

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PHILIP'S R C SCHOOL

SMETHWICK, WARLEY, WEST MIDLANDS

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 104001

Headteacher: MR. S DIX

Reporting inspector: Jennie Willcock-Bates
1967

Dates of inspection: 04-07 June 2001

Inspection number: 188253

Full 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: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Messenger Road
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West Midlands

Postcode: B66 3DU

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev William Wilton

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1967	Jennie Willcock-Bates	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum, mathematics, geography, physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9770	John Baker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How good does the school work in partnership with parents?
18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology	
17932	John Bald	Team inspector	English, history, music, special educational needs, equality of opportunity, English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Philips is a small Roman Catholic primary with 183 pupils from 3 to 11 years of age. The school admits Catholics and children whose parents want a Catholic education for them. Pupils come from an area of considerable social and material deprivation. A high proportion (56 percent) of children is entitled to free school meals. The turnover of pupils is high, 31 percent either left or joined the school during the last year. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average and children have very limited social and English language skills and often extreme anti-social behaviour. Several have significant special needs and this affects test results. The number on the special educational needs register, 29.5 percent, is well above average but only one has a statement. While the majority of pupils are from white United Kingdom heritage, 20 percent are from Black Caribbean heritage, with a small number of pupils from Indian, African, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Chinese heritage. One child is a refugee and four percent are travellers, half of whom are settled in the area. Five pupils speak English as an additional language and two are at an early stage of English language acquisition. There have been disruptions due to several changes of staff in Years 2 and 5. The current permanent head was appointed just over a year ago.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Philips school is effective. While standards of work seen are generally below average at the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils, whatever their ability, racial heritage, social class or gender achieve appropriately because teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1 and 2. Some of the pupils' achievement is good because of the progress they have made from a low start. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising although they are still not as good as they could be. The quality of education is good overall. The school is friendly and lively and pupils enjoy their work and behave very well. They are responsible and helpful. Attendance is improving but despite all the school is doing, is still well below the national average. The governors, headteacher and staff work effectively as a team committed to raising standards and improving the opportunities for all the pupils. Despite the large overspend, the school is currently providing satisfactory value for money. The governors are taking appropriate steps to rectify the significant budget deficit.

What the school does well

- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 is very good and an exciting range of activities is planned for them.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good because very positive relationships ensure respect and good behaviour.
- The provision for special educational needs and for children who speak English as an additional language is successful and their achievement is good.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and has a significant impact on the quality of education and teaching and learning.
- Teaching and learning are very effectively monitored and there is a shared determination to raise standards.

What could be improved

- The levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science still need to rise further.
- Standards of writing, information and communication technology and history at Key Stage 2 are not as high as they should be.
- Not enough time is available in the week for pupils to be creative or to explore and investigate.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1999, a new headteacher and several teachers have been appointed and this is having a significant impact on the quality of education in the school. Although there are signs that standards are rising and pupils' achievement is sound, further work is required to raise standards. Monitoring and evaluation has significantly improved and covers a broad range of systems. Governors, head and staff are taking effective and successful steps to secure improvement.

The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced, and shows improvements. The strong emphasis on raising standards of English and mathematics has compromised the time spend on some subjects. More needs to be done to ensure that an English and mathematics are also taught in other subjects and that an appropriate amount of time is spent on art and design and history. The school has extended the range of opportunities for cultural and multicultural development but more needs to be done to include an appreciation of the richness of the local culture.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	A
Mathematics	D	D	E	E
Science	E	E	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E

The school does not perform well in national tests. The results for 7 year-olds in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and writing was in the lowest five percent in the country. In the teachers' assessment in science was close to the national average. Results did not compare well with similar schools in reading and writing but they were similar in mathematics. While results for 11 year olds in English were below the national average, they were high compared to similar schools. The school did not perform well in mathematics and results were well below the average of similar schools. In science results were in the lowest five percent of the country, and did not compare very well with similar schools. One of the difficulties the school faces is the high turnover of pupils. Many do not stay in school to benefit from the teaching programmes. High numbers have special educational needs. Despite these low results, the trend over time is broadly similar to the rising national trend. With only three girls in the year group comparison with boys is unreliable. The school met its targets for literacy and numeracy in 2000. The targets for 2001 are appropriately based on the analysis of pupils' performance in tests.

Attainment on entry is well below average. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are either reaching or exceeding the national Early Learning Goals. Pupils perform better in lessons than in tests because they are well taught and supported. Overall standards in reading writing and speaking and listening remain well below expectations for this age group at 7 and below average at 11. Standards in mathematics and science are below average at 7 and 11. Although standards are not as consistently as high as they could be, pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory and often good, when considering their low starting point. Standards for 7 year olds in information and communication technology are average but below average for 11 year olds because they are not yet doing all the tasks they should. Standards and achievement in geography and are satisfactory at both key stages. In art, design and technology and history pupils reach appropriate standards by the end of Key Stage 1 but they decline across Key Stage 2 and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Standards in music are satisfactory by 11 achievement is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils throughout the school are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and on special occasions, such as a Mass, excellent. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected and respond well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils work and play well together. They enjoy each other's successes and are sensitive to their classmates feelings and needs.
Attendance	Above the local average but still well below the national average. No unauthorised absence but a high percentage of lateness.

The school is a happy place and the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a significant contribution to their learning. Rates of temporary exclusion have been significantly reduced.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	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 and pupils learn effectively. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all but one lesson, good or better in two thirds and over a third is very good or better. Eight outstanding lessons were seen. Teaching is good in the nursery and outstanding in the reception class. Overall, the school meets the needs of all pupils, whatever their ability, gender, racial heritage and level of English by good teaching, effective planning and interesting activities. Teaching is sound in English and good in mathematics and this is contributing to the small but perceptible rise in standards. While sound examples of writing in other subjects were observed and the teaching of numeracy is good, opportunities to practise reading writing and numeracy skills in other subjects are not as well developed as they could be.

Teachers understand how to motivate the pupils. Most ask very skilful questions that challenge the pupils. Consequently, this enhances the quality of learning, helping pupils to concentrate for long periods of time and work hard. Most lessons are carefully planned to extend pupils' learning but a few are not detailed enough and tasks are poorly designed. In some classes there are too few opportunities to develop their creative, investigative and problem solving skills and for pupils to apply what they have learned in different situations. Activities throughout the school are mainly varied and interesting and pupils produce considerable amounts of work. The disruption caused by changes of teacher in Year 5 has affected the pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils are managed well and consequently the behaviour in lessons in nearly all year groups is very good. Marking is sound but the use of homework is inconsistent. The able learning support practitioners successfully support teachers and pupils. The nursery nurses run the nursery effectively and know the children very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: the curriculum at each stage is broad but more work needs to be done to ensure a balance of time spent on each subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils' are given access to the full curriculum and their learning benefits from good targets in Individual Education Plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: the learning needs of the pupils are well met by the strong emphasis on speaking and listening and effective support from within the school and the local authority's specialist teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including	Very good: spirituality pervades all of school life and helps pupils develop moral values. Provision for social development is very good

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	but while pupils learn about other cultures, they miss opportunities to appreciate local cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: progress, attendance and behaviour are well monitored. Child protection procedures are good.

The school takes many steps to strengthen its links with parents and most are very supportive but some do not get involved in the life of the school and their child's education. Annual reports are unsatisfactory because they are inconsistent in the information they give to parents. A good range of learning opportunities outside the classroom, including clubs and visits enhance the curriculum. The school cares for its pupils effectively and knows them well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the leadership of the headteacher is having a significant impact on school improvement. Key management roles are well established but other subject leadership needs further development to be effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors are very supportive and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working to improve the school's reputation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: a broad range of analysis of results and evaluation of teaching and learning helps the school diagnose strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good: budget is efficiently used to raise standards and enhance learning. Financial control is good and based on accurate information.

The school critically analyses its performance and is applying strategies to get best value out of its use of resources. Parents, staff and pupils are consulted. Administration is efficient. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and there is an adequate number of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. A full complement of permanent teachers will be in place in September and the school is well placed for further developments.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel teaching is good and makes children work hard. • They feel welcome in the school and that the headteacher is a positive influence on the school. • They like the family atmosphere and that the children come first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority does not like the inconsistencies in homework. • They are concerned about the changes of teacher in some year groups.

The parents are generally happy with the school and support what it tries to do. The inspection team supports what pleases the parents. Teaching is good and children work hard. Homework is satisfactory and some children have more than others. The governors and headteacher understand the parents' concerns about the changes of teacher. They have worked hard to establish a permanent teaching team and appoint permanent teachers to Years 2 and 5.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to school in the Foundation Stage in the nursery is well below average and they score poorly on the tests undertaken during the first few weeks. They find it very hard to sit and listen and their English language skills are limited by a lack of words to communicate their ideas and feelings. Several children have extreme anti-social behaviour and find it hard to share the adults with other children. By the time they are four their attainment is still below average when they transfer to the Reception class. Their behaviour has improved and over the year in the class they have made significant achievement in language and communication. The achievement of children who speak English as an additional language and those with special needs is also marked because work is expertly matched to their particular needs. The excellent teaching means that by the time they are six, at the end of the Foundation Stage, a significant proportion is already reaching the national Early Learning goals in language communication, mathematics development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and their personal, social and emotional development. A small proportion of children is exceeding these goals because they respond very well to the outstanding teaching and high quality activities planned for them. The majority of children are exceeding the goals in physical development.
2. The school does not perform well in national test for 7 and 11 year olds. The results of the national tests in 2000 for 7 year-olds were well below the national average in reading and mathematics. Results in writing were in the lowest five percent of schools nationally but the teachers' assessments in science were close to the national average. This does not compare well with similar schools in reading and writing but in mathematics results were similar. The most able pupils attain higher than average levels and the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 compares favourably with similar schools. There have been variations in results over the last four years due to the small numbers taking the tests. Over the last three years the boys have done better than girls in reading and mathematics, and about the same as girls in writing. Girls out-performed boys in science. There is very little difference in the attainment of boys and girls in lessons.
3. The results in English for 11 year olds at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average but high in relation to similar schools because some pupils reached the higher Level 5. However, the results in mathematics were well below the national average and the average of similar schools. Results in science were very low and put the school in the bottom five percent of schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, results were also well below average. Pupils do not do as well in science and mathematics as in English. Despite these low results, there is improvement and the school trend is broadly in line with the rising national trend. When analysing the tests taken by this group when they were 7 years old, it would appear that standards have fallen in mathematics and science as they progress through the school. One of the difficulties the school faces is the high turnover of pupils particularly in Key Stage 2 but also in Year 2. This means that over a third of the pupils has changed. In addition the many pupils with special educational needs and the several changes of teacher in the last four years have a significant impact on results. The year groups taking the tests are small and with only three girls in the year group comparisons with boys' performance is unreliable.
4. This apparent drop in standards between the two key stages is not reflected in the inspection findings, which show that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory and sometimes good as they move through the school. The test results and inspection findings are similar but pupils tend to perform better in lessons than in tests. Any differences are largely due to differences in the ability of each year group rather than a decline in standards but also to the important changes that have been recently introduced. Overall, standards in reading writing and speaking and listening remain well below expectations for 7 year-olds and below average for 11 year olds. Standards in mathematics and science are below average at 7 and 11. The new teaching team has made improvements since the previous inspection two years ago. The school is continuing to improve and there are significant changes to the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 6, where teaching is

particularly strong. The new headteacher has continued to introduce many initiatives that are beginning to raise standards and improve teaching. For example, the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively implemented and performance data is carefully analysed and information used to track pupils' progress. The attainment and achievement of black boys is monitored and strategies to enhance their confidence and self-esteem by further raising teachers' expectations are proving successful. However, there are still temporary relief teachers working with classes that do not know the pupils well. A permanent team will be in place in September. Although standards are not yet as consistently high as they could be, these initiatives are beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment and achievement is at least sound and sometimes good considering the pupils' low starting point.

