

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC FIRST SCHOOL**

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116909

Headteacher: Mr A. P. Tamburro

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 190551

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | First School  |
| School category:             | Voluntary aided   |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 to 9  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Downsell Road<br>Webheath<br>Redditch<br>Worcestershire |
| Postcode:                    | B97 5RR   |
| Telephone number:            | 01527 546398  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body                                      |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr M. P. Thompson                                       |
| Date of previous inspection: | 18 <sup>th</sup> November 1996                          |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members   |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| David Westall  | Registered inspector | Mathematics<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Children aged under five  | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further?<br>Overall effectiveness |
| Lizzie Forster | Lay inspector        | English as an additional language  | How well does the school care for pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?  |
| Sandy Wellsted | Team inspector       | English<br>Geography<br>Physical education<br>Special educational needs    | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development   |
| Sarah Foulkes  | Team inspector       | Science<br>Art<br>History<br>Information technology<br>Equal opportunities | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |

The inspection contractor was:

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has 237 pupils on roll and is of average size. Pupils are taught in eight classes, and the school covers the age range from four to nine. The percentage of pupils having free school meals is well below the national average, although the school believes that considerably less parents apply for their children to have free meals than are eligible to do so. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is in line with the national average, and four pupils have statements of special educational needs. As a Catholic school, it serves a wide catchment area and pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. On entry to the school, the overall attainment of most pupils is broadly average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. It is forward-looking, and is effectively led by the headteacher and governing body. The teaching is good in reception and Key Stage 1, and is never less than satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well catered for; and the school is a caring community where pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Standards are good in English and pupils' achievements are sound, or better, in all other subjects except in art and design and technology in Key Stage 2. The monitoring roles of most co-ordinators need to improve, and Key Stage 2 pupils require more opportunities to make choices and use their initiative in some lessons. Overall, however, the strengths of the school greatly outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve good standards in English, in both key stages.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils are good at conducting scientific investigations.
- The school is well led by the headteacher, and has a committed and effective governing body.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching is good for pupils in reception and in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well.
- Reception children benefit from a rich and varied range of learning experiences.
- Pupils achieve good standards in physical education, across the school.
- Pupils' moral and social development are promoted well.
- The school is a caring community where the well-being of pupils is of central importance.
- There is a strong partnership with parents, and this benefits pupils' learning.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- Most subject co-ordinators need to develop more rigorous procedures for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school, in order to address areas for improvement.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to make decisions and to use their initiative in some lessons in Key Stage 2, and this restricts their learning in science and mathematics.
- Standards are too low in art and design and technology in Key Stage 2.
- Some pupils miss about one and a quarter hours of the school week, as a result of the late arrival of the school bus.

*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 good progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, in 1996, but there is still work to be done to rectify a few deficiencies. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and the quality of their teaching is better. The teaching was unsatisfactory in 20% of all lessons in 1996, but no unsatisfactory lessons were observed in this inspection. Pupils are now making better progress in their learning, and more able pupils are set more challenging work than they were in 1996, enabling them to achieve higher standards. Procedures for monitoring attendance have been improved since the last inspection. Learning resources, which were unsatisfactory in 1996, are adequate, overall, but there is still scope for improvement in some subjects. The curriculum now gives pupils more opportunities to develop their investigation skills in science and to apply their skills in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, there are still some weaknesses in provision in these aspects of science and mathematics in Key Stage 2. The last inspection found that standards in art and design and technology needed to be raised. While the school has been successful in improving standards in these subjects in Key Stage 1, they are still too low in Key Stage 2.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in:    | compared with |          |          |                 |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|----------|-----------------|
|                    | all schools   |          |          | similar schools |
|                    | 1997          | 1998     | 1999     | 1999            |
| <b>Reading</b>     | <b>C</b>      | <b>B</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>A</b>        |
| <b>Writing</b>     | <b>D</b>      | <b>D</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>B</b>        |
| <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>A</b>      | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>C</b>        |

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

The table shows that the school's 1999 results are well above the national average in reading and writing, and are in line with the national average in mathematics. When these results are compared with the results of schools with similar pupil intakes, they are well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics.

In English, inspection findings reflect the school's good test results in 1999, and show that standards are above average in reading and writing. Across the school, pupils make good overall progress in English, and they achieve particularly well in reading. Inspection findings are a little more favourable than the 1999 test results in mathematics in Key Stage 1, and show that a very high proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in Year 2, and an average percentage do better. In Year 4, most pupils reach the average standard and about a quarter exceed this level. The national numeracy strategy is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and they make sound or better progress in developing their number skills, including through mental calculations. In science, pupils achieve well when conducting simple experiments in Key Stage 1 and make sound progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. At the end of Key Stage 1, the overwhelming majority achieve the expected level and a significant minority do better. In Year 4, pupils' achievements in science are sound, overall, and a very high proportion demonstrate the average standard, while about a third exceed this level. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about pupils' overall standards in geography or music, but standards are too low in art and design and technology in Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages in all other subjects, except in physical education, where standards are high, across the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour is good, throughout the school day.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They share equipment sensibly, listen with interest during discussions and respect the opinions of others. When given the opportunity to show initiative and to take responsibility, pupils respond well. |
| Attendance                             | Satisfactory. Most pupils arrive in good time and sessions start promptly. However, the late arrival of the school bus means a small minority of pupils regularly miss the beginning of the school day.   |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils:  | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-9 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good               | Good           | Satisfactory   |

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better, in all lessons observed. In reception, all lessons were good, and in Key Stage 1 about two-thirds of all lessons demonstrated good, or sometimes very good, teaching. In Key Stage 2, the teaching was mainly satisfactory, but over one third of the lessons showed good teaching.

The teaching for reception children, including those who are under five, is a strength of the school. Teachers plan stimulating and effective practical and structured activities, and explain new ideas in ways which make sense to young children. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the national literacy strategy is being implemented successfully and the quality of teaching is good. As a consequence, pupils make mainly good progress in their learning in English. In mathematics, the teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers usually make pupils fully aware of what they are expected to learn. However, Key Stage 2 teachers need to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to real-life situations and to take more responsibility for organising and developing tasks. Overall, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in their mathematical learning. In science, the teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in developing their investigation skills, as a result of effective teaching. In Key Stage 2, teachers use sound questions to check pupils' understanding, and show pupils how to conduct systematic investigations. However, they provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to express and carry through their own ideas for enquiries, to choose or organise equipment or to write up their own results and conclusions. The teaching of physical education is good, across the school, and this is reflected in pupils' high standards. Although insufficient lessons were seen in art and design and technology to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, evidence from pupils' work suggests that teachers' subject knowledge and expectations need to be improved in Key Stage 2.

All teachers work effectively with pupils with special educational needs, planning their tasks carefully and liaising well with learning support assistants. More able pupils are suitably challenged by their work in most lessons, and their overall progress is sound, as a consequence. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of tasks and sound, or better, use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils respond well, demonstrating positive attitudes to learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Provision for reception children is very good, and they benefit from a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is generally well matched to pupils' needs in Key Stage 1, and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Appropriate emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, across the school. In Key Stage 2, there are weaknesses in the provision for art and design and technology, and pupils need more opportunities to make decisions about their own learning, particularly in science and mathematics. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. While the majority of pupils benefit from equal access to the curriculum provided, the teaching time for pupils coming to school on the bus is reduced by up to one and a quarter hours across the week. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good. Planning and leadership are effective, and support assistants make a valuable contribution to these pupils' needs.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and good provision for their moral and social development.  |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school places a high priority on pupils' welfare, and is a caring community.   |

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher has good leadership and management skills. He provides a clear sense of direction for the school, and analyses its performance rigorously. He promotes high standards and provides staff with a good role model through his commitment to school improvement. The headteacher develops constructive relationships with parents, and they hold him in high regard. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have a sound overview of their subjects, and all co-ordinators check planning and provide useful advice to their colleagues, when it is requested. However, most co-ordinators need to develop more rigorous monitoring procedures to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school, in order to target support accurately. The deputy provides satisfactory support; and good leadership and management skills are demonstrated by the co-ordinator of the Early Years Unit, which comprises the reception classes. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are all well informed. Statutory requirements are met.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed carefully, and appropriate targets are set for improvements. The headteacher observes and evaluates the quality of teaching, and provides valuable feedback to teachers which has a beneficial effect on their professional development. Co-ordinators for English and mathematics have a sound overview but most co-ordinators need to develop more rigorous ways of checking work in their subjects.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The school budget is analysed carefully, and financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The governors debate expenditure thoroughly in order to obtain value for money. Overall, the school makes good use of its resources.   |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The management of the school</li> <li>The school's expectations and values</li> <li>The staff are easy to talk to</li> <li>The school promotes high standards of behaviour</li> <li>Children enjoy coming to school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents would like more information on their children's progress</li> </ul> |

