

INSPECTION REPORT

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

LEA area: St Helen's

Unique reference number: 104804

Headteacher: Mr M A Boyle

Reporting inspector: Mrs E M D Mackie
23482

Dates of inspection: 17 – 21 January 2000

Inspection number: 104804

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Charles Street St Helen's Merseyside
Postcode:	WA10 1LN
Telephone number:	01744-735607
Fax number:	01744-735607
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Colquitt
Date of previous inspection:	28 – 31 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Diana Mackie	Registered inspector	Under fives	What sort of school is it?
		English	The school's results and achievements
		Information technology	How well are pupils or students taught?
		Music	What should the school do to improve further?
Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	N/A	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
David Price	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
51 St Andrew's Road
Chesterton
Cambridge
CB4 1EQ

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

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11 - 14
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14 - 15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17 - 18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18 - 20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22 - 24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26 - 37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is an average sized school for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. There are currently 202 full-time pupils in the main school and 52 who attend part-time in the nursery class. Children are admitted to the nursery class in the September after their third birthday. They join the reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 21 children under the age of five in the reception class. There is a general balance of boys and girls in the whole school but in Years 1 and 4 there are more boys than girls. The school is situated in a densely populated area close to the town centre of St Helen's and most pupils live in the surrounding area. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is well below that expected for three-year-olds in the important areas of literacy and numeracy. The school's pupils represent a broad range of backgrounds but they are, overall, well below average in social and economic terms. Forty-two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is well above the average figure for schools nationally. There are 36 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and, of these, an above average number of 9 have statements.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a thriving and caring community where pupils achieve good standards in the basic skills of English, mathematics and science by the time they reach the age of eleven. Most parents are well satisfied with the education provided for their children by the school. The quality of teaching is good, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. The headteacher, staff and governors work purposefully and energetically to achieve their aim for all pupils to achieve academic and social success. The school has an average income and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science is above the national average at Key Stage 2 and pupils make overall good progress.
- Pupils behave well and relationships are good.
- Teaching is good overall throughout the school.
- The school has adopted very effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- Provision for pupils' welfare and support, including assessment of their academic progress, is good.
- Links with parents of children under five are good.
- The headteacher provides incisive leadership and excellent educational direction for the school and governors carry out their duties well.
- Robust self-evaluation has provided the school with clear information on which to plan improvements and there is a shared commitment to improvement by governors and staff.
- Funds are used strategically to provide very good value for money.

What could be improved

- Standards at Key Stage 1 do not match those at Key Stage 2.
- Standards in information technology at Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient staff expertise and planned use of the subject.
- Communication with parents is underdeveloped at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- There are some omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and the school has no policy for the induction of new teachers.
- Much of the school, including outdoor play surfaces, needs refurbishment.

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 significant improvements since the last inspection in October 1996, when there were serious weaknesses in pupils' standards of attainment, curricular provision and the management of the school. These weaknesses have been addressed very positively and overall standards are now good by the time pupils leave the school. Test results are analysed rigorously to identify areas of weakness and set clear targets for improvement. The school has used national and local education authority guidelines to improve curricular provision in all subjects, with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Co-ordinators have been appointed for all subjects and this has had a positive impact on teaching and learning throughout the curriculum. The quality of teaching

has improved. The headteacher and governors have evaluated the school's needs and matched staff training to well-identified priorities. Governors are more involved in strategic planning and forecasts are more clearly linked to the school development plan. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are well presented so that information is clear for parents but there are omissions on staff development and school access for the disabled.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with		Key
	all schools	similar schools	
	1999	1999	
English	B	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A*	
Science	B	A	

These are very good results indeed. The above grades show that pupils' attainment in English was above average nationally and very high compared with similar schools. In mathematics, results were well above the national average and very high compared with similar schools. In science, results were above average nationally and well above compared with similar schools. Over the past four years, the trend in all subjects has been upwards. The high level of commitment by the whole school community has ensured that high quality teaching and learning are the norm and expectations are high. During the inspection, good standards were seen in English, mathematics and science. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have a few more months to 'polish up' their work before the year 2000 National Curriculum tests.

At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and standards are average overall by the end of the key stage. This is an improvement on the past three years, when results of national tests have been low in writing and mathematics. Writing skills have improved, with increased opportunities for pupils to write for a wider range of purposes. The school's enthusiastic introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved standards in mental arithmetic.

At both key stages, standards in geography, history, music and physical education are satisfactory. In art, they are good and pupils' bright paintings add significantly to the positive ethos of the school. Standards in information technology are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2, where the subject is not sufficiently integrated into all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They concentrate and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are trustworthy and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall but a few pupils are persistent non-attenders. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute strongly to the improvements in the school. Good relationships create a pleasant atmosphere where children listen well to one another and to 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.

During the inspection, 77 per cent of teaching was good or better. Two per cent was excellent, 21 per cent was very good, 54 per cent was good, 21 per cent was satisfactory and two per cent was unsatisfactory. Because of this high quality teaching, pupils' learning is good overall and they make good progress. Good teaching in English and mathematics ensures that pupils have a sure grasp of appropriate skills in reading, writing and arithmetic by the time they are eleven. Teachers ask probing questions to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Staff expertise in information technology is variable and this has a negative effect on pupils' progress at Key Stage 2. Teachers have introduced the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson very positively. Literacy and numeracy are developed effectively in other subjects, particularly in science, geography and history. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well with work matched to their needs. The learning of higher attaining pupils is extended well at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, these pupils need more opportunities for extended writing and better presentation of their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good quality policies and schemes of work in all subjects. Use of information technology not sufficiently included in medium-term plans.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision and support. Teachers plan work to match pupils' needs within the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Personal responsibility is encouraged and pupils develop an understanding of their own culture. Awareness of multicultural life in modern society is not so well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment procedures are good. Health and welfare issues are dealt with effectively. This is a caring school.

The school works hard to make good relationships with parents when their children start school. Parents of children in the nursery and reception classes have regular contact with staff and they are involved very positively in their children's learning. Parents of older pupils want to know more about the curriculum and they have been concerned about the amount of work their children are expected to do at home. Inspection judgement is that appropriate homework is now set in a range of subjects and parents are supportive with regular reading practice at home. The school recognises the need to let parents know more about what goes on in school and steps are in hand to send out more information.

The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and is particularly strong in English, mathematics, science and art. There is a satisfactory number of after school activities. These have been affected by recent staff illness.

There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress. Personal development is monitored and the school is developing profiles for all pupils. Provision for health and safety is well managed by governors.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
--------	---------

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and educational direction. Co-ordinators lead their subjects well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors manage the school very well and use their expertise effectively to support the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Appropriate priorities are set after rigorous analysis of test results and thorough evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and funds are deployed well to support priorities.

Staffing is adequate and deployed well, particularly during a period of long-term illness when there have had to be changes during which pupils have continued to make good progress. Most learning resources are adequate but more library books are needed. Accommodation is spacious and suitable for the delivery of the National Curriculum. The management recognises that much of it, including nursery and main school outdoor play surfaces, is in need of refurbishment. Negotiations with the diocese are in hand.

The leadership and management of the school is very good and the school applies the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • Their children are encouraged to be responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been concerned about homework. • They want to know more about the curriculum. • They would like more after-school clubs

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. An adequate amount of homework is now set. There have been meetings to inform parents about the curriculum. The school does not tell parents enough about the good work which is going on there.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the last inspection in October 1996, there were serious weaknesses in levels of pupils' attainment. Overall standards of attainment were average or above for children under five and pupils at Key Stage 1 but they were unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was good in the core subjects but by the end of Key Stage 2 it was unsatisfactorily low in mathematics and science. In the foundation subjects, standards were variable. There was good work in art at both key stages but work in design and technology was poor. In music, standards were good at Key Stage 1 and poor at Key Stage 2. There was insufficient attention to the development of geography and history at Key Stage 1 and some parts of the recommended programme of studies for physical education at both key stages. Standards in information technology were broadly satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs made sound progress but higher attaining pupils frequently failed to reach their full potential.
2. The school has focused on raising pupils' levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 and plans are in hand to effect similar improvements at Key Stage 1. The headteacher has a clear sense of vision for improved attainment throughout the school and subject co-ordinators have contributed to the evaluation of standards and the whole school development plan. Improved curricular provision, enhanced teaching and target setting have given the school the strong capacity to improve. Pupils work hard to match up to the school's expectations. The result is a school with a strong sense of purpose; it has, quite simply, turned itself round. There have been major improvements in pupils' standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 and, after a decline in standards over three years at Key Stage 1, standards there are now in line. No significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls were noted during the inspection. Targets set with the local education authority have been exceeded in the last two years and the school has realigned its expectations based on thorough assessments of pupils' progress. Although they expect pupils at Key Stage 2 to do well in 2000, they do not expect results to be as high as in 1999, when there was a high number of very able pupils.
3. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 2 or above was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage achieving level 3 was well above in reading, above in writing and close to the national average in mathematics. There was a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and also a significant number of higher attaining pupils. Compared with similar schools, this school's achievements were well above average in reading, above average in writing and well below in mathematics. Averaged over the four-year period 1996 to 1999, performance in reading has been well above the national average level. In writing it has been close to the national average and in mathematics it has been well below the national average level. Trends over the four years 1996 to 1999 in reading, writing and mathematics have been clearly downward. Inspection judgement is that the school has come to grips with this trend by identifying weaknesses and dealing with them effectively so that attainment is now broadly in line with expectations for seven-year-olds.
4. At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or above was above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. It was above average at level 5 in all three subjects. There was a significant number of very able pupils in the year group. Achievements compared with similar schools were very high in English and mathematics and well above in science. Trends in average levels achieved at Holy Cross over the four years 1996 to 1999 in English, mathematics and science have been upward. The rate of these upward movements has outstripped that of national levels. This very good rate of improvement reflects the school's robust attention to analysis of earlier results and the determination of the governors, staff and pupils to succeed.
5. The majority of children enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average in language and literacy and mathematics, below in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world and in line in physical and creative development. Despite good progress in language and literacy and mathematics in the nursery and reception classes, the attainment of the majority of children is still below expectations for their age when they are five. Pupils follow simple texts in 'big books' and standards in reading are broadly average but a significant minority of children still lack appropriate vocabulary and writing skills. A few higher attaining children begin to understand simple addition and are able

