

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Norton

Stourbridge

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103849

Headteacher: Mrs Beale

Reporting inspector: Mr R McGovern
10541

Dates of inspection: 12-16 June 2000

Inspection number: 190120

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Roman Catholic, Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lea Vale Road Norton Stourbridge
Postcode:	DY8 2DT
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev D McGough
Date of previous inspection:	28-31 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr R McGovern	Registered inspector	Geography History	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Mr B Eyre	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Foster	Team Inspector	Science Art Design & Technology	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs
Mr P Belfield	Team inspector	Music English	Children under five English as an additional language The curriculum
Mr B MacKinney	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education	The quality of teaching

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary school has 237 pupils on roll and is larger than most primary schools. The children start in the reception class in the September or the February after their fourth birthday. Their attainment on entry covers a wide range but is generally above that found nationally. The school has 5.3 per cent of pupils who are eligible for free schools meals; this is below average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs and there are fifteen pupils at stages 3 – 5 of the Code of Practice. Most of the pupils are of white ethnic origin; two pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school has strong links with the parish and the local community and the pupils are drawn from a wide area. The headteacher has only been in post since September 1999. The school has undergone a major building and refurbishment programme over the last twelve months. Additional classrooms have been built but the school has worked hard to ensure that the work has caused only minimum disruption to the children's education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The pupils achieve well; results in the national tests are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at age 7 and they are well above the national average at age 11 in science and above average in English and mathematics. This is largely because there is good quality teaching in most of the classes. There is a strong commitment to improvement from the staff and governors. The headteacher is a very effective manager and has the support of the governing body and staff. The school recognises its strengths and areas for development and is working hard to achieve its targets. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in the National Curriculum tests are high.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are very good. They are keen to learn and this makes a big contribution to the good progress they make in lessons.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The staff know the pupils well and show a high level of care for them. Relationships are very good.
- Over half the teaching is good or better.
- The headteacher is an effective leader. Recent developments in the school have been well managed and the headteacher, staff and governors have a shared commitment to improvement.

What could be improved

- The way in which the literacy hour is planned and taught.
- The demands made on the most able pupils.
- The school's procedures for checking the impact of teaching.
- The information the parents get about the work their children do, their children's progress and the school's expectations about homework.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Taking all three subjects together, standards in English, mathematics and science at age 11 continue to improve in line with the national trend. Standards and resources in information technology (IT) have improved considerably. The school responded well to the key issue to improve the written reports to parents about their children's progress, but the report format has not been popular with parents. These changes have been evaluated by the headteacher and, as part of the school's continuing improvement programme, further changes will be made to reports in 2001. There has been a review of the work of subject co-ordinators but their role is still underdeveloped. They have too few opportunities to monitor pupils' learning across the school and their work is not linked to a system of appraisal and target setting. The school hall has been extended and two classrooms have been built.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	B	D
Mathematics	B	A	B	C
Science	A	A	A	B

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

These results relate to those pupils who left the school in July 1999. They show that when compared with all schools, results in the national tests at age 11 are well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics. In science and mathematics a much higher percentage of pupils reach the higher level 5. The inspectors judge that there is room for improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English. The targets set by the school for pupils in national tests at age eleven are realistic and have been met; there is room for more challenging targets for English. The results in the national tests at age 7 are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection evidence supports the view that standards are high and that the pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1. This is particularly evident in their number work and in their reading. The pupils' progress is sustained and built upon in Key Stage 2 and this results in high achievement in English, mathematics and science at age 11. Overall, however, the teaching could make greater demands on the more able pupils and they could do better in their writing and in some aspects of mental calculation.

Standards in Information and Communication Technology have improved considerably since the last inspection. The pupils' progress in history, geography, art, music and physical education is good and by the time they leave the school, their attainment is above that found nationally. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy their work and are very keen to improve. In most of the lessons they concentrate well and take pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are polite, kind and considerate. They show self-discipline and good work habits when they are not directly supervised.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils show great respect and care for property and each other. They work and play together very well and enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Above average. The pupils are keen to come to school.

They are friendly and helpful. The pupils are clear about the school's rules and they respond readily to the high expectations set by teachers.

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.

The quality of teaching is good. In 93 per cent of the lessons, the teaching was satisfactory or better. The teaching was good or better in 59 per cent of the lessons and very good or excellent in 10 per cent of lessons. In 6 per cent of the lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory lessons were in Key Stage 2. Overall, the good teaching in English and mathematics enables the pupils to achieve well. Strengths in the teaching include the teachers' high expectations of the pupils' behaviour. This results in a good rate of learning. In most of the lessons the teachers plan interesting and lively activities that capture the pupils' interest. In the best lessons these build very successfully on the pupils' previous work. Well-directed questions promote the pupils' thinking and accelerate their rate of learning, particularly in English. In the weaker lessons the work is not well matched to the needs of all of the pupils. Too often it fails to challenge the most able pupils. This results in some underachievement, particularly in writing and aspects of mental arithmetic. Good and very good teaching was observed in both key stages.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad and balanced curriculum is in place. Good use is made of visits and extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The work the pupils need to do is clearly set out and the pupils are well supported by classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A notable strength of the school. The staff are very good role models and they have very clear expectations of the pupils' behaviour. They ensure that the pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The pupils' spiritual development is fostered very effectively, particularly through music and through rewarding their achievements. Cultural development is sound with notable strengths in drama and visits beyond the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A very high level of care is provided. The pupils learn in a supportive atmosphere where their welfare is given a high priority. Their personal development is monitored well. The school effectively identifies how well pupils are doing, but sometimes focuses more on average and below average attainment and does not have high enough expectations of the more able pupils.

The quality and range of the curriculum is good. Literacy and numeracy are given a high priority and the curriculum is enriched by interesting work in history and geography. The new computers are being used well. The staff show great care and concern for all of the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher manage the school very effectively and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. It has been a demanding year for the school with changes in leadership, staff absence and a major building programme. The disruption has been managed well and has not resulted in any discernible lack of progress in the pupils' work. The headteacher has high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour and these are shared by all staff. The school's ethos rewards achievement and learning. The role of the subject co-ordinator requires further development so that the school is in a good position to continue to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are active and knowledgeable and work hard on the school's behalf. They provide good support for the headteacher and the staff. All statutory requirements are met. They critically review expenditure plans and rigorously pursue best value. Value for money evaluations of spending and its impact on learning, particularly the high spending on staff who do not have a class teacher responsibility, are under-developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good in analysing the overall strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school is beginning to use data to decide what needs to be done to raise standards. More needs to be done to check the quality of teaching and to provide a clear direction for all staff about how they should plan their work.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial resources are managed efficiently and effectively. The accommodation has improved significantly and is well used. Learning resources are satisfactory.

The staffing levels are high but the staff who do not have a class teacher responsibility are not used as effectively as they might be, particularly in Key Stage 2. The accommodation is good. Resources are good for information technology and adequate for other subjects.

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 high standards attained. • The expectation that the children will work hard and do their best. • The very good behaviour. • The high level of care and commitment shown by staff. • The high quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some feel that the provision of homework is inconsistent. • That the information about what is being taught each term could be improved. • That the written reports to parents do not give a clear picture of the children's strengths, weaknesses and how parents might help them to improve.