5. Pupils aged 6 and 7 years old achieve very well in speaking and listening in response to carefully thought-out teaching in all subjects. They learn to listen to the teacher and to each other. Teachers have great skill in phrasing questions and explanations to enable pupils to understand their work clearly. All pupils, whatever their ability or level of acquisition of English are carefully included in discussions, including those who are not confident speakers, and this builds confidence. Pupils aged 8 to 11 years old continue to develop their speaking and listening skills at a good overall rate. As a result, they are eager to learn, and are interested in discussing their work with visitors. While standards remain below average, a good basis is laid for future progress.
6. Younger pupils aged 6 and 7 learn the sounds letters make, and begin to use them in their reading. This work continues as children become 7 at the end of Key Stage 1, but the standards reached by the lowest-attaining pupils remain stubbornly low. Pupils aged 8 to 11 years old make steady achievement in reading, and very few are still in the early stages of learning to read by the time they move on to secondary school. They develop good skills in supporting points they make in discussion by referring to text, and reach standards that are only a little below average in comprehension. However, the development of independent reading is limited by the lack of non-fiction books in the library, and by the school's practice of restricting their choice of books until they have completed its reading scheme.
7. Pupils' standards in writing are lower than in other aspects of English when they start work on the National Curriculum, and this pattern is still in place at the end of both key stages when pupils are 7 and 11. The learning of the youngest pupils is good, and is carefully fostered by teaching. However, many have difficulty in controlling their pencil and in spacing words, and a significant proportion is not writing independently by the time they are 7 years old. Pupils' learning affected by interruptions to their education, and in one class poor teaching was giving pupils too few opportunities to compose their own text. While learning was good in some lessons, for example in accounts of the experience of bombing during the Second World War, the balance of written work for pupils aged seven to eleven is too heavily weighted towards exercises and grammatical notes. This gives them too few opportunities to develop and practise their skills and they do not achieve as well in writing as in speaking and listening.
8. Despite a good start to their schooling, the current 7 year-olds left the Foundation Stage with mathematics skills that were below average. They achieved appropriately but, while vast majority of the current Year 2 displays a reasonable understanding of the four rules of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division, standards are below average. They know the numbers that build up to ten and struggle with strategies such as consider 10-1 when adding 9. In one lesson, pupils were working hard to complete a square of numbers up to 100. They name shapes and know how to use standard and non-standard measures. They count coins and calculate change from 50 pence with reasonable accuracy. Good teaching in Year 1 assures good achievement but achievement slows to sound across Year 2 as a third of the current pupils have not been in the school since they were six. Several join the school with special educational needs. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils a significant proportion of pupils are reaching standards close to average. They show a good understanding of fractions as a proportion and relate that to percentages with reasonable accuracy. A significant proportion uses a good range of strategies for long multiplication. From Year 3 most pupils recognise the names of three-dimensional shapes. Eleven year-olds were studying angles and their achievement was good because teaching was excellent. It gave pupils the opportunity to apply what they had learned. Two thirds of the class measured angles accurately using a protractor because the teacher skilfully identified what they needed to learn. While achievement slows in Year 5 because of the

disruption of different teachers who do not know the pupils, in other classes pupils of all abilities, social background, special educational needs and ethnic heritage achieve well because work is designed specifically for them.

9. Although standards in science are still below average they are now higher at the end of both Key Stages than those identified by the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, a greater proportion of 7 year olds are reaching expected levels but only a small proportion are reaching the higher level. Pupils are observant and watch experiments with interest and involvement. Most can record their observations effectively in words and pictures, discussing their findings and making comparisons. Although their limited language skills inhibit the full extent of their learning. By 11, pupils' achievement is good and standards are average. Pupils confidently discuss how forces affect a person pedalling a bicycle, how flowers reproduce or how to separate a mixture of salt and sand. They conduct fair tests, taking careful measurements and drawing appropriate conclusions from the results. However, pupils are not able to talk about how particular scientists made discoveries in the areas that they are studying. They also have difficulty in devising theories of their own and saying how they might do experiments to test them.
10. Standards in information and communication technology are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. By the time they are 7, pupils use a computer to make pictures, write text, draw a block graph and explore aspects of maths and English. They also enter a simple sequence of commands to control a floor robot and the most pupils can describe how they used a word processor to combine digitised images and fancy lettering to make a poster. These skills are not sufficiently extended at Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils know how to format text in different styles to represent their poems and to collect data for a traffic survey, producing a pie chart from their results. Some pupils can extract text and pictures from a CD-ROM or the World Wide Web. Pupils do not learn how a simple spreadsheet can help them solve practical problems in, for example, maths or design technology.
11. Standards and achievement in geography are satisfactory at both key stages. In art and design and technology pupils reach appropriate standards by the end of Key Stage 1 but standards decline across Key Stage 2 and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils reach below average standards in music at the end of Key Stage 1 but by the time they are 11 years old at the end of Key Stage 2, achievement is good and standards are satisfactory. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in history and reach standards that are well below expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 because skills are under-developed and too much work is copied from a text.
12. The reasons for the improved standards and good rate of learning are the good teaching and positive attitudes of the pupils. In English, mathematics and science most teachers plan a variety of tasks for the different abilities and levels of English language acquisition in the class. This helps pupils make good progress if they have special educational needs. Individual Education Plans are detailed, contain specific targets and are regularly reviewed. There are examples of excellent learning where the teacher is able to organise the class to give them special attention. Pupils who speak English as an additional language learn well in most lessons. They benefit from the school's emphasis on speaking and listening and from specialist teaching where this is provided. In the very few lessons where there were shortcomings in teaching pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language did not receive work that takes their learning needs into account, and they learned very little.
13. The school has sensibly concentrated on raising standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher and co-ordinators carefully analyse the results of a broad range of assessments. Information is successfully used to set targets based on previous performance. The targets in literacy and numeracy for the current Year 6 are appropriate but generous in comparison to their achievement as the impact of the new teaching programmes have not been taken into consideration. Appropriate targets are planned for individuals and groups of pupils in each other year group. Effective use is made of helpful local and national data to track progress. Governors, permanent teachers and classroom support assistants have a very clear idea of what has to be done to raise standards further and there is an impressive commitment improving the pupils levels of attainment. Consequently, the school is well placed for further improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good and they behave very well. These are strengths and mark continued improvement since the previous inspection two years ago. The children in the Foundation Stage work and play happily together. The vast majority takes time to settle into the routines of the nursery. By the time leave to go to the reception class they will still need support but they are confident and already familiar with the teacher. In reception the vast majority of the children is happy to settle down to work and play. They know how to organise their work and help each other out with their work. The children are enthusiastic about school and are keen to learn.
15. Nearly all the older pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language like school. They are eager to attend and take part enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. Their attitudes to learning are very good overall, which is having a positive impact on their attainment and achievement. The vast majority enjoys lessons, is interested, keen to contribute to lessons, undertake tasks enthusiastically and work hard to complete them. For example, in a Year 3 art lesson, pupils worked very hard on their drawings and took great delight in using colour. Pupils with special educational needs develop very good attitudes to learning as they move through the school. They take a full part in the life and work of the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are effectively integrated into the life and work of the school, and quickly grow in confidence. For example, a Slovakian boy in the reception class, who initially lacked the confidence to change for physical education, joined in spontaneously to demonstrate a skilful forward roll.
16. Since the previous inspection two years ago, behaviour has improved considerably and is now very good overall. In two out of ten lessons, during collective worship and a special Mass, behaviour was excellent, and as a consequence learning was highly effective. Behaviour in the playground, around the school and at the swimming pool is good and pupils move to and from lessons in an orderly fashion. When pupils come into the nursery at three years old they find it hard to sit and listen and show extremes of behaviour. They quickly settle into the routines of the nursery and with calm handling and high expectations they behave and respond positively. Any occasional outbursts are usually the result of frustration rather than deliberate misbehaviour. Behaviour in the reception class is exemplary and they respond exceptionally well to the clear rules and high expectations. Older pupils are aware of the high standards expected and respond well to discipline, which creates an orderly environment conducive to learning. All pupils whatever their racial heritage, play harmoniously together in the playgrounds and on the field. No signs of aggressive behaviour or racial harassment were observed. Pupils in Key Stage 2 organise their own games of football, which are played in a sporting manner. Also they respect the rota for use of the field and the playground football area including "girls only" football sessions. The rate of exclusion in the previous year was above average. The 14 temporary exclusions of 11 pupils, mainly boys and an even racial mix occurred when the headteacher started the school and wanted to stop fighting in the playground. A no fighting rule was established and because behaviour used to be a serious concern, after a formal warning, pupils were excluded for a day at a time. The system has proved successful and the rate of exclusions has fallen to three this current year.
17. Adults in the school provide children with good role models and they work well as a team. As a result, relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils play harmoniously and work very well together in the classroom when in pairs or larger groups. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils worked well together responding to the challenging lesson recording what they knew about plants and animals by helping each other. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and supported by pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are also very good and they are secure and confident in their relationships with other adults. Staff give a very positive lead by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity. Teachers value the contributions pupils make and as a consequence pupils listen to each other and celebrate each other's successes in learning. A good example of this was in the Foundation Stage when a boy, learning English counted in front of the class. Other children were delighted at his success and clapped enthusiastically, leaving him confident with his developing English and mathematics skills.
18. Pupils have very good awareness of the feelings and needs of others. For example, pupils befriend newcomers to their class, involve them in their games and do everything they can to help the newcomer settle in well. Pupils are very aware of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic faith and

behave impeccably throughout Mass, showing due respect and reverence. They show respect for the staff and are polite and confident when talking to visitors. For example, pupils were very keen to talk about their school and the activities in which they were involved. They show respect for other people's property and the environment, for example, keeping the school free from litter. Pupils' personal development is good. They mature as they progress through the school and willingly take on increasing responsibility. From the day they start school, pupils are encouraged to be independent. In Year 1 pupils tidy up after themselves and carry out simple class duties such as keeping the book corner tidy. As they move up through the school pupils take on an increasing range of classroom duties and Year 6 take on a wide range of whole school responsibilities. These include monitoring distribution and return of playground equipment, setting up assembly and helping younger pupils. Pupils in Year 6 set a very good example for other pupils.