to explain their work in mathematics. Good progress in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world enables children to reach appropriate levels by the time they are five. Children make satisfactory progress in physical and creative development and their attainment is in line with expectations when they are of statutory school age but manipulative control of pencils and scissors is weak for many children. Children with special educational needs attain at levels commensurate with their ability. These findings do not concur with those of the previous inspection, when standards were reported as satisfactory or better in all areas of learning. There are differences in children's overall ability from year to year. The quality of teaching and curricular provision according to the findings of the current inspection is good overall.

6. Attainment in English is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. Findings for Key Stage 1 broadly concur with those of the last inspection, but there have been improvements at Key Stage 2. Progress is good at both key stages. The good quality of teaching and the commitment, perseverance and good behaviour of pupils promote the high level of improvement at Key Stage 2. By the end of both key stages, pupils use their speaking and listening skills effectively to ask questions, explain their work and share ideas. Attainment develops appropriately in Key Stage 2 as pupils build effectively on earlier learning and become more self-assured. At seven years old, pupils use a good range of strategies, including letter sounds and context clues, to help them to understand what they read. By the time they are eleven, pupils enjoy reading a wide variety of texts. Most read stories, poetry and non-fiction fluently and accurately and use reference skills effectively to gain information from books. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils know letter sounds and use basic grammar correctly. Handwriting is usually correctly formed but presentation of work is variable. Increasingly, pupils write for a wide range of purposes and use their writing skills in other subjects, but there were few examples of extended pieces of work. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils write with accurate spelling and a clear sense of purpose and style. Teachers' rigorous attention to improvement has had a very positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment. Literary skills are developed and employed effectively in other subjects but pupils are not given enough opportunities to use the library.
7. Attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and this concurs with findings in the last inspection. At Key Stage 2, there has been a big improvement and pupils' attainment is now above average. Good progress is made at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know and use numbers to 20 accurately and show a good understanding of place value in tens and units. Pupils apply their knowledge of number appropriately to other aspects of mathematics. They gain appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of measurement. Over-use of worksheets inhibits opportunities for pupils to express their findings in their own ways. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils do mental calculations confidently and use this skill to enhance their work in all areas of mathematics. Pupils present their work in an orderly way. Appropriate use of numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum supports the good standards in mathematics. Good leadership and effective use of analysis of earlier test results have had a positive effect on pupils' attainment.
8. Attainment in science is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at Key Stage 2. Findings concur broadly with those at the time of the last inspection for Key Stage 1 but at Key Stage 2 attainment is now much higher. Progress is good at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils gain understanding of the life cycle of a plant as they study sunflowers. In their study of living things, pupils increase their knowledge of what is needed to support life. They know that humans need a healthy diet. Pupils carry out investigations and know that push and pull are forces. They gain early understanding of electricity as they make simple electric circuits. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils' knowledge and understanding in science are above that expected for their age. There have been improvements in pupils' investigative skills since the last inspection. They gain experience in using thermometers to record temperature as they investigate insulation and consolidate their understanding of a fair test. Pupils present observations, measurements and results clearly - for example, when they study the reproduction system of the tulip. Strong development of specific scientific vocabulary enables pupils to describe their work on forces very effectively.
9. In information technology, pupils' levels of attainment are broadly at expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and below by the end of Key Stage 2. This does not concur with findings in the previous inspection, when standards were satisfactory or better throughout the school. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key

Stage 1, most pupils use word processing programs and operate the computer mouse and keyboard satisfactorily. They write simple text to the screen and save their work appropriately. In a range of subjects, they use graphic programs to illustrate and explain their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use word processing and a significant number are proficient in gaining information from CD ROMs. Data handling skills are underdeveloped and pupils do not use information technology competently to support and enhance other subjects. Control and modelling skills are underdeveloped at both key stages.

10. In music, pupils achieve satisfactory standards at both key stages but their skills in composition are weak. Standards and progress are good at both key stages in art and pupils acquire expertise in a wide range of techniques. In design and technology, there have been improvements since the last inspection. Standards are satisfactory and the subject is closely linked with the school's curriculum for art. Standards are satisfactory at both key stages in geography and history. In these subjects, progress is supported effectively by teachers' good preparation of resources and the use of topics which are relevant to pupils' own lives. In physical education, children at both key stages achieve satisfactory standards, with very good standards in dance at Key Stage 1.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Their progress and self-esteem are promoted through the well-structured and consistent programme of good teaching which includes the effective use of assessments to inform planning. Early identification ensures that problems are dealt with as soon as possible and pupils are supported effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and their attitudes to school are good. These standards of behaviour have been maintained since the previous inspection, and are reflected in the parents' views of the school.
13. Children under five settle quickly into the daily routines and develop appropriate levels of concentration, perseverance and confidence. Other pupils show interest in the work they do in lessons. They are motivated by good teaching and the challenges provided for them in their work. All pupils are clear about their role in school and the value of their contribution to the community. During a school assembly, pupils' personal efforts were recognised when they received merit certificates for 'smiling a lot' in the nursery to 'becoming a better reader' in Year 5.
14. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are tolerant of one another and play together happily during break times. In discussion, they reveal that they feel safe from bullying and no incidents were seen or reported during the inspection. The recent exclusion of a pupil is not typical for the school. Pupils are polite and helpful towards visitors and are keen to share their work and talk about what they do.
15. Pupils are trustworthy and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Older pupils help in the nursery by preparing resources and they act as monitors in the cloakrooms and library. In assemblies they prepare the music and words for hymns. Younger pupils carry out simpler routine tasks such as tidying classroom shelves or returning registers to the office.
16. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils work effectively in groups and share resources sensibly. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils, promoting mutual respect and a good working atmosphere in classrooms. The quality of relationships has a positive impact on the quality of learning and standards attained by pupils. At Key Stage 1, pupils spoke thoughtfully about how people can think differently about things without anyone being 'wrong'. They remembered a story they had been told about some blind people who touched an elephant and all gave different views of what it was.
17. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive punctually so that lessons start on time. A small, but significant, minority of parents do not send their children regularly. Consequently, unauthorised absence is high. However, the majority of parents continue to support the rising levels of attendance, which are in line with similar schools. Since the last report, there has been a slight improvement in pupil attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, it was excellent in two per cent of lessons seen, very good in 21 per cent, good in 54 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent and unsatisfactory in only two per cent. This is an improvement on the last inspection when ninety five per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better.
19. Children under five acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding well because of the good level of teaching, particularly in the reception class. This good teaching is not able to compensate fully for the low starting point of many children by the time they reach statutory school age. Teachers have a secure understanding of the needs of young children and lessons are planned effectively to include the six required areas of learning. In the nursery class, children improve their levels of speaking and listening well. Appropriate vocabulary is displayed in the classroom so that all who are working with the children can use it during discussions. This aspect of teaching is a particular strength in the nursery. In both classes, teaching and non-teaching staff work together well to ensure that children settle happily and then adapt to the brisker pace of learning in the reception class. Elements of the National Curriculum are introduced and taught in interesting ways so that children make good progress and enjoy their learning. In the reception class children develop increasing independence - for example, when they match their patterns against those displayed on the classroom wall. Activities are well prepared and monitored in both classes and assessments of children's progress are recorded effectively so that they can be used to plan work and to share with parents so that they are aware of how their children are doing.
20. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers plan lessons well so that pupils are motivated to learn. There is a good balance of direct teaching, well-chosen activities and time for reflection and consolidation of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. At both key stages, pupils make good progress in most subjects because work builds effectively on previous learning and becomes more demanding. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers' thorough understanding of the curriculum and rigorous regular practice enable pupils to grasp basic skills. They become increasingly confident in combining letter sounds to build words and in using strategies of mental arithmetic to solve mathematical problems. In information technology, pupils make insufficient progress at Key Stage 2 because teachers' expertise is variable and, throughout the school, the subject is not included sufficiently in lesson plans. At Key Stage 2, pupils sometimes do not make appropriate progress in physical education when there are insufficient opportunities for them to keep active and to practise and improve skills.
21. In the key areas of literacy and numeracy and in most other subjects, pupils' learning is systematic and they are encouraged to reflect on what they already know and draw on this to develop and improve their current learning. In English, teachers are successful in selecting texts closely matched to the needs of the whole group in guided reading sessions and this sustains pupils' interest and promotes good progress. In most lessons, teachers' good questioning, instruction and explanation effectively engages pupils of a wide range of attainment. Information from questioning is used appropriately to plan future lessons. This is particularly effective for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers work closely with the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs so that individual education plans identify specific areas for improvement and short, measurable steps so that pupils build successfully on what they know. Plans are implemented appropriately and pupils are encouraged to reach their targets and recognise their own progress.
22. At Key Stage 2, teachers have high expectations of pupils and they respond positively and begin to think and learn for themselves. More able pupils are challenged through teachers' probing questions and persistent expectations of high quality work such as extended writing in English. In a geography lesson, pupils of all abilities drew on information from an earlier lesson to investigate what could live on the floor of the rain forest. Research skills are not developed sufficiently through the use of the school library, but CD ROMs are used increasingly by pupils in the classroom. At Key Stage 1, challenge is there in discussions and activities in English, but it is sometimes missing when teachers do not expect written work of the highest standard possible for all pupils. In mathematics, over-reliance on worksheets sometimes restricts the amount of work pupils are expected to do for themselves.
23. At both key stages, teachers manage pupils well so that the maximum amount of time is spent on the objectives of lessons. In the few instances when pupils become bored or restless, teachers quickly adapt their methods so that pupils' concentration and interest are restored. There is a general expectation of good behaviour in the school and pupils rise to this well. Teachers follow the school's effective code of practice for behaviour management