Inspection findings fully support the parents' positive views about the school, but there is no evidence to support some parents' concerns about information on progress. The school provides a range of opportunities for formal and informal contact with staff to discuss attainment and targets for improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In reception, pupils make mainly good progress in their learning, as a result of effective teaching. At the age of five, their standards are mainly average, although there is a broad spread of achievement, which reflects the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs as well as those who are quick to learn.
2. In Key Stage 1, the results of the 1999 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) were well above the national average in both reading and writing, although the results in reading were a little better than in writing. When compared to the results achieved by similar schools, these results were well above average in reading and were above average in writing. In their final year at the school, in Year 4, a high proportion of pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in the optional English SATs, and a third achieved the level normally expected for 11 year olds. Following the same pattern as in Key Stage 1, results in writing were lower, but a high percentage of pupils reached the expected standard and a significant minority did better.
3. In mathematics, the results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 SATs were broadly in line with the national average, and matched the results achieved by similar schools. In Year 4, a high proportion of pupils reached the expected level in the optional SATs, and a significant minority achieved a higher level. In science, the results of the 1999 teacher assessments in Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average, but was below the national average for those achieving a higher level. Overall, these results were in line with those achieved by similar schools in science.
4. Trends, over time, show that reading standards have risen consistently in the Key Stage 1 SATs over the last three years. Standards in writing improved significantly in 1999 when compared to the results in the earlier two years, which were broadly similar, and below the national average. In mathematics, the 1999 Key Stage 1 results are a little lower than those achieved in the previous two years, and the school attributes the recent fall to disruption caused by a staff change. The school has set itself sufficiently challenging targets to improve standards further in English, mathematics and science, and is making sound progress, overall, in reaching these targets.
5. In English, inspection findings reflect the school's good results in the 1999 statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and in the optional SATs in Year 4. Pupils make good overall progress in English, across the school, in relation to their prior attainment. Their progress in developing reading skills is particularly marked, and pupils acquire a wide range of reading strategies to help them to decode, understand and respond to different texts. In Year 2, almost all pupils can write simple texts, including short stories, while Year 4 pupils present their work well using neat cursive handwriting, can use a variety of sentence structures, spell competently and, for the most part, punctuate their work accurately. In speaking and listening, pupils' standards are mainly average for their ages, at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
6. Inspection findings show that current standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 are a little higher than the 1999 SATs results, and show that a very high proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in Year 2, while a broadly average proportion do better. In Year 4, the majority of pupils achieve the expected level for their age, and about one quarter exceed this standard. The national numeracy strategy is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, and they make mainly sound and often good progress in developing their number

skills, including through mental calculations. Their progress in developing skills in using and applying mathematics is more spasmodic, but is broadly satisfactory.

7. In science, the overwhelming majority of pupils achieve the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1, and a significant minority will attain the higher level. In Year 4, a very high proportion of pupils also reach the expected standard, and about one third do better. In Key Stage 1, pupils make sound overall progress in science, and make good progress when setting up and carrying out simple experiments. In Key Stage 2, pupils make sound progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding and have a satisfactory understanding of the need for systematic investigations which include fair-testing. However, their progress in carrying out and explaining their own investigations is slower, since they are given insufficient opportunities to express and carry through their own ideas.
8. In information technology and history, pupils' standards are average across both key stages, and reflect the satisfactory progress they make in the subject. In art and design and technology, pupils' standards are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but they make slow progress in Key Stage 2, where their standards are too low. In physical education, pupils achieve well, and their standards are high in both key stages. In geography, insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement about standards in either key stage. From the limited evidence of music during the inspection, it is clear that pupils' singing is satisfactory, across the school, and that Key Stage 1 pupils have sound listening and appraising skills and can recognise and repeat simple rhythms, demonstrating average attainment.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly good, and otherwise sound, progress in their learning. They build steadily and surely on their prior attainment and achieve standards which, though often below average for their age, nevertheless fully reflect their individual capabilities. Across a wide range of identified needs, pupils work hard to meet the targets that have been planned for them. More able pupils were considered to be underachieving at the time of the school's last OFSTED inspection. The school has taken steps to address this weakness. These pupils are now suitably challenged by the work set for them in the vast majority of lessons and they make sound progress, overall.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Children in the reception classes quickly adapt to school life. They thrive in the lively, energetic and purposeful atmosphere, develop confidence in their ability to learn and, reflecting the model established by the staff, work hard, trust others and form constructive relationships.
11. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and regard themselves as members of an extended, caring, family community. They respond particularly well to purposeful leadership, whether in lessons taught with pace and confidence, or in the school as a whole. When lessons are taught well, pupils are united in their commitment to the tasks in hand. They listen attentively and with interest to their teachers and to each other; are ready and willing to answer questions; and try hard to recall and to apply things they have learned on previous occasions. In practical lessons such as physical education, they can be trusted to handle equipment safely and responsibly, and they respond swiftly to instructions and signals. A particular strength of the relationships in the school, at all levels, is the very positive quality of the support for, and the response to, pupils with special educational needs. Pupils display no disrespect for anyone, adult or child, and are warm in their support and in their genuine pleasure at others' successes. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school and the numbers of those taking part are high.

12. In lessons, in the playground and at lunch, pupils behave well. Almost all pupils bring with them from home a strong sense of right and wrong, and good manners. The school is fortunate in being able to build on pupils' moral values and concern for others. Incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare, and there have been no recent exclusions. The very few pupils who have special learning needs associated with behavioural difficulties work hard to meet their targets, and no misbehaviour was seen during the inspection.
13. When they are given opportunities to use initiative, make choices and take responsibility, pupils of all ages respond well. Overall, such opportunities occur more frequently in lessons in reception and in Key Stage 1. In lessons in Key Stage 2, much of the work is very teacher-directed and there is little evidence to suggest that pupils identify and follow their own lines of enquiry. While pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to organise resources and equipment themselves, and do so very well, it is not unusual for teachers in Key Stage 2 to take on such tasks themselves. In both key stages, however, teachers develop pupils' sense of social and moral responsibility effectively. Pupils demonstrate concern for those less fortunate than themselves, for example by contributing to various charities in the local area and overseas. They empathise well with the feelings of characters in the stories they read and of the famous people they study in history.
14. Attendance is satisfactory with low levels of unauthorised absence. Registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Most pupils arrive in good time and sessions start promptly. However, the persistent late arrival of the school bus by up to fifteen minutes each morning means that a small minority of pupils are missing the start of lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching was sound, or better, in all lessons observed. In reception, all lessons were good, and in Key Stage 1 about two thirds of all lessons demonstrated good, or sometimes very good, teaching. In Key Stage 2, the teaching was mainly satisfactory, but over a third of the lessons observed showed good teaching. The last inspection also found that teaching was particularly effective in the reception classes. However, the overall standard of teaching has improved since 1996, when teaching was unsatisfactory in 20% of all lessons, but was otherwise sound or better.
16. The quality of teaching for reception children, including those who are under five, is a strength of the school. The teaching is lively and is effectively planned from the six areas of learning. Assessment is used well to judge pupils' progress and to ensure that work is matched to their needs. Good use is made of the space available, and the learning environment is stimulating. The early years unit is organised very well by the co-ordinator, and both the co-ordinator and her teaching partner work very effectively with support staff to promote children's learning. Children are encouraged to be independent, and good use is made of open-ended questions such as "Why do you think that?" or "What do you think will happen if... ?". Staff clearly understand well how young children learn, and provide many practical experiences to develop their understanding.
17. In English, the teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection, when it was judged to be broadly sound with some good features and some shortcomings. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the current inspection, and most lessons were characterised by good teaching. There were weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge when the school was last inspected, but now all have a secure understanding of the requirements of the English curriculum. The national literacy strategy is being implemented successfully, across both key stages; and pupils make good progress in English, as a result of effective teaching.

18. In mathematics, the national numeracy strategy is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, and the quality of teaching is sound, overall, and never less than satisfactory. Good teaching is sometimes demonstrated, particularly but not exclusively, in Key Stage 1. Teachers' subject knowledge has considerably improved since the last inspection, and is often good. Lessons are well planned and teachers usually make pupils fully aware of what they are expected to learn and use plenary sessions effectively to discuss what has been achieved. However, Key Stage 2 teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical real-life situations and to take more responsibility for organising and developing tasks. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive, across the school, and the teaching enables them to make sound progress in their mathematical learning.
19. In science, the overall quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. As a result of effective staff training, teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection, and more emphasis is given to the development of pupils' investigation skills. In Key Stage 1, teachers use skilful questioning and provide a range of good opportunities for pupils to learn through well focused enquiry. In Key Stage 2, teachers use sound questions to check prior learning, and show pupils how to conduct systematic investigations. However, they provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to express and carry through their own ideas for enquiries, to choose or organise equipment, or to write up their own results and conclusions. In both key stages, the teaching promotes positive attitudes to the subject and pupils are particularly enthusiastic when carrying out practical tasks in Key Stage 1.
20. In information technology, very little teaching was observed. However, recent developments in staff training and the provision of hardware and software are having a beneficial effect on both teaching and learning. As a consequence, pupils are making sound progress in their learning in the subject in both key stages. In physical education, the quality of teaching is good, and is sometimes very good, across the school. Teachers are confident and purposeful, and pupils are highly motivated and progress well. In history, the teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 but there was insufficient evidence to judge its quality in Key Stage 2. In all other subjects, too few lessons were seen to make overall judgements about the teaching. Evidence suggests that teachers' subject knowledge and expectations of pupils' standards are sound in art and design and technology in Key Stage 1. However, these need to be improved in Key Stage 2, where standards are too low in both subjects.
21. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of tasks and sound, or better, use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. As a consequence, pupils respond well, listen attentively to their teachers, and concentrate and persevere with their tasks. They try hard, make sound or better progress in their learning in all subjects in Key Stage 1, and in nearly all in Key Stage 2. A weakness in the teaching, in Key Stage 2, is the tendency for teachers to be over-prescriptive and to provide pupils with insufficient opportunities to make decisions or to demonstrate initiative in their learning. This is particularly evident in science and mathematics, and restricts pupils' learning in some lessons. The last inspection identified the need for teachers to provide work which was better matched to the needs of more able pupils, in both key stages. The school has successfully addressed this issue, and these pupils are now given tasks which are appropriately challenging in the vast majority of lessons.
22. In the majority of class lessons, teachers' plans include the provision of suitably differentiated work or identified support for the range of pupils with special educational needs, including the more able pupils for whom extension activities are often planned. All teachers know their pupils well, and most take particular care to involve pupils with special

needs in discussions and in all other activities, including the sharing of work in plenary sessions. Individual education plans for these pupils identify achievable and well defined targets. The pupils themselves know what their targets are, and this allows them to monitor their own progress and to recognise their achievements. Where appropriate, for example in literacy, teachers also draw up group targets, addressing common weaknesses in pupils' performance. In Year 1 and in Year 3, additional staff are used to good effect to enhance the learning opportunities of lower attaining pupils, with a very clear impact on their progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Often, pupils with special educational needs also benefit from tuition in small groups with well qualified learning support assistants. Those pupils who have complex learning difficulties, and who have statements of special educational need, are supported very ably and sensitively by regular support staff who know when to encourage, when to assist, and when to hold back and allow their charges to work things out for themselves. Where relevant, outside agencies are involved in therapy or other kinds of support, including behaviour management. Learning support assistants are thoroughly briefed about lessons and about what pupils are intended to learn. They make a valuable contribution to the progress made and to the standards achieved.