19. Attendance has improved significantly in the past year and is above the average for local schools. However, it is well below the national average but has no unauthorised absence, which is a significant improvement. A high percentage of pupils arrive late often because they have to prepare themselves and brothers and sisters for school, without help from their parents. Despite this, lessons begin on time, which ensures that the learning of children who do arrive on time is not adversely affected. Throughout the remaining school day pupils are punctual. Registration meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Despite the impact of staff changes and recent illness, which meant that pupils in two year groups were taught by temporary relief teachers that did not know the pupils well, teaching continues to improve since the previous inspection. A full complement of full-time permanent teachers will be in place from the autumn term and the school is well placed for further improvements. Overall the quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on standards, achievement and the quality of learning.
21. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all but one lesson and good or better in two thirds. In just over a third it was very good or better and eight outstanding lessons were observed. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is at least good and in the reception class it is outstanding. The provision in Foundation Stage, in the nursery and reception class is very good and an important strength of the school. Interesting tasks are planned to motivate children and provide them with a very good range of learning opportunities. Consequently, children's learning is very effective and they work hard to learn new things. Their achievement is good because the nursery nurses, teacher and classroom assistant work successfully together with high expectations, constantly encouraging them to be confident about what they can achieve.
22. In both Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching is good, with examples of excellent teaching in Years 1 and 6. There was proportionately more very good and excellent teaching in Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in speaking and listening and numeracy and sound in reading and writing. This is contributing to the perceptible rise in standards, particularly in mathematics. Literacy lessons are generally well planned but some teachers do not make full use of the range of teaching methods set out in the National Literacy Strategy, and pupils are not always encouraged to read widely enough. While sound examples of writing in other subjects such as geography exists, the teaching of writing suffers from a lack of co-ordination between written work in English and writing for learning in other subjects. Sometimes pupils, in history for example, were asked to copy text that they did not understand. The teaching of numeracy is good and planning is effective. Teachers generally have good ideas for activities to motivate pupils. For example, in the Foundation Stage the teacher inspires confidence in the children enabling them to play with numbers. The spontaneous joy in learning numbers was infectious and when a child with special educational needs suddenly found she could count to nine and write nine on the board it was a cause for celebration. While pupils have the opportunity to practise their numeracy skills in information and communications technology with traffic surveys and data collection, and use their measuring skills in science, links between mathematics and other subjects are not as well developed throughout the school as it could be.
23. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in information and communication technology at Key Stages 1 and 2, as very little took place during the inspection.

It is clear that where teachers plan work in other subjects such as English or mathematics to include the use of computers or other forms of information and communication technology, the pupils are learning appropriate skills and understanding. However, it is not yet well established in each class and a stronger emphasis could be made on using information and communications technology as a tool for learning across the curriculum. Teaching in science is good and the best provides pupils with an opportunity to work at a challenging level, at a good pace, and to make discoveries with a sense of wonder and excitement. Swimming, geography and music are generally well taught and consequently, pupils learn effectively at a good rate. Not enough evidence was available to make a secure judgement about teaching in art and design and design and technology or history.

24. Overall the school meets the needs of different pupils, whatever their gender, racial heritage and level of acquisition of English by effective planning and interesting activities. Those pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers in most lessons adapt work effectively to meet their wide-ranging needs and the best work with these pupils is outstanding. For example, in an excellent lesson for six-year-olds, a volunteer, who was also a qualified teacher, taught the higher-attaining pupils, enabling the class teacher to provide much needed teaching to a small group of pupils in the early stages of learning to count. As a result, these pupils' understanding of number improved rapidly during the lesson, and the teacher was able gradually to withdraw this intensive level of support, so that they began to work independently. Where the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory rather than good, teachers spend too much time consolidating learning, and do not move pupils on as quickly as they might. In the minority of lessons in which teaching is less than satisfactory, these pupils are given work that they do not understand, and therefore do not learn.
25. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are given effective support in lessons to help them develop their English language skills and confidence to participate. They achieve well because of teachers' abilities to use and re-enforce a good range of vocabulary. A good example, of this was in the Reception class where one boy, also supported by a specialist teacher was given time to respond in a numeracy lesson. The teacher very skilfully included him in the questioning, enabling him to show that he had grasped the idea of counting in 10s and adding small numbers in his head. Careful targets are set with the pupils and in most classes their work is planned to enable them to achieve the targets and be challenged to apply their linguistic skills in other subjects. Children from travelling families are happily integrated into the school. They are given appropriate support to speed up their learning and are taught basic skills that they can apply in different situations. A good example of this was in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where a relief teacher gave a young pupil time to work out her own ideas. She was thrilled with her discovery that counting in 10s was a quick way of solving the problem of missing numbers on a 100 square.
26. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and they understand how to motivate the pupils and broaden out their experiences. This enhances the quality of learning and challenges the pupils to work at a good pace. For example, in a food technology lesson in the reception class, children concentrated hard on designing sandwiches. The lesson was very well organised, with outstanding use of vocabulary by adults, insisting pupils rehearse words such as savoury and sweet. Children were excited at the discovery of honey, something very few in the class had tasted. They called it 'runny honey' and one child squealed 'it rhymes!', making a clear reference to the morning's literacy session. In Year 4, pupils were challenged to write accounts of the experience of bombing during the Second World War, the teacher's innovative approach, captivated the pupils' interest and resulted in good quality writing. Teachers' generally use effective technical language to extend the pupils' limited vocabularies and most insist that pupils use the right terms when describing their work. This is particularly successful in English, mathematics and science.
27. Teachers ask very skilful questions that stretch and challenge pupils enabling them to make effective on-going assessments of their learning. There are many examples in lessons, where questioning had a positive impact on achievement, helping pupils to increase their understanding and learn new things. One such example was in Year 1, when the teacher skilfully helped the pupils recall the book 'Elmer the Elephant', that they had been sharing. The pupils clearly enjoyed the book and with very skilful questioning they very carefully described the character of Elmer. The introduction to most lessons contains effective question and answer sessions

enabling teachers to check the pupils' understanding and remind them of what they have already learned ready for new skills and knowledge. In Year 6 mathematics lessons were successfully built on an analysis of assessment, when the teacher found that pupils' understanding of measurement in degrees and their knowledge about angles were limited. Very successful questioning and direct teaching enabled lessons to build successfully on each other and this had a significant impact on all pupils' achievement and learning skills. They enjoyed the challenge and celebrated their successes. The teacher was preparing them very effectively for the next stages of education.

28. Overall, lessons are carefully planned to extend pupils' learning and the different abilities, gender and English language acquisition in the class. There are examples of very good planning in each key stage. Most pupils are clear about what they are going to learn because teachers carefully discuss the objectives of lessons. In some classes there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their creative, investigative and problem solving skills and for them to apply what they have learned in different situations. In a few lessons planning was not detailed enough and tasks were poorly designed. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils were repeating and consolidating what they knew unnecessarily and achievement in writing was unsatisfactory because there was no clear framework to the lesson and the tasks were inappropriate. Pupils were not clear about what was expected of them and behaviour declined. Activities throughout the school are mainly varied and interesting and motivate pupils to work at a steady pace, producing considerable amounts of work. The disruption because of changes of teacher in Year 5 has affected the pupils' willingness to work quickly and concentrate hard. Resources are well organised to support all pupils' learning. In some lessons information and communications technology is used appropriately, but this is not a consistent feature in all classes. Time is generally used well and there were good examples of brisk and lively lessons that pupils thoroughly enjoyed and worked hard. However, numeracy and literacy lessons tend to dominate the timetable and subjects such as art and design, design and technology and history are not given enough time. While some progress has been made in this aspect since the previous inspection more adjustment of time to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are developed in other subjects relieving time for the more creative skills to be emphasised.
29. Pupils are managed well and consequently the behaviour in lessons in nearly all year groups is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Clear boundaries are set and teachers' expect to be listened to. In addition, the vast majority of activities are interesting and sufficiently varied to capture the imagination of the pupils. A good example of this was in a Year 6 geography lesson where a mountaineer talked about climbing and the expeditions he has been involved with. Pupils handled the equipment very carefully, listening sensitively to his stories and captivated by the slides of the mountain ranges he has climbed. The pupils were prepared for the lesson exceptionally well. This enabled them to capitalise on their curiosity, and to question an expert sensibly. The pupils were interested and able to sustain concentration for a long time. Group work is being developed effectively in some classes and pupils confidently share ideas and views.
30. On-going assessment is successfully used in the Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Year 6 to plan what the pupils need to learn next. This ensures that work is planned to meet the pupils needs and extend their learning. In some classes the pupils undertake work that is repetitive and this slows their achievement. As a result, pupils lose concentration and are reluctant to think and learn for themselves. Marking is sound overall and there are very good examples of marking that, not only praises and encourages pupils but informs them what they need to concentrate on next to improve, particularly in the reception class and Year 1, where marking acts as a good model of writing for pupils. There is little evidence to show that pupils have time to read, discuss or act upon teachers' comments. Consequently, while there are good examples of pupils evaluating what they have learned in lessons, they do not always know how they can improve their work. The use of homework to support the pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils take home books to read and spellings to learn. Some parents feel that homework is not set consistently and that pupils do not have enough to do. One of the difficulties the school faces is that several pupils do not have an environment at home that is conducive to homework. As yet there is no provision for pupils to complete homework at school. Some teachers use homework to support the pupils' learning but it is not consistent across Key Stage 2. The policy and practice needs reviewing.