The inspection team agrees with all of the positive comments made by parents and also with the view expressed at the parents' meeting that the school should improve the reports to parents; ensure greater consistency in the provision of homework, and provide more information about what is being taught. The school has acknowledged these issues and they are being addressed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The pupils' performance in the 1999 national tests at age 11 show that when compared with all schools, results in the national tests were well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. This variability is largely due to the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5. The inspectors judge that there is room for improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels, particularly in English and mathematics. The targets set by the school for pupils in the national tests at age eleven are realistic and have been met, but there is room for higher expectation of the more able pupils, particularly in English.
2. The pupils' performance on the 1999 national tests at age 7 was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and is very high when compared with similar schools.
3. Inspection evidence supports the view that standards are high and that the pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. This is particularly evident in their number work and in their reading. The pupils' progress is sustained and built upon very effectively in Year 3 and the work in this class is of a high standard. The pupils' writing develops well. By the time they leave the school, the good teaching of English, science and mathematics results in high achievement. Overall, however, the teaching could make greater demands on the more able pupils and they could do better in their writing and some aspects of mental calculation.
4. The pupils' ability to speak and listen is well above that found nationally. They start school with well developed speaking and listening skills. Whether listening to or discussing a story, analysing a text or giving an opinion, most pupils make good progress and they learn to speak out confidently and to state their opinions clearly. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in speaking and listening are well above average and the pupils have progressed well in their ability to speak confidently to a range of listeners. They have opportunities to develop their confidence in public speaking in assemblies and they have a refreshing confidence and maturity in their conversations with adults. Throughout the school class discussions are an important part of the literacy hour and they are a very effective tool for the development of the pupils' vocabulary and self-confidence. By the time they leave the school the pupils are able to follow instructions, contribute very effectively to class discussions and to both pose and answer questions. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language quickly develop competence in speaking.
5. The pupils' attainment in reading is well above average at age 7 and 11. The skills are well taught in the literacy hour and the pupils make good progress in lessons. The school has a significant number of highly competent and well-motivated readers. Many pupils discuss their reading books thoughtfully, showing an awareness of events and characters. Throughout the school there is an enthusiasm for reading, and boys and girls show an equal interest in fiction and non-fiction material. Relatively few of the pupils experience difficulties in learning to read and the work of the staff and volunteers in supporting these pupils is well managed and effective.
6. The reading partnership with parents is well developed and the regular reading homework makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved.
7. The quality and range of writing across the school could be better. In a number of classes there is a good range of writing and very good links are made with other subjects. The pupils write at length and are aware of purpose, audience, style and organisation. In other classes there is less

attention given to analysing texts and demonstrating how to write for different purposes. Where it is done well, in Year 3 and Year 6, there is a wider range of writing in the pupils' books and the quality of their work reflects the very clear teaching emphasis on this aspect of writing.

8. The early skills of writing are systematically taught. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 quickly learn to form their letters and early in Key Stage 2 they are able to join their letters and observe correct spacing. However, handwriting is not taught consistently across the school and there is no policy in place to guide the teachers. Standards are variable and by the end of Key Stage 2 a significant minority of pupils do not have a fluent and legible style. The presentation of their work could be better.
9. Standards in mathematics are high and the pupils are making good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils know and understand number bonds to 20 and they are confident in their use. They confidently add and subtract numbers mentally to twenty and recognise odd and even numbers. Most pupils are able to count in multiples of two, five and ten. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure understanding of place value to beyond a thousand. They have experienced work across all the attainment targets. The majority are working at level 4 with a significant percentage at level 5. In Year 6, the pupils are able to complete mental calculations in 1000's, looking for factors of the large numbers. The work is demanding and well paced and, despite the large number in the class, the pupils feel that attention is paid to their needs.
10. In some of the numeracy lessons the mental '*starter*' sessions lack pace and challenge; they emphasise mental calculation but do little to teach mental strategy. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were asked to share and compare their methods of calculating a mental problem, and to try out various methods recommended by their teacher or their classmates. This good practice was not evident in all lessons. In a number of lessons the approach to solving problems was led by the teacher and tackled in the same way by all of the pupils. There was no opportunity for the pupils to work the problem out for themselves. In discussion with a number of pupils they used paper and pencil methods to solve problems they were capable of doing in their heads.
11. The pupils make good progress in their learning in science and by the ages of 7 and 11 attain standards that are above the national average. They are attentive to their teachers and contribute confidently in lessons. They work well on their own and in small groups when, for example, in a Year 6 lesson they try to find out how to make bulbs light up with equal power. They use their knowledge to create a parallel circuit, describing it accurately as, "two separate circuits wired in series."
12. At Key Stage 1 the pupils make good progress in their learning based on the good quality of the teaching they receive. In Year 1, the pupils study leaves and identify the different characteristics of each. They accurately classify them according to shape, size, smell and colour. When they reach Year 2 the pupils study electricity and identify and label which appliances use which electrical source. They draw diagrams to show which bulbs will light up in a simple circuit. By the age of seven the pupils know about the life-cycle of frogs and are clear about their development through the various stages.
13. The pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 they conduct experiments to discover which materials are magnetic and which are non-magnetic. In Year 5 the quality of the teaching and learning is good. The pupils learn about the organs in the body and why they need a balanced diet to maintain good health. They are able to talk about the interdependence of human life and plant life and the effect of human life and lifestyle on health and on the planet. In Year 6, the pupils' prior learning is used very effectively to sustain rapid gains in learning and the pupils confidently describe some of the experiments that they have conducted, explaining their methods, results and conclusions. There is some good use of mathematics and data but the teaching could make greater demands on the more able pupils in this aspect of the work.

14. The work in Information and Communication Technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. The new computers are having a significant impact on the work of the whole school. The pupils' progress in history, geography, art, music and physical education is good and by the time they leave the school, their attainment is above that found nationally. The pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good. This is a notable strength of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The pupils are consistently helpful and well mannered. They have positive attitudes towards each other and adults. They greet each other and their teachers courteously when they meet in the morning and they settle quickly and quietly into their classroom routines. The children under five have settled well and have quickly learnt what is expected of them. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and the whole-class teaching in the literacy and numeracy lessons. They approach other classroom activities confidently and with good levels of commitment. The teachers' interest in the pupils' welfare and the example they set is reflected in the high standards of behaviour observed.
16. The pupils' behaviour is very good and they are most enthusiastic about their work when they are given challenging tasks to do. In the good and very good lessons they are willing to persevere and take pride in their achievements. These qualities were particularly evident in an English lesson in Year 3. The pupils were asked to become '*word detectives*' and they responded by working collaboratively to tease out answers and the meaning of words. In all lessons the children show a willingness to learn. The pupils' behaviour is managed well by most of the teachers. There have been no exclusions; the majority of parents support the efforts the school makes to promote good behaviour.
17. The pupils' personal development is very good. The older pupils undertake a range of tasks both in and out of the classrooms. The older boys and girls support the younger children in their play and work sensitively with the younger children as *reading partners*. All of the pupils develop caring friendships and they are keen to help and support each other. The older pupils assist in setting out the hall and act as prefects who greatly assist in the smooth running of the school. All of the older pupils talk confidently about their work and their interests and respond in a mature way to the many opportunities they are given to become involved in the daily routines of the school.
18. Attendance is good and there is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive on time for their lessons and settle quickly to their task. There are occasions, however, when teaching periods overrun; as a result the lesson objectives become difficult to achieve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good. In 96 per cent of the lessons, the teaching is satisfactory or better. Teaching is good or better in 59 per cent of the lessons and is very good or excellent in 18 per cent of lessons. In 6 per cent of the lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. The good quality of the teaching leads to the high standards at the end of each key stage. In the majority of lessons the teachers have a clear understanding of what they expect the pupils to achieve. There is good teaching in most classes.
20. The good quality teaching has been the key to sustaining standards since the last inspection and has resulted in the good progress made by the pupils in most of the lessons. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall, although in some lessons the expectations of more able pupils could be higher. The teachers are enthusiastic about their work and communicate this to the pupils. The arrangements for involving parents in their children's learning at home vary from

class-to-class. In those classes where homework is judged to be most effective the pupils are clear about what they are to do at home; how their homework relates to their work in school and how and when it will be marked. In Key Stage 1 the children regularly take their reading books home. This is appreciated by the parents and it makes a very significant contribution to the progress the pupils make.

