

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOP ELLIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

THURMASTON

LEA area: LEICESTER

Unique reference number: 120218

Headteacher: Mr. Ben Whelan

Reporting inspector: Jennie Willcock-Bates
1967

Dates of inspection: 26-30 June 2000

Inspection number: 189193

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Catholic
Age range of pupils:	4-11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barkby Thorpe Lane Thurmaston Leicester
Postcode:	LE4 8GP
Telephone number:	0116 2695510
Fax number:	0116 2697479
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Jo Fagan
Date of previous inspection:	10-13 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jennie Willcock-Bates	Registered inspector	Music, Areas of Learning for Children Under Five	What sort of school is it?; School's results and achievements; Teaching; Management and Leadership
Tony Comer	Lay inspector		Attendance; Personal development; Welfare support and guidance; Links with parents; Use of Strategic resources
Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	English, Art, Design and Technology, Equal opportunities, English as an Additional Language	Assessment
Paul Whittaker	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information Technology, Geography, Special Educational Needs	Opportunities for Learning
David Owen	Team inspector	Science, History, Physical Education	Staffing accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was: Quality Assurance Consultants

Quality Assurance Consultants
 The Hucclecote Centre
 Churchdown Lane
 Hucclecote
 Gloucester
 GL3 3QN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 – 9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10 – 13
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 – 15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15 – 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17 – 18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18 – 20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22 – 25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26 – 38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishop Ellis is a Catholic primary school with 342 pupils on roll between the ages of 4-11 years old. There are more boys than girls, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The pupils are bussed in from villages in three parishes around the village of Thurmaston. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Pupils enter one of the two reception classes at the beginning of the term in which they are five years old and sixteen pupils started this term as four year olds. The pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. Fourteen pupils represent other than white ethnic backgrounds. One per cent speak English as an additional language, which is slightly higher than schools nationally. However, they are bilingual and only three are at an early stage of English acquisition in reading and writing. Eighteen per cent of the pupils are identified as needing additional support with their learning or behaviour and two per cent have statements of need, which is broadly in line with the national average. As the numbers in each year group are uneven, pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes in Key Stage 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bishop Ellis Catholic primary school is a lively, friendly school that achieves standards that are above the national average and often higher. Pupils are very interested and involved in activities and the quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall and consequently pupils are learning well. The school has developed a very good quality and range of learning opportunities that benefit all pupils. Arrangements for the care of pupils are very good and parents are very well informed about their child's progress. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The governors, headteacher and staff work effectively as a team to improve standards and meet the stated aims. The school has an average income and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach above average standards in mathematics across the school and in writing, science, information and communication technology and music in Key Stage 2.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good and the pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is consistently good and pupils are very well managed, enabling them to benefit fully from the broad range of learning opportunities.
- Relationships are very good and consequently the pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners.
- The provision for the pupils' personal, spiritual, social and cultural development is very good because the pupils' contributions are valued.
- The school is self-critical and has a very clear idea of what to do to improve.

What could be improved

- The school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to organise their work independently and pursue their own lines of enquiry.
- The school does not yet use information from evaluation and analysis of evaluation, assessments and tests to set challenging targets and further raise levels of achievement.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996 and since then has made significant progress in all the weaknesses described. There have been improvements to standards in mathematics, science and information technology. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen year on year and the good standards in other subjects have been maintained. Behaviour is now good. Improvements have been made in all key issues the most notably in relation to the quality of education, provision for children under five, and curriculum and assessment which are now very

effective. Teaching and learning is now carefully monitored particularly in English, mathematics and science.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	A	B	well above A
Mathematics	C	A	A	A	above average B
Science	A	A	A	B	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Results are well above the national average in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 and they compare very favourably to the results of similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 1 the results in mathematics are also well above the national average and above the average of similar schools. Results in writing are above average and average in reading but do not compare so favourably with similar schools because not many pupils reached the higher Level 3. The rising trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend at both key stages.

The inspection findings show that standards are average in writing and science and above average in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, although standards in mathematics and science are not as high as the tests. This is because 30 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs and get extra help with their work. Consequently they achieve well. The rate of learning in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school because teachers expect a lot of the children. Standards are above average in physical education and average in geography at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average in art and music and by the end of Key Stage 2, they are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are enthusiastic and keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils are polite and courteous. They are sometimes noisy when they are working and a few pupils are silly in lessons but they respond quickly to the teacher.
Personal development and relationships	Very good and a strength of the school. Pupils help and support each other and have very good relationships with their teachers.
Attendance	Good: very little authorised absence and lessons start punctually.

Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a significant contribution to their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
---------------------	--------------------	----------------	-----------------

Lessons seen overall	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.

- Teaching was good in 72 per cent of lessons and of these 14 per cent were very good.
- Teaching is good in well over half of the lessons seen in Reception and Key Stages 1 and 2.
- No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.
- The skills of literacy and numeracy are successfully taught throughout the school.
- Teaching is strong in science and physical education at both key stages and art, information technology and music at Key Stage 2.
- Subject knowledge is generally good and effective use is made of technical language to enhance pupils' vocabularies.
- Planning provides a good structure to lessons and pupils know exactly what they are going to learn.
- Teachers use skilful questions to ascertain what pupils have learned.
- Teachers manage pupils very well to enhance their strengths and capitalise on good learning.
- Assessment is used very successfully to enhance the pupils' learning and plan the right activities for all of them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: very good quality and range of learning opportunities covering all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: children are well taught. Challenging targets are set for pupils and care is taken to ensure that pupils achieve them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: strong emphasis on spiritual development within the curriculum. Many opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop personal and social skills and an understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: assessment is well developed and the school knows its pupils well.

Procedures for monitoring personal development have not yet been structured outside the religious education curriculum. Parents are very supportive of the school. They receive very good information about the school and their child's progress.

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management	Good: headteacher and key staff are driving school development and promoting high standards
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors are highly effective and know the school well and ably support improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: monitoring of teaching is well established and information is used effectively for school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good: additional grants are used successfully for their designated purpose.

The school is critically analysing its performance and has established a pattern of consulting with parents. The pupils' views are taken into account. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff morale is high.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way the school is led and managed.• The children like school.• The school makes them work hard and achieve their best.• They feel welcome in the school and they will be listened to.• The strong community feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework.• Extra curricular activities.

Parents are very supportive of the school. The inspectors support their views about what pleases them. The inspection findings do not raise concerns about homework. Following consultation with parents the school has appropriate plans in place to develop the work pupils undertake at home. The inspectors feel that the extra curricular activities are a strength of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of children under five on entry to school is average and, while the current group of four-year-olds has been in school for only six weeks, they have made good progress in their personal and social development, reading and knowledge and understanding of the world. Consequently they are on course to exceed the recommended learning outcomes when they are five. Pupils are on course to reach expected levels in language and literacy, their mathematical, physical and creative development when they are five years old because they are well taught and learn quickly. They get a good start to their schooling and are ready to start the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 when they are five years old.

2. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 results in reading were in line with the national average and above average in writing. Mathematics results were well above average. The results in reading and writing do not compare favourably with similar schools, because fewer pupils than expected reached the higher than average Level 3. The school has evaluated the way reading is taught and has successfully concentrated on improving standards over the year. Mathematics results were above the average of similar schools. Pupils' performance in tests over the last four years has followed a similar pattern in reading and writing but in mathematics they have been rising, with a leap in attainment in 1999. The pupils performed well in science assessments and the results are above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. Girls are performing slightly better than the boys in reading and mathematics but there is very little evidence of differences in performance in writing.

3. The results of the tests in 1999 for the end of Key Stage 2 show some improvement. For example, in English, mathematics and science the pupils' performance was well above the national average. In English and science results were above the average of similar schools and in mathematics they were well above average. There is a rising trend in results in each subject that follows the national trend. Again, in general the girls performed better than the boys did, which is similar to the national trend. Although there is very little difference in their performances in mathematics. The school carefully monitors the attainment of boys and girls giving additional support and encouragement in English and science. There were no significant differences between boys and girls attainment during the inspection.

4. Inspection findings show that standards are average in writing and science by the end Key Stage 1 and above average in reading and mathematics. Standards are not quite as high in mathematics and science as the tests and have fallen in writing because the pupils in the current Year 2 are not quite as able as the previous Year 2 group. The standards in reading reflect the school's efforts in improving the pupils' attainment. Teaching programmes in mathematics related to the National Numeracy Strategy and in writing related to the National Literacy Strategy, have not yet had the opportunity to affect the pupils' attainment.

5. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average but not quite as high as the tests would indicate. This would point to a decline in standards but the current Year 6 is not as able as the previous year's group. Thirty per cent of the current Year 6 is or has been given specific support for special educational needs in reading and writing. Consequently the pupils are achieving well. The rate of learning in

English, mathematics and science is good across the key stage. This is because the quality of planning is good and the teachers' expectations are high. The school carefully monitors the attainment of boys, and gives additional support and encouragement in English and science. There were no significant differences between boys and girls attainment during the inspection. The pupils' skills in reading, writing and numeracy are successfully reinforced in other subjects. For example, in science pupils carefully write up their experiments and in geography, in Years 5 and 6, the pupils had to interpret information about the problems emerging countries in Africa have with their water supplies. The pupils present the findings of their research using graphs and calculate measurements accurately, in science, when growing cress or examining the proportional measurements of their hands and feet.

6. Standards in speaking and listening are good at the end of both key stages. Pupils listen attentively to each other and their teachers. At the end of Key Stage 1 a few pupils answer questions using a wide vocabulary. Teachers are skilful at asking questions and setting up effective opportunities for pupils to talk and discuss in each year group. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils use their vocabulary successfully to convey their opinions in fluent, comprehensive and accurate speech.

7. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages. Many pupils achieve well and are making good progress because they are effectively taught and enjoy a wide range of reading material. By the end of Key Stage 1 nearly all pupils identify the characters in their stories and predict what will happen next. They use a broad range of strategies to help them read unknown words such as letter sounds and recognising words within words. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils are reaching higher than average levels because of the good progress they make. They use the context of a passage to make sense of sentences and read a broad range of fiction and non-fiction. Sometimes more able pupils are reading texts that are too easy and not intellectually challenging, which could limit the extent of their attainment.

8. Standards in writing are average at the end of both key stages and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are improving further and more pupils are reaching above average levels than earlier in the year. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils write for a range of purposes, including simple lively stories, letters, instructions, news and comprehension. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are preparing their work in a range of styles, and the more able use their writing successfully to argue their views and opinions, with good use of grammar and effective punctuation such as exclamation marks. Handwriting and presentation is sound and the pupils are developing good joined styles. Not all the older, more experienced writers present their work as neatly as they could.

9. Last year the school exceeded its English target, of 75 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in 1999, by 18 per cent. The target for 2000 is lower, 69 per cent as a result of a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group, but early indications are that the school has met and even exceeded that figure overall. The National Literacy Strategy is making a positive contribution to pupils learning, however, the school needs to address further the balance within the curriculum between reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

10. In mathematics pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards are above average at the end of both key stages. Progress is good because through careful planning the teachers enable the pupils to consolidate what they have learned and good teaching challenges and extends the pupils' thinking and skills. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils confidently add and subtract two-digit numbers and beyond. They double and halve small amounts of money and know the names of common three-dimensional shapes. They

measure length, capacity and weight accurately and successfully plot data and extract information. Mental skills are developing well and the pupils solve problems speedily and accurately. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a secure understanding of number and are alert to alternative ways of solving problems using various successful strategies. They meet the challenges of the mathematics curriculum in Key Stage 2 well. They quickly solve problems using shapes and measures in calculating area, volume and rotation. Mental skills are very well developed. Sometimes the full extent of the pupils' attainment is inhibited when work is too prescriptive and there is not enough opportunity for them to design their own problems and organise their own methods of enquiry.

11. Standards in science are at least in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. A large proportion of the pupils in Year 2 is reaching higher than average standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have achieved well and are reaching standards that are above average and in experimental and investigative science and life and living processes, standards are high. For example, by the end of both key stages the pupils know how to construct a fair test and, at the end of Key Stage 2, the eleven-year-olds understand the importance of accuracy and fairness when they undertake experiments. Their factual knowledge of the natural world is good and they handle insects and other living things sensitively and sensibly.

12. In information technology standards are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2. There has been a rise in standards with improved programmes of work and teachers' subject knowledge. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils control the mouse effectively, are able to manage programs, retrieve and display information using the CD-ROM and create patterns and pictures using art program. They effectively word process their writing and solve simple number problems in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils use spreadsheets to organise information and create shapes using a graphics package to support their artwork. They are contributing effectively to the design of the school's web-site through their paintings of poppies.

13. By the end of both key stages, standards in physical education are above average. Standards are average in art and music at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average. Standards in geography are average at the end of both key stages. There is too little evidence to judge standards in design and technology, and history. Two reasons for the good rate of learning are the good quality teaching and the positive attitudes of the pupils themselves. In English, mathematics, science and information technology the teachers plan a variety of tasks that take into account the differing abilities of the pupils. This helps them make good progress whether they have special educational needs or are high attaining pupils. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are represented in all the levels of ability across the school and make the same good progress as the other pupils.

14. The school has exceeded the targets set in 1999 for the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Even though it has revised the current year's targets, in line with information from assessment of pupils and the rates of progress across Key Stage 2, they remain over-cautious and do not sufficiently reflect the good standards the pupils are reaching in English and mathematics. The school is at a very early stage of tracking and estimating the progress of individual and groups of pupils. However, it has successfully invested money to raise the levels of attainment of under-performing pupils, particularly boys. The school should set more challenging targets for reading and writing and mathematics and extend the plans for targeting pupils to raise the standards even higher than they currently are particularly at Key Stage 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a significant contribution to effective learning. The school has maintained the good standards identified by the last inspection. Parents feel that behaviour is good, that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible as well as to work hard and to achieve their best.

16. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. From the four to the eleven-year-olds, children enjoy coming to school and quickly become involved in the day's activities. They show a keen interest in lessons and enter into discussions with enthusiasm. They enjoy showing their work and are happy to talk about all aspects of school life. Children under five are bubbly and joyful about what they do. They work and play happily together sharing equipment and taking turns. Throughout the school pupils are interested, concentrating well and working hard to get things right. Positive attitudes to work are evident from the reception classes to the end of Key Stage 2. They develop mature attitudes by the time they reach Years 5 and 6. A large number of pupils are involved in the broad range of activities provided outside lessons, including the athletics club and French lessons.

17. Pupils' behaviour is good overall in lessons, the playground and at lunchtimes. Pupils understand and appreciate acceptable standards of behaviour and they are courteous to visitors. Children under five behave consistently well and respond quickly when they get noisy or silly. Throughout the school, pupils move around in a sensible and polite manner. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour but a small number of pupils can be silly and difficult to manage from time to time. Pupils respect each others' feelings and play happily together in the playground. For example, they often stand aside to let adults pass through doorways. There have been three fixed term exclusions during the last school year for dangerous behaviour. The pupils were quickly and successfully re-admitted to the school.

18. The pupils work well independently and in groups and they are happy to help each other. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility through classroom and assembly duties and, in years 5 and 6, through acting as 'bus line partners', taking the younger children to the bus after school. They take their various roles very seriously. For example, the youngest children are very sensible when taking the register some distance from their classroom to the main school office.

19. Relationships at the school are very good. The overall atmosphere of the school is that of a happy community with everyone working purposefully as a team. The four-year-olds relate very confidently to the adults working with them. Pupils across the key stages respect their teachers and other adults and appreciate their praise and encouragement. During discussions they show an understanding of the feelings and ideas of others. Children under five spontaneously celebrate each other's successes. There is no evidence of bullying and any minor incidents are brought to the attention of the staff and dealt with very quickly.

20. Rates of attendance are good. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually except when the school buses are delayed, and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. It is satisfactory or better in all lessons and in 72 per cent it is good or better. Teaching in 14 per cent of these is very good and one outstanding lesson was seen. Teaching is good in a similar

majority of lessons in the Reception classes and both key stages. Good teaching applies to almost all the subjects where there was sufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching. Literacy and numeracy are very successfully taught. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are observed regularly by the headteacher and co-ordinators, and staff training has focussed on what makes effective teaching and learning. These factors have been successful in creating a strong team of teachers who reflect on their practice, share ideas and refine their skills. Consequently this leads to effective learning for the pupils. They work hard, achieve well and generally make good progress.

22. Children under five are taught well by a temporary relief teacher who is working with them for one term. Despite limited knowledge about the age group he is capturing their interest and, as result, they are keen and eager to learn. The teacher celebrates the intelligent responses of the children. Praise and encouragement makes them confident to try out new things. The teacher plans effective activities that motivate and interest the children. For example, he uses practical tasks such as children queuing to help them learn about 'in front' and 'behind' and the plans for the caterpillar hunt enthralled and delighted the class. On occasions too many tasks in one session confuses the children and the work is too challenging for many of them. As a result, they lose interest and concentration.

