually recorded in writing rather than on worksheets, which gives pupils practice in a particular style of writing.

81.In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. However, previously completed work shows that the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 are not typical. In one class, teaching was unsatisfactory last year because pupils were given too little work and much of it was disorganised. It has improved this year, though the teacher's subject knowledge remains a weakness, which is also true for several other teachers in the school. In the top half of Key Stage 2, teaching is very effective, especially in the knowledge-based aspects of science. Throughout the school, teachers make insufficient use of assessment information. For example, in several lessons, pupils were asked to spend too long repeating work that they remembered from the previous year. The teachers were unaware precisely what had been learned. In other lessons, teachers did not use assessment information to move higher attainers on to the next stage. However, teachers' questioning was often very effective in checking pupils' understanding and sometimes in extending it. In lessons for older pupils the teachers' good use of language encouraged pupils to explain their ideas using the correct vocabulary.

82.The use of the new scheme of work is helping teachers to plan lessons with a better balance of investigative work than has previously been the case. However, its overall success will depend upon teachers' subject knowledge being improved so that they have a clear understanding of how the different aspects of the science curriculum can be integrated. There is too little planned use of information technology for science lessons. The subject co-ordinator has set a good direction for development and is supporting colleagues effectively. There are sufficient resources and they are

used effectively.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

83. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 matches national expectations. For example, pupils use information about shopping to create different sorts of bar charts. They control a programmable toy purposefully in tasks linked to work in mathematics, physical education and literacy. Year 2 pupils used word processing to make a book, with each group of three pupils responsible for a page. With help, pupils store and retrieve information from a computer. During the key stage, pupils make sound progress.

84. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is below the national expectation, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Some work is of an appropriate standard. For example, pupils integrate text and graphics when they draw and label a map, and use a spreadsheet to find the relationships between the properties of rectangles. However, during the key stage, pupils do not reach the required standard in control work, data handling and sensing physical data in science. Consequently, pupils' progress during the key stage is unsatisfactory. However, their rate of progress is improving because the direct teaching of skills has been introduced and the school has recently adopted a good scheme of work, which helps teachers when planning lessons.

85. All classes have timetabled lessons for teaching information technology skills, when teachers demonstrate and explain a piece of software. The intention is that pupils will practise newly-learned skills over the following weeks. However, during the inspection, pupils did not have enough opportunities to work with computers. In the few lessons seen, teaching was always sound or better. Teachers gave clear explanations, involved the pupils and ensured that their attention was held. The pupils made at least sound progress in these lessons. In a lesson when younger Key Stage 1 pupils made very good progress, there was very good direct teaching of how to make capitals and spaces, and how to delete. The pupils were encouraged to use both hands on the keyboard. The teaching guided the pupils but expected them to complete tasks for themselves. They successfully wrote sentences about themselves. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils made good progress in a lesson when they learnt how to copy images and change their size and position.

86. As at the time of the previous inspection, the pupils' response was good. For example, Year 6 pupils working with a spreadsheet were clear about the purpose of the task, co-operated well and suggested a quicker way of completing the work.

87. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection, and the school now follows a nationally recognised scheme of work. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have not had the experience of following this scheme for the full four years of the key stage. Although there has been some useful training, staff do not yet have sufficient expertise. Information technology is not included in lesson plans for other subjects, which is a weakness. There is some good assessment of pupils' progress in certain classes but, in others, no records are kept.

88. There is a very good development plan for improving pupils' attainment in information technology over the next four years. Plans are being implemented to build an information suite, which will include a computer network. The school is benefiting from its involvement in the National Grid for Learning. A very good audit was carried out last year by the subject co-ordinator and this identified the important issues for development. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Art

89. In the work seen, standards were above expectations for the ages of the pupils. The school has made good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. During their time at the school pupils are given a variety of experiences that help them to develop their skills in drawing, modelling and the consideration of the work of famous artists. By the end of Key Stage 2 they produce some good work using perspective and close observational drawing. Pupils make good progress in art. Their skills develop systematically through the school. For example, younger pupils make a collage from materials cut out by the teacher, whilst older pupils choose their own materials and cut out their own shapes. Younger pupils are encouraged to think about the appropriateness of colour when painting faces, whilst older pupils think carefully about the positioning of facial features. The good scheme of work, variety of resources and supportive leadership of the subject contribute strongly to standards.

Design and technology

90. Standards in the work seen matched expectations for the ages of the pupils. During their time in the school, pupils learn appropriate skills both in designing and making. They use a range of materials such as wood, card and textiles, and a variety of tools and techniques for measuring, cutting and joining. When designing, there is too little thought given to function of the product. For example, some pupils made very good mock-up slippers, but used materials that would be unsuitable for the finished article. The design process would have been greatly improved by researching and suggesting appropriate materials for a final product. There are useful links with other subjects. For example, pupils practise measuring skills when making model bridges, and increase scientific understanding through food technology. When younger pupils made puppets there were good opportunities to develop language skills. Older pupils' cultural and artistic awareness was raised when they looked at masks from different cultures before making their own. Standards remain similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Aspects that remain weak are the insufficient planning for the systematic development of skills through the school and the lack of evaluation carried out by pupils.