31. The able learning support practitioners and the nursery nurses fulfil a range of functions. The nursery nurses run the nursery effectively and know the children very well. They are sensitive to their needs and provide a good range of activities, planning with the reception class teacher. Other learning support practitioners work closely with teachers, to support individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as a team with the teachers, who direct their work. They use their many skills to the full, interacting successfully with pupils, helping them to learn.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

35. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in extending the range of learning opportunities for pupils, but further work remains to be done. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage up to five offers an exciting and well thought out range of learning activities that engage children's interest and promote very good learning. The school has adapted the provisions of the National Curriculum to meet the needs of its pupils, by emphasising literacy and numeracy in its timetable and giving priority to speaking and listening in all lessons. This enables the curriculum to meet the learning needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and of other pupils from minority ethnic groups well. The curriculum is suitably modified in most lessons to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, whose learning also benefits from good targets in their Individual Education Plans. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall, and good in instrumental music lessons. The curriculum at each stage is broad but more work needs to be done to ensure a balance of time spent on each subject. Sufficient time is given to other subjects and to religious education to meet statutory requirements.
36. Provision for numeracy is well co-ordinated, and this leads to good learning and achievement across the school. The co-ordination of literacy ensures that English teaching is based on the National Literacy Strategy, and that pupils make good progress in the early stages of reading. However, writing for pupils aged seven to eleven in subjects other than English is not planned carefully enough to contribute to progress in literacy, and includes too much copying. Pupils have too little choice in their reading until they have completed all stages of the school's reading scheme; this limits the development of independence in reading and restricts pupils' cultural development. The school's system of curriculum maps and weekly plans, monitored by the headteacher, allows outline planning of learning in each class, but does not extend to the detailed design of learning tasks for pupils. The length of the teaching week is satisfactory, but lesson times for some subjects are either too long or too short to promote effective learning. The time allocated to history during the school year is only just long enough to meet legal requirements.
37. Personal, social and health education takes place within the context of the school's Christian ethos, and is of very good quality. Teaching is based on the Family Life programme for religious education, and is reinforced in science and throughout the pupils' work, for example in creative writing for nine-year-olds. Arrangements for sex education and for education on the consequences of abusing drugs are satisfactory. The school has good links with other schools in the area, which are providing support for the development of information and communication technology and health education, through the Healthy Schools Initiative. Pupils visit local secondary schools during their last two years at the school, and this ensures smooth transfer at eleven. Links between the nursery and reception class are excellent, and enable children up to five to get to know the school and children close to their own age before they join. A good range of learning opportunities outside the classroom, including clubs for art and chess as well as football and cricket enhances the curriculum. Older pupils have a well-planned residential visit to Alton Castle. The school has plans to develop a homework club in September. The contribution of the community to children's learning is satisfactory. It includes good links with the parish church and good co-operation with the local professional football club.
38. The provision for spiritual, moral and social education is very good and one of the school's key strengths. Assemblies, in all forms, are uplifting and spirituality pervades almost all aspects of school life. A good example of this was when pupils in the reception class discovered that they could record and play back their own voices on a tape recorder, they sang their favourite hymn at the tops of their voices and squealed with delight when it was played back to them. When a visiting mountaineer recounted his exploits to pupils in Year 6 were captivated by the beauty of the mountains and were in awe when he told them how his friend died down a crevasse. Teachers share their own sense of wonder at the natural world in the stories they tell. In hymn

practice and during mass, teachers take care to create an appropriate atmosphere by means of organisation, resources and setting an example in their own approach. The school successfully aims to embody Christian principles in all its work and all teachers co-operate in achieving this.

32. Christ's teachings also form the basis for the schools' development of the pupils' moral values. The school successfully aims to foster a spirit of justice, peace, respect and tolerance and this comes out clearly in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The behaviour policy, to which all teachers adhere, helps pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong. They respect each other's beliefs and feelings. There is harmony between pupils from different racial and social backgrounds. Pupils are taught, not only in religious education, but also in subjects like geography and science, how to care for each other, the environment and people in different circumstances from their own. Despite the deprivation of their area, pupils appreciate how some people are worse off than they are when they study, for example, the work of Mother Theresa in Calcutta.
33. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop socially. From the breakfast club first thing in the morning, through assemblies and lessons, to the choir or clubs in the evenings, pupils are fully involved and allowed to voice their opinions. They take part willingly in assembly activities. In Year 6, pupils are proud to lead the singing or organise the hall for lunch. They speak of their pride in the school and each other's achievements. Younger pupils are given responsibilities in the classroom. Older pupils help the younger ones in the playground and swimming pool, learn first aid and visit a local study centre. One boy went to London to receive a trophy on behalf of a pilot scheme in which the school was involved. A residential retreat for Year 6 and trips for pupils of other years help to develop social awareness.
34. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils study different geographical regions, the work of different artists, music from around the world and a range of historical periods as part of the National Curriculum. In religious education, pupils learn about other religions and are expected to show tolerance and respect for people's beliefs. However, the school fails to capitalise on the diverse range of backgrounds represented within the local community. They miss opportunities to help pupils appreciate the richness and diversity of art, music, poetry, storytelling and drama that different local cultural traditions could provide, which would add to the pupils' creative experiences in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The governors, headteacher and staff are totally committed to taking good care of all their pupils. There has been considerable improvement in how the school cares for its pupils since the last inspection two years ago. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour have improved significantly and all are now very good. Good improvement has been made in monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development and ensuring pupils' welfare. Support and guidance has a very effective impact on the pupils' achievement and their academic, personal and physical development and wellbeing.
36. The school is a safe and secure place in which pupils are closely supervised. First aid and medical care arrangements are satisfactory. Three members of staff are fully first aid trained and lunchtime supervisors have undertaken basic first aid training. Pupils' personal safety, personal hygiene and general well being are covered well through the personal, social and health education curriculum, which is well supported by outside speakers such as the community police officer. The school places great emphasis on healthy living and is currently working towards the first level of the "Healthy Schools" awards scheme.
37. Child protection procedures are good. The designated person, the headteacher, is suitably trained and very experienced in this area. All staff are aware of the procedures and their importance. Also there is very good liaison with other agencies. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare. The Breakfast Club and the break time cafeteria ensure that all children have some form of breakfast at the start of the day. Procedures for ensuring a safe working environment are satisfactory. The premises are inspected annually and any issues that arise are resolved with appropriate urgency.

38. The school has developed very good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. These include highly detailed arrangements for tests when they enter school and in the Foundation Stage. A combination of annual tests and less formal arrangements for assessment for pupils throughout the school, ensuring that the achievements of different groups of pupils is monitored by the headteacher, and the results are fed back to teachers for use in planning. Assessment is particularly effective in mathematics, where it covers a broad range of skills within the National Curriculum, and is used very well to plan future work. Arrangements for assessment in English are good, and are used well in planning for pupils aged five to seven. Information from assessment is not always used to a satisfactory standard to plan work in writing for pupils aged seven to eleven. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work in science are good and used to identify points of weakness, but not yet to improve planning. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are very well assessed, and used to devise clear targets on individual education plans. These are based on good collaboration between class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs, are shared with parents and pupils, and regularly reviewed. Pupils with English as an additional language are identified quickly, and their learning needs are effectively assessed, with good collaboration from specialist agencies where this is needed. This very good standard of care enables pupils new to the school to settle quickly and begin to learn.
39. The very good procedures for improving attendance include careful monitoring of rates of attendance and lateness with appropriate follow-up by the school or the Education Welfare Officer. Attendance is promoted strongly by publishing figures in the weekly newsletter to parents and by rewarding the class with the best attendance each week. These procedures are proving very effective and have improved attendance significantly in the past year. In addition the Breakfast Club encourages pupils to arrive early.
40. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good and training all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are carefully in school's approaches. As a result, procedures are consistently applied throughout the school. Rewards include house points and the award of certificates in assembly. Pupils with challenging behaviour are monitored by daily report sheet and are set targets on their individual "Behaviour Promise" sheets. All pupils are involved in agreeing class rules, a copy of which is sent to parents for their endorsement. Playground rules have also discussed and agreed which, results in pupils willingly conforming to rules because they regard them, quite correctly, as their rules. Overall, teachers manage their pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour in a firm but positive way which creates a calm atmosphere in the classroom conducive to learning.
41. The good personal support and guidance pupils receive make a significant contribution to their personal development. Looking after pupils' personal and emotional needs is the responsibility of class teachers who are sensitive to these needs and thus able to provide good personal support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Since the last inspection, and particularly in the last 18 months, the school has taken many positive steps to strengthen its links with parents, which are now good. Most are very supportive of the school but it is taking time for some to move to a position where they can see the value of being actively involved in the life of the school and their children's education. Consequently, the impact of the majority of parents' involvement on the work on the school and in their children's learning is, at present, unsatisfactory.
43. Parents have very positive views about the school. They all feel that their children are achieving well, that teaching is good and the school expects their children to work hard. They feel that the school is well led and managed and all would be comfortable approaching the school with problems. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, excellent weekly newsletters and the governors' annual report. Information to parents about the curriculum is satisfactory. Listing curriculum topics for each year group in the newsletter at the beginning of each term compensates for the very limited curriculum information in the prospectus. The school is aware of the need to improve information to parents about the curriculum and will be starting a series of presentations to parents about specific subjects later this term. Information to parents

about their children's progress is satisfactory overall. Consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms with a further opportunity for consultation after annual reports are issued in the summer term. Annual reports are unsatisfactory because they are inconsistent in the information they give to parents. There are some comments on progress and attitude but few that give any information on what pupils need to do to improve and there are no comments on how well pupils are doing.

44. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and whose children speak English as an additional language are fully informed of their children's learning difficulties and progress. They participate fully in annual reviews. A few parents provide good parental help in classrooms, which is much appreciated by the school and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. There is good parental support on trips and visits. Also, a parent who runs the art club has painted the murals in the school and painted the playground games' markings. Parents support the school through the Parent Teachers' Association, which raises valuable funds for the school and has helped towards forming the 'After School Club'.
45. The school values parents' views and has acted on many of the points raised in a recent questionnaire. Parents are encouraged to attend school masses and celebration assemblies. Increasing numbers are beginning to do so which indicates a gradual strengthening of parental involvement in the school.
46. Arrangements for all children entering the school are good and ensure that all make a happy start to their school life. Home visits are made to all new entrants to the nursery and parents are asked to sign the Home to School agreement. Entrants to the Reception class attend an induction afternoon and parents receive an induction pack. A curriculum evening is also arranged for all parents of reception children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management are good overall and contribute significantly to improved teaching and rising academic standards and standards of behaviour. The headteacher, appointed after the previous inspection, two years ago is having a significant impact on the school improvement. Consequently there have been improvements since that inspection.
48. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He is enthusiastic and committed to improving teaching and raising standards and has the confidence of the parents, governors, pupils and staff. The headteacher, together with the governors and teaching and non-teaching staff has a determined commitment to improving the school's reputation in the area. For example, there have been significant improvements to the pupils' behaviour. The quality of teaching is now good, with significant amounts of very good or better teaching in both key stages. The curriculum has improved and the strong and appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' achievements in English and mathematics has led to the literacy and numeracy strategies being appropriately established. This is largely due to effective training from the local education authority and encouragement and support from the headteacher. This clear educational direction is creating an effective teaching team. The many changes of teacher are due to end when the permanent team starts work in September.
49. There is a strong sense of teamwork from teaching and non-teaching staff and considering the difficulties faced by the school staff morale is high. This means that there is a purposeful and supportive ethos, which permeates the school and has a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The aims are strongly reflected in its everyday at all levels. The school has recently received the Investors In People Award.
50. The governing body fulfils its role well and governors are very supportive of the school. Many assist in the school and this provides helpful insight into the organisation. The chair of governors is a regular and popular visitor and some governors have visited the breakfast club. While they have looked at samples of pupils' work, they are not yet involved in observing teaching. While still rely a great deal on the headteacher, they know what has to be done to raise standards and make further improvements. This shows continued improvements since the previous inspection.
51. Statutory requirements are met. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is knowledgeable and the procedures for identifying and supporting pupils is well managed. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well met by the class teachers, with the support of specialist staff from the local authority. As a result, provision is well targeted to individual pupils' needs and they generally make good progress.
52. Teachers have a satisfactory range of responsibilities, but because of the temporary relief teachers the headteacher has too many responsibilities. Plans are in place to rectify this when the permanent staff is established in September. Roles and responsibilities are clear. The senior management team of the headteacher, his deputy and the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, meet regularly to discuss issues and evaluate the school organisation. They provide effective support for the head and a significant role in securing improvement. Key roles for English, mathematics and science are well established. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are developing. Some of the co-ordinator's roles are not as well established, as they should be because their subjects are not a priority for development.
53. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is very good. An extensive range of practices is in place to monitor standards, achievement and pupils' learning. The headteacher undertakes detailed monitoring of pupils' work by systematically selecting pupils; testing their reading, discussing the progress they are making in their work and agreeing targets for improvement. Class teachers are then given feedback about the tasks planned for pupils and the impact of their teaching on the pupils' work. Consequently, the head and his teachers know pupils and teachers' well. Teachers are given regular feedback on their teaching from the head following observation of lessons. Planning is evaluated and this has had a significant impact on the permanent teachers' lesson plans. Analysis of results by gender, racial heritage and ability helps provide helpful information to formulate the priorities in the school development plan and feedback about the curriculum and pupils' learning. The school development plan is a successful

tool for development. Priorities are appropriate and carefully linked to subject development plans. Time scales are appropriate, although the strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science has limited the time available for important development to the more creative subjects in the curriculum.