24. Most resources are planned well and teachers employ a wide range of ideas to stimulate pupils' interest. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in sequencing numbers when teachers use simple washing lines with pegged numbers which are moved to make different patterns. In history, pupils gain a deeper understanding of local history and their own heritage when they watch a well-chosen video recording. Worksheets are sometime used too often in English at Key Stage 1 and this inhibits the development of pupils' writing skills. Pupils' progress in developing an appropriate range of skills in information technology is hampered because teachers do not always plan its use sufficiently in lessons. At Key Stage 1, where there is more use, pupils make satisfactory progress.
25. Support staff are deployed well and this is a strength in the school, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern that pupils are not always withdrawn from the class for separate teaching. During the inspection, it was noted that, because they are supported well in the classrooms, pupils join in the pace of the lessons and make good progress at the appropriate level. They watch and learn from other pupils and gain information and skills which help them to join in discussions at the end of lessons. This has a very positive effect on their self-esteem and gives them confidence. The headteacher provides very effective support where it is needed, especially when teachers are absent and continuity of pupils' learning is important.
26. Classroom monitoring by the headteacher has been very effective in helping teachers to share good practice and improve the quality of their work. Good feedback after monitoring is the key to this success. Teachers work hard and so do the pupils, who are supervised well to ensure that they carry out activities diligently and complete them appropriately. Work progresses at a brisk pace and most pupils are productive and work at a good rate. Homework is set in all classes. This takes the form of reading practice, finding information for a range of subjects or completing written work to consolidate or extend learning from class lessons. Parents have been concerned about the consistency of homework and the school has made a concerted effort to improve this aspect so that the links between home and school are strengthened. Pupils benefit from these links.

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

27. The school's clear aims are successfully fulfilled through a broad and full curriculum which promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and adequately prepares them for secondary school. The allocation of time is balanced effectively so that there is appropriate provision for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. Content of the curriculum for non-core subjects has been organised effectively into manageable and coherent units of work, each with a clear focus for learning.
28. The school has been very effective with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Staff have received appropriate training and the planning of the curriculum is closely linked to national guidance. At Key Stage 2, there is a clear upward trend in National Curriculum test results which confirms the school's success in curricular provision. At Key Stage 1, the reading programme is enriching pupils' learning in English and the school is gradually improving provision for non-fiction writing. In mathematics, the new curriculum is proving successful in strengthening pupils' ability in mental arithmetic throughout the school.
29. Children under five receive an appropriate curriculum which fulfils the requirements of the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes and leads purposefully towards the National Curriculum. The school provides a suitable range of well-planned learning experiences and children start the National Curriculum in the term after they are five, or earlier if they are ready to do so.
30. Curricular provision for pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs is good overall and it supports learning targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. Class teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that tasks are set at appropriate levels, with an element of challenge to help pupils to improve. The national Code of Practice is followed and parents are appropriately involved in their children's learning. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, there was some concern about provision because pupils are not always withdrawn for group teaching. Inspection evidence shows that pupils benefit from tasks

which match their needs in the classroom and they gain self-esteem and deeper understanding when they join in the discussion periods at the end of lessons.

31. Overall curricular provision for all pupils is good and it contributes positively to the high standards achieved by the pupils by the time they are eleven. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to effect the improvements in provision which were recommended in the last inspection report. There are helpful policies and detailed schemes of work for all subjects of the National Curriculum. A high level of teamwork between subject coordinators and other staff has ensured that schemes provide progression in skills and clear structures for teaching knowledge and understanding. Medium-term planning is effectively based on these policies and schemes. Thoughtful, short-term, weekly planning is implemented consistently by all teachers, except in information technology, which is not included sufficiently in the plans but is clearly part of the overall curriculum plan. Learning objectives are clear so that teachers are able to assess what pupils do, learn and understand in lessons.
32. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum. There are karate and guitar clubs and a variety of activities for older pupils are held at a nearby secondary school. Competitive and inter-school sports are organised increasingly to provide opportunities for pupils to enhance their skills in team events. Parents would like more clubs but they recognise that lapses in some clubs are due to recent staff illness.
33. In its curriculum policy statement, the school recognises the primary responsibility of the parents for the child's sex education and therefore has no separate sex education policy. The school seeks to help pupils understand human relationships by basing their sex education on Christian principles and relating it to their stage of development as they move through the school. Through science teaching, pupils are made aware that some drugs, including tobacco, can have harmful effects.

Provision for pupils' personal development

34. The school offers its pupils a welcoming, secure and caring environment. The atmosphere in classrooms is characterised by a sense of calm purpose built on mutual respect, shared values and a very strong Christian ethos. At the time of the last inspection, the school was successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development but provision for pupils' cultural development was unsatisfactory.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and it is supported and enriched by the school's calm atmosphere. Daily acts of worship begin with a quiet opening prayer and pupils express the meaning of hymns thoughtfully as they sing. In English, science, music and art there are opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work. In an art lesson, pupils considered the beauty of daffodils as they made observational drawings. In English, pupils reflect on the clever way in which authors use words to express ideas and feelings such as sadness or joy at the beauty of nature. Prayers are said in classrooms at the beginning and end of the day, when pupils reflect on what their purpose is in life is and how they can serve others.
36. Provision made for pupils' moral development is good. The clear Christian aims and ethos of the school, which stress respect for self and others, provide a strong and effective focus for pupils' moral development. Values are fostered through the caring, supportive and strong relationships which exist between staff and pupils and the good example set by all who work in the school. The importance of love, respect and justice is communicated through the evident concern which the school community has for them. Pupils learn about the differences between right and wrong as they consider class rules and are reminded of these. The well-prepared behaviour policy provides the basis of a shared moral code which encourages pupils to be aware of what is acceptable. Pupils are appropriately praised and rewarded for their good behaviour and attitudes to work. Certificates are awarded during Friday morning assembly.
37. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The strong work ethic and partnership between members of staff is reflected in the positive social and working relationships amongst pupils. They are expected to be polite and courteous, to talk and listen to one another with respect and to act with consideration for others at all times. They have many opportunities to work and play co-operatively and are encouraged to take responsibility within the classroom and around the school. Older pupils act as monitors. They go into other classes to play with younger pupils at wet playtimes. Subjects such as history and geography provide opportunities for pupils to consider social issues such as poverty and drought. Suitable opportunities are given to the pupils to appreciate and contribute to the community in which they live. Pupils take part in inter-school competitions and they invite the community to their art exhibition at

Easter each year. The school works effectively with the local authority Road Safety Officer to enable older pupils to gain safe cycling skills. All pupils, irrespective of race, sex, age or ability, are given the opportunity to involve themselves fully in the life of the school.