23. Literacy sessions are well planned. The teachers follow the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy effectively. Different activities are planned for the pupils' capabilities and these are suitably challenging. For example, in one lesson, low attaining pupils were using a writing frame with help, from the teacher, to begin their explanations of the water cycle, whilst higher attaining pupils were drafting and editing their factual writing. These different tasks helped all pupils, regardless of their ability, to achieve well and make good progress. Sometimes when sticking too closely to the strategy, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to expand their speaking skills. The teaching of numeracy is good. Parents raised a concern about the quantity and quality of homework. The school has consulted with parents and new procedures for homework are due to start in the new school year. Again, lessons are well planned and organised. Where teaching in numeracy is very good teachers know the pupils well through careful assessment, which enables them to match work to the pupils' individual needs. The strong emphasis on mental calculation enables the pupils' skills at calculating in their heads to be well developed and consequently they reach above average standards. There is a tendency for teachers to remove supporting apparatus for calculation too early and while the pupils remember the strategies for getting sums correct they do not always understand fully what they are doing.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and this is a strength of the school. Teachers and ancillary staff co-operate effectively and ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers are highly aware of pupils' individual targets and there is a close and effective link with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. They work closely as a team to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for the pupils. Consequently, pupils make good progress and learn effectively. At Key Stage 2 the pupils' progress is marked and some achieve so well that they are successfully removed from the special educational needs register. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught well and make the same good progress as other pupils.

25. The teachers have generally good subject knowledge. This results in particularly good teaching in English, mathematics, science, and physical education throughout the school and in art, music and information technology in Key Stage 2. Effective use is made of technical language to enhance pupils' vocabularies because teachers are confident in the subjects they teach. For example in one lesson the teacher was exploring the

specialist language of other subjects. The pupils were very familiar with different terms used and confidently used the vocabulary in their discussions. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection.

26. Teachers use skilful questioning to elicit what the pupils have already learned. Introductions to lessons enable the pupils to recall what they know and explain what they can do. These set the scenes for successful lessons and enable the pupils not only to consolidate existing learning but learn new things very quickly. For example, the pupils were composing music using all the elements together, exploring the sound their instruments could make. The teacher questioned the pupils carefully to ensure that they were practising and consolidating their compositions creatively. In science a teacher discovered through questioning that the pupils were confused about the height of their bar charts. This enabled her to rectify the misconceptions and use the information effectively as a starting point of her teaching. Such discussions enable pupils to express their ideas and this also has a positive impact on their developing vocabularies.

27. Pupils are managed very well to enhance their strengths and capitalise on good learning. Clear expectations of behaviour and standards help the pupils to work hard and improve their work. Teachers expect the pupils to listen, and contribute to their work to the best of their abilities. They use discussion sessions at the end of lessons well to reinforce a teaching point or find out what pupils have learned. Pupils leave their seats, organise their chairs to see a video or talk to others with little fuss because teachers have established sensible routines. For example, in a geography lesson, the pupils in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class organised their group work efficiently and no time was lost in re-organising the classroom for a video about water in African countries. In a few lessons the pupils were allowed to become too noisy and while they were discussing their work, the noise was travelling to other classes that were working quietly.

28. The quality of teachers' planning is good. It provides an effective structure to lessons and pupils know exactly what they are going to learn. Teachers organise interesting activities and use a good range of teaching strategies. For example in art the work of famous artists is used very successfully to help the pupils learn about pattern, shape and form. This work is then carefully linked to a computer program that helps the pupils develop skills to create a shape that they can change and move in preparation for their own work in the style of Matisse. These careful and appropriate links between a topic and other subjects including numeracy and literacy are effectively planned into lessons across the school. However, sometimes work is too prescriptive and too few opportunities are planned for the pupils to raise their own questions, organise their work independently of the teacher and pursue their own lines of enquiry. Sometimes teachers do too much for the pupils. In one potentially very good lesson the teacher had planned challenging activities, very effective group work that demanded that pupils share their ideas and then told the pupils exactly what page of the text to use, read the information and answered questions for them.

29. Assessment is successfully used in lessons to enhance the pupils' learning and plan the right activities for all of them. Assessment is very good in lessons in Key Stage 2. There are examples where marking is good, but it is not always consistent in each class. At its best evaluative comments help the pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. For example, in English in Year 2, the pupils' efforts were praised, but the teachers also offered suggestions for improvement. Where work was acknowledged with a tick or a grade, without any targets or tips on how they need to improve their standards, marking did not have an impact on the pupils' work. Use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils take a sound range of work home, including reading books, spellings and some research related to the topics. Examples of where this supports learning well are

where the work pupils have done at home is used in the lessons. For example, pupils had looked at the amount of water they and their families' use in relation to work they are undertaking in geography. Parents raised a concern about the quantity and quality of homework. The school has consulted with parents and new procedures for homework are due to start in the new school year.

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

30. The overall curricular provision of the school is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The curriculum is relevant, broadly based and well balanced. It includes a very good range of worthwhile opportunities to meet the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Provision for all subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children under five is very good and marks an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the recommendations of the desirable learning outcomes. A broad range of activities including outdoor play enables the pupils to learn effectively. All areas of learning are now fully represented and well resourced.

31. The curriculum is well planned in both key stages to provide a good range of learning opportunities through a sensible programme of work. The school is rightly proud of the strong emphasis on the arts and sport and on the provision of all foundation subjects for its pupils. Long-term planning is based around the schemes of work, which are in place for all subjects. Medium-term planning is taken from the schemes of work and is set out in detail for each year group in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, a well-structured two-year rolling programme of topic themes provides appropriate coverage of the curriculum for all pupils in the mixed age classes. The quality of the planning is good, although in geography there is not adequate attention to the teaching of geographical skills to enable the pupils to investigate appropriately places and themes.

32. The school implements the National Literacy Strategy very well, beginning in the Reception Year. Lessons are well structured according to the framework and provide for successful development of skills. Mathematics lessons are very well planned, in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. They have a good structure, which ably assists the pupils' learning. Mental mathematics plays a key role in reinforcing and extending pupils' skills in written calculation. A very good feature of the curriculum is the teaching of information technology skills, which are then used to support other subjects.

33. The curriculum is enhanced with a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are valued by most parents. Club activities are run by staff, parents and governors, and include chess, sports and musical activities. The school competes successfully in locally arranged competitions. An information technology club provides opportunities for pupils to develop further their skills in this area. A good range of visits and visitors is used to motivate pupils' interest, including dancers, musicians, members of the local community. Day visits to local places of interest and residential visits in Years 5 and 6 enhance the curriculum and the personal development of pupils.

34. The school aims to include all pupils regardless of ability or disability. If a pupil has a specific need then the school aims to provide for that need. Pupils of different academic abilities receive appropriate support. Those with specific special educational needs have statements explaining the required support and learning programmes. Pupils with behavioural and physical needs also receive effective support. However, the previous inspection identified the lack of provision for those with mobility difficulties and this situation

has not been remedied. Although the school has no pupils needing wheelchair access at present, it would be physically impossible for those of more limited mobility to get into the majority of classrooms with ease.

35. Within classes teachers are very aware of the implications of issues of gender and the need to present positive role models in the resources and materials they use. When accessing the use of equipment such as the computers they generally ensure that groups are fairly balanced by age, ability and gender, ensuring that boys do not dominate computer keyboards. Tests and assessment results are analysed by gender to modify the curriculum to ensure equality of opportunity. This has resulted in a focus on writing in general and boys writing in particular. The school's mission statement reflects the work within the school accurately in that although pupils come into school with a varied range of experiences they are all valued as individuals. The school does not have a policy and scheme of work to ensure specific and targeted linguistic support to ethnic minority pupils.

36. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and achieved mainly through the religious education and science curriculum. A relevant programme of health and drugs education raises pupils' awareness and sex education is taught appropriately. In addition, teachers take every opportunity to promote these skills and knowledge whenever appropriate. The strong Catholic ethos pervades the school and contributes greatly to the pupils' personal development. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school plans for, and takes advantage of, opportunities for pupils to gain insight into the values and beliefs of others both through the curriculum and in assemblies. Provision for moral development is good and pupils know right from wrong and believe that the school rules and behaviour policy are fair. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss and understand moral issues. Overall, the provision for their social development is very good. There is a strong sense of community throughout the school. Teachers act as good role models, providing numerous opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons. Responsibilities are given to pupils ranging from taking registers and helping in the classroom to supporting children in the bus queue. The potential for pupils to show initiative and take part in important decisions about the school is not well developed.

37. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for pupils' cultural development since the last inspection and it is now very good. It is now evident throughout much of the curriculum, particularly in music, art, English and geography. Topics about the lives of people in contrasting environments and the struggle villages in Africa and India have to get clean water enable pupils to understand how different people live. Discussion, educational visits and visitors, a good range of books, artefacts and musical instruments contribute significantly to the success of the provision, which is a strength of the school.