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

23. Across the school, the curriculum meets the statutory requirements, including those for children aged five and under, and takes full account of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. Within this curriculum, however, the quality and range of learning opportunities varies between the different stages.
24. In the Early Years unit, the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is very good. A rich and diverse range of learning opportunities is on offer to children aged five and under, providing them with both stimulating and structured ways of developing their basic and personal skills. Staff and resources are used very effectively to enrich the curriculum, and positive attitudes to learning are very well promoted through talk, enquiry and play. Overall, the curriculum provides a very good foundation for the National Curriculum.
25. In Key Stage 1, the curriculum is mainly good, effectively builds on pupils' prior learning experiences and provides a reasonable range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and initiative. In Key Stage 2, the overall quality of the curriculum is sound. However, there are some weaknesses in provision for art and design and technology, and insufficient opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their own learning, particularly in mathematics and science. Some of these criticisms were also made at the time of the last inspection, for example in relation to art and mathematics. Other identified weaknesses in the last report have now been rectified. Across both key stages, there are good strategies for teaching literacy skills, and sound or better strategies for teaching numeracy.
26. Across the school, there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy full access to the school curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Where necessary or relevant, they receive support in the form of special apparatus or resources, as well as adult help. All pupils benefit from the generally high level of discussion and input at the beginning of literacy lessons, and later activities are usually well matched to the needs and capabilities of individual pupils. They have regular opportunities to work within whole classes, in small groups, and, occasionally, in one-to-one situations involving adult support. More able pupils are generally given suitably challenging work in lessons, but their independent reading, beyond the reading scheme, is neither as extensive nor as demanding as it should be.
27. The school enriches the curriculum well through a good range of sporting and other extra-

curricular activities. There is a satisfactory programme for personal safety, including road safety, but provision for drugs education is carried out informally, at present. The school appropriately recognises the need to develop a coherent policy for this area. The policy for sex education is implemented successfully, and is suitably linked with provision in the partner middle school. Whilst the majority of pupils benefit from equal access to the curriculum provided, the teaching time for pupils coming to school on the bus is reduced by up to one and a quarter hours across the week. This was a weakness identified in the last inspection report.

28. Overall, the school's programme for pupils' personal development is sound although there are strengths within this provision. These findings reflect those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is well promoted through acts of collective worship and through religious education. It is less well developed through other curriculum areas, apart from in the Early Years unit where children regularly reflect on immediate and special experiences and the wonder of living things.
29. Across the school, provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school's Catholic Christian ethos provides a firm foundation for its strong moral code, for example whole school and class assemblies are used effectively to enable pupils to explore moral values and a range of issues. At all times, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and, from reception onwards, are clearly made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils' social development is mainly good. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate well in pair and group learning activities, to listen and behave courteously, and to develop good relationships. The youngest children are helped to take responsibility for looking after resources and caring for living things in the Early Years Unit; and pupils in Key Stage 1 are effectively taught to make suggestions and use their initiative, particularly in science. In Key Stage 2, pupils are given sound opportunities for some daily routines, for example as school librarians, but overly teacher-directed tasks in some lessons impede the development of personal initiative and decision making skills. As a whole school, however, pupils are positively encouraged to take responsibility for raising money for a range of charities.
30. Overall provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. Pupils benefit from good links with the local Catholic community and partner institutions, and these make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Visits and visitors are used effectively to enhance the curriculum, and pupils are able to participate in a range of sporting and musical activities both within and beyond the school. However, with the exception of the Early Years Unit, regular planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures are limited. Incidental opportunities are suitably used but this area continues to be an area for development, as it was at the last inspection.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

31. Overall, the school has sound arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress, and for using assessment information to guide curricular planning. Policies and procedures are clear and they are mainly implemented appropriately across the school, although there are some variations between the different stages.
32. In the Early Years Unit, teachers and support staff keep good records of children's personal and social development, evaluate the results of baseline assessment carefully and monitor children's progress in basic skills appropriately.
33. Across the school, the analysis of statistical data from statutory and non-statutory standardised tests is good, and is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to set appropriately challenging year group targets. In Key Stages 1 and 2, planned assessments



are made, in English, mathematics, science and information technology, on a termly or annual basis, and sound records are kept. While these assessments are used well to set focused targets for pupils with special educational needs, specific individual curricular targets are not always explicit or clearly communicated to all pupils. Sound evaluations of planning for literacy and numeracy are made on a weekly basis, and this helps to inform future planning. Good home/school reading diaries are kept, and include pertinent comments on pupils' progress with their reading scheme books.

34. The school has clear procedures for marking pupils' work and these are mainly implemented consistently across the school. There are examples of good marking in some classes and subjects, for example in English, where specific and helpful comments enable pupils to know and understand how well they have achieved. In Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their learning and to identify what they have enjoyed or found difficult, particularly in literacy and design and technology. In Key Stage 2, pupils are occasionally involved in self-assessment activities, but not on a regular basis. This reflects findings in the last inspection report. Overall, however, the school has made improvements in the way policies are implemented since the last inspection.
35. The school is a caring community which provides effective support for all its pupils and this is a strength of the school. From their earliest contact with the school, the adults quickly get to know the children through close monitoring of their personal and social development. They are sensitive in ensuring appropriate support is provided for those with particular medical, pastoral or educational needs, throughout the school. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns with the school and are confident that they will be listened to sympathetically.
36. There is an effective behaviour policy which is consistently implemented across the school. Pupils respond positively to the high standards expected of them and relationships are invariably based on respect and care for others. The anti-bullying policy is clearly understood by pupils and they are confident that any worries they have will be listened to by the adults in the school. Consequently, incidents are very rare and are dealt with promptly. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are sound, but there are no effective strategies planned to address the persistent late arrival of the school bus in the mornings.
37. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory with staff receiving oral information at staff meetings on the latest procedures. Care is taken to vet adults who help with after school clubs, and pupils are reminded regularly about issues affecting their personal safety. Children have the opportunity to visit before starting school and this helps them to settle quickly into school life.
38. Many aspects of health and sex education, including healthy eating, are appropriately taught as part of the science or religious education curriculum. Pupils have occasional opportunities to learn about personal safety when speakers from the police or fire service are invited, but this does not yet include issues relating to drugs education. The school has well established procedures for medicines, accidents and emergencies which are properly documented in the health and safety policy. Thought has been given to ensuring that the environment meets the needs of the pupils with physical disabilities. The premises and grounds, which are very clean and well maintained, are regularly inspected to ensure a safe and secure environment for the pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

39. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a school that strives hard to encourage a strong Catholic family ethos, and this forms the basis of a very strong partnership with parents. Parents

are very supportive of the school and find that the headteacher and the staff are friendly, open and caring. Parents are given informative documentation about the school, and particularly value the curriculum summaries on what is to be taught. Occasional meetings are held to explain new educational strategies such as for numeracy. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with school activities and events.

40. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns with the staff; and good communication between staff and parents is maintained through the home/school diary, which is also used as a reading record and to record homework. The school understands the importance of pastoral support for families and this is sensitively provided by the Parish Sister. Some parents also participate in the parenting skills course that she runs each year.
41. There are planned opportunities, throughout the year, for parents to talk to staff about how their children are progressing. Reception class teachers regularly discuss with parents how children are settling into school and this establishes a firm foundation for subsequent partnership. The home/school agreement has been well received and parents are clear about homework expectations. They provide good support in hearing their children read regularly at home and this has a positive effect on standards attained. Annual written reports give sound indications of pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
42. Parents and grandparents feel welcome in the school and many give generously of their time to help in classes or to hear reading. Where possible, the school uses the specialist expertise of parents for projects in art and science. The active parents' association not only organises well supported fundraising activities but also acts as a discussion forum for parents to raise issues or make suggestions for improvements to the school. Parents' commitment to the school provides a very good role model for the pupils, and is a significant factor in developing their positive attitudes to learning and in maintaining the school's ethos.
43. There is very effective communication between the school and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The parents are kept informed of their children's progress and are involved appropriately in reviews. They are made fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their children's performance and, where relevant, are involved in setting new targets. These parents are very supportive of their children, and also of the school's efforts and hard work on behalf of their children. As a result, there is a genuine partnership which serves the children well.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work effectively. The budget, school development plan and the results of statutory testing are all debated thoroughly. The governors with responsibility for monitoring literacy and numeracy have attended training courses and have observed lessons across the school. They have established good links with the co-ordinators for English and mathematics, and have a good overview of provision. Overall, the governors have a clear understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses in the school, and know the challenges it faces. Statutory requirements are fully met.
45. The headteacher has good leadership and management skills. He provides a clear sense of direction for the school, and analyses its performance rigorously. The headteacher develops constructive relationships with parents, and they hold him in high regard. All the parents' questionnaires returns are positive about leadership and management, and the headteacher was identified as a strength of the school during the pre-inspection parents' meeting. He promotes high standards and provides staff with a good role-model through

his commitment to school improvement and through his effective teaching skills. The headteacher analyses the results of the statutory and non-statutory testing carefully, and works with co-ordinators to set realistic targets for standards in English, mathematics and science. He monitors the quality of teaching through well-focused observations in lessons across the school, and provides teachers with valuable feedback which has a beneficial effect on their professional development. The headteacher has regular discussions with teachers about their work, but needs to focus more rigorously on their co-ordinating roles to ensure that more consistent and effective whole-school procedures are established.