38. The school now makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and develop their knowledge of British culture and traditions. In history, pupils learn how the local area developed in Victorian times and how things have changed over time. Pupils appreciate works of art as they study pictures by Lowry and Renoir and produce their own paintings and drawings based on these and other famous artists. As they study other cultures from the past, such as the Ancient Egyptians, Romans and Tudors, they recognise the similarities and differences in societies. In geography, they compare their own town with that of Chembokoli in India. Religious festivals such as Divali are studied, and the art curriculum includes patterns and methods of fabric printing from round the world. The study of minority ethnic cultures in this country is limited and insufficient attention is given to raising pupils' awareness and understanding of multicultural life in contemporary British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Pastoral provision is good and staff provide good levels of individual support and guidance. They listen and respond constructively to the individual and collective needs of pupils. Policies on behaviour management, attendance and equal opportunities support good practice. Pupils' academic and personal development is systematically monitored. Information provided for parents in annual reports does not always draw sufficiently on the interesting and useful records kept in school of pupils' success in areas such as working harder, behaving better or being helpful.
40. Teaching and non-teaching staff ensure that pupils' attendance and time keeping are monitored and this helps pupils to improve and sustain their performance. Policies on child protection and health and safety are followed effectively so that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. Governors are negotiating with the diocese to improve the nursery outside play area and the main playground as part of more extensive school improvements.
41. The school has a good range of strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include assessments on entry to the nursery class and when children are five years old. Regular assessments at Key Stages 1 and 2 include national and non-statutory annual tests to gauge pupils' levels of attainment, measure their progress and plan future work which challenges and improves standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Parents are appropriately informed of their children's results in national tests. Teachers know their pupils well and day-to-day assessments are used well in lessons to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Assessments in non-core subjects are made throughout the year and these are also recorded for parents in their children's annual reports. Systems for assessing the attainment of pupils with special educational needs are effective. Individual education plans are clear, with targets which help pupils to overcome their weaknesses. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection, when they were reported as satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. In answers to the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents expressed overall satisfaction with the school. Inspectors agree that the school is well managed, teaching is good and the pupils are well behaved. This is a very positive background to the school's work. The recent home-school agreement forms a sound base on which most parents build a purposeful relationship with the school. They are pleased with the level of information they receive about their children's progress in annual reports and at parents' evenings.
43. Information for parents includes the much improved school prospectus, the governors' annual report, helpful annual reports on their own children's achievements and information on school events. Despite this range of communication, some parents have indicated that they want to know more about the school. They want more information on the curriculum, homework arrangements, the school's successes and changes in the deployment of teachers. The

management is aware that this is an area for improvement, especially as it has so much to be proud of which is not being shared sufficiently with the community. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, some dissatisfaction was expressed with the level of support provided for pupils who have special needs. Inspectors feel that the provision for special needs is good and the school now provides appropriate homework. The school is not communicating with parents sufficiently so that they know what is being done for their children.

44. Overall, the involvement of parents in the school is satisfactory. A small but dedicated number of parents support learning in the classrooms. The fundraising committee consists of a committed group of parents and teachers who raise substantial funds which are used to enhance areas of provision identified by the school. This involvement and support contribute positively to the success of the school. At the parents' meeting, some said that they would like to become even more involved but do not always know how. Parents are welcomed into the school when their children join the nursery class and there is regular communication with them, often at an informal level at the beginning and end of the school day. When their children join the reception class, parents are provided with a helpful 'starting school toolkit' and are invited to workshops to help them support their child's learning at home. This helpful initiative ensures the smooth transition from the nursery to the reception class.
45. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in annual reports but information on pupils' personal development is sometimes too general. There have been improvements in the governors' annual report and the school prospectus. These are now presented in a style which makes them more accessible to parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher provides strong and incisive leadership for the school. His educational direction is excellent. Since his appointment in 1998, he has worked conscientiously with staff and governors to identify the school's priorities and implement necessary measures for improvement. As a result, pupils' standards of attainment have improved significantly at Key Stage 2 and are beginning to show similar trends at Key Stage 1. The headteacher's vigorous monitoring of teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons and his positive, consistent support has motivated all staff to work with a shared sense of vision. His purposeful management ensures that all who work in the school are aware of its aims and priorities and the importance of their contribution to its success. As a part of the senior management team, the deputy headteacher has a clear role in the strategic planning for the school. He communicates effectively between the headteacher and other senior staff to ensure that all have a clear overview of the school's work and what needs to be done. Serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been dealt with very effectively.
47. Relationships between the headteacher, staff and governors are very good. Together, they have tackled difficult issues resolutely. The school's preparation for the inspection was managed well so that staff felt confident in their teaching and during discussions with inspectors. Responsibilities of co-ordinators have been increased so that they share decisions about curricular issues and financial management in their subjects. Governors have developed skills to monitor the school's performance and they are welcomed to literacy lessons, where

they observe the impact of the school's provision on pupils' progress. These visits also help them to gather useful information on standards. There are plans to extend this monitoring role to other subjects.

48. The governing body actively supports the headteacher, as a good 'critical friend', and contributes very positively towards shaping strategies for improvement. Relevant committees fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and use their skills well in the service of the school. Governors help to formulate the school development plan and set future targets. They recognised the need to improve provision for pupils who have special educational needs and used funds and staffing prudently achieved to achieve good support.
49. Governors have set performance targets for the headteacher and there is a systematic schedule for the appraisal of teachers. Thorough monitoring and evaluation of classroom performance and discussions with the senior management team enable the headteacher and governors to be fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Appropriate staff development, linked to the school's educational priorities in the school development plan, has helped to raise standards at Key Stage 2. Plans are already under way to employ similar measures for Key Stage 1. Information on staff development is not included in the annual report to parents. Particular strengths of the teaching staff are fully recognised and used effectively to the benefit of pupils. Governors are not sharing sufficiently with parents news of the good work being done by the school.
50. The school is clearly focused on improvement and has the strong capacity to continue its current success. Information from assessments on entry and national tests is carefully analysed and used to predict outcomes and focus extra support. For example, in the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, although overall standards were below average, the school recognised the needs of higher attaining pupils and supported them appropriately. As a result, the percentage of pupils achieving level 3 was well above average in reading, above in writing and close to the national average in mathematics.
51. There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Although the number of support staff employed is low, they are suitably qualified and trained and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who have special educational needs. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern at the recent change of teachers in two classes. Inspectors support the management's decision to deploy staff to make the best use of current expertise at a time of staff illness. The headteacher has carefully planned for staff to be deployed in classes where the need is greatest and the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met. This has resulted in their good progress. The governors recognise the need to improve teachers' expertise in information technology and to have an induction programme for newly qualified teachers. Two teachers are currently undertaking professional studies in higher education to support their areas of curricular leadership.
52. Accommodation, including the recently refurbished hall, is spacious and satisfactory overall and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Most classrooms are of an adequate size for the age of the pupils. There is good use of the community room for meetings, clubs and some lessons, but the library is not used sufficiently. The accommodation is kept clean, warm and well cared-for by the conscientious caretaker and his staff. Stimulating and colourful displays in corridors and classrooms give value to pupils' work and celebrate their achievements. A significant number of classrooms require refurbishment and decoration and the school is presently negotiating with the diocese to improve indoor and outdoor facilities. In the governors' annual report, there is no statement about access for the disabled. Surfaces in the nursery outdoor play area and the main playground require attention. The school makes effective use of the local swimming pool and sports centre to ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of sports facilities.
53. The provision of learning resources is adequate for most subjects of the curriculum and the range of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Much of the library stock is old and in need of replacement. The school's fundraising committee makes a valuable contribution to the provision of books throughout the school. Equipment is managed and stored well.
54. Strategic financial planning is carefully linked to the school's priorities identified in the school development plan. These priorities focus on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with improving the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs. Some of the spending decisions on resources are given to subject

co-ordinators, each of whom has a budget. The comprehensive school development plan is linked to available funds. The management recognises that some items in the plan are not fully costed. Governors have an appropriate oversight of strategic budget planning and receive regular detailed information to ensure that the schools' finances are kept in good order. The school uses its funds for special education needs effectively. Recommendations in the last auditor's report have been dealt with appropriately.

55. Day-to-day administration is very effective and contributes positively to the efficient running of the school. The school secretary manages the school accounts well and they are securely organised. Clear procedures are in place for the management of ordering materials and making payments. Principles of best value are applied very well. The headteacher and governing body are constantly seeking to get best value for money. They follow local education authority guidelines for contracts and ensure that goods and services are cost effective in making a positive contribution to the pupils' education. New computing arrangements are imminent for budget management, accounting and recording of assessments of pupils' progress. Information technology is used regularly to make useful materials to support pupils' learning and the school uses it effectively to present its prospectus, policies and schemes of work in a helpful and attractive way. It has not, however, been effectively incorporated into the curriculum for pupils.
56. There have been significant improvements in the school since the last inspection. Children enter with well below average attainment, the quality of teaching is good, pupils achieve above average standards by the time they are eleven and the leadership and management of the school is very good. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to continue the very effective improvements initiated since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and other staff should make the appropriate plans to address the following issues:
- (1) Standards at Key Stage 1 should be improved by:
- applying the effective systems used to achieve the impressive improvements at Key Stage 2;
 - reducing the use of worksheets.
- (Paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 24, 69, 73, 76, 80, 82, 90)*
- (2) Standards in information technology at Key Stage 2 should be improved by:
- increasing the provision of staff training;
 - including the subject more frequently in lesson planning.
- (Paragraphs 9, 20, 24, 51, 86, 95, 112-116)*
- (3) Information for parents about the school's activities should be improved by:
- giving more information about the curriculum and current provision in school;
 - sharing news of the school's successes more frequently.
- (Paragraphs 39, 42-45, 49)*
- (4) Statutory requirements should be met by:
- including all necessary information in the annual report to parents;
 - adopting a policy for the induction of new teachers.
- (Paragraphs 49, 51, 52)*
- (5) Refurbishment of the accommodation should be sought by:
- continuing negotiations with the Diocese.
- (Paragraphs 40, 23, 66)*

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

The following should also be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

(1) Planning more consistent use of the school library.