38. The school has good links with the community that contributes to pupils' learning and personal development. Examples of include the Barnaby Bear project, and the pupils' participation and successes in the Thurmaston Parish art competition. Opportunities to enhance the curriculum through partnerships with the business community are not currently being exploited

39. Constructive relationships with other schools, mainly through a local group, ensure a smooth transfer for pupils from one phase of education to the next. This partnership also facilitates the sharing and exchange of knowledge, skills and resources. Effective links with two local colleges provide swimming facilities and adult numeracy education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The formal and informal support and guidance which pupils receive is very good and parents appreciate the openness and approachability of staff in dealing with questions and problems. The school is maintaining the strengths identified by the last inspection. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and respond to their needs. Overall, the care that pupils receive remains a strength of the school and has a beneficial effect on their progress and personal development. The profile of pupils, especially the range of languages and backgrounds within the school, is carefully monitored by the headteacher. Class teachers effectively evaluate pupils' progress.

41. Overall the school has effective procedures in place for ensuring pupils' care and welfare and the monitoring of their academic performance that make a major contribution to pupils learning. The assessment co-ordinator is experienced and works closely with the head teacher and senior management team to collate the information that the school obtains about pupils' attainment in relation to local and national standards. Detailed records of results are analysed in order to identify trends in standards. The school has a broad range of assessments used to assess progress including national and internal tests and assessments for English, mathematics and science. Teachers in the reception classes make good use of assessment on entry to plan work suited to the children's needs. Many teachers also set an end of topic assessment to ensure knowledge and understanding in the other subjects. The work of the pupils with special educational needs is carefully and systematically assessed to ensure the relevance of the Individual Education Plans.

42. Teachers make good use of information gathered from assessment to plan work for individual pupils' needs and form groups within classes to support different areas of the curriculum, particularly within the national literacy and numeracy projects. This valuable information is also used to develop and improve the curriculum but not, as yet, to track the progress of groups of pupils and set challenging targets for the school as a whole. Procedures for monitoring, recording and reporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory, but they are not documented and therefore cannot be used effectively to assess pupils' progress.

43. The school's policies and procedures successfully promote discipline, good behaviour and health and safety. Regular checks of the building and the grounds take place. Trained First Aid help is available on the staff. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good and meet requirements. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are also very good

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Overall, the school's partnership with parents remains good and parents feel that the school works closely and successfully with them. They are happy with the way the school is led and managed, and with what the school provides and achieves. They are pleased that their children like coming to school and that they are encouraged to work hard, achieve their best and become mature and responsible. They agree that behaviour is good, and that questions and problems are welcomed and dealt with effectively. Parents' contribution to, and involvement with, their children's learning at school and at home is good.

45. Very effective communication between the school and parents is provided through regular newsletters, parents' meetings and annual reports. This compensates for the lack of informal day-to-day feedback caused by the fact that so many pupils travel to school by bus. The school prospectus, annual reports and the governors' annual report to parents all now meet requirements. Parents are consulted about many aspects of school life, including recently the formulation of a draft school homework policy. The annual reports give them a

clear indication of what pupils' know, understand and can do, as well as indicating targets and strategies for improvement, particularly in mathematics and English. Parents whose children have special educational needs are involved well. They are invited to attend all review meetings to discuss their children's progress and to contact the school at other times if they have any concerns.

46. The school makes successful efforts to encourage parental involvement in all its life. These efforts are reinforced by the shared agreement about the responsibilities of parents, pupils and teachers in their child's education. The majority of parents and pupils have endorsed this. A number of parents provide valuable support in the classroom, and with trips and extra-curricular activities. The Friends' Association is committed to enhancing the social and financial aspects of the school and gets good support from all school staff and parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The management and leadership of the school are good. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection when the leadership was sound. The new headteacher is successfully establishing himself in the school and has the confidence and support of governors, parents, pupils and staff. The headteacher and his deputy work effectively together and both are committed to improving the standards and the quality of teaching. For example, there have been improvements to the subject knowledge of teachers through effective training and professional development. Governors and staff work as an effective team committed to raising standards.

48. The governors, headteacher and key teaching staff have established a culture whereby members of staff are willing to reflect critically on their practice and are keen to debate aspects which might be improved. Evaluation of teaching and learning are well established and all staff are involved in successful professional development. There has been a marked improvement in many areas since the last inspection. The weaknesses identified have been addressed systematically. A series of well-targeted action plans has underpinned improvements. The headteacher has carefully delegated responsibility to key staff and the new senior management team ensures that roles and responsibilities in evaluation are clear and the school frequently reflects on its practice.

49. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff morale is high. This means that there is a purposeful and supportive ethos, which permeates the school and has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Catholic values and the school's aims are strongly reflected in its everyday work at all levels.

50. The governing body is highly effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. Governors have a detailed knowledge of important aspects of the school's work, such as financial management, the pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching. They share a clear vision for improving standards and ably support school improvement. They work effectively with co-ordinators to establish a clear focus when they visit to observe the school at work. For example, governors are involved in the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and have been examining the pupils' work.

51. Teachers who are responsible for particular subjects provide effective leadership. Through careful monitoring and evaluation they have a good overview of how their subject is taught across the school and the standards pupils achieve. This applies particularly to English, mathematics, science and information technology. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides successful leadership and works hard to ensure that pupils receive an

education that is appropriate to their needs and that they make good progress.

52. Systems for monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing are good. There is an emphasis on identifying strengths and weaknesses related to different aspects of each subject in order to raise standards further. Information from evaluation of standards, teaching and learning enables the school development plan to provide an effective framework for educational development that formalises the priorities established. A system for tracking pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is at an early stage of development and is not fully used to analyse individual pupils' progress or overall trends and anomalies. Consequently targets currently set are not sufficiently challenging. Governors and staff appropriately agree priorities and are all clear about the plans for development.

53. The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the educational needs of the pupils. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are used well and they share a common purpose to make their work more effective. Consequently teachers are well supported by co-ordinators and this has a positive effect on the pupils' attainment. Staff development needs are well met through an effectively managed programme. It ensures that staff training is linked closely to priorities identified in the school's development plan, teacher appraisal targets and individual needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers and their performance management are sound. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and this enables them to use their developing skills effectively.

54. Ancillary staff form a strong team with the teachers. This has a considerable impact on pupils' learning. They carry out a variety of tasks all of which make a good contribution to the progress made by the pupils. The support staff who work specifically with pupils with special educational needs are appropriately trained and play a very important role in the overall provision of very good support.

55. The present accommodation is good overall and is used well to meet the demands of the curriculum. The hall is spacious and facilities for practical work and the central library are good. The hatted accommodation has appropriate access to the outside for children under-five and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, access for staff, parents or pupils with special physical needs remains difficult because no ramps are provided for wheelchair users. This was identified in the previous inspection. The school site is attractive and well maintained. Sound proofing between the open areas is barely adequate and noise sometimes travels between classes. Much is done to celebrate and value pupils' work by good quality displays. The field is sufficiently large for games and is successfully used for other subjects such as geography and science.

56. The quantity and quality of learning resources are good and meet the demands of the curriculum. The school has significantly improved the quality and range of books and resources since the previous inspection. For example, a good range of books, resources and musical instruments representing other cultures such as Africa and India, enhance the provision. It fully represents the richness of the cultural diversity of the local area. The pupils have easy access to all resources including books, audio-tapes and computers. Resources for teaching English, science, information technology, music and physical education are good. The library is well stocked and the resources for the foundation stage are good.

57. The school makes efficient use of its strategic resources and has maintained the good standards identified from the previous inspection. The school has not been audited in the last few years. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's successful

financial planning. The current under-spend is the result of careful budgeting following a year when the budget was close to being in deficit. The excess funds are to be used to provide an additional Reception class teacher. As yet, budget and time allocations to the school development plan are not sufficiently clear to ensure that the true cost of developments is identified. Information and communication technology is used effectively to manage the finances and provides very helpful information to Governors and headteacher about the budget. Consequently the governing body is fully informed and fulfils its financial responsibilities very well. Grants are used effectively for their designated purpose. The school is beginning to apply procedures to ensure that it gets the best out of its resources and consultation with parents and pupils is well advanced. Whilst school results are compared to schools nationally and statistical information is used to influence developments comparisons with other neighbouring schools are not yet made. Administrative procedures are very efficient and enable the teachers to concentrate their efforts on the pupils. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. To improve the effectiveness of the school further, the governing body, headteacher and senior management should:

- 1. Ensure that the use of information from evaluation and analysis of assessments and tests to set challenging targets to further raise standards as identified in the SDP.**

Paragraphs 31, 34, 38, 42, 52, 55, 69, 81, 82, 96, 99, 100

- 2. Improve opportunities for pupils to organise their work independently and pursue their own lines of enquiry by:**

Paragraphs 10, 28, 73, 85, 86, 99

- i) ensuring that there is an agreement about how these learning skills will be systematically developed throughout the school;
- ii) planning tasks that create opportunities for pupils to raise their own questions as well as answer those posed by the teacher;
- iii) ensuring that teaching is not too prescriptive and that the pupils take decisions about how work will be organised and the resources and methods they will use to undertake it.