46. The deputy provides satisfactory support; and good leadership and management skills are demonstrated by the co-ordinator of the Early Years Unit, which comprises the reception classes. All subject co-ordinators monitor planning for their subjects conscientiously, and provide useful advice to their colleagues, when it is requested. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed lessons, across the school, and have a sound overview of their subjects. In science, the co-ordinator has a beneficial impact on teaching and standards in Key Stage 1, where she teaches, but needs to develop her awareness of provision in Key Stage 2 to develop a clearer whole-school perspective. Although examples of pupils' work in English have been analysed, co-ordinators generally make insufficient use of work-sampling to judge pupils' progress and standards. Overall, most co-ordinators need to develop more rigorous monitoring procedures to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school, in order to target support accurately.
47. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are effective. Until very recently, responsibility for special needs rested with the headteacher who established a very sound policy, high expectations for special needs pupils, and effective systems and procedures for the day-to-day management of this area of the school's work. Above all else, perhaps, he communicated, to governors and staff alike, a very real commitment to supporting these pupils and to enlisting specialist help for them wherever necessary. This work has set the tone and expectations that are upheld and pursued, still, through the energetic endeavours of a 'new' special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), and the continuing efforts of the special needs committee of the governing body. Professional contacts with external agencies are constructive and helpful. The SENCO works closely with parents and with staff, and there are effective communication systems at all levels. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored rigorously, and there is good liaison with the middle school to which pupils transfer, ensuring that there is continuity and progression in their learning. Special needs governors have a very sound oversight of provision, receive regular updates about progress, and monitor the school's work. Financial management of the special needs budget is wise, staff are deployed well, and the school makes constructive use of all the resources available to it. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements in relation to special educational needs. Although the school has no detailed policy on equal opportunities, the valuing of each child underpins all aspects of school life. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, play their full part in the school community.
48. The school development plan has been formulated through effective leadership by the headteacher with appropriate staff and governor involvement. It is well organised, with a clear vision statement which emphasises the school's commitment to high standards. Action plans identify those responsible for individual initiatives, and how the initiatives will be undertaken and resourced. Overall, the plan, which extends to 2002, identifies relevant priorities and makes a valuable contribution to school improvement. The last OFSTED inspection found that the 1996 plan identified too many targets, and the school has successfully addressed this weakness.
49. The day-to-day management of the school is good, and benefits from effective secretarial support. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school.

50. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher and the school secretary. Spending is also carefully monitored by an independent financial auditor and advisor, who is bought in by the school, and by the finance committee of the governors. A five year strategic plan provides detailed information about likely patterns of income and expenditure. It runs alongside the school development plan to help the headteacher and governors to make informed decisions about the development of the school, and provides a sound basis for financial planning. The last OFSTED inspection found that strategic planning was not sufficiently developed, but this is no longer the case. The finance committee meets regularly, and the budget is analysed with particular care during the spring term. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the initiatives on the school development plan, and individual initiatives are carefully costed. The governors debate expenditure thoroughly in order to obtain value for money, for example in relation to staffing costs and improvements to the school building.
51. Overall, the school makes good use of its resources. It is well led by the headteacher and the governors are effective. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, behave well and try hard. The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory, throughout the inspection, and was good, overall, in the reception classes and in Key Stage 1. Pupils achieve good standards in English, and make sound or better progress in all subjects except in art and design and technology in Key Stage 2. When these achievements are considered, along with annual expenditure, the school provides good value for money.
52. Overall, there are sufficient teachers, and the staff have the expertise and experience to cover the age range and ability of the pupils. Children in the reception class benefit from particularly well informed teaching, and the subject knowledge of Key Stage 1 teachers is often good. In Key Stage 2, teachers' subject knowledge and expectations for pupils' standards are mainly sound, but need to be raised in art and design and technology. Classroom assistants are well briefed, and develop positive relationships with pupils. They have good skills and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Induction procedures for staff are sound; and the school is making appropriate preparations for the introduction of performance management from September 2000.
53. The accommodation is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff, and has a beneficial effect on the overall quality of education provided by the school. Classrooms are of at least satisfactory size, and the reception pupils benefit from generous accommodation. Teachers take care to enrich their classrooms with attractive displays of pupils' work, and the reception base is particularly well organised and stimulating. The school is well adapted to allow full access to users of wheelchairs. There is sufficient playground space and a good area of grass.
54. The last inspection found that learning resources were generally unsatisfactory. In particular, resources for English, design and technology, history, art, music and physical education needed to be increased. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing this deficiency, although resources in some subjects, though broadly adequate, could be improved to benefit pupils' learning.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to improve pupils' standards and achievements, and to improve aspects of leadership and management, the school should include in its post-inspection plan the following issues for action:

- Develop the roles of subject co-ordinators so they have more rigorous strategies for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school, in order to address areas for improvement.

**(See paragraphs 46, 76, 82, 85, 96, 100 and 103)**

- Provide more opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to develop their decision-making skills and to use their initiative in lessons by ensuring that:
  - (i) they are encouraged to express and carry through their own ideas for scientific enquiries, to choose and organise equipment and to write up their own results and conclusions;
  - (ii) they use their mathematical skills more regularly in practical real-life situations and take more responsibility for organising and developing tasks.

**(See paragraphs 7, 13, 21, 25, 75 and 81)**

- Improve standards in art and design and technology in Key Stage 2 by providing staff with well-focused in-service training to improve their subject knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements.

**(See paragraphs 8, 20, 25, 83, 85, 86 and 90)**

- Ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum by implementing effective strategies to ensure that pupils arriving on the school bus do not miss part of the school day.

**(See paragraphs 14, 27 and 36)**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 43 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 14 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|           |           |      |              |                |      |           |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
| 0.0       | 4.8       | 52.4 | 42.9         | 0.0            | 0.0  | 0.0       |

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>   | YR – Y4      |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)             | 237          |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals                    | 15           |
| <b>Special educational needs</b>   | YR – Y4      |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs                | 4            |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register          | 49           |
| <b>English as an additional language</b>                                     | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language                      | 0            |
| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 4            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 0            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 4.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 0.2 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 23   | 21    | 44    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 23      | 23      | 22          |
|   | Girls    | 20      | 19      | 19          |
|   | Total    | 43      | 42      | 41          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 98 (84) | 95 (82) | 93 (91)     |
|   | National | 82 (80) | 83 (81) | 87 (84)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 23      | 22          | 23      |
|   | Girls    | 20      | 18          | 18      |
|   | Total    | 43      | 40          | 41      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 98 (85) | 91 (87)     | 93 (91) |
|   | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85)     | 87 (86) |

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      |              |
| Black – African heritage        |              |
| Black – other                   | 6            |
| Indian                          | 2            |
| Pakistani                       |              |
| Bangladeshi                     |              |
| Chinese                         |              |
| White                           | 182          |
| Any other minority ethnic group |              |

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.0  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 24.9 |
| Average class size                       | 29.6 |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8.0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 151 |

### ***Financial information***

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 1998/1999 |
|  | £         |
| Total income                               | 365918    |
| Total expenditure                          | 357930    |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1530      |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 8332      |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 16320     |



## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 234 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 80  |

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 66             | 29            | 4                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 64             | 25            | 10               | 0                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 61             | 36            | 1                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 55             | 38            | 6                | 1                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 70             | 25            | 4                | 0                 | 1          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 64             | 24            | 13               | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 78             | 19            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 71             | 28            | 0                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 58             | 33            | 9                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 80             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 69             | 25            | 4                | 0                 | 3          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 60             | 28            | 6                | 3                 | 4          |

## **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**

55. During the inspection, specific lessons were observed in language and literacy, mathematics, scientific learning, and creative and physical development. In addition, the whole range of learning opportunities was evaluated through informal observations of children at work and play, and through an analysis of documentation and discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and children. Evidence shows that the quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge, plan stimulating and effective practical and structured activities, and explain new ideas in ways that make sense to young children. Support staff also make a valuable contribution to children's learning, and demonstrate a good understanding of the different areas of learning.