(Paragraphs 22, 52, 75)

(2) Developing the curriculum to include more information for pupils on life in contemporary British multicultural society.

(Paragraph 38)

(3) Improving the attendance of the few persistent absentees.

(Paragraphs 17)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	21	54	21	2	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	202
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	85

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
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
	1999	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	12	12	9
	Total	26	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (89)	74 (86)	71 (81)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	14
	Girls	11	10	9
	Total	25	26	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (89)	74 (81)	66 (78)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	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
	1999	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	24	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (69)	93 (66)	93 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	24	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (66)	90 (69)	90 (78)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	180
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	1	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	1998/99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	417046
Total expenditure	409172
Expenditure per pupil	1694
Balance brought forward from previous year	20035
Balance carried forward to next year	27909

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	253
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	3		
My child is making good progress in school.	60	40			
Behaviour in the school is good.	43.0	43	13		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	50	13	7	7
The teaching is good.	47	53			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	40	33		3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	33	13		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43			3
The school works closely with parents.	30	50	17		3
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	7		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	3		3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	27		10	17

The inspection team supports parents' positive views of the school. Appropriate homework in the form of reading, research or written work is now set throughout the school. Evidence from reading diaries shows that parents support the school well with its reading programme. There is a satisfactory number of after-school clubs, which have been disrupted because of recent staff illness. The school recognises that parents want to know more about what their children learn in school and steps are in hand to work more closely with them. The school does not share its success sufficiently with parents, who are keen to support the school.

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

58. Children under five attend part-time in the nursery class and then full-time in the reception class. Most children start the nursery class with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age in language and literacy and mathematics. Attainment in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world is below that expected. In physical and creative development, it is in line. Although they make good progress in both classes, most children's attainment is still below expectations in language and literacy and mathematics by the time they are of compulsory school age. They reach the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Children with special educational needs make good progress and reach standards commensurate with their abilities.

Personal and social development

59. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and the quality of teaching is good in both classes. Teaching and non-teaching staff take time to talk to pupils and use praise effectively to raise the children's self-esteem. Children soon settle into school routines in the nursery class, and show increasing levels of independence in dressing and personal hygiene. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to join in activities. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time, behave well and make good relationships with one another and with staff. When they join the reception class, children adapt well to the brisker pace of lessons. They play happily with Key Stage 1 pupils in the playground and respond well to the simple but clearly explained classroom rules. In both classes, children become increasingly confident in asking for help when they need it and become more responsible as they help to clear away activities or get ready for outside play. Children move around the school sensibly and go to the school hall for assemblies and physical education lessons in an orderly way. They behave well.

Language and literacy

60. In both classes, children listen to stories with enjoyment and know a good range of songs and rhymes from memory. They talk about their families and discuss their feelings, likes and dislikes confidently. In the nursery, many of the children have difficulties in expressing themselves clearly because of a lack of appropriate vocabulary. Skilful staff intervention and direct teaching ensure that children use their listening and speaking skills more effectively in all areas of the curriculum. The majority still have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills by the time they are five. The children's love of books and reading is a strength in their development in both classes. In the nursery, children handle books carefully, turn the pages appropriately and know that print has meaning. They tell stories by looking at the pictures but few recognise any words or letter sounds. In the reception class, children begin to read simple texts and able children know a good number of simple commonly used words. The teacher uses very effective methods during the literacy hour to help children to construct simple sentences. In the nursery, children gain experience with mark making through regular activities involving tracing, copying, painting and drawing. By the time they are five in the reception class, many children still have weak pencil control, but they write from left to right, begin to form letters correctly and trace or copy the teacher's writing with increasing skill. Able pupils write simple sentences independently. The teaching of language and literacy for children under five is good in the nursery and very good in the reception class.

Mathematics

61. In the nursery, children have a wide range of sorting and matching experiences and develop an appropriate vocabulary to express size, shape and colour. They join in number rhymes and songs such as 'Five little speckled frogs' and count to five confidently but have difficulty in counting objects reliably. Children play purposefully with sand and develop mathematical language such as 'full' and 'empty'. They measure ingredients when they make icing for cakes, and develop a greater understanding of sequence and order as they play with well-chosen puzzles and games. Effective teaching in small groups helps children to develop the idea of 'difference' as they look for the odd one out in sets of pictures. In the reception class, more able children develop an awareness of simple number operations as they partition numbers to ten and recognise that the two parts equal the whole. Mental strategies are

developed very well as children are encouraged to think hard before they answer questions. They use their mathematical language effectively to support other subjects, for example when they make sets of hard and soft objects in science. Teaching is good in both classes and teachers use an appropriate mix of direct teaching, questioning and stimulating activities to promote learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Children gain a broader knowledge of the world in a wide range of interesting ways. In the nursery, they visit a farm and a railway station. They talk about the weather and the seasons during discussion times. Through stories and rhymes, art and craft activities and dancing, they learn about butterflies and frogs and know that animals live in different habitats and need food. In the role-play area, children increase their understanding of shopping, buying and selling as they play in the 'decorator's' shop. Children use a large roller-ball confidently to control the computer and move images across the screen. In the reception class, children develop early mapping skills when they look at their routes to school. Children increase their understanding of climate when they learn about hot and cold places and decide what to wear in cold weather. They increase their understanding of chronology and historical enquiry when they research their own lives and those of their families. Children are keen to use the computer and they recognise that machines respond to signals. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good in both classes.

Physical development

63. Children in the nursery have appropriate control of their movements during music and movement lessons. They run, jump and move around in the hall and the outside play area purposefully and are well co-ordinated. They ride and push wheeled toys confidently and develop increasing control of pencils. No teaching was observed in the reception class, but teaching is satisfactory in the nursery. Reception class children enjoy outdoor play with Key Stage 1 pupils and they have regular physical education lessons in the hall. Manipulative control improves and this has a positive effect on writing, craft and technology skills, but a significant minority of children have weak pencil control by the time they are five.

Creative development

64. In both classes, children use a wide range of media, including paint, crayons, pastels and collage, to make pictures with a range of textures. Their paintings are bright and colourful, and their drawings are lively and expressive, though many representations of people are immature. In the nursery class, children print sponge patterns on frogs and make hats to wear during their performance of a frog dance. They paint bold pictures of windy days and print attractively with leaves. Manipulative skills improve as children gain experience with malleable materials such as dough and plasticine. In the reception class, children illustrate their written work with lively drawings. They do bright crayon drawings of rockets. Teaching is good in both classes, and children are supported well by non-teaching staff. Creative activities are linked effectively to other areas of the curriculum. In the nursery, children express themselves through role-play as they buy and sell rolls of wallpaper and pots of paint. In the reception class, children use their imagination as they play in the home corner. Their interaction with one another increases as they gain a wider vocabulary. In music time, singing is tuneful and children play a wide variety of percussion instruments. In the reception class, performance improves as children join with Key Stage 1 pupils to sing in assemblies.
65. The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching in the reception class. Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and of national expectations for the age group. Lesson planning is good, and teachers plan together to ensure proper curricular provision and effective progression from the nursery to the reception class. Teaching and non-teaching staff work together very well to provide stimulating opportunities for children to develop appropriately in all areas of learning. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of language and literacy and mathematics. Teaching and non-teaching staff use creative activities appropriately to extend children's vocabulary and provide colourful displays of work which consolidate and extend children's learning. Time and resources are used effectively to make the most of the part-time sessions in the nursery class. The brisker pace in the reception class is appropriate to prepare children for the more formal activities of the National Curriculum. Assessments are used very effectively to inform the next stage of planning.
66. Schemes of work provide effective support for teachers to prepare appropriate, challenging

experiences for children in both classes. Resources for children under five are adequate, but furniture for the nursery home corner is shabby. Accommodation for the age group is satisfactory and is used well but the nursery classroom and outside play area are in need of refurbishment. Enriching activities such as visits and visitors are used to bring relevance and excitement to the children's learning. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. There are good links with home when children start the nursery and the school uses a local education authority initiative very well when children start compulsory education; parents are given a pack of materials which includes ideas for them to help their children with early literacy and numeracy skills at home.