54. The school has an adequate number of suitably trained staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. A period of consolidation is planned next term when the permanent staff is established. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are well used to support relief teachers and each other. They share a common purpose to make their work more effective. The three temporary relief teachers, including one teacher who came into school during the inspection at very short notice are appropriately supported enabling them to settle into their roles. Learning support practitioners and the nursery nurses form a strong team with the teachers. This has a considerable impact on their learning. They carry out a range of tasks all of which make good contributions to the progress pupils make. This particularly marked in the nursery and Foundation Stage.
55. The accommodation is adequate and used well to meet the demands of the curriculum. Classrooms are generous in size and nursery provision is very good. Good use is made of displays, particularly in reception, which, together with the attractive murals around the school, creates a stimulating environment conducive to learning. The premises are very well maintained and scrupulously clean. The playgrounds and field provide good facilities for recreation and outdoor physical education in an area that is lacking in safe play spaces.
56. The school has satisfactory resources for teaching and learning and prioritises its spending to enable significant improvements to be made in updating and improving what is available in each subject. Resources for literacy and numeracy are appropriate and are particularly effective in mathematics. There is a good range of musical instruments from around the world and provision for the Foundation Stage is good, including a stimulating range of wheeled toys for the playground. Resources for science have recently been upgraded and, although storage is a problem, they are accessible and well used for experiments. The number of computers and other information and communication technology hardware that the school has is satisfactory and these are sensibly deployed, at present, in the classrooms. The range of software is good but the school does not yet enjoy Internet access for curriculum use. The library is unsatisfactory. It is sited inconveniently and cannot easily be used by more than two or three pupils at a time. The range of books for teaching reading and for early reading is good. However, there is a limited range of reading books beyond the ones in the schemes. Reference books are good and are kept in the classroom. However there are shortages of textbooks, for instance in science, and pupils often have to share.
57. The school makes good use of strategic resources and is efficient and effective in using the budget to raise standards and enhance the learning of all groups of pupils. Specific grants are used very well to raise levels of achievement and improve the quality of education for all pupils concerned. For example, the special educational needs grant is successfully targeted those pupils with additional and complex needs. The grant to boost pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has contributed to the perceptible rise in standards. The environment around the school has been improved and the grant for information and communications technology is carefully planned to improve teachers' subject knowledge and plans are in place for further improvements to the information and communications technology curriculum. Educational priorities are effectively supported through efficient financial planning and carefully linked to spending in the school development plan.
58. Fluctuations in the numbers on roll and a historical over-spend make the budget problematic to manage. A significant over-spend occurred five years ago and, after the previous inspection several families left the school. In addition, the local council's programme of urban renewal and the demolition of large blocks of flats has led to families being re-housed and changing schools. Long term illness and unsettled staffing further compromised the budget. The governors finance committee and headteacher are continually seeking ways of reducing the over-spend and still providing sufficient funds to continue to settle the staffing arrangements and further improve the good quality of education. Financial planning and budgetary control are now good and carefully based on accurate information. New technology is effectively used for finance and administration.

59. The school is applying procedures in management and use of resources to get best value. For example, the headteacher and senior management team analyse test results and track pupils' progress in comparison with similar schools locally and nationally. Groups of parents, staff and pupils are consulted about issues related to improvement. For example, while still below average, attendance rates are improving because of the range of strategies the school devised following consultation and evaluation of procedures. Governors carefully seek ways of obtaining value for money and cost effectiveness on improvements to the school building and site. Administrative procedures are efficient and the school is well organised to enable teachers to concentrate their efforts on the pupils. The quality of education the school provides is good and, although results are still below average and still need to rise further, pupils' confidence and behaviour is much improved and there are clear improvements to their achievement. The school is effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. To improve the effectiveness of the school further the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1. Further raise standards in English mathematics and science, by*
 - i) implementing the new teaching programmes consistently in each class;
 - ii) continuing to refine and review the curriculum to meet the pupils' needs;
 - iii) ensure that the outstanding teaching influences teaching throughout the school enabling the new permanent teaching team to be quickly established.

Paragraphs: 4-11, 79, 81, 85-88, 93.

2. Improve standards in writing and information and communications technology for pupils aged 7 to 11, by:

- i) improving the design of writing tasks and the ways information and communication technology* supports work in all subjects;
- ii) further improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- iii) reducing the proportion of time taken up by copying and exercises;
- iv) improving the consistency and use of assessment, marking and target setting.

Paragraphs: 6, 9, 10, 25, 26, 36, 37, 105, 107.

3. Improve the organisation and use of time, by:

- i) giving more time to investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science, and to creative and imaginative work in all subjects;
- ii) improving the links between reading, writing and mathematics in subjects and work in the literacy and numeracy hours;
- iii) ensuring that each subject receives enough time, and that lessons are of a suitable length.

Paragraphs: 31, 36, 81, 99,

The following minor weaknesses should also be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan

*Develop the library to provide effective support for learning in all subjects. Paragraph 61

Broaden the range of books the pupils are allowed to read. Paragraphs 6, 80

Ensure marking is consistently good throughout the school. Paragraph 33

*Improve the quality of written reports to parents. Paragraph 47

The * shows areas that the school has already identified for development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
18	18	30	30	0	4	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)	26	143
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		86

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	59

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	7	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	10
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (83)	57 (78)	71 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	9	9
	Girls			
	Total	11	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	52 (78)	67 (91)	71 (83)
	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	10	3	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	5	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	7 (48)	38 (72)	38 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (56)	62 (64)	62 (64)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Results have been omitted where the group of pupils is 10 or below.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	34
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	2
Indian	23
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	136
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	20.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	4	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	458636
Total expenditure	457838
Expenditure per pupil	2571
Balance brought forward from previous year	-99206
Balance carried forward to next year	-98408

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	161
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.
 My child is making good progress in school.
 Behaviour in the school is good.
 My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.
 The teaching is good.
 I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.
 I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.
 The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.
 The school works closely with parents.
 The school is well led and managed.
 The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.
 The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
74	21	6	0	0
74	26	0	0	0
53	35	3	0	9
38	47	9	0	6
79	21	0	0	0
59	35	6	0	0
74	26	0	0	0
82	18	0	0	0
59	38	3	0	0
79	21	0	0	0
71	24	3	0	3
53	26	0	3	18

Other issues raised by parents

The parents raised concerns about the many changes of teacher in the school. They are pleased that the school now has a substantive and that the changes are coming to an end. Parents at the meeting were very supportive of the new headteacher and feel that he has made many significant improvements. They feel St Phillips is a good school and that the children are now behaving well. They like the trios and visits that children are able to go on.

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

61. Overall, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has improved since the previous inspection in 1999, with the development of the Early Years Unit under the leadership of the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. The children are generally 3 years old when they start in the nursery. Just over half attend part time in the morning or afternoon and the rest attend full time. They transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old. The very able nursery nurses running the nursery visit every child's home before they start and consequently they know the children and their families well. The current curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong and appropriate emphasis on language and physical development. Exciting practical activities are planned and at least satisfactory and often good teaching enhances the pupils' experiences and ensures that they get a successful start to their schooling. Teaching in the Reception Year is outstanding and as a result the children's achievement is marked. They are very well prepared to start work on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1.
62. Children's attainment on entry to school is well below average and they score poorly on the tests undertaken on entry. They find it very hard to sit and listen and their English language skills are limited by a lack of words to communicate their ideas and feelings. Several children have extreme anti-social behaviour and find it hard to share the adults with other children. The nursery nurses carefully manage bouts of aggressive behaviour. By the time they are four, children's attainment is still below average when they transfer to the Reception class. Their behaviour has improved and over the year in the class they make significant achievement in language and communication. The achievement of children who speak English as an additional language and those with special needs is also marked because work is expertly matched to their particular needs. The excellent teaching means that by the time they are six, a significant proportion is already reaching the national Early Learning Goals in language communication, mathematics development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and their personal, social and emotional development. A small proportion of children is exceeding these goals because they respond very well to the outstanding teaching and high quality activities planned for them. The majority of children are exceeding the goals in physical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. The vast majority of children enter the nursery with under-developed personal and social skills for their age group. They take time to settle into the routines of the nursery. Teaching is good and with consistent and calm management and well-established routines the pupils are on-course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. By the time some of them leave the nursery this summer they will still need support but they are confident and already familiar with the teacher. Children in the Reception class have had consistently positive attention because the teaching is excellent. Guidelines are clear and the teacher and the classroom assistant both encourage them to be confident about what they can achieve. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage this summer, the vast majority will have reached the Early Learning Goals and made good achievement over the year. They are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
64. Children in the nursery and reception work and play happily together, responding very well to each other because the nursery nurses, teacher and assistants act as very good role models for them. While in the nursery the pupils are unsettled after a holiday and take a long time to sit and listen, by the time they are in the Reception class they sit quietly and listen attentively to the teacher. The vast majority of the children are happy to settle down to work and play. In the nursery they enjoy playing with the adults and despite finding it hard to share some of the special equipment they work along side each other well. The children in the reception class enjoy question and answer sessions. They know how to organise their work and help each other out with their work. In one excellent numeracy session the teacher was very ably helping children to remember number facts children were excitedly telling each other the

answers. Their contributions are valued and all the adults make learning fun, consequently pupils are confident and happy.