Geography

91. Pupils attained standards appropriate for their ages in the geography work seen. Standards are similar to those reported during the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils develop a sound knowledge of different places and make increasingly detailed comparisons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound progress developing their map skills by making simple plans of the school. This knowledge is extended in Key Stage 2 when pupils draw more detailed maps. They understand symbols, read simple co-ordinates and identify places from aerial photographs. Older pupils have produced a substantial amount of work in their topics about Bangladesh and Europe, incorporating studies of rivers and climate and their effects on the population and the environment. There is satisfactory support for cultural development through studies of other places.

History

92. Standards in the work seen were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. This was the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand the concept of old and new and make distinctions between past and present. For example, they talked about the differences between their grandfathers' lives and their own after carrying out research into their families. Key Stage 2 pupils identified Tudor artefacts found in the Mary Rose and compared them with similar things we use today. In the lessons seen, pupils were keen to ask and answer questions, and listened carefully to the teacher and to each other. Pupils make good use of research skills in topics such as the Tudors and Britain Since 1930. Progress over time is satisfactory and an important contributory factor is the well-planned history curriculum, which is extended by useful visits to places of historical interest.

Music

93. In the music lessons seen standards were well above expectations for the ages of the pupils. The oldest pupils sing very well, with good diction, pitch and rhythm. In a very successful lesson, pupils practised songs that had been learned the previous week and also started new ones. The fast pace of the lesson and the considerable expertise of the two teachers enabled pupils to reach the high expectations that were set. All pupils in Year 4 learn to play the recorder and this is a very successful policy that leads to many carrying on with instrumental tuition in later years. In a recorder lesson, pupils improved their breath control, fingering, reading of standard notation and playing together. They made excellent progress because the specialist teacher's enthusiasm and

high expectations motivated them, and her musical expertise enabled her to teach techniques very effectively. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Both boys and girls take part in musical activities enthusiastically. The very positive ethos and highly effective use of staff have helped maintain the high standards reported during the last inspection.

Physical education

94. In the work seen, standards were appropriate for the ages of the pupils. The oldest pupils practised and improved their performances in various athletic activities and with ball skills. Some of them paced a run very well and improved their times from the previous week. They worked hard both for individual and team success when practising football skills. Pupils in Year 5 made sound progress because the teacher gave them appropriate opportunities to demonstrate throwing and catching techniques and evaluate performance. They enjoyed a competitive ball game and were pleased to recognise outstanding progress in other pupils. Opportunities to demonstrate and evaluate also helped Year 2 pupils to make good progress in learning gymnastic skills. There are insufficient extra-curricular activities and sports fixtures to enable pupils to extend their learning in a wider context.

95. The inspection of this school included a focused review of **swimming**. There was insufficient information available for inspectors to ascertain standards. There have been no swimming lessons for two years, and so the school is not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Lessons were stopped following frequent problems with the available pool and concerns about the cost in both time and money. The school has recently negotiated a unique arrangement with a local swimming pool. This will enable all pupils in Year 3 to receive a course of lessons from qualified coaches on a Saturday morning, at the school's expense. Of the 32 pupils in this year 23 have chosen to take part, and parents of other pupils have made alternative arrangements. The school is unable to ensure that all pupils have lessons and is, therefore, still not meeting statutory requirements. However, governors feel that the benefits of a large cost reduction and the saving of other curriculum time make this a reasonable way forward. Parents' strongly support this course of action and, in a school with such a positive partnership, it is no more likely that pupils will miss swimming lessons outside school time than during it. At present, there are no procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment, which will be needed if the school is effectively to evaluate the success of the experiment.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

96. The inspection was carried out over a period of one week by five inspectors for a total of 14 inspector days. For the majority of the time in the school the inspectors visited classes, talked with pupils and evaluated samples of work from each year group. In total 40 observations of teaching were made, taking over 33 hours. Pupils from each year group were heard reading. Planned meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, and governors. Policy documents, teachers' planning and assessment records were inspected. A meeting for parents was held before the inspection with 18 parents attending.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meal
YR - Y6	201	2	51	11

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

8

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

25

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff

13

Total aggregate hours worked each week

141

Average class size:

28.7

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	343,042
Total Expenditure	321,496
Expenditure per pupil	1,474
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,235
Balance carried forward to next year	29,781

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

152

 Number of questionnaires returned:

59

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	46	49	3	0	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	49	41	3	5	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	42	24*	5	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	37	54	7	2	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29	51	10	7	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	32	61	3	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	24	53	12	7	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	22	56	14	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	47	51	2	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	44	51	5	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	54	41	5	0	0

* The high neutral figure reflects the number of parents who stated that they had no cause to complain.