ENGLISH

67. In the National Curriculum reading tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, 74 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above and this was well below the national average of 82 per cent. Fifty-one per cent achieved Level 3, which was well above the national average of 29 per cent. In writing, 74 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above and this was well below the national average of 83 per cent. Eleven per cent achieved Level 3 or above, which was above the national average of 8 per cent. There was a wide spread of ability in the year group. The school's results in reading were well above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In writing, the school's results were above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Taking 1996 to 1999 together, the results for reading were well above the national average, while those for writing were close to the national average. Averaged over the same period, the results for boys are significantly better than those for girls in both reading and writing.
68. Attainment in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 was above the national average. Eighty-three per cent achieved Level 4 or above and this was above the national average of 70 per cent. The percentage reaching Level 5 or above (24 per cent) was above the national average of 22 per cent. The year group included a high number of very able pupils. The school's results were very high compared with the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Taking 1996 to 1999 together, results are close to the national average. Averaged over the same period, the results for girls have been significantly better than for boys.
69. The last report on the school in 1996 stated that standards were in line with national expectations at both key stages. After a decline in test results at Key Stage 1 from 1997 to 1999, standards are again in line with those expected for seven-year-olds. Curriculum provision and the quality of teaching have improved. Results have risen year by year at Key Stage 2 and are now above the national average. The school is aware of the need to raise standards of writing at Key Stage 1 and more attention is being given to non-fiction writing such as lists, captions, observations and instructions. This is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Research skills have been improved at Key Stage 2. The last report stated that the school library was underused and this is still the case. Some teachers relied too heavily on textbooks but with the introduction of the literacy hour, a much wider range of resources is used. The school has dealt with the unsatisfactory provision of fiction for older pupils effectively and there is now a good supply in all classrooms. The school has the capacity to maintain high results, allowing for slight changes because of the varying number of able pupils in each year group. During the inspection, no difference was noted in performance of boys and girls at either key stage.
70. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Most pupils speak clearly and reply confidently to teachers' questions. They express their ideas and thoughts effectively because of the school's emphasis on the development of appropriate subject vocabulary. Pupils listen attentively and take turns to contribute to discussions, for example when they discuss a traditional text in Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age. Pupils join in discussions confidently and answer teachers' questions with increasing clarity. In Year 4, pupils use specific vocabulary in a geography lesson, for example, to describe the various storeys in the rain forest. Pupils gain confidence in speaking to a larger audience when they contribute to school assemblies and take part in concerts for parents and friends.
71. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils reach the nationally expected levels for their age in reading. The youngest pupils develop an interest in books and begin to recognise familiar words. The school's appropriate phonic programme gives pupils a good grounding. Pupils benefit from the introduction of the literacy hour. They practise rhyming words and this helps

them to decipher and spell words effectively. Pupils read aloud with increasing fluency. Able pupils read simple storybooks confidently and discuss the characters and stories. They use simple dictionaries effectively and are confident in using the context and index pages in books. Most pupils, even the youngest in the key stage, are aware of the contribution of authors and illustrators to books.

72. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read at levels above those expected for their age and some are very good readers. Pupils have a wide range of strategies to decipher meaning from print and they progress well. They use context cues well and recount the significant ideas, events and characters in stories. Able pupils read good quality children's novels with fluency and expression. They cope well with the more complex narrative structures in these stories and understand sub-plots. All pupils read from a good range of literature, including poetry and non-fiction. They know the names of well-known authors of children's literature and adult authors such as Shakespeare and Dickens. In the literacy hour, pupils read together from enlarged print and this benefits all pupils by encouraging pace and expression. The study of vocabulary and sentence structure in texts gives valuable practice to enhance reading comprehension and enrich writing activities. The school has a small but good range of CD ROMs, and this supports the extension of pupils' research skills.
73. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is broadly in line with national expectations. Most pupils know their letter sounds and are able to blend them into words. Higher attaining pupils know 'tricky' words such as 'laugh' and 'people'. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately. They begin to plan their stories and there is a clear sense of narrative. In non-fiction writing, pupils sequence events with increasing skill, for example when they write about how to make a sandwich or boil an egg. More able pupils begin to use inverted commas for speech. Presentation of work is variable, but handwriting is usually correctly formed and evenly sized and a few pupils are beginning to join their writing. There are few examples of extended pieces of writing. Opportunities for this are missed when worksheets are used too often.
74. Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is above that expected for their age. The school's rigorous approach to the introduction of the literacy hour has had a very positive effect in the key stage. Pupils benefit from the clear focus on word and sentence work. In extended writing, pupils plan and draft their work systematically and use word processing to present work for display. Spelling is good. The use of paragraphs is secure, and pupils use interesting vocabulary to bring life to their writing. Handwriting improves in the key stage as pupils practise the writing of letter patterns regularly. They transfer their skills to written work very effectively and presentation is very good in Years 4, 5 and 6.
75. The school is effective in promoting literacy across the curriculum. Pupils at both key stages love reading, and there is good quality literature in all classrooms. In history and geography, pupils develop specific vocabulary and use extended writing to support their studies. Opportunities are taken to enrich the pupils' vocabulary by labelling displays and providing lists of useful words in the classrooms. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use the library. Interest in reading is enhanced through good support from parents and the regular completion of reading diaries.
76. The overall quality of the teaching is good, with some very good teaching at both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers manage pupils well so that they listen attentively and are well behaved and motivated. At both key stages, teachers have a secure understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and this is a strength which supports pupils' good progress. Lesson objectives are clear, and an interesting range of tasks is set after the well managed class text work. Pupils concentrate well during these activities and are keen to succeed. In most lessons, earlier learning is clearly identified in teachers' planning to show that there is progression in the work. At both key stages, pupils enjoy the literacy hour and they are particularly enjoy and make good progress in the shared text sessions when they read together and study features such as vocabulary or punctuation. Teaching is particularly strong in these sessions. Basic spelling and grammar is taught systematically so that pupils build well on previous learning. At Key Stage 1, worksheets are sometimes used too frequently so that pupils do not have to think for themselves about sentence construction. In exercise books, there is insufficient insistence on good presentation of work.
77. Teachers use a clear, direct approach in class teaching and there is very good questioning of the pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are drawn into discussions so that teachers are able to assess their understanding and extend their learning.

Most listen attentively to the teachers and are well behaved and motivated. There is a brisk pace to lessons, especially at Key Stage 2. Opportunities are provided for high attaining pupils to extend their learning through more challenging tasks. Relationships in the classes are good, and pupils work well in pairs - for example, when they share their knowledge and record lists of words in Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They benefit from teachers' sensitive implementation of carefully prepared individual education plans and good support from non-teaching staff and the headteacher.

78. Assessment procedures are good, records are well kept and each pupil's progress is tracked through the school. Rigorous analysis of test results enables the school to focus on weaker aspects of the subject so that they can be improved. This initiative has been very successful at Key Stage 2. Teachers' day-to-day assessment through very good questioning helps pupils to progress well. The quality of marking of work varies. There are examples of good marking throughout the school, with constructive comments to help pupils to improve their work. Homework is set regularly for reading and this link with parents provides valuable extra practice. Other homework is set, especially for older pupils, so that they consolidate and extend work done in school. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting stressed their wish to continue to support their children through regular homework.
79. Management of the subject is good and English is well represented in the school development plan. The literacy hour has been introduced very successfully and the co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. Staff training is well organised and teachers work purposefully together as a team, with good liaison between the key stages. There is a good supply of reading scheme books and high quality children's fiction, but there are too few library books to support all areas of the curriculum. Attractive displays of work and stimulating reading corners enhance the pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

80. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 was well below the national average. Seventy-one per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above and this was well below the national average of 86 per cent. The percentage reaching Level 3 or above (23 per cent) was close to the national average of 21 per cent. This somewhat unusual picture reflects the high number of pupils in the year group who are on the school's register of special educational needs. The school's results were below the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Taking 1996 to 1999 together, the results are well below the national averages. Averaged over the same period, the results for boys are significantly better than those for girls.
81. Attainment in national tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 was well above the national average. Ninety –three per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or above and this was well above the national average of 69 per cent. The percentage reaching Level 5 or above (31 per cent) was above the national average of 24 per cent. There was a high number of very able pupils in the year group. The school's results were very high compared with the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Taking 1996 to 1999 together, the results are close to the national averages. Averaged over the same period, results for boys are little different from those for girls.
82. Current standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with expectations and this concurs with the findings of the last inspection report. Pupils add and subtract numbers up to 20 and begin to show good understanding of place value in tens and units. They count in sequences of 2, 5 or 10 and identify odd and even numbers. They know the language of time and sequence months of the year and seasons correctly. There is an over-reliance on photocopied sheets for pupils' written work, limiting opportunities for them to develop their own recording skills, or to see the progress they make over time in their books.
83. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is higher than the national average in mathematics. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be below average. The strong leadership provided by the recently appointed headteacher, the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy have contributed significantly to the school's improved performance in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 show a good understanding of number. They do mental calculations quickly and accurately and explain the process they used to find the answers to problems. Pupils understand place value of whole numbers and decimals and

know the percentage equivalents of fractions such as one tenth and one quarter. They can mentally calculate the cost of an article with ten per cent off. Pupils have a sound knowledge of multiplication tables and use long multiplication methods accurately to calculate, for example, 342×26 .