#### **Personal and social development**

56. All staff know the children well and provide the right blend of support and challenge for all children, including those with particular and special educational needs. A wide range of rich learning experiences is provided for pupils to develop good personal and social skills through talk, enquiry and play. As a result, children are very responsive to the activities on offer and are eager to explore new learning. Children treat living things with care and concern, for example when planting seeds, and are able to talk about their feelings and special moments in their lives. They play co-operatively with each other, take turns and share, for example, in the role play corner, the water and the sand. They concentrate on their learning and show a sense of wonder, for example, when looking at plants with a magnifying glass. They are sensitive to the needs of others, and are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. The range of experiences is particularly effective in helping children to develop a sense of personal responsibility within the supportive structure of the early years family.

#### **Language and literacy**

57. Although representing a very wide range of attainment, children under five have broadly average skills in speaking and listening, overall, on entry to the reception classes. They follow a very wide curriculum which enables them to meet the desirable learning outcomes for language and literacy by the age of five, and which equips them very well, in almost every respect, for the first stages of the National Curriculum for English and for the National Literacy Strategy. Children develop a love of stories, learn to handle books well, and enjoy joining in with the teacher to 'read' familiar parts of a favourite story aloud, or to recite it from memory. Most recognise initial letter sounds and can match the sounds to the beginnings of printed words. Most also recognise some common words and phrases by sight, know that we read print from left to right, and are developing an appropriate range of strategies to decode print. For example, they can use the illustrations, the patterns of the language, and the meaning of the text to help them predict what might follow. Most children can identify rhyme, and can recite a refrain with a strong sense of the rhythm of the language. In response to their teachers' questions, they can talk sensitively about the feelings experienced by characters in a story, for example, how Jack's mother might have felt when her son sold the family cow for a handful of beans. They begin to consider dialogue as they suggest exactly what words she might have spoken when this happened. Nevertheless, in spite of the breadth of their learning across a range of literacy skills, a substantial minority of the children have not yet acquired a secure enough base of in phonological awareness to read independently or to build words systematically when writing. While a few high attaining children read well for their ages and are beginning to write very simple stories with plausible spellings, the writing of more children than might

have been anticipated remains 'emergent' by the first half of the summer term. These 'emergent writers' are keen to communicate their ideas, work hard, form most or all of their letters accurately, write occasional recognisable words or phrases. However, they do not always observe correctly the spaces between words, and do not have the phonological knowledge of blends and digraphs to represent, plausibly, many of the sounds of the language they hear. In a phase of their schooling which has very many strengths and gives children a experience rich in many aspects of their work in language and literacy, this is a weakness which needs to be addressed.

## **Mathematics**

58. Teachers' planning for mathematics is good, and they provide a range of appropriate activities to develop children's understanding and skills in the subject. Children make sound progress when counting forwards and backwards to at least 10, using a dice and a number line, and in writing single digits. Teachers are careful not to provide children with ready answers, and use skilful questions to probe their understanding and to help them learn from their mistakes. Children progress well when using an information technology program to develop their number skills, and co-operate well when using the computer. Overall, teachers effectively organise the use of their time and the work of the support assistants. As a result, children often benefit from good teaching in mathematics. By the age of five, most children achieve the expected standard in mathematics.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

59. Children in reception acquire a sound foundation for the study of geography. When using the listening-centre, they learn to use basic terms related to position, drawing people and objects which are, for example, 'above', 'to the right of', or 'at the bottom of' Jack's beanstalk or the giant's castle. When they go on walks in their immediate locality, they are made aware of both natural and man-made features of the landscape, as well as of changes brought about by the weather and by the different seasons. They make judgements about their environment, deciding, for example, which features they like and dislike; and they come to view themselves as agents for change when suggesting new developments and new designs for their own playground. At different points in the school year, they learn about other people and other cultures, for example when they engage in a variety of cultural activities to mark the Chinese New Year.
60. Children make good progress when making simple shakers as musical instruments, using recycled materials. They demonstrate sound cutting and sticking skills when making models of the play equipment they would like, and achieve well when using construction kits to create model vehicles which have moving wheels. They benefit from close adult supervision when using hammers, nails, glue and junior hack-saws to make simple constructions in wood; and achieve sound standards when making representations of spring gardens using pictures they have cut out of magazines and stuck to the insides of cardboard boxes. Overall, children have a good range of opportunities to develop their making skills in the reception classes, and their standards are average or better at the age of five.
61. Effective questioning and the good use of first hand experience enables children to make plausible observations of the world about them and to begin to learn why things happen. They recognise features of living things when studying the life cycle of a frog, how babies develop in the womb and when discussing the conditions needed for growing plants from seeds. They make simple predictions about how their bean seeds will change over time and of what will happen to sugar paper lily pads in the water tray. They understand the passage of time through sequencing stories and observing changes in the growth of plants, and learn that homes can be different when discussing and making the Giant's castle. They can use available technology to support their learning, for example they can use the

mouse to click and drag when labelling frogs or to create patterns with circles, squares and triangles. They can use taped stories at the listening centre and are confident when using the mouse and keyboard to play number games and to generate early writing.

## **Creative development**

62. Children are given good opportunities to explore a range of materials, techniques and equipment to express their ideas and make creative responses. As a result, they produce bold, imaginative paintings, and can paint and collage good pictures of frogs to illustrate their life cycle. They can use sponges, brushes and combs to create textures, and can find and make good rubbings of textures in the environment. Good supporting discussion and encouragement from supporting staff enable children to produce effective and careful observational drawings of plants. A variety of structured and unstructured play activities enables children to show imagination and create their own characters and sequences of events, for example, in the Garden Centre. They quickly pick up repetitive words and rhythms in familiar stories, for example the Giant's rhyme from 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Children enjoy singing and using musical instruments in the reception classes. They are keen to perform and have learned a range of songs by heart. They make good progress when identifying the different sounds made by a range of shakers and drum beaters, and learn to clap simple rhythms.

## **Physical education**

63. Children in the reception classes have regular periods of outdoor play with opportunities to use an appropriate range of large and small equipment including tricycles and other wheeled toys. They also have physical education (PE) lessons, and they show developing confidence, co-ordination and control in all their movements. They have been well trained to set out apparatus and can work together well in small groups to move benches and mats both sensibly and safely. Most children can throw beanbags accurately into hoops, roll along mats maintaining a correct body-shape, balance and slide face-down along benches, jump carefully onto mats, and skip at least once - and sometimes up to nine times - using a rope. Children perform movements accurately and move smoothly and quickly into line when required to do so. They show awareness of space and of others. In the classroom, they handle pencils and other small objects with increasing control. By the time they are five, most children attain standards which are above average for their age in all aspects of their physical development.

## ENGLISH

64. Although pupils entering Key Stage 1 at the age of five have made good progress in many experiential and inferential aspects of their work in language and literacy, their attainment, in those skills which can be 'measured', remains broadly average overall in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
65. In Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their early language experience, making particularly good progress in the more formal aspects of the English curriculum and developing those skills necessary to do well in the national tests. The school's results in the national tests (SATs) for seven-year olds in 1999 were well above the national averages in both reading and writing, although the results in reading were a little better than those in writing. When compared to the results achieved by similar schools, these results are well above average in reading and are above average in writing. Over the period from 1997 to 1999, the school has shown sustained improvement, year on year, in pupils' reading results. In 1999, results were particularly good: almost all pupils attained, or exceeded Level 2, the standard expected for their age, and over 40% of the pupils attained Level 3. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above in writing was well above average in the 1999 SATs, although the proportion attaining the higher level, (Level 3) was broadly average. In Key Stage 2, the school administers optional national tests in Years 3 and 4. The school's results for reading were particularly good in the Year 4 optional SATs in 1999, with a high proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age, while a third of the pupils did even better and attained Level 4, the standard set for eleven-year olds. Following the same pattern as in Key Stage 1, results in writing were lower, but a high percentage of pupils reached the expected level and a significant minority did better.
66. Inspection findings confirm the test results in both key stages. Pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in most lessons in both key stages, and particularly good progress in reading. Throughout their time in the school, they are taught, and acquire, a wide range of reading strategies which help them to decode, understand and respond to different kinds of fiction, poetry and information texts. In writing, they gradually learn to adapt the vocabulary, grammar and style of their work to match its intended audience and purpose, to use punctuation accurately and to spell increasingly complex words correctly. By the end of Year 1, almost all pupils have a fairly secure grasp of what constitutes a sentence, and have developed neat, well formed handwriting. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils can write simple texts, including short stories, and have sufficient insights into the craft of writing to suggest 'improvements' - both technical and stylistic - to the work of one of their peers. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate their knowledge about language in their assured use of technical terms such as 'glossary' and 'metaphor', and can explain the use of 'bold type' when reading an information text about elephants. Almost all pupils in Year 4 present their written work well and use neat cursive handwriting. Most pupils use a variety of sentence structures, spell competently and, for the most part, punctuate their work accurately. Weaknesses in the work of lower attaining pupils are associated with an insecure grasp of the structure of complex sentences, a lack of interesting detail which might engage the reader, a fairly limited vocabulary and inconsistencies and errors in punctuation. Pupils in Year 3 make particularly good progress in their 'performance' of poetry: they show very good insights into the links between punctuation and intonation, read complex poems aloud in unison with a well developed sense of rhythm, and have clearly developed a love for the sound of language. More generally, pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening, attaining average standards for their ages by the end of each key stage.
67. At the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1996, standards were judged to be 'in line with national expectations' at the end of each key stage, although the more able pupils were said to be making unsatisfactory progress in reading and writing, and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. It is clear, from the findings of the current inspection and from the

school's results in national tests, that standards have risen substantially as a direct result of good teaching and of other measures taken to improve the attainment of various identified groups. The national literacy strategy is being implemented successfully. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, support assistants are well informed, well briefed and well deployed, and the quality of support and intervention to help pupils with special educational needs is good. The Additional Literacy support material are also being taught well and are making a real difference to the attainment of some pupils in Year 3. The use of an additional teacher to teach the literacy hour in Year 1 has allowed for intensive support for pupils of all levels of attainment in this vital year, and their written work testifies to the good, or better progress made over the year. More able pupils are suitably challenged by most of the work set during lessons, in both reading and writing. There remains scope, however, for them, as for other pupils, to read more widely and to encounter greater challenges in their independent reading. Whilst pupils read well, few are well read : they have only a very limited knowledge of significant authors and poets, either contemporary or past. Very few pupils have well developed reading preferences, few read non-fiction for pleasure and interest, and few read widely from a range of genres. While the school's structured reading scheme performs a useful function and enables both teachers and parents to monitor pupils' progress, many pupils are capable of reading more demanding texts than those they encounter outside the literacy hour lessons.