65. Across the Foundation Stage adults have high expectations of behaviour and clear rules are established. Consequently, behaviour in the nursery is generally good and the occasional outbursts are usually the result of frustration rather than deliberate misbehaviour. Children dress and undress themselves sensibly and take out and put away equipment when they have finished using it. They organise what they would like to do and move sensibly from activity to activity after periods of sustained concentration. The nursery nurses manage the children very well. By the time they reach the Reception class the children behave very well. They know when they must be quiet and when to chat. They respond quickly to the teacher's request for quiet. As a result, children are very interested in what they are doing and enjoy their time in school.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children in the nursery enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They know where the cover of the book is and that it is where the story starts. They took great delight in the story of the Octopus and her babies. One child carefully counted the Octopus's eight legs seriously explaining that one leg was wrapped round a baby as she read the picture. Children are keen to talk to adults and the nursery nurses are skilful at asking questions and using a good range of vocabulary to help the children learn new words. They are making lively marks on paper and some trace carefully over the letters written for them. A small number of examples of writing show that children know that letters are grouped into a word. Children who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language are steadily acquiring spoken English and understand what is being said to them. They achieve well over the year in the nursery and are ready to learn more, by the time they reach the Reception class.
67. In the Reception class the love for stories develops further. Children enjoy picking out rhyming words in 'This is the Story of the Bear'. They know what an author and an illustrator does because the teacher places a strong emphasis on children's knowledge of books. They practice reading as a class and 50 percent of the pupils are reading most of the words with great enthusiasm. Teaching is very good and this helps the children to try out their new learning. A good example was when they were looking at reading with more expression. Some children quickly grasped the idea that the exclamation mark meant they should emphasise the word. They know the sounds some letters make and this helps them to read new words. Their achievement in writing is good. From marks on paper to well-phrased sentences with good use of capital letters and full stops for the most able. Children with average attainment are spelling simple words correctly and writing stories with more than one sentence but several children still need support from the teacher but are confident to write organised marks on paper that they read back to the teacher. Children who speak English as an additional language are learning English quickly and are recognising a broad range of words because support is good. Some children have significant special educational needs and are given very good support and are achieving well. The teacher asks carefully frames questions to help them practise their spoken language. Overall, by the time they leave the Reception class the majority will meet most of the Early Learning Goals for reading and writing but some pupils' communication skills are still below average.

Mathematical development

68. Throughout the day the teacher, nursery nurses and classroom assistants include numbers in their activities. In the nursery, children count up to 10 happily with the help of an adult. When working on a model of an Octopus one group carefully counted eight legs. They enjoy playing with shapes and several pupils recognise a square and a circle because the nursery nurses are careful to use the language of mathematics with them. They challenge the children to recognise whether an object is bigger or smaller or to stand in front or behind. The children happily sing number rhymes and carefully match the pieces of a jigsaw together. They are well prepared for the Reception class.
69. Children in Reception are able mathematicians because the teaching is excellent and gives them confidence to play with and learn numbers. A strong emphasis on visualising numbers

when calculating in their heads helps them develop effective skills of mental calculation. They are learning at a good rate and many count as a class in 10s, 100s and several loved counting in 1000s and 1000, 000s. The teacher and assistant make learning fun and consequently pupils learn quickly and concentrate effectively to answer puzzles about recognising the properties of shapes. There is a spontaneous joy in learning numbers in this class and great celebration when a child with special educational needs discovered she could count to nine. With delight she kept repeating her new skills. A child who speaks English as an additional language could calculate in his head and complete missing numbers in a number line. All the children in his class enjoyed his success. The most able children know that 8 is more than 7 and 27 more than 20. Two thirds of the group know how to count the coins in a purse up to 10 pence and complete a number square up to 40. This excellent model of teaching has a significant impact on children's learning and confidence in mathematics, enabling several to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. Several children are already working within the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. This is an area where children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals and several children will exceed them. In the nursery children enjoy playing with shells and have been looking at the seaside as part of their topic work. A good range of interesting activities is planned to capture their interest in the world around them. For example, they squealed with delight when discovering a lobster and shells buried in the sand. They make careful choices when designing an octopus and know that it lives deep in the sea. The nursery nurse helps children from different groups with careful questioning to describe the materials around the room and to extend their language skills by describing the models they are making. Children enjoy using the computer and carefully manage the mouse to move things around the screen.
71. In the Reception class, the children participate in a broad range of tasks to help them understand the world they live in and to broaden out their experience. For example, in one outstanding food technology lesson the room was buzzing as the children designed and made sandwiches. They made careful choices from white or brown bread. All the helpers were very well prepared to ask the pupils questions about their creations. The teacher very skilfully led the pupils to understand and use terms such as sweet and savoury. Great excitement resulted in the discovery of honey; many of them had never tasted it before. They described and then tested their mixtures, such as chocolate spread and cheese and jam and cucumber. Children are gaining an understanding of the past, by looking at old toys. They make sensible comparisons with their own toys. When questioning the school secretary about her very old Teddy Bear the pupils were enthralled by the story and gazed in utter amazement to hear that Father Christmas used to sew the bear's head back on safely each Christmas. The children handed each other's bears very carefully and listened respectfully to each other's explanations and descriptions. Computers are used to support learning and children use the mouse to open and close programs. Children were fascinated to look at a range of technology and discuss how artefacts such as the telephone, keyboard, a torch would work. Teaching is excellent and ensures that children experience a broad range of positive and exciting activities.

Physical development

72. This is an area where the pupils are exceeding the Early Learning Goals. A good range of physical activities is planned for the children in the hall and the large outdoor play area. Although only the nursery was observed in the hall, the children were confident using the apparatus, climbing nimbly up the wall bars and jumping off the large table. They could turn over on a single bar and many could roll forward and back with reasonable control. One child who is at a very early stage of English acquisition and who refused to change his clothes to participate in the lesson, suddenly sprang on to the mats and delighted everyone with a near perfect forward roll. The nursery nurse skilfully encouraged him to take part but to no avail. Children are helped to share the equipment and show what they have mastered at the end of each session. Teaching is good. The children in Reception run, jump and skip confidently in the play area. They throw and catch balls reasonably accurately. The teacher and classroom assistant successfully teach skills such as threading, tying laces and working with small

apparatus to make models. A very good range of resources, including large and small-wheeled toys is available to the children.

Creative development

73. A good range of creative activities is planned to help the children to develop their creative skills. In the nursery children paint enthusiastically describing the colours they are using. Again, skilful question helps them to use words to describe what they are doing. They are proud of their patterns and pictures and the models they make. They enjoy role-play and slip easily into different roles when lively play ensues. Sometimes the play becomes erratic and adults intervene. Although no creative work was observed in the Reception class because of the complexity of the timetable, exciting paintings are displayed and models show a careful concentration and effort. Pupils draw well to illustrate their work and they achieve well over the year as their drawing improves. They share out roles in the role-play area and quickly organise the stories of their play, recounting what each person must do. They sing happily and enjoy listening to music. Children keep time when accompanying a song with percussion instruments. Children will meet the Early Learning Goals

ENGLISH

74. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and very low in writing, which put them in the bottom five percent of schools nationally. Results did not compare favourably with similar schools. Eleven-year-olds in 2000 reached below-average standards in national tests for English when compared to schools nationally. Results were high in comparison to schools in similar contexts. Standards during the inspection were similar. There has been little change in standards since the last inspection in 1999. However, the school's task of raising standards in English is made extremely difficult by its very high turnover of pupils, most of who join the school with very limited skills in all aspects of the subject. Despite their very good start in the nursery and reception class, most pupils begin work on the National Curriculum with very low standards for their age. Overall, achievement in English is satisfactory, though pupils are achieving more in speaking and listening and in reading than they are in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are learning effectively and their achievement is good.

75. Pupils aged five to seven achieve very well in speaking and listening in response to carefully thought-out teaching. They learn to listen to the teacher and to each other, to take turns when speaking, and to give relevant answers to questions. Teachers have great skill in phrasing questions and explanations to enable pupils to understand their work clearly, and focus their attention on it. Examples during the inspection included exceptionally good explanation to lower-attaining pupils in the early stages of learning to count, and a very clear introduction to map work. Teachers take care to include all pupils in discussions, including those who are not confident speakers and this builds confidence. Teachers read aloud well when sharing books with pupils, engaging their interest and developing their enjoyment of books. Pupils aged seven to eleven continue to develop their speaking and listening skills at a good overall rate, though they had too few opportunities to speak during the inspection in one class, which had a high turnover of teachers. In the most successful lessons, teachers take great care to build pupils' knowledge and understanding of new words, and use discussion well to build vocabulary for pupils to use in their writing. As a result, pupils are eager to learn, and are interested in discussing their work with visitors. While standards remain below average, a good basis is laid for future progress, particularly as pupils move on to secondary school.

76. Younger pupils aged five to seven learn the most common connections between sounds and letters, and begin to apply these in their reading of stories and poems. This work continues as children approach seven, but the standards reached by the lowest-attaining pupils remain stubbornly low; in the most severe cases, seven-year-olds do not know the difference between letters and words. Learning during the inspection was most effective among 5 and 6 year-olds. The learning of 7 year-olds had suffered from a high turnover of teachers. Overall, the quality of learning for pupils in this age range is satisfactory in view of the difficulties they face. Pupils aged 8 to 11 make steady achievement in reading, and very few are still in the early stages of learning to read by the time they move on to secondary school. They develop good

skills in supporting points they make in discussion by referring to text, and reach standards that are only a little below average in comprehension. However, the development of independent reading is limited by the lack of non-fiction books in the library, and by the school's practice of restricting their choice of books until they have completed its reading scheme.

77. Pupils' standards in writing are lower than in other aspects of English when they start work on the National Curriculum, and this pattern is still in place at seven and eleven. The learning of the youngest pupils is good, and is carefully fostered by teaching, which assesses development in great detail. However, many have difficulty in controlling their pencil and in spacing words and a significant proportion are not writing independently by the time they are seven. Pupils' learning in writing is particularly severely affected by interruptions to their education, and in one class poor teaching was giving pupils too few opportunities to compose their own text. While learning was good in some lessons during the inspection, for example in accounts of the experience of bombing during the Second World War in Year 4, the balance of written work for pupils aged seven to eleven is too heavily weighted towards exercises and grammatical notes. This gives them too few opportunities to develop and practise their skills and they do not achieve as well in writing than in speaking and listening.
78. Teaching during the inspection was good in three fifths of lessons, half of which were of very good quality. However, there was poor teaching in one class, and analysis of pupils' work showed longer-term weaknesses in the teaching of writing for pupils aged 7 to 11. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Very good teaching during the inspection was concentrated in work for five- and six-year-olds and for pupils about to move on to secondary school. Teachers manage these classes very well, fostering good relationships and an interest in learning, and developing pupils' skills carefully through close assessment of their progress and learning needs. Across the school, teaching is very good in speaking and listening, and satisfactory in reading and writing. While there is good teaching of reading and writing in some classes, in others teachers do not make full use of the range of teaching methods set out in the National Literacy Strategy, and pupils are not encouraged to read widely enough. While sound examples of writing in other subjects exists, the teaching of writing suffers from a lack of co-ordination between written work in English and writing for learning in other subjects, where pupils are sometimes asked to copy text that they do not understand. Marking is very effective in improving the work of the youngest pupils. In most other classes, work is marked regularly, but targets set for improvements are not followed up. The use of homework, chiefly through regular reading, is satisfactory. Where the teaching was poor, in a class which had had a high turnover of teachers, work was poorly matched to the range of learning needs in the class, and did not enable any of the pupils to development their reading and writing skills as the teacher intended.
79. The management of English is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good knowledge and understanding of the subject and has carried out an audit of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The school has a sound action plan for raising standards in English and a draft policy for developing the library, though neither of these is focussed closely enough on the points of weakness identified in the inspection. There are good procedures for tracking pupils' progress in English from year to year, including samples of work and voluntary national tests. However, only in classes where the teaching is very good is information from these used to plan programmes of work. The school identifies the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language quickly and effectively, setting good targets for learning and making good use of support from specialist teachers from outside the school. There are good resources for the early stages of teaching reading, but the range of literature is too narrow, and this limits the contribution of English to pupils' cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

80. Results in mathematics in national tests for seven year-olds were well below the national average but similar to the results of schools with children from the same background. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than average Level 3 compared favourably to similar schools. The results of eleven year olds were well below the national average and they did not perform as well as pupils in similar schools. While the percentage of pupils reaching

average levels in mathematics is in the bottom five percent of the country, the proportion reaching higher than average Level 5 was above the average of similar schools. From these results it would appear that pupils make very little progress as they move through the school. The small numbers of pupils taking the test makes these results unreliable. Several changes of temporary relief teacher over the last two years has led to disruptions in improving the mathematics curriculum; the high turnover of pupils particularly between Key Stage 1 makes the school's task in raising standards extremely difficult. Pupils who join the school tend to have low mathematical standards for their age. Overall achievement in mathematics is good because teaching is becoming consistently focussed to meet the needs of the pupils and help them improve their skills. This enables pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Consequently, standards during the inspection were slightly better in number and algebra than last year's results and, although still below average, are improving because new programmes of work are beginning to have an impact, teaching is good and pupils are well supported in lessons.