21. The teaching of the children who are under five in the reception class is good. The teacher and the classroom assistant work very well as a team and they give a high priority to the development of the children's language, literacy and numeracy. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of the ways in which young children learn and are sensitive to their individual needs. The lessons are conducted in a calm, orderly manner and the children are managed very well. There is an appropriate and stimulating range of learning activities for the children. The response by the children is very positive; they are interested in their work and concentrate well. This was evident in a lesson when the children were taught letter sounds and sight words. The teacher made very good use of a range of resources to give the children opportunities to hear and repeat the initial sounds and to link it with writing letters and words. The planning and assessment procedures are good and they inform the setting of learning targets for each child. As a result, the children are well motivated and they make good progress.
22. Literacy and numeracy are generally well taught throughout the school. Where the teaching is at its best the teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and the National Frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy and this is demonstrated in the range and the quality of the work that is produced by pupils. The teachers are clear about what the pupils are to learn. They build very successfully on previous work and the pupils are given challenging tasks.
23. The teachers organise pupils in a variety of ways, but most lessons begin with carefully directed whole class teaching. This is followed by small group and individual work. The pupils are required to work at an appropriate pace and the teachers make it clear to them what they are going to learn. The teachers use skilful questioning to assess and extend the pupils' understanding. These qualities are particularly evident in the work in Year 3 and Year 6. In English, in Year 3, the teacher prepared her lesson carefully. Her good subject knowledge ensured that she was clear about what all the pupils were to learn and the demands that were to be made on the different groups of pupils in the class. Her questions were carefully targeted and allowed all of the pupils to make a contribution to the discussion of the text. By the end of the lesson all of the pupils had a good understanding of verbs and adverbs and were confident to ask and answer questions about their work. The infectious enthusiasm of the teacher in Year 6 ensures that the children commit themselves to their work and approach their tasks with great enthusiasm. This is particularly evident in science where the standards achieved and the pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding within lessons is very good.
24. In the weaker lessons the teachers do not match the work to the pupils' abilities; too often all of the pupils are set the same work. This results in a slower rate of learning, particularly for more able pupils. The pupils' written work varies in quality and in the way in which it is marked. The unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection was characterised by one or more of the following: unclear objectives, poor use of time and tasks which confused the pupils. The work in the pupils' books shows patchy progress. In most lessons, however, the teachers set high standards in work and behaviour. They respect the pupils, who in turn respect each other. The pupils feel comfortable in the classrooms, which gives them confidence in their ability to complete the tasks set.
25. The classroom assistants and teachers generally work well together. The classroom assistants are most successful when they are well briefed about the objectives for the lesson and understand the part they play in it. Good use is made of outside agencies such as the local authority *Sportslink* scheme to support the teaching of physical education.

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

26. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is interpreted in a stimulating way and the school plans to cover all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, sex education and drugs awareness. There are some weaknesses in the planning and the way it caters for the interests of the most able pupils but all of the pupils benefit from the lively lessons and make progress. Fundamentally, the children want to attend; they enjoy school and have a high regard for their teachers. There are strengths in the way the school teaches mathematics, science and music but in English, the teachers' planning is not always clearly linked to the National Literacy Framework. The pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills are very well developed during the literacy hour but more could be done to improve the quality and range of the pupils' writing. The curriculum for the children under five is well planned and covers all of the areas of learning. It provides a good foundation for the pupils' entry to the National Curriculum. The teacher and classroom support assistant plan a good programme of work and give appropriate emphasis to developing the children's reading, writing and understanding of number. Whilst many activities are directed by the teachers, there is a good balance between free-choice activities with appropriate provision for imaginative play. The curriculum ensures that children under five achieve well in the Reception class.
27. In mathematics, the numeracy lesson is being taught in an interesting and largely challenging way and this is encouraging higher achievement, particularly in the weaker aspects of mental calculation. However, on occasions the work for the more able pupils could be more demanding. In science, the work is practical and results in some good work in using the computer to record results and in the writing up of experiments. The work in music is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides good support for extra-curricular activities to promote music-making and singing. The school also employs a pianist to support and develop the work in music. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development.
28. The school has recently devised a curriculum framework that sets out when subjects will be taught and what will be covered in each of the topics. A number of teachers have begun to incorporate the model schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) into their planning but, to date, the school's guidance about how the schemes are to be implemented is limited. Consequently, the teachers' medium-term plans vary in quality. A number are comprehensive, others lack detail. The class timetables are mostly devised by individual teachers and, occasionally, there is too much or too little time allocated to subjects such as English and mathematics to allow the planned work to be taught. Some lessons and assemblies overrun and this is an added pressure on lesson time and the extent to which lesson objectives are met.
29. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development. Sound provision is made for their cultural development. The school's approach is based firmly on the Catholic ethos and the principle that all of the children have a right to learn and to make progress. The headteacher and staff ensure that the rules are well understood and adhered to. The pupils are proud of their own good behaviour and are able to apply the rules and expectations to their work inside and outside the classroom. In one telling example, one boy from Year 6 declared, "I like coming to school, the teachers are fair and they treat us with respect."
30. The good teaching, purposeful lessons and interesting assemblies make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. In assemblies time is given to celebrating the pupils' personal achievements. In the Literacy Hour, the teachers receive and value the pupils' ideas about the texts that are being studied and, through skilful questioning, encourage them to listen carefully and reflect upon each other's ideas. The high profile of music in the school allows

boys and girls to become involved in music-making and to experience the joy that comes from singing. Musical performances by individuals and groups of pupils form a part of class assemblies.