84. There is a strong emphasis on numeracy throughout the school and the National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively by all teachers. It has raised teachers' expectations in terms of the planning, teaching and learning of mathematics. Regular practice of mental arithmetic skills and the development of mathematical language are strong features of lessons. Pupils in Year 2 confidently and accurately use the terms 'partitioning' and 'combining' when solving number problems. Aspects of mathematics are practised in other subjects. In the reception class, pupils improved their data handling skills in a geography lesson when they built a class pictogram which showed the different ways of travelling to school. Pupils in Year 1 used their number skills well in a dance lesson when they counted the number of steps they needed to take.
85. Significant improvements have taken place since the previous inspection. Curricular planning, which is based on national guidance, is more rigorous and focuses more clearly on skills to be taught in each lesson. The subject co-ordinator now manages mathematics across both key stages and this gives her a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development. The quality of teaching has improved through well-planned in-service training and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher. Robust analysis of the school's results in national tests has helped the school to identify weaknesses and establish plans to remedy them.
86. Pupils are taught well. Teaching was good or better in almost seventy per cent of the lessons seen and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers have a good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and plan their lessons well. Teaching is brisk and challenging, reflecting the high expectations which teachers have of pupils. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils' mental agility was tested well when they were asked to calculate $4 \times \text{£}4.95$ or to add three sums of money. Having given the answer, they then had to explain the process they used. Most resources are used effectively to support learning but there is insufficient use of information technology at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 1 gained a deeper understanding of tens and units when they used simple sets of cards with numbers on them. In Year 3, the teacher used a small flipchart to change numbers as he asked quick-fire questions about the value of digits. In a small number of lessons, the over-reliance on photocopied sheets limits the amount of work which some pupils do. It also restricts the opportunity for pupils to practise setting out their own work correctly and to monitor their own progress in order to improve.
87. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils. As a result, there is a pleasant working environment and a sense of purpose in the classrooms. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, acquire skills and knowledge at a good rate. In the reception class, children build on their experience as under fives and establish a sense of enquiry and interest in numbers which stays with them throughout the school. Pupils sustain their concentration and enjoy the challenge of work. Behaviour in lessons is good; pupils share resources well and show consideration towards one another.
88. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and prepare work effectively to extend what pupils know, do and understand. For example, in Year 6, the teacher gave a thorough analysis of pupils' previous work and pointed out areas for improvement before she introduced the new lesson. Work is marked regularly by teachers and comments usually give pupils information on how to improve. Classroom assistants are deployed very effectively and they are clear about the learning objectives for the pupils who have special educational needs. When pupils are withdrawn in small groups, their work is directly linked to that of the rest of the class. This enables them to join in discussions at the end of lessons and gain self esteem.
89. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator, whose role has been more clearly defined since the last inspection. Specific training and support from the headteacher and the advisory service of the local education authority has helped the school to establish a firm basis on which to build improvements.

SCIENCE

90. In the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, 66 per cent of pupils reached level 2 or above and this was well below the national average of 87 per cent. Twenty-nine per cent

reached level 3 or above which was above the national average of 20 per cent. The wide variation reflected the high number of pupils with special educational needs and of highly able pupils. Over the last four years, standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown a downward trend for pupils reaching level 2 or above and an upward trend among pupils reaching level 3.

91. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, 93 per cent of pupils reached Level 4 or above and this was well above the national average of 78 per cent. Thirty-four per cent reached Level 5 which was above the national average of 27 per cent. The school's results were well above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Averaged over the four-year period 1996 to 1999, the results for both boys and girls were close to the national average, but this includes below average results in 1996. There has been a gradual upward trend, with more pupils reaching level 4 or above and a much greater upward trend for those reaching level 5. Over the last four years, pupils' performance has been well above average in comparison with similar schools.
92. After the last inspection, standards reported for Key Stage 1 were not matched by teacher assessments in the following three years. The school has made a determined effort to improve pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding in the past year and standards are now in line with national expectations for seven-year-olds. At Key Stage 2, standards were judged to be poor and they are now above expectations. This big improvement is due the increased focus given to science in the key stage. Analysis of test results highlighted weaknesses which the school has addressed very successfully.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop deeper understanding of life processes and living things. They grow seeds and study sunflowers to gain knowledge about the life cycle of plants. Understanding of the five senses develops as pupils explore sight and hearing. Pupils know that all animals need food, and become more aware of health issues as they study healthy diets. Pupils recognise 'push' and 'pull' as forces and know that force is applied in many contexts. More able pupils understand the idea of a fair test as they add different loads to model vehicles on a ramp. As they study how things work, pupils list appliances from home and school which need electricity. They experiment with batteries, wire and bulbs to complete an electric circuit.
94. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils obtain evidence to test scientific ideas in a variety of ways. They use first-hand experience and research to obtain information and draw conclusions. In work on heat, they employ their investigative skills effectively to find the best of three methods of insulation and then record their findings. They draw appropriately on their numeracy skills as they become more accurate in using thermometers to record changes in temperature. Pupils in Year 3 consider the properties of a range of materials as they choose clothes for a pharaoh's trip on the River Nile. Literacy skills are used effectively when pupils in Year 6 study parts of the tulip flower and make carefully labelled drawings and notes to explain the reproductive system of the plant. In work on forces, pupils use correct scientific vocabulary such as gravity, friction, upthrust and air resistance. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the acquisition of scientific skills, knowledge and understanding.
95. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages. Teachers plan lessons to include clear objectives and these are conveyed effectively to the pupils so that they understand what they have to do and how they are to do it. Lessons are well balanced to include whole-class teaching and stimulating activities in which pupils investigate and find out things for themselves. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about what they are doing. They are encouraged to make predictions and decide what observations and measurements will provide appropriate evidence. Teachers question pupils effectively to assess and extend their understanding of cause and effect. Pupils respond well in discussions because of the teachers' emphasis on the development of scientific vocabulary. Teachers manage pupils well; work is matched well to pupils' needs so that their interest is maintained and all are able to achieve success. Most resources are prepared and used well but there is insufficient use of information technology in measurement or recording.
96. The science co-ordinator shares his enthusiasm with colleagues and all are keen to raise standards. The policy and systematic scheme of work are detailed and cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Resources are adequate and they are well organised and stored. The school uses visitors and educational visits, for example to museums, effectively to enhance pupils' scientific understanding.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. At both key stages, standards for art and design and technology are above those seen in most schools. This is an overall improvement from standards recorded in the last report. At that time, standards in art at Key Stage 1 were in line with expectations and at Key Stage 2, they were good. In design and technology, there was inadequate coverage of the subject. The school has combined the two subjects and produced a scheme of work which covers the National Curriculum guidance for both.
98. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop good levels of skill in observational drawing. In Year 1, pupils draw daffodils and colour them. They observe the flowers carefully and match the size, shape and colour effectively. Pupils then use a variety of materials to design and make frames for their pictures. Skills of cutting and making are satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils discuss textile patterns from a range of cultures and then make their own designs. They produce carefully executed and attractive work when they print their patterns on paper and cloth. Bold work on display includes full-length portraits which are bright and colourful. Pupils' work in art and design and technology is often linked to other subjects, for example when pupils make lively and bright illustrations for the story of Daedalus and Icarus and create collages of ships during work on voyages of exploration.
99. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good sense of colour. They understand primary colours and mix them with black or white to create a range of tints and tones. This work is linked to that of the artist Kandinsky. As they study the work of artists such as Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec, pupils gain expertise in producing different effects with paint, pastels and crayons. They design and make objects related to other subjects. In Year 4, pupils design and make jewellery after studying Roman artefacts and they make items from papier mache. Attractive Roman mosaic patterns are translated into three-dimensional plaques with the use of clay blocks. Older pupils design and make a bold collage of a Tudor ship.
100. Teachers plan skilfully to link much of the work in art and design and technology to other subjects. This brings relevance and interest to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan lessons well to include a balance of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils achieve high standards as they respond well to enthusiastic teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They stress the need for care, concentration and accuracy and this is reflected in pupils' work. Tasks are explained clearly so that pupils are able to achieve success. Pupils are taught to use tools and materials safely.
101. The co-ordinator for these subjects is well-qualified and very enthusiastic. The policy and scheme of work are innovative in linking art and design technology together. Resources are adequate and they are organised and stored well.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Standards of work seen in geography at the end of both key stages are similar to those seen in most schools. Pupils develop geographical knowledge and skills appropriately as they progress through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average at Key Stage 1 and standards were improving at Key Stage 2.
103. Pupils in reception class for example, observe features of their own locality. They recall the buildings they see or the transport they use on their way to school. In Year 1, pupils extend their earlier experiences by locating the main features along local routes and begin to use correct directional language. By the end of the key stage, pupils learn about places beyond their own locality. They label the countries of the United Kingdom correctly on a map and compare features of St. Helen's with the lifestyle of people in an Indian village. At Key Stage 2, pupils study the impact of environmental change on communities. Pupils in Year 3 compare the difference in facilities required to serve the needs of Southport rather than St Helen's. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 improve their mapping skills by using four-figure grid references and by drawing accurate plans with keys to locate features. Understanding of changes in the environment are developed in history lessons, when pupils study the history of local industry.
104. Teaching quality is satisfactory overall, with some stronger features at Key Stage 2. Learning for pupils in Year 4 progressed very well in a lesson about the rain forest. The teacher's very good subject knowledge meant that pupils' questions were answered at an appropriate level. Resources were used very effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly those who have special educational needs, to ensure that they understand how to complete their work. In all lessons teachers assess pupils' knowledge and build well on what they know. Teachers are clear about what pupils will learn during the lesson and set appropriate targets for them. The quality of learning is good. Staff plan conscientiously to ensure that all pupils work at a good pace and understand what they do. Pupils are interested in their work and respond well to suggestions as to how they can improve. Pupils' good behaviour and their consideration for one another creates a good working environment and has a positive impact on their learning.
105. Management of the subject has improved since the previous inspection. The curriculum is planned well to provide good breadth within the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Management of funds to enhance resources has been delegated to the subject co-ordinator. Responsibilities are clearly defined but do not include monitoring of teaching and learning.