68. A further criticism raised in the previous OFSTED report concerned an emphasis on the teaching of skills at the expense of creative and imaginative work. In this respect, the current inspection finds no case to answer. The National Literacy Strategy has resulted in an appropriate balance of skills and creativity, and ensures that pupils follow a suitably broad English curriculum. However, many pupils are able to produce only short pieces of writing in the time available during lessons and, by focusing at all times on careful handwriting as well as the subject matter, do not always write at the speed and length required to do very well in tests.
69. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and most of the teaching was good. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously, with very clear objectives. They follow the recommended structure of the literacy hour closely, maintaining a good pace throughout lessons and making sure that all pupils are engaged at all times. Texts are selected with care to demonstrate particular features of style and form, and teachers model reading and writing skills effectively through activities shared with the whole class or with smaller groups. Questioning is usually effective, frequently targeting specific individual pupils in order to raise their attainment. All teachers are aware of the language component in other areas of the curriculum, and there are good examples of effective links, for example by reading for information and writing in history. In other subjects, such as science, opportunities for pupils to make notes or to record their work in their own words are not always used as well as they might be.
70. The English co-ordinator is well informed and has a genuine love of the subject. She has been instrumental in ensuring that all staff are well prepared to teach the Literacy Hour and, with the headteacher and local inspectors, has been involved in useful monitoring of teaching in all year groups. The school is making effective use of its analysis of test results to target support at those pupils who most need it and to identify, and address, any curriculum weaknesses. The marking of pupils' work is usually constructive and helpful, showing pupils how they might improve. Targets in the form of National Curriculum levels are set for individual pupils each term, and each pupil's performance is tracked over time. However, targets are not communicated to pupils in terms they would readily understand, and this is an area that might usefully be improved.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. At the age of five, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils is average. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 statutory tests in mathematics were broadly in line with the national average, and matched the results achieved by similar schools. In Key Stage 1, current standards are a little higher than the 1999 SATs results and show that a very high proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in Year 2, while a broadly average proportion do better. The 1999 Key Stage 1 results are a little lower than those achieved in the previous two years, and the school attributes the fall to disruption caused by a staff change. In their final year at the school, in Year 4, the majority of pupils achieve the expected level for their age. The school predicts that about one quarter of the Year 4 cohort will achieve a higher standard and a slightly smaller percentage will not reach the expected level. Inspection findings support the school's prediction, and demonstrate pupils' mainly sound achievements in Year 4 in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound overall progress in both key stages; and they make good progress in some lessons as a result of particularly effective teaching.
72. The national numeracy strategy is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, and they make mainly sound and often good progress in developing their number skills, including through mental calculations. Their progress in developing skills in using and applying mathematics is more spasmodic, but is broadly satisfactory. Across the school, most pupils demonstrate a secure grasp of mathematical language, using it confidently and correctly, and pupils achieve well when explaining their mathematical reasoning in the best lessons. However, learning is sometimes inhibited when opportunities are missed for pupils to apply their mathematical skills practically in real life situations, and for them to take responsibility for organising and developing tasks, particularly in Key Stage 2.
73. In Year 1, pupils can read and write numbers to at least 20, and are able to add two single digit numbers together, with reasonable speed and accurately. They are able to measure the sizes of objects, using non-standard measures, and make sound progress when learning to recognise and name common 2D and 3D shapes. Most are confident in counting in tens, and the higher attaining pupils are able to use a 100 square to discover that, for example, 87 minus 60 is 27, and that their answer is confirmed by using the grid to check that  $27+60 = 87$ . By Year 2, the vast majority of pupils can state the subtraction corresponding to a given addition, and vice versa. They can identify a range of different coins that can be used to create a given amount; and can find various means of partitioning numbers below 100 into two numbers which total to the identified sum. Most Year 2 pupils understand and competently use mathematical vocabulary such as 'multiples', 'add', 'subtract', 'double' and 'digit'. They have a satisfactory understanding of place value, and recognise simple sequences of numbers, including odd and even numbers. Most are able to order four different three digit numbers, starting with the lowest or the highest. Higher attaining pupils can identify lines of symmetry in simple 2D shapes, and can use Venn diagrams to identify numbers which are multiples of both 5 and 2, and those which are multiples of only one or the other.
74. In Year 3, pupils have a secure recall of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and most are confident in counting on or back in tens or hundreds from any two or three digit number. They are able to recognise fractions such as halves, thirds, quarters and eighths, and can use them to find fractions of shapes. More able Year 3 pupils are able to find out, without paper or pencil, the total of four figures such as 399, 11, 50 and 125, using rounding skills to help their calculations. In Year 4, pupils are able to use the eight compass directions correctly, and make sound progress when learning to measure and calculate the perimeter and area of simple shapes. They have a sound understanding of decimal notation and fractions, and make satisfactory progress when interpreting data in tables and graphs.
75. The quality of teaching is sound, overall, in both key stages, and is never less than satisfactory. In the last inspection, the teaching was also mainly sound. Good teaching is



sometimes demonstrated, particularly in Key Stage 1, and the Year 3 upper mathematics set is well taught by the headteacher. Lessons are generally well planned, and are securely based on the guidance provided by the national numeracy framework. Teachers explain tasks clearly, and their subject knowledge is often good. All teachers introduce pupils to appropriate mathematical vocabulary and reinforce its use throughout their teaching. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers make the learning intentions of lessons clear to the pupils, and plenary sessions usually draw together what has been achieved. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good questioning skills and provide ample opportunities for pupils to offer their methods and solutions for discussion. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. As a consequence, pupils listen attentively to their teachers, concentrate, try hard and behave well. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good, and have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be sound. On occasions, teachers do not target their questions to involve pupils who are making limited responses during discussions. In addition, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculation; and plenary sessions sometimes need more time for teachers to check and reinforce what has been learned. Teachers rarely give pupils time limits, and these would sometimes help to speed up pupils' work. Key Stage 2 teachers, in particular, need to provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in practical real-life situations, and to take more responsibility for organising and developing tasks.

76. The mathematics co-ordinator is well informed and conscientious. She has observed lessons in all classes and provides useful verbal feedback to her colleagues. She analyses the results of statutory and non-statutory tests carefully but recognises that more regular work sampling would increase, further, her awareness of standards in the school. The co-ordinator has a sound overview of teachers' planning and makes a beneficial impact on provision in the subject. Procedures for assessment are sound, and have improved since the last inspection so that work is generally matched to meet pupils' needs. Resources for mathematics have also improved, and are sound.

## SCIENCE

77. Pupils entering Key Stage 1 at the age of five achieve average standards in science. At the end of Key Stage 1, the results of the statutory teacher assessments show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected national standard was above average, but was below the national average for those achieving the higher level. Overall, they were in line with those for similar schools. The breakdown of these results shows that, in 1999, pupils achieved better in some aspects of science than others. In particular, the more able pupils did not achieve as well as they might in carrying out investigations, looking at living things and from studying the properties of materials.
78. Inspection findings show that the school's accurate evaluation of prior attainment and the recent staff development are both making a positive impact on standards in science. In Key Stage 1, evidence from lessons confirms the school's predictions that the overwhelming majority of pupils is likely to attain the expected standard this year and that a significant minority will attain the higher level, particularly in planning and carrying out investigations, and in their understanding of the properties of materials and physical processes. There was insufficient available evidence to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things. Overall, however, pupils at Key Stage 1, including the more able and those with special educational needs, make overall sound progress in science, and good progress in setting up and carrying out simple experiments.
79. In Year 1, pupils can sort materials according to their properties, and can identify which will change shape and which are magnetic. They can make simple predictions about what will happen when materials are heated, observe changes in these materials, record their

results carefully on a prepared table, and begin to learn how to make an experiment fair. They understand the key issues related to electrical safety, can draw accurate diagrams of electrical circuits and can identify which appliances use electricity. In one particularly successful lesson, Year 1 pupils made very good progress in understanding the forces of push and pull through a variety of imaginative practical activities and well focused questioning. In Year 2, pupils can observe accurately when investigating whether light travels through different papers and other materials, and are beginning to write clear explanations of their findings independently. They can accurately observe and record changes in different materials when different forces are used on them; and can make sensible predictions and plausible reasons for the results when melting jelly. Year 2 pupils can make and break electrical circuits accurately and correctly identify which materials will conduct electricity. In one lesson, the teacher's effective organisation, questioning and use of positive reinforcement enabled pupils to make good progress in experimenting with ways of moving toy vehicles, making predictions, identifying accurately what is 'unfair' about their test, and suggesting alternative 'fair' investigations.