31. Work in art, history, geography and music reinforces the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own cultural heritage and provides them with insight into other cultures and religions. The pupils are given opportunities to perform in musical plays and enjoy the work of visiting drama groups, musicians and performers. Many of these visiting groups are used to enrich and enliven the topics that are being taught. The school makes very good use of local amenities and visits to historic houses and sites, galleries and museums to enrich the pupils' learning.
32. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including mixed team sports, for example, rugby, football, cricket, netball and athletics and also opportunities for music and drama. Residential and day visits are also organised to enable the pupils to experience more adventurous outdoor activities. These contribute to the pupils' social development and many of the activities bring the children in contact with the wider community, enabling them to compete and to win and to take pride in their achievements. Access to the Internet and the opportunities it offers for immediate links with other schools and organisations is at an early stage but it is developing. The pupils have written letters to pupils in other schools and had video conferencing via the Internet. Older pupils are helping to set up a school website.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a very high level of care for the pupils and there are good procedures for ensuring their welfare and guidance. All adults in the school know the pupils very well and they are sensitive to their needs.
34. The procedures for monitoring and promoting high standards of behaviour are very good. The school's rules and codes of conduct are well understood by the pupils and they are fully aware of the consequences of their actions and how their behaviour affects others. The behaviour and discipline policy is implemented consistently throughout the school and, in combination with the Catholic ethos, is very effective in preventing bullying or oppressive behaviour. This very good feature is evident throughout the school both in and out of the classrooms. Playtimes are pleasant social occasions.
35. The local child protection procedures are fully implemented and staff are aware of the need to be vigilant and to report any concerns to the child protection co-ordinator. The school's health and safety procedures are good. A nominated governor supports the work of a member of staff in checking procedures. Several members of staff have undergone appropriate first aid training. Children are looked after well if they have accidents or feel unwell but there is no room for the treatment of injuries or where the pupils can rest. Fire drills and other safety arrangements are well managed.
36. The monitoring of the pupils' academic progress is satisfactory overall. The school is beginning to use the results of its assessments to help it take action to improve achievement, but this analysis of data is at a relatively early stage. The teachers know their pupils well. They are able to talk about their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and about their personal development. This understanding is not always used to plan work that is well matched to the pupils' interests and abilities. In the weaker lessons all of the pupils are given the same work. It may start with easier tasks and gradually become more demanding, but too frequently the work lacks challenge for the more able pupils. Parents shared their concern about this aspect of the school's work at their meeting and in their response to the questionnaire.
37. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' attendance are good. Registers and admissions records are maintained accurately. Registers are marked promptly and analysed for patterns of absence. Some pupils arrive late in the mornings and not all of the lessons start on time and they overrun.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has developed a strong partnership with parents and works hard to sustain and strengthen the links. Parents have very positive views of the school. Those parents who attended the meeting with the inspectors or who completed the questionnaires expressed confidence in the school. They identify the school's many strengths and point out areas where they feel improvements can be made. The parents very much appreciate the ethos and high moral values the school promotes. They would like to be better informed about their children's progress and how to help with homework. The approachability and helpfulness of teachers is highly regarded.
39. The information to parents about their children's learning through written reports was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. The school responded very positively to this and implemented a system of computer-generated reports. The parents have mixed feelings about the quality of these reports and the extent to which they give a clear view of their child's relative achievement and how they might help them to improve. The inspectors find them to be broadly satisfactory, but share the parents' concerns that too much of the report is devoted to a description of the work that has been covered and there is too little comment on what the pupils have actually learned. It is unclear whether the pupils' attainments have matched or exceeded the teacher's expectations or what the future targets for learning are.
40. The parents' and teachers' association is a lively and effective organisation doing much to enhance the ethos of this community school. Fundraising activities and social events are wide ranging and successful. For example parents, teachers and pupils recently organised a car washing event to raise funds for the residential trip to Edale. Funds have been raised to buy a piano and to provide a new photocopier. Many parents help in classrooms and around the school. The parents are keen to be involved in their children's learning at home. Many feel that the school's homework policy is applied inconsistently and they receive too little information about what is being taught. The inspectors agree with this. The school intends to review this aspect of its work and plans to ensure greater consistency in its procedures next year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year. She manages the school very effectively. She has established herself as a calm and confident leader who values all of the hard work done by the staff, pupils and parents on behalf of the children. The school has had a very difficult year. The major building works have caused considerable upheaval and, combined with staff absence, this has been a major management task. The headteacher has been ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The changes have been managed well and the school is now ready to benefit from the new classrooms and resources. The work in the pupils' books indicates that the disruption has not resulted in any discernible lack of progress in their learning.
42. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has been done since the last inspection but it is not used effectively as part of an appraisal process or to set targets for improvement. The observations are not underpinned by explicit criteria and, as a result, the headteacher is unable to evaluate the impact of the monitoring on improving the quality of teaching. All of the teachers have received training for the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies but the quality of the teaching, particularly in the Literacy Hour varies from class-to-class. The work of the subject co-ordinators is still under-developed. Appraisal and performance management is not used to set targets for staff with management responsibilities. Teachers who are new to the school are well supported and quickly develop their confidence and a

willingness to contribute to the school's positive ethos. The school has the potential to be an effective provider of initial teacher training.

43. The headteacher, staff and governors share a commitment to improve the school and to achieving the school's aims. The governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their monitoring of the school's performance is sensitive and well judged. They respond well to the concerns of parents and have very positive relationships with staff and children. Future developments are clearly set out in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The plan is clearly set out and is intended to guide developments in the first year of the new headteacher. This is appropriate and the headteacher and the governors are already working on a long-term plan.
44. Overall the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and responded quickly to the three key issues. Standards in English, mathematics and science continue to improve in line with the national trend. Standards and resources in information technology (IT) have improved considerably. The school responded well to the need to improve written reports to parents but has found that the computer generated methods it adopted less than successful. This is being reviewed with changes to be implemented in 2001. There has been a review of the work of subject co-ordinators but their role is still underdeveloped. They have too few opportunities to monitor pupils' learning across the school and their work is not guided by an appropriate performance management or appraisal structure.
45. Daily routines and administrative procedures are very well managed by the secretary and headteacher. The secretary oversees the day-to-day computer system and ensures that items are purchased and checked effectively. There are good routines in place to monitor the school's spending. In terms of the good progress that pupils make and the good quality of the teaching, the school provides good value for money.
46. The overall number, qualifications, and experience of teachers and classroom assistants are well matched to the demands of the curriculum, including the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. The staffing in the reception class is appropriate and meets the needs of the children who are under five. The school has 2.3 teachers (including the headteacher) who do not have responsibility as a class teacher. The number of pupils in each of the Key Stage 2 classes is higher than average. The school uses the unattached staff to teach each of the classes so that the class teachers have some preparation time. Overall, however, the arrangements are not judged to be effective in reducing the class sizes or reducing the range of attainment in each class. The class teachers have some preparation time but the support is not effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. It does not give satisfactory value for money.
47. The school's accommodation is good. There are plans for improved access for wheelchairs. The classrooms are of adequate size for the younger children but they are very cramped for the large classes in Key Stage 2 and this limits the range of practical and group work that can be done. The playgrounds are a good size and there are number of quiet and shaded areas. The school has direct access to a well maintained community playing field and this is used well for physical education and games. Resources are adequate in all subjects and very good in information technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to raise further the standards and quality of education provided, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Review the implementation of the literacy hour and:

- agree a common format for lesson plans;
 - provide opportunities for staff to observe good practice;
 - ensure a clearer focus on the teaching of writing and handwriting.
- (paragraph numbers: 57-64)

(2) Raise the quality of the teaching to the level of the best by:

- ensuring that teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn in lessons;
 - sharing the learning objectives with the pupils;
 - ensuring a closer match of work to the pupils' abilities and, in particular, providing greater challenge in the work for the more able pupils;
 - monitoring the quality and impact of the teaching on the pupils' learning;
- (paragraph numbers 24, 42)

(3) Provide parents with regular information about what is being taught, their children's progress and the school's policy on homework.