The following minor weaknesses should also be considered for inclusion in the governing body's action plan:

- i) Agree a systematic way of monitoring and recording the pupils' personal and social development.
- ii) Improve the systematic development of skills in geography.
- iii) Develop further links with the business community to further enhance the pupils learning opportunities.
- iv) Ensure that adults and pupils who have physical needs have easy access to the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	14	57	28	0	0	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	342
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	63

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	25	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	24
	Girls	26	28	29
	Total	46	49	53
Per centage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	89 (96)	96 (83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	25
	Girls	27	29	28
	Total	49	53	53
Per centage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	96	96
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Per centages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Teachers' assessments for 1998 were not available for Key Stage 1.

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
		1999	23	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	43	43	44
Per centage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (77)	93 (83)	96 (87)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	21
	Girls	18	21	22
	Total	33	41	43
Per centage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (77)	89 (79)	93 (81)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Per centages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	10
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	282
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	461110
Total expenditure	485471
Expenditure per pupil	1509.80
Balance brought forward from previous year	17116
Balance carried forward to next year	17800

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	342
Number of questionnaires returned	107

Per centage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	29	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	29	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	45	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	14	2	3
The teaching is good.	71	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	46	7	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	50	44	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	75	21	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	51	9	0	13

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

59. Attainment on entry to school is average. Nearly all children have had some pre-school experience from either play groups or private nursery schools or classes. They settle quickly into school and make good progress because they are well taught and the provision is good. Of the two reception classes one has children under five, who started school at the beginning of the term. A temporary relief teacher, who is not familiar with the age group but who is providing a good start to the children's schooling, is teaching them for the term. Older children in the second reception class are already five. They have been in school for two terms and are working with an effective teacher who is experienced at working with young children. They have made good progress over the year and are already working well within the early stages of the Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1. Overall attainment of the current new entrants is average. Almost all are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes for five-year-olds. They are progressing well in all areas of learning, especially their reading and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are well prepared for the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

60. The teacher provides a very good role model for the pupils. Consequently they are lively enthusiastic learners. They are full of ideas and keen to learn and celebrate each other's successes because the teacher and the ancillary support assistant praise good effort. For example, one pupil had a good idea about how to identify butterfly eggs and caterpillars on the bug hunt by using the pictures that they had drawn. The teacher spontaneously celebrated this intelligent response and other children were delighted. Behaviour is always good and children are bubbly and joyful about what they do. They work and play happily together sharing equipment and ideas and taking turns. They are very young and consequently find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time. Although when finding out about caterpillars and preparing for the caterpillar hunt they were captivated as the teacher talked to them about how to keep safe. They concentrated for a long time and remembered what they had been told. The children have a strong sense of right and wrong and know what is fair. When the class got too noisy they responded well to a plea for quiet from a classmate. Relationships in both reception classes are very good. The four-year-olds relate very confidently with the adults who work with them. They are courteous and polite and are developing a sensitive respect for the different needs and beliefs of others. They are on course to exceed the recommended outcomes when they are five.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

61. Standards in language and literacy are average and the children are making steady progress. Teaching is satisfactory and the children are on course to meet the recommended outcomes by the time they are five. Some will exceed them in reading. The children listen attentively to stories and are eager to talk about the characters. Nearly all of them know their alphabet and are already able to recognise the sounds several letters make. They are keen to discuss their work. Sometimes the work is too hard for them, which results in some confusion about the words they are building up. The children enjoy reading books and all of them are confident to read a story from the pictures. They know that an author writes stories because the teacher introduces books very well to the class. A few children are already reading the stories and recognising a good range of simple words. Most hold a pencil correctly and write recognisable words. They are beginning to

write their names correctly and know that it has a capital letter. The majority make marks with some recognisable letters and their words are in the structure of sentences. They copy the teachers' writing confidently and work hard with their handwriting.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

62. The children's mathematical development is sound and they are on course to meet the recommended outcomes by the time they are five. A small group of the most able will exceed them. Teaching is good and effective activities are planned to motivate the children's interest. The majority counts confidently up to ten and beyond. The most able order numbers up to ten and knows that 5 and 4 is 9. They count and match objects and lay a table in the cafe for four people getting the correct number of settings. They know that 100 is a very large number and can read the date. They are effectively developing mathematical language. Most pupils know what left and right is. They order a queue of children to show their understanding of 'front' and 'behind'. One pupil decided to order the children according to the biggest and smallest and others recognised a pattern of boy and girl. Most children recognise a circle and that their table is an oblong.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

63. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and they are on course to exceed the recommended outcomes by the time they are five because they are well taught. The activities are successfully planned to link with other areas of learning and consequently the children progress well because the curriculum is coherent. Teaching is good and enables the children to show what they already know and can do. Ideas are challenging and the pupils' respond with great interest. For example they read a book about planting a bean and are waiting patiently for it to grow. The children are excited to see their beans and potatoes begin to grow. They were fascinated by the life cycle of the butterfly and know that a magnifying glass will help them see the segments on a caterpillar more clearly. They are lively and bubbly and full of ideas because they understand what they are learning. The children are carefully and successfully taught to understand that small creatures are delicate and must be handled with care. Consequently, they remember that for a caterpillar to live it needs to be given the leaves on which it was found.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

64. The children's physical development is sound and they are making good progress in developing confidence in dance. Consequently they are on course to reach the desirable outcome when they are five. A good range of activities is planned for the children and they are well taught. Consequently they build coherently on their existing skills of running, jumping and responding creatively to sounds. The very good relationship between teacher and children enables effective interactions that improve the quality of their movements and use of space in the hall. The children successfully use a range of large and small equipment. They construct models carefully manipulating joins. In the sand tray they carefully balance equipment to experiment with how sand falls through a sieve. They use scissors carefully developing good cutting skills and make patterns with pegs with great dexterity and concentration.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

65. The children's creative development is sound and a broad range of experiences is planned for them. They are on course to reach the desirable outcomes when they are five. Teaching is satisfactory but sometimes children are given too much help to complete their pictures, which inhibits their own creative flair. The children enjoy making butterfly pictures

with string and paint and carefully create the caterpillars with plasticine. They use a good range of vocabulary to explain what their game is when playing in the shop. In the café children organise roles effectively, confidently writing orders for meals. Their play is lively and sometimes they become over-excited which limits the creativity of their role-play. However, they respond well when the teacher re-establishes the rules and continue to play sensibly. The children enjoy dressing up and creating their own play characters. They make imaginary telephone calls and confidently involve the adults working with them.

66. There have been significant improvements to the provision for the youngest pupils and the weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been overcome. Both teachers in the reception classes provide a broad range of learning opportunities. Assessment is thorough and the teachers know the children well. A significant investment in resources means that they are now good in quality and range. A range of wheeled toys would further enhance the pupils' physical development.

ENGLISH

67. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English are average and because of good progress and good teaching by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are generally above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils enter the school with average attainment in language and literacy. They make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and pupils of all levels of ability achieve reasonably well particularly in writing. The 1999 national test results for seven-year-olds were average in reading and above average in writing. The results do not compare favourably with the results of similar schools because not enough pupils reached the higher than average Level 3. Girls performed better than boys in reading, but there was very little difference in their performance in writing. The school adds value to the pupils' learning in English and results in the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds was well above the national average and a higher than average number reached Level 5. Consequently these results are above average when compared with similar schools. Apart from a dip in 1998 there is a rising trend in results that follows the national trend.

68. Last year the school exceeded its target of 75 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4 and above. The target set for 2000 is lower, 69 per cent, as a result of interim testing and a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Early indications are that the school has met and even exceeded this figure overall and that the targets are not sufficiently challenging. The National Literacy Strategy is making a positive contribution to pupils learning, however, the school needs to address further the balance within the curriculum between reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

69. Teachers plan effective opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills. Consequently, by the end of both key stages standards in speaking and listening are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other and a significant minority answer questions using a wide vocabulary and well formed sentences. The majority of pupils has a love of words and is adding frequently to those they understand and use. Most listen to and follow instructions accurately, work out the logical order for giving simple instructions to each other and complete tasks from other instructions. Teachers are good role models and, as a result, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a wide spoken vocabulary and use that well to convey their thoughts and opinions in fluent, comprehensive and accurate speech. They give detailed descriptions and take part in debates as well as drama, and formulate persuasive and comparative arguments. When reading out loud, older pupils recall the story of the text, using the language and idioms of the book in their discussions about characters and plot. More able pupils at both key stages expand their sentences to convey their ideas and

opinions fully. Pupils with special educational needs reach appropriate levels as a result of the support they receive.