81. Despite a good start to their schooling, the current 7 year-olds left the Foundation Stage with mathematics skills that were below average. Standards are slightly better than those identified by the previous inspection. Pupils achieved appropriately but, while vast majority of the current Year 2 displays a reasonable understanding of the four rules of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division, standards are below average. They know the numbers that build up to ten and struggle with strategies such as consider 10-1 when adding 9. In one lesson, pupils were working hard to complete a square of numbers up to 100. Two out of the three groups managed the numbers reasonably accurately. One child clearly applied what she had learned when realising she could work more quickly if she calculated multiples of 10. Pupils name shapes and use standard and non-standard measures. They count coins and calculate change from 50 pence with reasonable accuracy. Good teaching in Year 1 assures good achievement and that pupils enthusiastically tackle their work. Achievement slows to sound across Year 2 as a third of the current pupils have not been in the school since they were six. Pupils with special educational needs, travellers and pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in mathematics and consequently their achievement is good.
82. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils a significant proportion of pupils are reaching standards close to average. They show a good understanding of fractions as a proportion and relate that to percentages with reasonable accuracy. A significant proportion uses a good range of strategies for long multiplication. They show an understanding of the mean and median of a sequence of numbers. From Year 3, most pupils recognise the names of three-dimensional shapes. Eleven year-olds were studying angles and their achievement was good because teaching was excellent. It gave pupils access to learning, enabling them to apply what they had learned. Two thirds of the class measured angles accurately using a protractor because the teacher skilfully identified what they needed to learn. Pupils are comfortable working in large numbers and enjoyed a brisk banter during a quick-fire mental calculation session. While achievement slows in Year 5 because of the disruption of different teachers who do not know the pupils, in other classes pupils of all abilities, social background, special educational needs and ethnic heritage achieve well because work is designed specifically for them. Pupils across the key stage are building upon what they have previously learned relating to number and algebra, shapes and measures, and, when given an opportunity, they solve mathematical problems. Standards have risen perceptibly since the previous inspection and are well placed to rise further.
83. Pupils' numeracy skills are generally sound. While they undertake surveys of pets, traffic and weather and know that graphs are a pictorial representation of the data, links between mathematics and other subjects such as information and communications technology are not used enough for them to collect data, create and interrogate a range of graphical representations. Likewise links between mathematics and art and design, physical education and geography for example are not purposefully developed. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen and willing to answer questions, listening carefully to their teachers and each other. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and pupils have benefited from the intensive support of a local education authority numeracy team. Sometimes lessons are too long but planning is effective and lessons are conducted at a lively

pace. More could be done to help pupils evaluate what they need to learn next at the end of lessons in addition to teachers checking that pupils have achieved the objectives.

84. Overall, teaching is good with some outstanding teaching in Years 1 and 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers carefully share the main objectives with pupils and most start their lessons with a brisk oral and mental session. Appropriate mathematical language is used throughout the school, which helps the pupils to extend their vocabularies. A wide range of open and closed questions stimulates pupils' thinking. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them explain new ideas to pupils in sufficient detail and from a number of view points. A good example of this was in Year 6 in a series of lessons planned to improve the pupils' knowledge about angles and raise standards of measurement in degrees. The teaching was excellent and several strategies were used to help all pupils in the class have a better understanding. Pupils quickly grasped the idea and quickly learned the names of the angles and became successful in estimating the number of degrees an angle was likely to be. They were excited when they discovered easy ways of calculating by using their common sense.
85. Pupils work hard and concentrate effectively in mathematics lessons to advance their understanding. They are confident learners and willing to have a try at working out number problems in their heads. Resources are used effectively to support learning. The most able pupils are successfully challenged by work planned to stretch their thinking. In Year 1 excellent teaching was observed when pupils were very effectively managed after being restless and unsettled after the half term break. The teacher organised the lesson very well and captured the pupils' imaginations about adding three amounts of money using a range of techniques.
86. Homework is set but there are limitations because some pupils do not have supportive working conditions at home. Assessment is very good and effectively used to plan the next stages of teaching and learning. The analysis of test results points to areas that the pupils need to learn. Information from assessment is carefully used to judge progress and set targets but is not yet used to provide teachers with information to help them improve teaching and learning. Marking is generally satisfactory and there are excellent examples where mathematics is marked in ways that is very helpful to pupils. However, some work is unmarked or just ticked.
87. The new subject leader has been in post for a year and has a good idea of what the school needs to do to improve, through careful monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and pupils' work. She is an excellent mathematics teacher and provides a challenging role model for others. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. New teaching programmes have not yet had time to have an impact on mathematics throughout the school but there are signs of improvement in some classes. Appropriate plans are in place for developments to continue to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

88. The results of the 2000 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, show that the attainment of 7 year-olds was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or higher was below average. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher than average Level 3 was well above average. While the higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 did well in the knowledge of science, they were much weaker in the experimental and investigative aspects. Results of 11 year-olds in 2000 were very low compared with schools nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. Pupils also performed poorly with respect to their prior attainment. The boys' attainment was higher than the girls' attainment although, with only three girls in the year group, this is not a significant result. Over the last 4 years, attainment has been below average for both boys and girls. One of the difficulties faced by the school is the high turnover of pupils, which affects the pupils' attainment. Nearly half the pupils were not in the school for their Key Stage 1 tests.
89. Although standards are still below average, they are now higher than those identified by the previous inspection at the end of both Key Stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, a greater proportion of 7 year olds are reaching expected levels but only a small proportion are reaching the higher level. Pupils are observant and watch experiments with interest and involvement. Most can record their observations effectively in words and pictures, discussing their findings and making comparisons. Although their limited language skills inhibit the full extent of their learning. In Year 1, pupils use a simple computer program to enter data they have collected and display the results in a chart. In one lively lesson on forces, Year 2 pupils explained why a steeper slope would make the car go faster and made predictions on how far it would travel. Pupils' work shows that from an experiment pupils discovered what habitats suited different creatures. They were able to record their observations in simple tables. Few pupils can record these experiments fully in their own words because of limited writing skills: many pupils are simply writing text the teacher provided. There is no evidence to show that pupils can obtain information from books and few can offer suggestions for making improvements to their work.
90. Again, by the end of Key Stage 2, an average proportion of 11 year olds are now reaching the expected level and their achievement is good. Only a small proportion is reaching the higher Level 5. Their knowledge across a wide range of scientific topics is average overall. There is no significant variation in standards of attainment between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. By the time they leave school, pupils confidently discuss how forces affect a person pedalling a bicycle, how flowers reproduce or how to separate a mixture of salt and sand. They conduct fair tests, taking careful measurements and drawing appropriate conclusions from the results. Pupils are not able to talk about how particular scientists made discoveries in the areas that they are studying. They also have difficulty in devising theories of their own and saying how they might do experiments to test them.
91. After a very good start in the reception year, pupils' achievements are good at both Key Stages. This is because the majority of teaching is good and never less than satisfactory at both Key Stages, and because the pupils are keen to learn and work hard. The ethos of the school involves pupils in a lively and stimulating environment in which knowledge is valued. The best teaching provides pupils with an opportunity to work at a challenging level, at a good pace, and to make discoveries with a sense of wonder and excitement. Teachers take care to include all pupils fully in the lessons, whatever their gender, background or level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are given careful support and their achievement is also good. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged when they join the school at times other than the beginning of the Key Stage, or when the pupils' education is disrupted by changes of relief teacher. National Curriculum science is covered thoroughly and teachers use their knowledge of the attainment of each pupil to help them consolidate and extend their understanding. This is done through careful questioning and well-focussed activities. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were excited to discover how their seeds had developed during the holidays and were taught the skills needed to measure and compare the different results. Teachers are less successful at introducing the pupils to the idea of devising their own theories and conducting their own experiments or investigations

independently, which the older or higher attaining pupils should be able to do. Too much writing is copied at both key stages with not enough recording in the pupils' own words. Whilst teachers always plan and manage the lessons very carefully, too often classes are directed and controlled by the teacher with pupils sitting and listening. For example, in Year 5, pupils studied the reproduction of flowering plants, without actually examining or comparing real flowers. Pupils are very well behaved and attentive but have limited freedom to consolidate or broaden their understanding in books or at the computer.