(paragraph numbers 20, 38-40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	16	41	33	6	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	R - Yr 6	
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	237	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	R - Yr 6	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	63	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		99	19	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	34	34	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (92)	94 (97)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	86

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	34	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (96)	94 (96)	98 (96)
	National	82 (81)	86 (98)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		99	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	19	20	22
	Total	30	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (79)	83 (79)	92 (88)
	National	70 (64)	69 (57)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	33	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (79)	86 (82)	95 (94)
	National	67 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

Percentages 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	
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
	£
Total income	424,073
Total expenditure	436,601
Expenditure per pupil	1,797
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,962
Balance carried forward to next year	17,434

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	237
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60.0	36.0	3.0	1.0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57.0	39.0	2.0	2.0	1.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44.0	53.0	1.0	0	2.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25.0	48.0	16.0	7.0	4.0
The teaching is good.	57.0	36.0	4.0	1.0	3.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35.0	54.0	10.0	1.0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62.0	30.0	4.0	3.0	1.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56.0	41.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
The school works closely with parents.	37.0	52.0	8.0	2.0	1.0
The school is well led and managed.	46.0	45.0	7.0	2.0	1.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54.0	44.0	1.0	0	1.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29.0	38.0	25.0	2.0	7.0

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

49. The children are admitted to the reception class in September and February after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection seven children under the age of five were being taught in one class. The results of the baseline assessment indicate that the children enter Reception with a wide range of attainment but for the majority of children it is above that found nationally. The inspection findings indicate that most of the children are likely to exceed the desirable learning outcomes for pupils entering compulsory education in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and they achieve well. In creative development and physical development they are likely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes.

Personal and social development

50. The children make good progress in their personal and social development. Good relationships are established between the children, their families and the staff. The daily routines and rules form the basis for developing the children's understanding of the organisation of the school and the wider community. Teaching is good in this area of learning and enables the children to grow in confidence and to use their initiative. An example of this is the way in which the children clear away equipment at the end of each lesson. They develop positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with adults and other children. There is a secure and caring atmosphere where the contributions of all the children are valued. The teacher and the other staff use praise and encouragement and this contributes to the growth of the children's self-esteem. When the children make mistakes or, when they do not succeed with tasks, they are encouraged to understand that they cannot always get things right first time and that they should persevere. The children are encouraged to think about their actions and to see how these affect other people. They listen carefully to the adults and concentrate well when the whole class is gathered together. When they are working in smaller groups they share resources sensibly, concentrate on the task they have been set and demonstrate a good level of independence.

Language and literacy

51. The children achieve well in this area of learning. When all of the class is gathered together the children listen carefully to the teacher. There is a very clear emphasis on developing the children's language and literacy. The quality of teaching is good and the skills of speaking and listening are developed well in teacher directed activities using appropriate strategies from the National Literacy Strategy. Good opportunities are provided for imaginative play in the 'Home' area that is set up outside the classroom. The children listen to the teacher and to each other and take turns to speak. They are confident when speaking to adults and in front of a larger group and they are taught to speak in more formal situations when talking to the whole class. Early reading skills are developed through the sharing of books and stories and the effective home-school reading partnership. The teacher regularly hears the children read. They 'read' a book using the pictures and their own knowledge of the story. They recognise many letters and their sounds. They learn that writing conveys meaning and are able to make predictions about events in the 'Big Books' which are used very effectively by the teacher to engender a love of stories and to teach the shape and sounds of letters and words. More able children are beginning to recognise familiar words and can read simple stories. The children enjoy books and are provided with an appropriate choice. They handle them well and turn the pages carefully. The children achieve well in their writing skills with many children writing letters correctly and using their phonic knowledge to write words and sentences. The teacher provides many opportunities for the children to write and provides a good range of word banks and sentence makers to help them.

Mathematics

52. In mathematics the children are making good progress. Through small group work and class activities they extend their mathematical language and learn to count, sort and measure. The teacher and the classroom assistant ensure that the children become familiar with mathematical language through stories, rhymes, discussions and activities. The quality of teaching is good and songs, rhymes and mathematical games are used effectively to develop the children's mathematical understanding. The teacher has high expectations and takes every opportunity to introduce numbers and counting into activities. The children can name simple shapes and sort and classify objects by colour, shape and size. Most children are able to count and order numbers up to twenty and identify which number is missing from a sequence of numbers. They are beginning to recognise patterns in every day things and can devise repeating patterns using beads, cubes and counters.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. The scrutiny of the teacher's planning and the children's previous work indicates a wide range of work in this area of learning. The children are developing an awareness of places in and beyond their own environment. They are taken on walks to compare seasonal changes in the nearby woods. They cover topics on *Growth*, *Autumn* and *Ourselves* and develop their understanding of maps and directional language. The children have an appropriate understanding of the past and the present and understand chronology in relation to their birthdays and families. They study electricity and can locate appliances around the school. They are aware of how these appliances are used and of the dangers of electricity.
54. Topics such as *Moving Around* help to develop the children's scientific knowledge and understanding simple forces as they find out what makes a toy move. Hand-lenses are used to study similarities and differences in objects. The children solve simple problems by making and modifying models and can use a variety of small constructional equipment. They cut, paste and stick as they create their models out of card and paper. They learn to use the keyboard and the mouse to operate a number of different computer programs. The quality of teaching is good and the teacher plans effectively to cover all of the different aspects of this area of learning.

Creative development

55. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and the children have appropriate opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shape. They are making steady progress in this aspect of their creative development. They paint repeating patterns and make cardboard clowns with moving limbs. The work is linked to topics, for example, when the children create clay models of a mouse from the nursery rhyme *Hickory Dickory Dock*. The children use pencils and crayons well and produce well-proportioned drawings. The children are encouraged to listen carefully to music and have opportunities to make their own music using percussion instruments. They respond well to music and join in confidently with action rhymes and songs. During imaginative play sessions the children demonstrate good co-operative skills when working together.

Physical development

56. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. The school has made determined efforts to overcome the lack of facilities for outdoor play by making good use of the equipment in the hall and by using the small area outside the classroom. In the lessons in the hall the children are able to use the apparatus. However, they do not have daily access to a range of equipment in a secure outdoor space to develop their co-operative play, strong movements and confidence. The school has few wheeled vehicles or other large outdoor equipment to meet the children's needs in this aspect of their physical development. Their manipulative skills are developed through modeling and working with the small construction equipment. They use pencils and other tools very confidently. The children enjoy physical activity and respond well.