80. In Key Stage 2, at the end of Year 4, inspection findings also confirm the school's own predictions for how well pupils achieve as they leave the school, and will be broadly similar to last year. The vast majority of pupils are likely to achieve the expected standard at this age and about one third will attain better in most aspects of science. However, insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement of pupils' attainment in the study of living things. In Year 3, pupils understand how shadows are formed, and have had experience of carrying out experiments to test the distance a toy truck will travel and the 'stretchiness' of tights. In Year 4, pupils have had experience of investigating how light travels, the effect of forces on objects and of fair testing, for example to test the absorbency and insulative properties of materials. All pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs, have clearly made sound progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, progress in planning, carrying out and explaining their own investigations is slower due to insufficient opportunities for pupils to take forward their own ideas and evaluate their findings in their own words. Evidence in books shows that pupils' write-ups of experiments are often identical and teacher generated. These weaknesses were also demonstrated in the lessons observed. While pupils were well able to make sensible verbal suggestions for fair testing and to explain the results of experiments, they made slow progress in making decisions and choices of their own, planning and organising the test and it's related equipment and writing up the results themselves.
81. The need to improve teachers' subject knowledge in science was a key issue following the school's last inspection, as was the lack of sufficiently challenging work for more able pupils and insufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment and carry out their own investigations. All these areas have been addressed through staff training and are now having a beneficial effect on teaching and standards, particularly in the early years and in Key Stage 1. Overall, teachers now have a secure subject knowledge in science and have implemented a sensible planning framework for experimental science in all classes. However, the effectiveness of teaching methods, planning and the use of time and resources varies between the key stages. In early years and in Key Stage 1, the overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, teachers motivate pupils well through the good use of voice, gesture and encouragement. Questioning is effective and well targeted at pupils of differing abilities, and all pupils' suggestions are valued and followed through into practical tasks. As a result, pupils are very keen to contribute, enthusiastic and actively involved in all elements of the learning process. In the most effective lesson, pupils were given very good opportunities to explore the classroom, choose objects to demonstrate a particular force and to explain their learning. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers ask sound questions to check prior learning, reinforce correct terminology and enable pupils to make suggestions, participate fully in experiments and observe and measure results. As a result, pupils are mainly attentive, behave well and concentrate on

their work. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to express and carry through their own ideas or to choose and organise equipment. There were also individual instances of teachers not only over-directing the investigations but also providing the reasons for discrepancies in results or a prepared write-up to copy. The latter weakness does not help pupils to develop their independent literacy skills when writing for a specific purpose. More effective teaching features enabled pupils to suggest ways of adapting and applying what they had learnt to a different experiment, and to use a digital camera to record the investigation in action.

82. The leadership and management of science are partially effective due to the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator. Her influence has been particularly effective in Key Stage 1. Here, she has been able to trial lessons, sample books, check standards, and monitor and support teachers informally. However, she has insufficient opportunities to gain an oversight of the subject across the whole school, from reception to Year 4. Agreed procedures and a systematic programme of work sampling and observations needs to be established so that strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching approaches can be identified and evaluated. Resulting issues can then be addressed through sharing and modelling expertise and establishing focused individual and group targets. Guidance on the systematic development of independent investigation and recording skills might also be a useful starting point. Resources for science are just adequate for the current number of pupils.

## **ART**

83. Across the school, a relatively small amount of work was available for examination, and this was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Within the range of materials and techniques used, standards in art are in line with those expected nationally in Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. In Key Stage 2, standards are below the expected standard, as they were in the last inspection.
84. In Year 1, pupils produce good quality pastel drawings of plants and owls, and sound visual effects when mixing media to produce 'impressionist' images. They make sound progress in their understanding of the work of Monet. In Year 2, pupils make good observational drawings of bicycles, and produce satisfactory standards when exploring line and tone from looking at the work of a book illustrator. In Key Stage 2, pupils do not build upon the good drawing skills they acquired in Key Stage 1, and make slow progress and produce below average drawings in their sketchbooks. When studying textiles, pupils make limited progress and produce woven and dyed pieces at a level usually associated with younger pupils.
85. Due to timetabling arrangements, insufficient observations of teaching took place to make a secure judgement. Findings are based on evidence from documentation, displays and pupils' work. This shows that teachers have a secure subject knowledge and that teaching is broadly sound in Key Stage 1, within the range of techniques taught. In Key Stage 2, the current teaching arrangements and evidence from pupils' work suggest that teachers have an insecure knowledge and understanding both of the content of the subject and the expected standards. The co-ordinator of the subject appropriately recognises the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She now needs to extend her informal support in reception and in Key Stage 1, and develop more rigorous monitoring and support procedures across the school. Planning for the new curriculum orders will enable the school to review the existing range of techniques taught and tools and equipment used; and to supplement existing resources which are just adequate.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Five year olds in reception make good progress in design and technology, benefiting from the rich range of appropriate activities to develop their making skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress slows but is satisfactory, overall, and pupils achieve standards which are in line with their ages. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning in the subject declines further, and becomes unsatisfactory. As a consequence, pupils' standards are generally too low in their final year at the school.
87. The last inspection, in 1996, found that standards were below average in both key stages, and identified the subject as a key issue for improvement. While pupils' standards are currently higher in Key Stage 1, the school has made unsatisfactory progress in improving attainment in Key Stage 2.
88. Year 1 pupils achieve satisfactory standards when making clay pots and when designing and making their own sandwiches. They decide on the ingredients they will use for their sandwiches, on the implements they will require and on the methods for preparing the food. In Year 2, pupils also create sandwiches, but their planning shows an appropriate increase in the level of detail, and their evaluations of the finished product are satisfactory for their ages.
89. In Years 3 and 4, pupils also design and make sandwiches, but their work does not show sufficient improvement from pupils' work in Key Stage 1, and lacks appropriate challenge for most pupils. Year 4 pupils make satisfactory progress when using 'mod-roc' to create Roman helmets and write clear and well ordered descriptions of their methods for making the helmets. However, their models of Viking houses, made from card and wood, are typical of the work usually associated with younger pupils, and demonstrate limited making skills. They also derive little benefit from folding and cutting commercially produced templates to create a model of Chedworth Villa. The very simple boxes they make, from folded paper, represent low standards for Year 4 pupils. Their designs of lunchboxes provide no details of joining methods or of the tools required, and many are not adequately considered in relation to the viability of their construction.
90. No design and technology lessons were taught in Key Stages 1 or 2 during the inspection, so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence suggests that expectations of pupils' potential attainment needs to be raised in Key Stage 2. Discussions with pupils show they have very positive attitudes to the subject, and enjoy design and technology lessons, across the school. Resources for the subject are broadly satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be mainly inadequate.

## GEOGRAPHY

91. As a result of the school's time-tabling arrangements, no geography lessons could be observed in Key Stage 1, and only two lessons in Key Stage 2. Evidence from other sources, such as pupils' written work and displays, is also rather limited, particularly in Key Stage 2 where the subject is taught mainly during the summer term. Although it is difficult, given these constraints, to reach secure judgements about standards or teaching, overall, in either key stage, the work planned and the knowledge and skills demonstrated by the oldest pupils indicate that pupils' progress is mainly sound.
92. Building on their work in the reception classes, pupils in Key Stage 1 develop their knowledge of the locality and of the immediate school environment. They use mapping skills to find their own homes on a map of the local area and to work out who lives nearest to, and who the furthest away from, the school itself. They plot their own routes to school,

and they produce their own simple, pictorial maps, marking on them such significant features as 'the big trees' or 'the roundabout' which help them to visualise and recall their journeys. They learn to note natural and man-made features of the landscape, to observe changes over time, and to reach judgements about the features they like and value, and about those they dislike. For example, they study photographs showing changes to the immediate school environment, commenting that they like 'the new pond' better than the old, and that, while they like the playground, they do not like the patches of thorns and brambles in the school grounds. After looking at a plan of the school, they consider how the space is used, noting, for example, the space used for teaching as distinct from the space used for offices. Similarly, after a visit to the local church, they identify on a plan those areas significant to the different purposes for which the building is used. In Year 2, pupils make a particular study of the weather, recording differences in temperature, sunshine, rain, wind and cloud, for example, from day to day.

93. Evidence from the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2 shows that pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of weather. For example, pupils in the Year 3/4 class use a weather station to record temperature and rainfall over the winter months, then calculate the daily average rainfall and the total amount of sunshine over the period in question. They carry out an investigation to find answers to questions related to temperature on the school site, placing thermometers on the north, south, east and west walls of the building to find out, for example, in which location the temperature stays highest for the longest period of time. Pupils in Year 4 show sound knowledge and understanding of hurricanes. They know the conditions that precede a hurricane, what happens during and after a hurricane, and how people in affected areas can best prepare for such an event and defend themselves. They use geographical terms appropriately, referring, for example, to 'the Beaufort scale', and to the various names given to hurricanes in different parts of the world. The use of data-handling and of information technology is soundly promoted well in geography in both key stages.
94. There is insufficient evidence to reach secure judgements about the quality of teaching in either key stage. The two lessons observed in Key Stage 2 were well prepared and were generally satisfactory.
95. At the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1996, the team found 'insufficient evidence to make a judgement about attainment. This remains the case, and it is not clear, from the evidence available to the current inspection, whether pupils in either key stage spend an adequate amount of time studying contrasting localities, or whether pupils are sufficiently involved in identifying geographical questions of their own to inform their investigations. The lack of available evidence suggests that these aspects of pupils' work are not addressed as rigorously as they might be, and it seems very likely, too, that geography does not make as strong a contribution as it should to pupils' cultural development. Since the criticism of resources for geography in the last inspection report, the school has purchased additional globes, atlases, library books and software. Overall, resources are better now, although many of the older books in the library are out of date and need to be replaced. Furthermore, the school will need to review its resources in the light of its changing curriculum as it develops its scheme of work to accommodate the requirements of Curriculum 2000. This will be particularly important in Key Stage 2, where weather is no longer a principal unit of study.
96. Geography has not been a priority in the school's development plan for some time. Nevertheless, there is a sound policy document, and the co-ordinator is actively engaged in reviewing the scheme of work to address the requirements of the new curriculum. She has monitored the implementation of the current scheme, and was largely responsible for the medium-term plans which inform current practice. As yet, she has had no opportunity to monitor teaching or to provide training for her colleagues, although she has kept abreast of developments in the subject through her own attendance on relevant courses. In

addressing the new requirements, it will be necessary for her to oversee plans for, and to monitor, provision across the two key stages, taking particular account of the need to ensure progression for those pupils in mixed-age classes.