HISTORY

106. By the end of both key stages, standards in history are similar to those seen in most schools.
107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop a growing sense of chronology by thinking about their own lives and those of their families. They write the poem which begins, "When I was one, I had just begun" to reinforce their understanding of how they have grown and changed. They increase their knowledge of how towns have changed over time when they consider how shops have altered. Pupils in Year 2 discuss the difference between a chemist's shop of 1910 and the present time. Careful observation of pictures of different methods of transport enables pupils to record differences between a penny-farthing bicycle and a modern 'bike'. In Year 1, pupils know about the Bleriot brothers and early balloon ascents.
108. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop a satisfactory level of factual knowledge of a range of historical periods. They know that the Romans invaded Britain and recognise the key features of Roman dress and everyday life. In Year 3, pupils study the use of hieroglyphics in Ancient Egypt and know that they were found in burial tombs. Pupils studying the Stuarts have an appropriate understanding and knowledge of the main events, people and changes during the period. They increase their understanding of how seafarers such as Sir Francis Drake made voyages of exploration. During study of the Victorian period, pupils write about the homes of poor people of the time.
109. Standards in history have improved at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when standards were reported to be below national expectations. At Key Stage 2, standards are similar to those noted in the last report.
110. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages. Teachers ask probing questions so that pupils recall previous learning. They encourage pupils to be aware of work done by other

classes, which is displayed in the school. Other adults are well deployed in classrooms and this is especially beneficial for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan lessons well and have clear objectives that enable pupils to grasp new information and ideas effectively. There are good links with literacy - for example, when pupils write about 'The Canterbury Tales' and write letters in the style of a Crusader at the time of Richard the Lionheart. Time is used well by teachers and there is a good balance between whole-class teaching and pupils' individual and group work.

111. The co-ordinator has produced a good, detailed scheme of work and a review of the policy is included in the school development plan. Resources for history are satisfactory. Teachers draw on appropriate artefacts, texts and video recordings to enhance lessons and engage pupils' interest. Visits to local sites bring relevance to pupils' learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Pupils' levels of attainment are broadly at expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1 but below by the end of Key Stage 2. This does not concur with findings during the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory at both key stages. Focus on the core curriculum subjects has meant that there has been little recent training for the whole staff.
113. By the time they are seven, most pupils operate the computer mouse and keyboard satisfactorily. They follow instructions, move images effectively and recognise the importance of giving precise instructions. They write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They use a graphics program to create pictures and select appropriate tools for the task. They support their learning in other subjects with attractive text and pictures. Pupils do not gain sufficient experience with robots or other programmable toys. In Year 2, more able pupils use CD ROMs confidently to look for information.
114. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is below that expected because pupils have not had sufficient practice and have not developed appropriate skills in control and monitoring. Data handling skills are also underdeveloped at the end of the key stage, and this reflects the lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information technology in mathematics, science, geography and history. Pupils become more aware of the use of computers to find information in CD ROMs and, throughout the key stage, pupils show satisfactory progress in this aspect of the subject. They do not acquire monitoring and control skills to support work on measurement in science and to enhance work in design and technology. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs build on their previous knowledge and understanding at the same rate as the other pupils.
115. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching because no direct teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection. Teachers do not regularly include the subject in their planning. When information technology is included regularly in lessons by the co-ordinator at Key Stage 2, pupils benefit from his secure subject knowledge and support. At both key stages, teachers' expertise is variable. Their competence in word processing helps pupils to develop confidence in this aspect of the subject. Information technology is not used consistently as a tool for learning and this inhibits the faster progress of all pupils. Pupils enjoy using computers and are keen to have their turns on the machines. They are inquisitive and keen to learn more about the possible operations within programs. There are insufficient effective systems for pupils to record their sessions on the computers, and assessment is insufficiently developed.
116. The school has a useful policy for information technology and has adapted national guidelines to form a comprehensive and helpful scheme of work. However, this scheme is not adequately implemented, especially at Key Stage 2. Resources are adequate and the co-ordinator keeps a good overview of equipment and software. Training for staff has not been a priority during the past two years, when literacy, numeracy and science have been the principal subjects for development in the school. The management recognises the importance of improved use of information technology to support and enhance pupils' learning.

MUSIC

117. Inspection judgements are based on teachers' planning, observation of hymn practice, listening to pupils in collective worship, discussion with the co-ordinator and a visit to the guitar club. From this evidence, attainment in music is judged to be in line with standards expected nationally at both key stages.
118. Provision and achievement in music have improved since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning has improved so that all elements are included and pupils have a wider range of experiences.
119. At Key Stage 1, pupils have regular opportunities to sing and play instruments. They know a good range of songs, including action songs and hymns. Singing is well pitched, with an appropriate regard for dynamics to give expression to the words. Clapping is rhythmical and pupils play percussion instruments enthusiastically to support their singing. Most listen attentively and respond appropriately to recordings of classical music in assemblies. Pupils gain knowledge of traditional music in dance lessons - for example, when pupils in Year 1 respond to the patterns of a folk tune. Participation in school concerts gives pupils opportunities to perform for an audience.
120. At Key Stage 2, pupils' singing is controlled and tuneful, with a good sense of rhythm and pitch. Pupils listen to one another sensitively, follow the teacher's direction effectively and sing well in unison. Guitar players lead the singing very effectively in assemblies and pupils from both key stages accompany hymns rhythmically on percussion instruments. Pupils know popular pieces of music by composers such as Vivaldi and enjoy opportunities to share their knowledge of pop stars. The thoughtful choice of recorded music in assemblies engages the pupils' interest. Violin lessons are arranged through the local education authority and a good number of guitar players share their skills when they play for school concerts.
121. No judgement on teaching can be made. Staff have worked together conscientiously to create the school's scheme of work. Lessons include listening, performing and composing elements, although composing is at an early stage in the school. Music from a range of cultures is a positive feature of the scheme. Recorded lessons are included and pupils follow simple scores and become familiar with traditional notation. Teachers' planning of half-term topics is good and the subject co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further. She shares information with colleagues and there is an air of enjoyment of music in the school. Teachers' improved planning and commitment to improvement compensate satisfactorily for the overall lack of musical expertise among the staff. Resources for music are satisfactory, and instruments are used and stored well.
122. Pupils gain expertise and confidence in the after-school guitar club, which is well attended. Enthusiastic pupils from Key Stage 2 are ably taught by the deputy headteacher and a supportive parishioner. This provides valuable extra tuition for pupils. A highlight of the week is when a folk music group visits the school each Friday to play for Years 5 and 6. This enhances provision and extends the range of musical experiences for these pupils. At Christmas, singers from the school perform in concerts in the local shopping centre and at a residential home for the elderly. Singers gained experience of performing in a larger group when they joined with pupils from other schools in a local 'Songs of Praise' event.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the end of both key stages. They make satisfactory progress in games, gymnastics and dance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have weekly swimming lessons and the majority develop good levels of competence in the water. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate appropriate balance and co-ordination. They pass and receive a ball confidently and use space effectively to practice jumping, turning and stretching movements. In dance lessons, pupils respond imaginatively to rhythm and incorporate high and low gestures in addition to more traditional steps, in their movement. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use their strength and stamina well when balancing and supporting their body weight. They approach apparatus with confidence and demonstrate safe landing techniques, when jumping to the floor.
124. Opportunities for the development of skills are provided through activities such as the karate club, soccer practice and netball coaching. During the autumn term the school makes good

use of a local sports hall for indoor athletics. Teams compete against other schools in swimming galas and field sports.

125. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some outstanding teaching was seen in a dance lesson. Pupils were fully active during the lesson and were continually challenged by changes of speed and rhythm in the music. The teacher's participation was excellent and raised the confidence and performance of the pupils to a very high level. Music was used very effectively to motivate and stimulate imaginative dance. In most lessons, teachers plan and prepare well. They set clear aims for both work and behaviour and manage pupils skilfully. When the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils are inactive for too long, teaching is less successful. There is insufficient challenge for the majority of pupils to improve their skills.
126. Since the previous inspection, there has been better planning, in which skills are identified for each year group. A published scheme has been integrated with the school's planning to add more breadth to the range of activities and there has been some enhancement of equipment. Extra-curricular provision has also improved to include a wider range of activities. The school is in line to be part of the nationally organised 'Top Sport' initiative to further improve the confidence and expertise of the staff.