ENGLISH

57. Standards are above average at age 7 and 11, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and most of the pupils make good progress in reading, writing and in speaking and listening. Overall, the pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well when compared with pupils from similar schools. In the 1999 national tests the attainment of the pupils in Key Stage 2 was below that of pupils in similar schools. This is because fewer pupils reach the higher level 5 or above – a much smaller percentage than in mathematics or science. The inspection evidence reveals some underachievement in writing, particularly by the more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in reading. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language quickly develop competence in speaking.
58. The pupils' ability to speak and listen is well above that found nationally. The pupils start school with well developed speaking and listening skills. Whether listening to or discussing a story, analysing a text or giving an opinion, most pupils make good progress and they learn to speak out confidently and to state their opinions clearly. When, for example, predicting the words that might describe 'The Pied Piper' or, finding words that begin with an initial letter sound, the pupils listen very attentively and are able to discuss word meanings and suggest appropriate words and phrases. The pupils take part in role-play activities, act out plays and perform in assemblies. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are well above average and the pupils have progressed well in their ability to speak confidently to a range of listeners. They have opportunities to develop their confidence in public speaking in assemblies and in the *Celebration 2000* assembly performed during the inspection. Meal times are pleasant social occasions and the children talk with confidence and maturity about their school and their interests. They respond enthusiastically to literature and talk confidently about books they have read and web-sites they have visited for information. Year 6 pupils have a refreshing confidence and maturity in their conversations with adults.
59. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and use lively and imaginative texts to engage their attention. Probing questions require the children to listen carefully and to consider their answers. In a very good lesson in Year 2/1, the teacher talked to the children about the sort of questions they should ask a famous footballer. The children were then encouraged to pose questions for themselves. They responded enthusiastically and purposefully. Their contributions were respected and the teacher built on them and extended them.
60. By Year 6 most of the pupils are able to speak confidently and with expression during their class assembly. They enjoy the dramatic way in which their teacher reads extracts from *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens to them and work hard to read it with the same enthusiasm and confidence. Throughout the school class discussions are an important part of the literacy hour and they are a very effective tool for the development of the pupils' vocabulary and self-confidence. By the time they leave the school the pupils are able to follow instructions, contribute very effectively to class discussions and to both pose and answer questions. They are able to listen carefully and give sensible, reasoned answers to questions. They listen carefully to each other and work well in groups.
61. The pupils' attainment in reading is well above average at age 7 and 11. The skills are well taught in the Literacy Hour and the pupils make good progress in lessons. The school has a significant number of highly competent and well-motivated readers. Many pupils discuss their reading books thoughtfully, showing an awareness of events and characters and using the appropriate vocabulary. Throughout the school there is an enthusiasm for reading, and boys and girls show an equal interest in fiction and non-fiction material. Pupils of all ages talk enthusiastically about their favourite type of story with older pupils selecting books by their preferred authors. In the Literacy Hour, the use of Big Books and group reading has a positive impact on the pupils' progress in reading. Relatively few of the pupils experience difficulties in learning to read and the work of the staff and volunteers in supporting these pupils is well

managed and effective. The reading partnership with parents is well developed and regular the reading homework makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved.

62. The school is making good use of Big Books in the first part of the Literacy Hour to develop some of the word and sentence level work but the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the understanding staff have of it is rather patchy. There is no common format for lesson plans and the word level work is taught separately in some of the classes with little reference to the text used in the literacy hour. The quality of the pupils' writing varies from class to class and by age eleven it could be better. There is insufficient guidance given to the pupils on how they should structure their writing. The modelling of writing in the Literacy Hour ranges from very good in a number of lessons to poor. The scrutiny of the pupils' work shows a similar picture. In a number of classes there is a good range of writing and very good links are made with other subjects. The pupils write at length and are aware of purpose, audience, style and organisation. In other classes there is less attention given to analysing texts and demonstrating how to write for different purposes. Where it is done well, in Year 3 and Year 6, there is a wider range of writing in the pupils' books and the quality of their work reflects the very clear teaching emphasis on this aspect of writing. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 3 the teacher made maximum use of the text from *The Pied Piper* to link reading and writing together. The resulting work on adverbs led to the consolidation of a spelling rule and a very good understanding of how words work for effect. In Year 6, the teacher made very good use of a passage by *Dickens* to provide the pupils with examples of how to set the scene for an extended piece of writing using metaphors and similes to create the 'mood.' In these lessons the teachers were clear about what they intend to teach and what the children would learn. They used carefully directed questions to include all of the pupils in the discussion, followed by open-ended questions to take the discussion on. This part of the lesson was a privilege to observe. It built the pupils' learning so incrementally and so successfully that all those present were clear about what needed be achieved in the group work. The less successful lessons do not make good use of the suggested approaches to teaching and learning in the National Literacy Framework.
63. The early skills of writing are systematically taught in Key Stage 1. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 quickly learn to form their letters and this is built upon very successfully in Year 3. However, handwriting is not taught consistently in Key Stage 2 and there is no policy in place to guide the teachers. Standards vary from class to class and by the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work could be better.
64. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent; it is good overall. The teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' needs but this is not always used to ensure a close match of work to the pupils' abilities. The work makes appropriate demands on the pupils of average ability but often underestimates the more able pupils. Some of the learning support assistants could be used more effectively if they were better briefed about the work that are to do and given clear tasks. Resources are good and match the current curricular needs.

MATHEMATICS

65. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are well above average at the end of both key stages. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The teaching is effective and all of the pupils make generally good progress irrespective of their prior attainment. There is room for some improvement in mental arithmetic.
66. At the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils know and understand number bonds to 20 and they are confident in their use. They confidently add and subtract numbers mentally to twenty and recognise odd and even numbers. Most pupils are able to count in multiples of two, five and ten. The teachers encourage the pupils to use the correct mathematical terms; they develop a secure mathematical vocabulary and are able to describe the properties of common shapes. They recognise angles of turn and everyday standard units of measurement in length, capacity, mass and time. All of the mental arithmetic sessions observed were well targeted. The pupils

enjoyed them and responded positively and quickly to the teacher's questions. In the reception year, the five year olds are able to recognise and recreate patterns. In Year 1, the majority understand the processes in partitioning numbers to 20. In Year 2 the majority can add amounts to money to a total of pounds and pence and break down these totals to coins of appropriate denomination to post into a moneybox. The majority can add amounts of money in £'s and 50p's.

67. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure understanding of place value to beyond a thousand. They have experienced work across all the attainment targets. The majority are working at level 4 with significant percentage at level 5. In Year 3, the teacher builds very effectively on the pupils' prior attainment. The pupils have a very good understanding of the four operations and their multiplication tables. They respond eagerly to the teacher's high expectations of them and their skills in mental computation develop well. In Year 4, the pupils can multiply in 10's and 100's. In Year 5, the work is well prepared but in many of the topics all of the pupils begin from the same low base – this limits the rate of learning and the challenge for the more able pupils. In Year 6, the pupils are able to complete mental calculations in 1000's, looking for factors of the large numbers. The work is demanding and well paced and, despite the large number in the class, the pupils feel that attention is paid to their needs.
68. The teaching is mainly good, with well taught lessons observed in both key stages. In the best lessons, there is good subject knowledge, clear learning objectives and high expectations of the pupils. Time is used well and the pupils are clear about how much time they have for their tasks. In some classes the teachers use mathematics as an integral part of classroom activities. There is some work on data in other subjects, particularly science, where the pupils present information in tables, bar charts and pictograms. But this work could be planned more carefully, linking it to the National Numeracy Framework and making greater demands on the pupils. All of the teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. There is no common format for lesson plans; the main focus of the lesson is clear but the learning objectives are not. In some of the lessons the mental 'starter' sessions lack pace and challenge; they emphasise mental calculation but do little to teach mental strategy. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were asked to share and compare their methods of calculating a mental problem, and to try out various methods recommended by their teacher or their classmates. This good practice was not evident in all lessons. In a number of lessons the approach to solving problems was led by the teacher and tackled in the same way by all of the pupils. There was no opportunity for the pupils to work the problem out for themselves. In discussion with a number of pupils they used paper and pencil methods to solve problems they were capable of doing in their heads.
69. Those pupils with special educational needs receive good support. The classroom assistants are skilled at encouraging the pupils to think for themselves and use a good combination of support and encouragement. In Key Stage 1 there is evidence of co-operative planning and targeted teaching in those classes containing Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This reduces the range of attainment in each class and improved the rate and pace of learning in lessons.
70. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator, who is based in Key Stage 1, also teaches in Key Stage 2. Resources are adequate. The pupils enjoy mathematics.