70. The school has concentrated effectively on the teaching of reading and by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' standards are above average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress, though some of the more able pupils in Year 6 are sometimes reading material that is not fully challenging to their intellectual development. They read a wide range of material: stories, poems, information texts and worksheets. Most pupils identify the characters in stories, recall the plot and some predict what will happen next to those characters. They are beginning to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information in books using a content page. Pupils have a broad range of skills to help read unknown words including using letter sounds and small words within longer words. The school reading scheme helps develop these skills. More able pupils recognise and correct their errors. They are achieving a good degree of fluency and read with expression. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are using the context of the passage to make sense of sentences, and read a good range of fiction and non-fiction. They use index and content pages to find information and many have learned the skills of scanning a text, skimming for meaning rather than reading each word. Pupils have a broad range of favourite authors and illustrators and like books about horror, comedy, the environment and history.

71. The teaching of writing is systematic and effective and standards are in line with the expectations for this age range. Pupils' achievement is steady at both key stages. Good progress is being made and standards in writing have improved over the current year. Many opportunities are planned in other subjects to enable pupils to practice their writing skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to set out their writing using story sequencing and writing outlines. They use letter sound patterns in their spellings. They are starting to write longer accounts and stories, redrafting and editing their work. The literacy hour is helping pupils to use a wide vocabulary and is improving grammar and punctuation, as well as extending knowledge of a range of texts. The pupils write for a range of purposes including simple stories, poems, letters, instructions, news and comprehension. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and praise and encouragement is effectively used to motivate the pupils. As a result, by the end of the key stage pupils prepare their work very carefully using a range of styles. Punctuation and grammar are usually accurate and effective. They regularly redraft their writing, extend their ideas and use different formats. Good use is made of the word processor to support editing and presentation. Writing is carefully marked to help the pupils know what to do to improve. Handwriting and presentation are variable though pupils are encouraged to develop joined writing and by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are using a quality cursive script. Unfortunately, in some books writing was untidy and difficult to read.

72. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good in both key stages. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. Challenging work motivates the pupils who enjoy reading and writing. Progress in lessons is marked with rapid learning and the successful completion of all planned tasks. The good progress made by the majority of pupils in English is due to well-supported learning and effective strategies for teaching literacy throughout both key stages. Pupils enjoy the books they are reading and they are successful in their writing as a result of teachers carefully matching tasks to pupils of different abilities. This enables the most and the least able to be actively involved in lessons. Teachers use questions skilfully and by making the end of each lesson an assessment of progress they are able to plan further work accurately. Sometimes the pupils' learning is inhibited by too much direction from the teacher that slows lessons. This results in pupils losing concentration and becoming restless and untidy.

73. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is improving

standards by providing a structure to the development of reading and writing skills. There are times, however, when by sticking too closely to the strategy teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to extend and expand the links between speaking and reading. The curriculum for English is broad and balanced and pupils practise their skills in other subjects especially in geography, history, mathematics and science. Regular and careful assessment ensures that pupils receive work that is specifically targeted to developing skills. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator successfully monitors progress and matches attainment to teachers planning, in class support, staff training and resources.

MATHEMATICS

74. The pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average at the end of both key stages. These standards represent an improvement since the last inspection. Progress is good because, through careful planning, the teachers enable the pupils to consolidate what they have learned in Key Stage 1 and good teaching challenges and extends the pupils' thinking and skills. Numeracy is well taught in other subjects. For instance, in studying water in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made comparisons between consumption in litres in this country and in a third world country. They consider also how heavy water is, in kilograms, and collect and examine data in science to make graphs. Consequently the pupils make good progress in understanding the application of the mathematical skills they are learning.

75. The inspection findings reflect the national tests where results in 1999 for 7 year-olds were above the national average. A third of the pupils reached the higher than average Level 3. The results are well above the average of with similar schools. Girls slightly outperformed the boys in mathematics. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the pupils' performance in mathematics was above the national average. Attainment currently remains above the national average and there is every indication this standard will be reflected in the results for 2000. Good teaching in Key Stage 2 enables the pupils to make good progress. The results of the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds at the end of Key Stage 2, were well above average and over a third of the pupils reached the higher than average Level 5. These results are high when compared to the results of similar schools. Trends over four years show a steady rise in attainment with a significant improvement in 1999. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The findings of the inspection indicate that standards now are slightly lower in Year 6. This would point to a decline in standards but the current Year 6 is not as able as the previous group and a higher number of pupils receive additional support for special educational needs. The results of this year's tests indicate the same levels of attainment.

76. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils add and subtract numbers of up to two digits, and beyond confidently. They know odd and even numbers, understand the importance of place value and show good recall of the two and five times tables. They double and halve small amounts of money, recognise coins and use this knowledge to play money games, such as buying bus tickets to travel from Thurmaston to nearby villages. Pupils know the names of common two and three-dimensional shapes and are aware of some of their properties, such as that a square has four straight sides of equal length. They identify right angles, as on the corner of a book, although they are not secure in appreciating that an angle is a measure of turn. In measuring, the pupils know the relevant units to apply to capacity, length and weight and they recognise something of their appropriateness, for example, centimetres to measure the length of a table and kilometres (or miles) to measure the distances from Leicester to other towns. Pupils successfully plot data and extract information. Throughout the key stage, the pupils' skills in mental mathematics are

developing consistently well to solve problems both speedily and accurately.

77. Pupils in Year 6, at the end of Key Stage 2, have a secure understanding of number and show good numeracy skills. They are alert to alternative ways of solving number problems and deploy various methods, mentally and on paper, to obtain answers. They understand, for example, that numbers may be partitioned (such as: $264 = 200 + 60 + 4$) and that the distributive law can help them in solving multiplication problems. They explain their chosen ways of working and are receptive to new methods. Pupils identify equivalent fractions, are familiar with factors and understand positive and negative integers. In dealing with written problems, such as buying food in a restaurant, pupils extract the relevant mathematical information to determine the solution and relate this to a previous estimate of cost. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the full range of aspects of mathematics represented in the National Curriculum. This includes, for example, shapes and measures where they solve problems such as on area, volume and rotation. By the end of the key stage, pupils' skills in mental mathematics are very well developed and the very strong emphasis placed on this during the numeracy hour contributes to the above average standards attained.

78. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and consequently the pupils learn successfully. Some excellent teaching was seen. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection where teaching was unsatisfactory in a significant number of lessons. Most lessons are well planned and have a good structure, including the recall of previous learning and the review of learning objectives. As a result, the progress and continuity of experience for the pupils enables them to learn effectively. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and equips the pupils with the correct mathematical vocabulary and the right ways of presenting work. For example, in an excellent lesson on capacity in Key Stage 1, the teacher gave the pupils an accurate definition of capacity and gave them appropriate words, like "half full", to explain clearly their findings. This gave them confidence and ensured their understanding. Assessment is skilfully used to enable teachers to plan just the right work for all abilities in the class. This enables all pupils to learn new skills systematically and confidently and consolidate what they already know. Within this security pupils are prepared to attempt answers and make suggestions which will be valued. The management of pupils is very good and contributes to the good behaviour in most lessons. Sometimes when the pupils' levels of ability are sound teachers do not provide them with apparatus such as cubes or number lines, for instance, to help them with their work. As a result, pupils get correct answers but do not always have the understanding of what they are doing.

79. Where ancillary staff are available, they are used well to support pupils' learning, particularly that of pupils with special educational needs, who are seen to make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. The use of computers to assist learning is effective in both key stages and at all levels of ability, for example, to solve simple number problems in Key Stage 1 and to complete spread sheets showing price reductions at the Co-op in Key Stage 2. Homework is given on a regular basis, which effectively consolidates work done in school. Mathematics makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development through the frequent requirement in lessons to work collaboratively.

80. The curriculum covers all areas of mathematics very well and the strong emphasis on number is appropriate. However, although the pupils are frequently given problems to solve, as in the use and application of mathematics, they are not given appropriate opportunities to devise their own investigations or make their own explorations into number, for instance. The potential to raise standards even higher, therefore, is being missed.

81. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers' planning is closely monitored and

valuable support and guidance is offered to staff. Classroom observations provide constructive feedback and contribute effectively to raising the quality of teaching. Procedures for assessment are very good and information is used well to guide future curriculum planning. Monitoring of pupils' performance is developing well and performance data at the end of each year is analysed efficiently and used to improve pupils' learning. Effective tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school is at an early stage of development. Data are not yet used sufficiently to set challenging targets for the school.

82. Resource provision is satisfactory but the limited accommodation in some of the teaching areas means that they are not readily accessible to the pupils.

SCIENCE

83. As a result of the effectively organised curriculum and, more particularly, good teaching, standards of attainment in science have improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, they are consistent with what is expected nationally, but a particularly large proportion of pupils achieve higher standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above the national expectation and, a high proportion of pupils reach levels of achievement which exceed expectations for this age group. In the assessment tests, results were well above the national average and the average of similar schools and a good indication of the successful teaching. Over the last three years the results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been consistently well above the national average and the rate of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend. The inspection findings are different from the test results because the current Year 2 is not as able in science as the previous year's group. In Year 6, 30 per cent of pupils have needed support for their learning in science. Whilst they do well with support not as many of them are reaching higher than average standards as the 1999 results would indicate.

84. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good at both key stages and as a result the pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school as pupils tackle the even more challenging aspects of science in Key Stage 2. They enjoy their lessons; work hard and they are well behaved. Teachers plan challenging tasks, enabling the pupils to learn effectively through investigations connected to their experience and to the natural world around them. For example, in Year 2 an examination of whether pupils with the longest feet also have the greatest hand spans captured the pupils' interest and improved both their understanding of scientific method and their factual knowledge. Work on the growing of cress in Year 1 also contributed well to the pupils' learning and to their attitudes to work. Both activities made a good contribution to numeracy as the pupils measured, tallied, calculated and drew graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils were similarly motivated by a focus on animal habitats and in particular that of woodlice. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in science and work is planned carefully to meet their needs. Consequently they make good progress in consolidating their learning and building on new ideas.

85. Good attention is paid to developing the pupils' understanding of what constitutes a 'fair test' and this enables them to predict the outcomes of experiments and to sort out which factors are important and which are unimportant when conducting an investigation. One weakness in this otherwise good picture is that pupils are insufficiently involved in raising questions to be addressed through scientific investigations or observations. This over-directed approach inevitably limits the pupils' thinking and the level of their independence.

86. Through skilled questioning, observing and listening, the teachers very effectively assess what the pupils know, and then use this information as a starting point for further

teaching to take the pupils' thinking forward. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for Year 2 pupils. The teacher discovered that a substantial number of pupils thought that in the bar chart they had produced the height of each bar was a measurement in centimetres rather than a number of pupils. She was able to correct this misconception in a discussion with the whole class. The pupils responded well to this ongoing assessment. It fostered interest in the work and helped pupils of all abilities to make progress. It also helped them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, sometimes teachers direct the pupils too much and do not provide enough opportunities for them to organise their own investigations. Enabling them to organise their own lines of enquiry, independent of the teacher could further enhance the pupils' learning.

87. The pupils provide clear and thoughtful explanations for their thinking and this is a reflection of the teachers' confident expositions. The teachers use their good subject knowledge, not only to impart knowledge, but also to ensure that pupils think for themselves and that they learn from one another. The teachers have high expectations for behaviour and standards of work, which helps to keep pupils focused on activities. A good selection of accessible resources is provided for most tasks. This was a most important factor in one lesson for pupils in Year 6 and ensured that pupils worked at an appropriate pace and were well behaved. Pupils use information technology to record findings such as on spreadsheets for example. Science is very well led and managed and a clear plan of improvement is successful in developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

ART

88. Standards in art are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in art as a result of the good quality teaching they receive. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils are working across a wide curriculum that is focused upon the acquisition of knowledge and understanding by observation and analysis of work by a range of different artists. This information is combined with practical activities to enable pupils to produce their own work in a range of media using the themes, textures, colours and effects of such as Monet, Van Gogh, Klee and Kadinsky.

89. Pupils carefully use a pencil, practising shading and sketching techniques because teachers at both key stages systematically teach a good range of skills. Pupils are developing patterning skills, using knowledge of colour and texture, to print from a 'natural' design, using primary colours, a repeating pattern. To match those in the works of famous artists, such as Seurat, Picasso and Monet, the pupils successfully blend colours. In painting, they mix colours and in collage match materials to produce a finished piece of work, in the style found in the work of different artists or to represent their own ideas, using themes from other subjects such as story characters. Pupils work in a range of materials, such as malleable dough, textiles, recyclable materials, such as cardboard, to make jointed puppets and make close observational studies using 10 centimetre frames. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to analyse their own work and that of others in their classes as well as appreciating the work of other artists.

90. Younger pupils especially enjoy being able to "make a mess" with paint and glue. As a result of carefully planned activities pupils concentrate, persevere and take responsibility for their work. Most are able to use resources independently, getting out and tidying away appropriately. In Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoy the opportunity for extended periods of work and are able to use their initiative in selecting colours, brushes and papers. Throughout pupils have positive relationships and are self-critical, being prepared to refine and alter their work to improve.

91. The quality of teaching is good and art is effectively used to support other areas of the curriculum through illustrative drawing of insects and diagrams in geography. Teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging and share this enthusiasm with their pupils. They use an appropriate vocabulary to introduce ideas because of their good subject knowledge and consequently pupils know what they need to do to complete their tasks and learn. Teachers manage the pupils very well and use supporting adults very effectively, carefully briefing them about the tasks and what to expect of the children. The art co-ordinator has a clear understanding of developments in the subject and ensures that resources match the scheme of work appropriately.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Too few lessons in design technology took place during the inspection to make secure judgements about standards and teaching and learning. The limited work available shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress. The school has successfully maintained a full programme of design and technology even though the implementation of national strategies has compromised some of the time available.

93. Pupils obviously enjoy their work, from the limited number of lessons seen and from photographs in displays pupils are proud of their efforts, have good recall of what they have been asked to do and behave well, taking care to keep themselves and those around them safe. They give good regard to hygiene in the food technology area and use tools, such as knives and scissors, hammers and saws carefully and correctly.

94. Teachers are well prepared; planning lessons within the guidelines of the policy, teaching skills through a range of activities designed to increase knowledge and understanding. Procedures for assessment are good. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to develop analytical and self-evaluation skills. Teachers skilfully identify good practice to share to raise standards further.

95. The school is well placed to re-align its design and technology with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Design and technology is well resourced, with equipment trolleys provided for each phase of the school and a food technology area, including cooker and appropriate equipment for small groups to experiment and develop skills further. A good range of learning opportunities is planned to enable the pupils to develop planning, designing and making skills systematically. For example, pupils constructed their own food technology area making safe packets and containers for food. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have been exploring designs for a 'healthy' pizza. This marks an improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected for this age group. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and resources have been improved. Teaching is sound and consequently pupils' achieve at an appropriate rate. Their knowledge and understanding of places and themes is satisfactory. Their knowledge and application of the appropriate geographical skills is sometimes unsatisfactory because teachers do not teach these skills systematically and progressively as specified in the scheme of work.

97. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils talk about where they live and produce booklets "About My House" in which they draw simple maps of their home locations and write about features, like the garden. They made comparisons with their own local area with the island

of Struay in Scotland and using a map, identified features such as hills, rivers and roads. They understand the distinction between human and physical features, like the post office and the sea. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced through the continuing study of "Where in the World is Barnaby Bear?" which has introduced them to the names of European countries and to an idea of the world's continents. In looking at artefacts from various places in Africa, including bowls made of banana leaves from East Africa and a coffee-pot from West Africa, pupils have developed an appreciation of various and contrasting life styles.

98. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils study their locality more closely, learning something of the features, like the towns and rivers, and consider what makes an area pleasant or unattractive. They examine the school grounds, for example, and appreciate the need for maintenance and the scope for possible improvements. Through a topic on "water", the pupils are beginning to understand geographical patterns, like the rain cycle, and recognise physical processes, such as erosion, and how this may shape a landscape. They successfully learn and use appropriate geographical vocabulary related to rivers, including 'source', 'estuary' and 'mouth'. Teachers make effective use of videos to enable pupils make comparisons between water supplies at home and in other parts of the world, such as Ghana. This helps them to recognise the importance of location, like the nearness to a reliable water supply, for example.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Individual lessons are well structured and preparation is good. This ensures that full use is made of the available time. Teachers manage the pupils very well, which results in generally good behaviour and a sustained concentration in lessons. For example, in one lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 sensibly worked in groups, discussed issues as a class and moved chairs and tables without any fuss to watch a video. Artefacts are used effectively to stimulate interest and pupils in Year 2 enjoyed looking at aspects of life in contrasting environments in Africa through handling utensils and tools. Effective use is made of information technology to locate maps of specific areas using a CD-ROM. Teaching, however, is less effective where there is limited subject knowledge and a failure to teach the pupils the relevant geographical skills, in particular with regard to using plans, maps and globes in association with the topics and themes. At times, teaching is too prescriptive and does not give pupils enough opportunity for their personal enquiry.

100. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She knows what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in geography. Planning for geography links well with the detailed schemes of work based on nationally recommended guidelines. Medium-term planning, however, is inadequate and not effectively monitored. As a result there is not appropriate attention to the systematic development of pupils' geographical skills. This is an area for attention if standards are to be raised.

HISTORY

101. It is not possible to make reliable judgements about teaching as only one lesson was taught during the inspection. However, an examination of previous work, and discussion with pupils, indicates that they are making satisfactory progress in both key stages and that standards by the end of each key stage are in line with those expected nationally for this age group. The school has maintained the sound standards identified in the previous inspection.

102. The pupils in Year 1 develop an appropriate sense of chronology as they reflect on the toys they had as babies and select, from a catalogue, toys suitable for children of different ages. In Year 2 the pupils successfully compare the past with the present by

considering historical events and people from different periods. For example they contrast the life and work of Florence Nightingale and a more recent nurse, Mary Seacock who was born into a poor family in Jamaica.

103. The pupils make satisfactory progress in both factual knowledge and the skills of historical enquiry as they pass through Key Stage 2. In Year 6, through an examination of changes to domestic, commercial and industrial life they develop an understanding that different sources of evidence may conflict and they are starting to assess differences and to make effective links between sources. Subject leadership is good and monitoring and evaluation of planning ensures that there is a clear programme of development for history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards in information technology are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement from the last inspection when standards were in line with national expectations. The school has recently revised the scheme of work according to nationally recommended guidelines and information technology is taught as a distinct subject as well as being used to support learning in other subjects. As a result, the pupils are gaining confidence and becoming competent in applications that they can successfully apply in subjects such as science and mathematics. Together with the recent staff training and the efficient monitoring by the subject co-ordinator, these factors have contributed to the rise in pupils' competence.

105. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and pupils learn to control computers using the mouse and the keyboard and they acquire the appropriate skills and confidence for their age. Their skills are effectively refined through work such as the 'dressing teddy' program in the Reception class. By the end of the key stage, pupils retrieve and display information from a CD-ROM when finding out about Africa. Progress is good throughout the school because teachers instruct the pupils clearly and demonstrate effectively in whole-class lessons motivating them to listen attentively and learn well. Consequently the pupils' competence improves further, and by the end of Key Stage 2, they make informed choices on fonts and font size. They readily save and access stored files, add pictures to illustrate their work and rearrange text to produce the style they require. They apply their skills to several subjects, such as geography where they use spreadsheets to display data on water consumption. Pupils enjoy using computers and understand how they can be used to support learning. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils used graphics software effectively to create a shape, move, rotate and resize it to help them create their own art work in the style of Matisse. They are adept at using a digital camera and familiar with accessing the Internet by contributing to the designing of pages of the web site using their paintings of poppies.

106. The good teaching is, in part, the result of recent successful staff training. This has equipped the teachers with a good knowledge of the potential applications of the software. Pupils, therefore, learn the correct terms and procedures and have the skills and confidence to work well. The pupils are managed very well and the teachers have high expectations of them to apply themselves appropriately to set tasks. As a result, they focus closely on the work in hand, sustain high levels of concentration and readily share their knowledge and skills with each other. Teachers are alert to the potential that information technology may have for supporting pupils with special educational needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1, a pupil with limited control of his pencil was given the opportunity to show his knowledge in numeracy by using a mouse to click on to the answers.

107. Information technology is well led by a very enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has been active in ensuring that there are the necessary resources to support the teaching. Teachers

are motivated and are applying their new skills well. Planning is closely monitored and teachers are supported very effectively. A popular lunchtime computer club significantly enhances the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have benefited from a residential visit to an activity centre where they further developed their technological skills.

MUSIC

108. Standards in music are at least in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Singing is above average and at the end of Key Stage 2 standards in composition exceed the levels expected of eleven-year-olds. These above average levels are reached because the specialist teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good and the depth of subject knowledge enables the pupils' to learn a good range of technical skills with percussion. In assemblies the pupils sing enthusiastically and the quality of diction is good and by the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are developing the skills of phrasing their singing and are aware of elements such as pitch and tempo. In Key Stage 1 the pupils learn songs quickly and maintain a steady beat to accompany taped music. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in years 5 and 6 pupils are successfully applying what they have learned when creating their own music because the quality of the learning opportunities are good. Consequently their compositions are sensitive and well constructed.

109. Pupils benefit from sound teaching at Key Stage 1 and good teaching at Key Stage 2 in music. Consequently they respond well in lessons and enjoy them. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers benefit from the expertise of a specialist colleague and the carefully chosen scheme that enables lessons to be effectively planned to meet the needs of pupils across the two key stages. Technical language is used and this contributes to the pupils' ever increasing vocabularies and their understanding of the elements of music such as pitch and tempo and dynamics. Lessons are carefully linked to the topics the pupils study and this motivates their interest and imaginations. Therefore the pupils respond well to challenging tasks. In one year 2 lesson for example, the pupils worked hard to master the complex rhythm of a song and were delighted at their successes. In the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes pupils' created imaginative compositions in response to pictures related to the theme of 'water'. They worked hard to refine and practise their music in preparation for the recording, which would enable them to evaluate and improve their work in later lessons. The teachers very good subject knowledge clearly enhanced the standard of the pupils' work. Throughout the school programmes of work build systematically and pupils are challenged with taxing questions that force them to consider all the elements of music in their compositions.

109. The leadership of the subject is good. The detailed planning and good scheme of work ensures that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The curriculum is enhanced by performances in concerts and events outside school and visiting musicians such as a Steel Pan band. Several pupils have successful instrumental tuition that includes woodwind, strings and keyboard. These pupils perform for the school and their success is effectively celebrated. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' literacy skills and their spiritual and social development. For example, they quickly learn the importance of working together to sing complex songs or compose music. The talent of others and the creativity with which keyboards are used in composition entrances them. The school is very well resourced with instruments of good quality, including several electronic keyboards. The interesting range of instruments from other cultures, in particular the good variety of African and Indian drums, marks a significant improvement in resources since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Standards are above average at the end of both key stages and the school has maintained the standards identified by the last inspection. These good standards are the result of successful teaching, which ensures that the pupils learn well, behave sensibly and develop positive attitudes to the subject.

111. In Key Stage 1 teaching very good. The pupils learn well, work hard and make good progress as a result of the enthusiasm of the teachers and the lively and well-structured teaching. Progress is in part attributable to strong subject knowledge and the high expectations, which the teachers have of the pupils. For example, in dance these factors lead the pupils to develop good body movements, to create interesting and well-controlled shapes and to respond appropriately to rhythm. Similarly when working on ball skills they improve their abilities to throw, bounce and catch, and they become more adept at keeping their eyes on the ball. The good teaching also ensures that the pupils behave sensibly and concentrate on the current task. In all lessons the teachers carefully observe the pupils and motivate them by assessing performance, making encouraging comments, asking them to demonstrate and giving advice. These factors effectively foster good relationships and trust between the teachers and the pupils.

112. In Key Stage 2 the teaching is good and teachers have considerable confidence in the subject. They build successful relationships with the pupils and expect a great deal of them in lessons. The pupils respond with real enthusiasm and work hard putting considerable physical effort into activities. Where there are pupils with Individual Education Plans for behaviour problems the pace and demand of the activity are effectively used to combat inappropriate behaviour. A strong emphasis on the teaching of the skills associated, for example with relay racing, is reflected in the good progress made by pupils of all abilities. The teachers use ongoing assessment and pupil demonstrations effectively to help pupils improve their performance. Insufficient opportunities are planned for the pupils to assess their own performance and that of others. This limits the extent of their intellectual involvement, and as a consequence, the pupils are less independent and do not use their initiative.

113. A strong programme of clubs, sporting competitions and other activities outside of the school day such as a residential, outdoor adventure visit for pupils from Years 5 and 6 enhances the overall good picture. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Educational assistants, parents, professional footballers and professional basketball players all contribute effectively to the extra-curricular activities and to the good standards achieved by the pupils. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was well supported when an Indian dancer visited the school. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which includes swimming from Year 2. The subject is well managed by a new and enthusiastic co-ordinator and appropriate plans are in place for further developments.