## **HISTORY**

97. Due to the school's planning cycle, no lessons in history were observed in Key Stage 2. Findings are based on an analysis of planning documentation, pupils' work in books and in classroom displays and from discussions with staff and pupils.
98. In both key stages, pupils attain standards in history which are in line with what is expected nationally; and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. These findings reflect those in the previous inspection report. Year 1 pupils can make sound personal and travel timelines, use information technology to research early flight, and understand the special importance and main events in the lives of famous people, for example Florence Nightingale and Mother Theresa. In Year 2, pupils can identify changes over time when studying land and air travel and can empathise with people living in the past, for example at the time of Stephenson's Rocket. Pupils' discussions and drawings show that they have a secure understanding of the sequence of events in the story of Grace Darling, and they can suggest and explain why people at the time acted as they did. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain valuable first hand experience from visiting historical sites, for example Chedworth Roman villa, and can explain the main characteristics of the Roman, Saxon and Viking invasions. They show a sound understanding of chronology, changes over time and the main events in other periods, but there was no evidence of pupils asking and answering their own questions about the past,
99. In Key Stage 1, the teaching is sound. Teachers ask suitably challenging questions and encourage pupils to make suggestions and to identify appropriate sources of historical evidence. In one lesson, the teacher effectively retold the story of Grace Darling's life by taking on the role herself and drawing pupils in to express their views and feelings at appropriate moments. Insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. However, evidence suggests that all teachers have a secure subject knowledge and provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to gain historical skills and knowledge. The choice of Key Stage 2 study units, for example, enables pupils to explore history in ways that are appropriate for their level of learning development, although there was little evidence of personal research to support these themes.
100. The subject co-ordinator currently checks planning and monitors standards and teaching in history informally. More rigorous procedures for identifying and developing strengths and weaknesses in the subject are now needed. The co-ordinator appropriately recognises that the new curriculum orders will provide a good opportunity for him to revise the scheme of work and identify cross-curricular links. At the same time, it would be sensible to review and augment the current resources for the subject which are only just adequate. While the school makes sound use of borrowed artefacts from a local museum, it has none of its own.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

101. Insufficient lesson observations were carried out to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. Findings are based on an analysis of documentation, displays and pupils' work, and on evidence gained from talking with staff and pupils.
102. Overall, attainment in information technology is in line with that expected nationally, at the

end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, and all pupils make satisfactory progress. This reflects findings at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, pupils use the mouse confidently to 'click' and 'drag' pictures of kitchen appliances in science in Year 1, and information on George Stephenson when studying history in Year 2. Pupils can draft stories and accounts of visits, word process labels and prayers, and create illustrations and covers using different software. They produce sound work when collecting and sorting information on the number of cubes pupils can hold in maths in Year 1; and can scroll down to answer questions in science in Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils can open appropriate programs to start their work; programme the Roamer and use Logo; and input data collected on the weather to generate block and line graphs. They can store and retrieve information; and draft and edit their own accounts of the story of Elijah, using the spell checker. More able pupils are beginning to learn how to use a scanner and 'PowerPoint'.

103. Very little teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection, partly due to timetabling arrangements and to problems with accessing the websites to be used. However, individual pupils and pairs of pupils were observed using information technology for a range of purposes across the school. Together with other evidence available, this suggests that recent developments in staff training and the provision of hardware and software are having a beneficial effect on both teaching and learning. The co-ordinator for the subject is suitably qualified, has drawn up a sound action plan and is beginning to personalise the scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and match it to the school's new planning cycle for the subject. She monitors provision and attainment informally and sometimes works alongside teachers, which is good practice. She would now benefit from planned time to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching across the school more rigorously, in order to target support. There is good hardware provision for the subject in the recently created information technology suite and in classrooms; and the range of software is sound and is reviewed and upgraded regularly.

## MUSIC

104. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe only two lessons in Key Stage 1 and none in Key Stage 2. In addition, singing was heard in assemblies and in the Key Stage 2 after-school music club; and a tape recording of singing during a recent school performance was heard. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' performance using instruments in Key Stage 1 or to judge their skills in composing simple pieces. In Key Stage 2, no evidence was available to make judgements other than in relation to pupils' singing. In the last inspection, standards in music were judged to be satisfactory.
105. Overall, the quality of pupils' singing is satisfactory across the school. Pupils' diction is clear and their control of pitch and use of dynamics is sound. There is some evidence of good singing. For example, the group of 18 Key Stage 2 pupils in the music club have mainly good singing skills, and the tape recording demonstrates how careful tuition enables pupils to perform well when singing rounds or songs in several parts. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1, pupils' listening and appraising skills were satisfactory, and their capabilities in recognising and repeating simple rhythms, through body percussion, were sound for their ages.
106. Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, both lessons observed in Key Stage 1 were well taught, captured the interest of the pupils and enabled them to make good progress in developing their listening skills. The music club benefits from the effective teaching of the music co-ordinator, who has good subject knowledge. Sound use is made of a commercially produced music scheme, and teachers' planning is satisfactory in both key stages. Resources for music are just adequate, but a number of percussion instruments are well-

worn.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Gymnastics, games and athletics lessons were observed during the inspection. The school has worked hard to develop the P.E. curriculum and to raise standards since the last OFSTED inspection. As a consequence of the many measures introduced, standards have risen in all aspects of the subject. In 1996, standards were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage. The wide range of evidence available to inspectors in the current inspection indicates that standards are high, with most pupils in every year group attaining above average standards in all lessons seen. The many pupils who represent the school by participating in competitive sports and athletics activities in local and regional leagues and galas also achieve high standards, bringing numerous awards and trophies to their school as the fruits of team and individual efforts. Physical education is a strength of the school.
108. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand, and can explain, the effects of exercise on their bodies. By Year 2, all can perform a forward roll accurately, adopting the correct body positions and achieving a smooth start and a polished finish. They can devise sequences of movements involving rolling and jumping, and some pupils develop complex sequences, integrating backward rolls as well as forward rolls. All pupils use correct terms to describe their movements, referring confidently, for instance, to 'a straddle', and 'a half-turn'. In a basket-ball lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 demonstrate above-average skills when bouncing the ball ; they use only one hand, look ahead, not at the ball, move forwards at a good pace, and turn, changing their body level from high to low to touch a marker. By the end of the lesson, almost half the pupils have succeeded in throwing the ball through the net, and the rest achieve very near misses. In another Year 3 lesson involving throwing the javelin, all pupils understand and explain the safety guidelines which need to be considered, and all, more importantly, observe these rules. During the warm-up, they sustain energetic activity well, and they demonstrate a high standard of co-ordination in their movements. They respond particularly well to feedback and work hard to improve their throwing technique. By the end of Year 4 most pupils achieve high standards in the range of activities provided, including swimming. A marked feature of many lessons, throughout the school, is the high achievement of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom have physical disabilities.
109. Since the last inspection, the PE co-ordinator has been pro-active in extending the range of activities available to pupils, in developing the scheme of work for the subject, and in engaging the assistance of experienced and talented specialists, as coaches, to support teachers in lessons. This arrangement ensures that pupils are taught well, and that teachers develop their own skills by working alongside real experts. As a consequence of these arrangements, expectations are high, and clear progress is evident, year-on-year. Teaching was good, and sometimes very good, in all lessons seen. Lessons are planned well, with clear objectives which are communicated to the pupils. Every lesson has a secure, developmental structure, with appropriate opportunities for warm-up, revision of past learning, introduction, demonstration, practice and evaluation of new techniques. Pupils are frequently required to solve problems and, with rare exceptions, to evaluate their own or others' work. The teaching is confident and purposeful. As a result, pupils are readily engaged, want to do well, and are receptive to feedback. They take pride in their achievements and enjoy every minute. Pupils' high regard for the subject is reflected in the considerable numbers who enrol for extra-curricular clubs and activities.
110. At the time of the last inspection, resources for PE were found to be lacking. Through involvement in various community and LEA schemes including Redditch Action Sport, YMCA, Top Sport and Fun-Fit, the school has benefited not only from expert tuition, but



also from the loan or provision of equipment to support the teaching of a wide range of sports and athletic activities.

111. The co-ordinator is dedicated, well informed and hard working. Plans are already in hand to introduce yet further opportunities for pupils in the coming year. Through her involvement with the Worcestershire Catholic Schools Association, the co-ordinator is also reviewing the school's excellent scheme of work to ensure that the requirements of the Curriculum 2000 are met, and that progression is secured throughout the pyramid of schools to which Our Lady of Mount Carmel school belongs.