SCIENCE

71. The pupils make good progress in their learning and by the ages of 7 and 11 attain standards that are well above the national average. The school has recently adopted the model scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA) and has successfully incorporated this into the existing scheme to build on the existing good practice. Incorporated into the new scheme of work gives a clear indication of the type of extension work that will give provide greater challenge for the more able pupils. The teachers assess the pupils' work at the end of each unit of work in Key Stage 2 and assess learning at the end of each topic in Key

Stage 1. The use of these assessments to plan future work varies from class to class in Key Stage 2. As a result, the work in one class lacks challenge.

72. At Key Stage 1 the pupils make good progress in their learning because of the good quality of the teaching. In Year 1, the pupils study leaves and identify the different characteristics of each. They accurately classify them according to shape, size, smell and colour. When they reach Year 2 the pupils study electricity and identify and label which appliances use which electrical source. They show on diagrams which bulbs will light up in a simple circuit. By the age of seven the pupils know about the life-cycle of frogs and are clear about their development through the various stages.
73. The pupils make good progress in Year 3. They conduct experiments to discover which materials are magnetic and which are non-magnetic. The teacher uses well prepared resources in the lesson to develop the pupils' understanding of magnetism. They study and identify living and non-living things and correctly identify the needs for maintaining life. In the Year 4 class the pupils know that a battery is a store for energy and that it has positive and negative terminals. But the teaching did not encourage them to question or hypothesise. In Year 5, however, the quality of the teaching and learning is good. The pupils learn about the organs in the body and why they need a balanced diet to maintain good health. In discussion they are able to talk about the interdependence of human life and plant life and the effect of human life and lifestyle on health and on the planet. When they study gases, liquids and solids, they know that a gas may fill all of the available space, and that a solid can maintain its shape. In Year 6, the pupils' prior learning is used very effectively by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher to sustain rapid gains in learning. The pupils learn about forces and accurately describe how forces are needed to create movement. They describe "friction" as a force and explain how it affects movement and creates heat. They know that they need to plan their experiments carefully to ensure that they are a fair test and that they are capable of being compared. They confidently describe some of the experiments that they have conducted, explaining their methods, results and conclusions. There is some good use of mathematics and data but this aspect of the work could make greater demands on the more able pupils.
74. The overall quality of teaching is good. The highest quality teaching and learning is seen in Year 6 where the teacher has very good subject knowledge and an infectious enthusiasm for the subject. The planning is very good, with clearly identified learning objectives and appropriate activities to achieve them. Where the quality of teaching is good, the teachers have well prepared resources and the pupils are given good opportunities to learn in a practical way. The teacher's interventions require them to think carefully and to modify their approach. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the pupils were given a wide variety of materials from which they had to identify magnetic and non-magnetic items. Before they started their experiments, the pupils were given clear instructions about how they were to conduct them. The teacher pointed out, for example, that they had to identify which they thought were magnetic before using their magnets to check. In the less successful lesson in Key Stage 2 the teacher's planning was unclear in identifying what the pupils were to learn and the work was undemanding. Too little guidance was given to the pupils on the sort of questions they should be asking themselves and the excessively high noise levels were not conducive to good learning. A lesson in Year 5 about sound was well organised with clear instructions for each group of pupils. The way in which the teacher used the classroom support staff was good and this made a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.
75. The co-ordinator for the subject is very experienced and well qualified. She leads the subject effectively but would have greater impact on the quality of learning if, for example, she were able to teach alongside some of her colleagues. The range and quality of resource provision is good and the resources are used well in teaching and learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the science curriculum.

ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. By the time the pupils reach the ages of 7 and 11, standards are above the levels expected for the age group, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In both subjects the pupils are given a wide range of experiences and the work in these subjects is often linked. There is an appropriate scheme of work for each subject. The quality of the art scheme of work is exemplary. It sets out clearly what is to be taught and learned from year to year. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.
77. At Key Stage 1 the pupils make good progress in their learning and this is largely due to the high quality of the teaching. They study faces and use a wide range of media to paint and draw them. They draw the facial features very clearly and accurately and are able to draw sketches of their own faces using a mirror. These pictures are carefully produced with accurately placed features. One group of pupils used a computer program to paint faces. They were confident when loading the program and in operating the "mouse" to drag features onto the face they drew. As part of the same topic the pupils use clay to make heads. They contain appropriate detail and show good proportion. In design and technology lessons the pupils design and make a range of artefacts. In the reception class they study houses and make models of igloos, tepees and Tudor homes. The pupils in Year 1 make moving models of clowns.
78. The pupils continue to make good progress in their learning when they move to Key Stage 2. In a Year 3 art lesson the pupils study the work of Clarice Cliff. They design and paint plates and cups in a similar style to, working very carefully and accurately. They use colour well when executing their designs and produce work of a high quality. In the same class the pupils design and make individual self-portraits using collage. The individual squares are sewn together to form a banner to mark their first Confirmation. The pupils take pride in their work and use equipment and glue very carefully. The pupils in the Year 4 class visited the local pizza restaurant when studying food technology. They each made and decorated their own pizza. These were then cooked at the restaurant. There are close links between the subjects in Year 5 when the pupils design and paint t-shirts. They create their individual designs on paper before transferring them onto their t-shirts. The pupils work carefully and accurately using a range of fabric paints. The designs they transfer onto their shirts are good impressions of their original designs. Pupils in Year 6 maintain the high levels of learning and use control technology effectively when they make models driven by electric motors.
79. The overall quality of the teaching in both subjects is good. In the best lessons the teachers have very good subject knowledge and they are confident to allow the pupils to make choices and to select resources. They question the pupils carefully about their work and encourage them to think carefully about techniques, colour and appropriateness of style. The activities themselves are interesting and challenging and the resources are good. The pupils are made aware of the work and style of other artists and they enjoy the lessons. In Year 3 and Year 6 the children were very engaged by the work. The quality of their learning and the work they produced was very good. The way in which the teacher demonstrates or uses the work of individual pupils to demonstrate teaching points, helps the pupils to become critical of their own and of others' work. This has a positive impact on the learning.
80. The subjects are managed effectively and resources are adequate. The scheme of work for art is very good and ensures that an appropriate range of work is covered, staff are clear about what to teach and that standards are high.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

81. The previous inspection report indicated that standards were high in both of these subjects. These high standards have been sustained and the pupils achieve well in both key stages.
82. The subjects are well planned and the termly planning sheets are clear about what is to be taught and learned. The 'key questions' approach ensures that the work is based on enquiry methods and encourages the children to ask and answer questions and make good use of books and artefacts. This was most evident in a history lesson in Year 1 where the pupils' knowledge

of the events of the Fire of London and the impact of the events on the future of London was most impressive. It was clear that the pupils were able to distinguish between what might be represented as a 'story' and the fact that the events actually happened. This work has very good links with speaking and listening, reading and writing and across the school and there are examples of good writing in these subjects. In Key Stage 1, the pupils first learn to understand about their school and the place in which they live; they begin to use geographical terms and to recognise different simple features, such as land and sea, on maps and globes. In their work on islands they begin to use simple co-ordinates. They can interpret simple maps and plans and in their studies of the local area collect information about different types of housing. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils have covered a wide range of work. They talk confidently about topics they have covered and are able to compare and contrast other areas in this country, and abroad, with their own locality. They are able to use a wide range of maps, including Ordnance Survey maps and have undertaken a range of visits to support the work, including the Stourbridge Town Trail, the Wyre Forest and Woodgate Valley. Year 6 pupils end the year with a residential visit in Edale. The visits are closely linked to the work and the pupils in Year 6 have enjoyed them.