92. The headteacher is the temporary co-ordinator of science and has made a good start to carrying out the action recommended by the previous report. The school has adopted an appropriate scheme of work, which fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning carefully, and uses this information, along with data from the good assessment procedures, to provide targets for development as well as for attainment. He has improved resources and provided training for teachers, making good use of the support provided by the Local Education Authority, and the permanent teachers have a good idea of what needs to be achieved. Despite difficulties, the school has worked hard to achieve a good improvement since the previous inspection and is well placed to produce further improvements in the future.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

93. In both subjects, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 is average and at Key Stage 2 it is below average. By the end of Key Stage 1 the 7 year-olds are able to express their ideas and observations using a variety of media such as paint, pencil and clay. They are developing the skills to design and make images and artefacts. In art, they make interesting collages of the building works going on outside the school and used the scanned images of these to make posters on the computer. In design and technology they carefully design and make models of playground equipment with a variety of materials and joining methods. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not effectively developed. Sketchbooks are untidy and do not show the pupils' progress, consisting mainly of pencil sketches. They are not valued by the pupils and in one lesson, only about half the pupils used them. In design and technology, pupils draw the objects they wish to make, with labels. Higher attaining pupils make alternative suggestions for designs. In Year 3, pupils make accurate lists of instructions for making toast. In art, pupils in Year 6 create paintings and detailed drawings and talk about the style of painters such as Picasso or Van Gogh. Higher attaining pupils have an understanding of how perspective can be used to enhance their work. There is little evidence to suggest that pupils learn how to evaluate and improve their designs. When questioned, pupils in Year 6 said that they had never dismantled everyday objects to find out how they work.
94. No teaching was seen at either key stage in design and technology or at Key Stage 1 in art. Therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. Two art lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, where teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. After a very good start in reception, pupils' achievements in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory in both subjects but at Key Stage 2, they are unsatisfactory. In talking to pupils and teachers, scrutinising work books and examining displays, the evidence suggests that teachers lack the expertise and experience to implement the schemes of work, based on national guidelines, which have recently been adopted. In a Year 6 art lesson, for example the teacher discussed with the pupils a wide range of concepts pertaining to visual representation in pictures. Not only was it unclear whether this was revision or new knowledge, far too much ground was covered and pupils were unsure what they were supposed to be learning, particularly when it came to the drawing exercises. These were very challenging and lasted for only a small proportion of the lesson.
95. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment in design and technology have improved at Key Stage 1 but not at Key Stage 2. In art and design, standards of attainment have been maintained at Key Stage 1, but declined at Key Stage 2. Whilst the policies have been re-drafted and the new National Curriculum guidelines incorporated into the schemes of work, little has changed in the delivery of art and design and design and technology since the last inspection. The delivery of these subjects is organised by a single co-ordinator. She has had recent in-service training and her own skills and knowledge are sound. However, because of

the strong emphasis on English and mathematics these more creative subjects have not been given the attention they require to improve teaching and learning. Skills and knowledge and good practice in teaching are not sufficiently shared across the staff to raise standards. There is insufficient guidance for teachers on how to develop lessons, based on the schemes of work. A selection of annotated examples of pupils' work, with exemplars from national guidelines, would help teachers know what pupils should be capable of at each level. Resources for the delivery of art are unsatisfactory. In one lesson, pupils used reference books from the class library to take outside as drawing boards.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Too few lessons too place in geography to make a secure judgement about teaching but from analysis of pupils' work and talking to them about what they know and understand, standards are broadly average. Geography was not inspected during the last inspection in 1999 but standards have been maintained since the inspection in 1996 and standards reached by the most able have improved. By the end of Key Stage 1, seven year-olds find cities on a map of the United Kingdom. Quickly found Manchester and Birmingham. They have a developing knowledge of the colour conventions on maps and the points of the compass. Pupils are developing and understanding of their own locality and in Year 1 pupils could identify features in their area that helps to keep them safe such as yellow lines on the road, Zebra crossings and traffic lights.
97. The sound standards in Key Stage 1 are carried through to Key Stage 2 and in their final year, 11 year-olds recall the study of life in India and the features of the Indian village in contrast to their own local area. Pupils understand how to use co-ordinates to find places on a map and have views about environmental issues such as water conservation and improvements to Smethwick. Standards are average and pupils understand current developments. A good example, of this is the excitement about the impact of the demolition of the large block of flats near the school. They understand what makes their area safe to play and live and know that employment is a significant feature in urban renewal. Overall, pupils' achievement is sound. Sometimes the pupils' weak speaking skills inhibit their learning when they cannot find the words to describe their ideas but teachers worked hard to provide technical geographical language in the few lessons observed and this helps pupils learn new words. Pupils with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language enjoy what they are learning and are well supported enabling their achievement in geography to be sound.
98. The current work on mountains in Year 6 is capturing the pupils' interest. A good example of geography teaching was observed in one lesson at the start of a study of rocks and mountains. Their teacher prepared them very well for a visit from a local mountaineer. Carefully crafted questions from the teacher and the visitor encouraged the pupils to recall knowledge that they had acquired. Several in the class knew the names of mountain ranges in England and took great delight when one pupil could name the highest mountain in England. They were enthralled by the slides of mountains across the world and handled the climbing equipment with great interest trying to guess how each item would be used. They sensitively discussed the lives of Sherpas and cultural traditions of the people who live near Mount Everest. They shared the sadness of the fatal accident on the expedition and that posed serious questions about why the mountaineer would put his life in danger. The quality of learning in this lesson was excellent because pupils listened very carefully, asked pertinent questions to acquire new knowledge and applied the skills they had previously learned.
99. The provision for geography is satisfactory and a broad range of activities is planned to enhance the pupils' learning. With the current focus on raising standards in English and mathematics, geography is not yet an area for development. Reading and writing skills, particularly note taking are practised in geography but the links with the rest of the curriculum are not as systematically developed as they could be. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of visits to the local area and further afield. The role of co-ordinator is new and is not yet well developed. The co-ordinator is developing strategies to help her know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Appropriate plans are in place to extend the role.

HISTORY

100. Standards reached by 11 years old at the end of Key Stage 2, are below average. In discussion, pupils showed broadly average understanding of the topic on Ancient Greece they had studied most recently but had very little recall of any other work. They knew a little about the damage done by Hitler, but otherwise had little knowledge and understanding of the Second World War, and often placed historical figures in the wrong period. The quality of their writing was well below average, with some copying, and the subject is not making the contribution it should to the development of literacy skills. There was too little evidence to judge standards reached by 7 year olds. At the time of the last inspection, standards in history at seven and eleven were broadly average. The current standards reached by eleven-year-olds therefore represent a decline, chiefly caused by the very limited allocation of time to the subject and to a lack of co-ordination in the school's work. Pupils are achieving significantly less than they should be.
101. Too few lessons took place during the inspection, but the sample of pupils' work showed good progress in writing in one class only. Most pupils had written little about the history they had studied, and some younger pupils had copied work that they could not understand. In the single lesson that took place, nine-year-olds made very good progress in work on bombing during the Second World War. They showed good grasp of detail, and wrote good accounts of the experience from a personal viewpoint. Pupils with special educational needs learned well in this lesson, and were developing moral views on the issues involved in bombing, though they found it difficult to express these clearly because of limited speaking and listening skills. Teaching in this lesson was based on very detailed knowledge of the period, and much was expected of the pupils.
102. While the quality of teaching is, on the available evidence, satisfactory overall, but the quality of learning is compromised by barely adequate time spent on history. The subject is not well co-ordinated. The curriculum map for history lists topics to be covered, but provides no additional support for teachers, and does not enable the school to track progress, or to take advantage of the opportunities which history offers for developing reading and writing skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards in information and communication technology for 7 year olds are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and achievement is good. Standards are below average for 11 year olds, where achievement slows. By the time they are 7, pupils use a computer to make pictures, write text, draw a block graph and explore aspects of maths and English. They also enter a simple sequence of commands to control a floor robot. Higher attaining pupils can say how they used a word processor to combine digitised images and fancy lettering to make a poster. These skills are not significantly extended between age 7 and 11. By the time they leave the school, pupils know how to format text in different styles to represent their poems and to collect data for a traffic survey, producing a pie chart from their results. Some pupils can extract text and pictures from a CD-ROM or the World Wide Web. Pupils do not learn how a simple spreadsheet can help them solve practical problems in, for example, maths or design technology. While pupils carefully describe how to control the robot, they do not know how to program the computer to control other models or to explore models to identify patterns and relationships.
104. Seven year-old pupils' achievements are good because teachers ensure that they have adequate opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning in different areas of the curriculum. Pupils are shown how technology plays an important part in their lives as well as learning computer basics effectively. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory and little teaching took place. At Key Stage 2 achievements are unsatisfactory, as they still do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding needed. By the time they are 11, the higher attaining pupils should be deciding for themselves where a computer could be used to solve a problem or provide some useful information, but this is not happening.
105. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in information and communication technology at either key stage, as very little took place during the inspection. However, it is clear that where teachers plan work in other subjects such as English or mathematics to include the use of computers or other forms of information and communication technology, the pupils are learning appropriate skills and understanding. This

is not well established in each class. All teachers have access to at least two computers for classroom use and need to develop strategies to make the best use of them. During the inspection, computers were only observed in use in Reception and Year 1 classes. Teachers use classroom displays effectively to show pupils' achievements but do not use formal marking or assessment to determine pupils' progress and attainment.

106. The headteacher is the temporary co-ordinator for information and communication technology and has established a clear vision for improvement. The school has spent money wisely, including special grants, in the purchase and deployment of new equipment. The school makes good use of the computer facilities available at the local football club. A new, specialist teacher will begin next term and sponsorship has been secured which should provide the school with the space and resources it needs. Whilst the teachers have received training in the use of new technology, they still need further help and guidance to make best use of information and communication technology to improve pupils' levels of attainment. Appropriate plans are in place to secure this improvement. The school has consolidated its work since the last inspection and made satisfactory improvements.

MUSIC

107. There was too little evidence to judge standards in music for 7 year-olds, though learning in a lesson for six-year-olds in Year 1 was satisfactory. Standards at eleven are broadly average, and pupils sing well in assemblies. The small number of pupils following instrumental music lessons learns very effectively, and reaches above average standards for their age. Pupils are achieving the standards they should be, and the school has maintained the satisfactory standards in the subject recorded during the last inspection.
108. The quality of teaching in music lessons is satisfactory and some good teaching was observed. Instrumental teaching is very good. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, and plan lessons well, with an interesting range of activities for pupils that covers the full range of the National Curriculum, including suitable opportunities for reflection. Teachers explain technical terms well, and older pupils develop sound skills in reading music and in singing in parts. They study a good range of styles and music from a broad range of cultural backgrounds. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, repetition in the work causes pupils' concentration to lapse towards the end of the lesson.
109. Music is effectively co-ordinated, and teachers' skills were being successfully developed at the time of the inspection through co-operation with an advisory teacher from the local authority. The range of resources is satisfactory, and includes a good range of African instruments, but there is little use of new technology in teaching music. Woodwind lessons are planned and taught to a good standard. They are finely tuned to each pupil's needs and make maximum use of the short time available to each group. As a result pupils learn quickly, and soon reach standards above average for their age.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Too few lessons were observed during the inspection to make a secure judgement about standards and the quality of teaching. However, in the two lessons observed teaching was very good consequently pupils achieved well and reached sound standards in swimming in Year 6 and games in Year 1. The full range of the physical education curriculum is taught. Swimming is well organised and planned. Pupils are reaching a sound level of competence and are confident in the water. In discussion with pupils, they have a strong sense of fairness and are developing an understanding of how to be part of a team. They are proud of their achievements in a swimming tournament and explained that although they were not the fastest they enjoyed taking part.
111. Pupils have appropriate amounts of time for physical activities and the school does much to provided opportunities for them, successfully compensating for the restricted accommodation for those who live in flats or homes with no gardens or safe play areas. Physical education is undergoing a period of significant development through the school's participation in a national project with other local Catholic schools in the area. A specialist tutor will be starting work in the school to enhance the teachers' subject knowledge in areas such as gymnastics and dance.
112. Physical education is well resourced and the school field is an appropriate size for athletics and team sports. A good range of sporting activities enhances the curriculum including orienteering, cross-country around the school site, badminton and athletics. Pupils have the opportunity of working with local professional footballers and are also working towards athletics awards. The provision has improved since the inspection in 1996. Pupils are now taking part in sporting events in the local area.