83. In history in Key Stage 1 the pupils learn about past times through story and about the lives of famous people and events in the past. The work makes good links with literacy and art with the work done in the Literacy Hour. The pupils' understanding of chronology is developed by the use of timelines and displays which set out the chronology of events. The pupils in Year 1 are confident to use appropriate language to describe events that have happened within living memory and those in the distant past. Very good use is made of artefacts and displays to enrich the work and to encourage the children to reflect and question. In Key Stage 2 the topics studied are interesting and provide a useful context for work in art, drama and writing.
84. The pupils' written work shows a good understanding of the periods studied. The subject is used well to develop the pupils' literacy skills and the pupils in Year 6 talk confidently about locating information in books and using other archive material in their study of the development of the school. This aspect of the work could usefully be extended to include the use of the internet as a means of researching information.
85. The subjects are well led and managed. The work is interesting and it is enjoyed by the pupils. The medium-term planning is thorough and quickly translates into learning objectives for each lesson. There is evident and rapid progression in the work across the school. Resources are good.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

86. There has been a significant improvement in standards in information technology since the last inspection. This is largely due to the increase in the number of computers and the very good use that is now being made of the dedicated computer suite. At the end of both key stages the pupils are achieving standards that are in line with those expected for their ages. The computer suite has twenty computers and a teaching computer that is linked to a projector and screen. The computers are linked so that software and information can be shared and so that there is access to the internet. Three of the four Key Stage 1 classrooms also have computers. Very good use has been made of the additional funds available to the school to purchase computers and software.
87. The pupils make good progress in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils are able to use the computer confidently for a range of purposes including drawing and paint programs, word processing and to link text with pictures. All of the pupils are able to save their work. Classroom displays show evidence of using tools using a paint program, where pupils draw pictures from photographs and writing poems, changing fonts, and using colour to good effect in Year 2. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 4 are able to compose letters to send to pupils in other schools. They are able to write and attach files to E-mails and they are excited by this aspect of the technology and the immediate response to their efforts. Year 3 pupils have used

the computer to help them to design book covers and in their creative writing. There is some evidence that computers are used to display data and graphs in the work of pupils in Year 4. The work on control and simulation is underdeveloped in Key Stage 2.

88. There is evidence that standards are improving and that they will continue to rise. The computer suite and the good range of software has given more opportunities for direct teaching of the skills. Effective use is being made of the co-ordinator's skills to support staff and pupils in the use of this very valuable resource. The key to the development of the subject will be to ensure that all of the staff become confident users of information technology and, more importantly, that they identify the opportunities for using computers in their planning. A very good example of this active approach to the teaching of IT can be found in a Year 2/1 class where a cross-curricular plan of work is displayed in the classroom and the pupils' use of the computer is carefully targeted and recorded.
89. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has attended a number of training courses. There are a number of lunchtime ICT Clubs and after school clubs for pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 and an evening workshop for parents. The ICT Development Plan has a focus on improving teachers' competencies through the New Opportunities Fund training.

MUSIC

90. It was only possible to observe one lesson and so it is not possible to make a judgement about the standards attained. Discussions with the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of the teachers' planning indicate that the pupils cover an appropriate range of work. Singing was judged to be good at the last inspection and this remains the case with pupils singing tunefully during assemblies and in the Year 3 rehearsals for the First Communion celebrations. In the lesson observed in Year 2/1 the quality of the teaching was good and the pupils were able to discriminate between long and short sounds playing untuned percussion instruments. They represented the sounds that the instruments made using coloured cubes and were able to suggest how they might sustain notes more easily on some instruments than others. They listened carefully and worked hard in their groups to complete their tasks. The quality of the learning in this lesson was good.
91. The school employs a pianist to support the teaching of singing and to assist with musical productions. The quality of the singing in these lessons was very good and was greatly enhanced by the class teacher and the pianist working together. Both teachers were able to participate, encourage and instruct. This was highly motivating and was a very positive feature of the work. The pupils show obvious pleasure in singing together. Their singing is tuneful and the older pupils sing in two parts.
92. The pupils have opportunities to participate in at least three concerts each year. Parents tell how much they have enjoyed productions of *The Tinderbox*, the *Rocky Horror Show* and *Paradise Island*. The pupils perform in the Dudley Music Festival and there are opportunities for extra-curricular tuition to learn to play the recorder, flute, violin, cello, guitar and brass.
93. It was not possible to form a judgement on other aspects of the pupils' achievement, but it is clear that music has a very secure place in the curriculum. The school has made a particular effort to enrich the pupils' musical experiences by participating in workshops led by the Birmingham Royal Ballet Symphonia, an African-Caribbean Music Workshop and a Catholic music group. Although there is no teacher with particular musical expertise, all of the staff have completed in-service training and are well acquainted with the scheme of work and the resources for teaching. Assemblies are enhanced by listening to recorded music and by the skilled piano accompaniment for all of the hymns.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

94. By the end of Key Stage 1 most of the pupils achieve standards that are above the national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
95. In a Year 1 gymnastics lesson the pupils' attainment in sequencing and travelling was close to the expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2. The pupils were able to use space well were able to hop, jump and run confidently and with good control. In a Year 2 games lesson all of the pupils were able to work co-operatively, throwing the ball accurately to their partner.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2 most of the pupils achieve standards that are above the national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
97. All of the pupils in Year 5 are able to swim 25 metres. In the lesson designed to improve stamina the groups were arranged so that the pupils could achieve maximum attention from the teacher and the support staff. The teaching is good. There is a good balance between teaching time and practice time. There is good subject knowledge. High standards are encouraged.
98. The school is in transition between the local authority scheme and QCA scheme. When these plans have been completed there will be scope for even higher standards. The pupils are very well behaved and are enthusiastic about physical education. There is a natural, but not stifling emphasis on safety. The pupils are willing to have a go.
99. Until the week of inspection the school had been unable to use the school hall because of the building alterations. The school yard is small for Year 5 and Year 6 activities and needs resurfacing. The school makes good use of the neighbouring field for gymnastics and games.
100. The co-ordinator is qualified in Physical Education and helped to plan the excellent local authority scheme. She models lessons and consults with the other teachers. A strong feature of the work is the links with and use of outside agencies. Excellent work was observed with the swimming pool staff, the local authority Sportslink instructors and a number of Sixth Form students.
101. Out of school activities include Netball, Cricket, Rugby, Athletics and Football (of which the school are the local league champions).