

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chorley, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119673

Headteacher: Mrs L Caswell

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 25 – 27 June 2001

Inspection number: 190629

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Eaves Green Road Chorley Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rt Rev Monsignor M McKenna
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1743	D S Roberts	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17913	B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23453	C Cressey	Team inspector	English Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Chorley in West Lancashire. It is an average sized school, and currently provides full-time education for 111 boys and 105 girls ranging from four to 11 years of age. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is in line with the national average. The majority of children receive pre-school education before entering the reception class, and their general attainment levels at that stage are in line with those found nationally. Just over 17 per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Five pupils, of whom two have statements of specific needs, are at stages 3-5, and their requirements include those for specific learning and physical difficulties. At present there are no pupils from families belonging to minority ethnic groups, and none who speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It provides a high level of care for its pupils and makes very good provision for their personal and social development. The teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is generally of very good quality, and is sometimes outstanding in English and mathematics. Most pupils achieve good standards in relation to their prior learning in most subjects, but there is scope for improving the progress of children at the Foundation Stage in some aspects of the curriculum. The headteacher, governors and staff co-operate very successfully to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere, where the Catholic ethos is strongly emphasised. The school is very well led and managed, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above the national expectations in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and in aspects of design and technology.
- Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is of an excellent standard.
- The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages, and is sometimes outstanding in English and mathematics.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and very good provision for their cultural development.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good.

What could be improved

- Children at the Foundation Stage are capable of making better progress than at present, when they work independently and engage in activities which they choose for themselves.

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 since the last inspection in 1996. During the four years up to Year 2000, the school's rate of improvement was consistent with the national trend. The proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding Level 4 by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 has increased steadily since the last inspection. There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard, which reflects the growing attention given by the school to challenging and extending higher attaining pupils. Considerable work has been devoted to improving provision and teaching in ICT, which is reflected in above average standards in the subject. The most important factor in achieving these improvements in standards has been better teaching. The proportion of lessons judged to be at least satisfactory has increased from 90 per cent, in the 1996 inspection, to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 11 per cent to 47 per cent. All of the key issues listed in the last report have been successfully addressed. In addition to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching, the school has produced appropriate policies and schemes for all subjects and aspects, which address successfully all dimensions of the curriculum and pupils' personal development. Effective steps

have been taken to improve curricular and teachers' planning, by identifying clearer objectives for learning. In addition, the school has strengthened considerably the arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, and this contributes significantly towards the setting of appropriately challenging work for pupils at all levels of attainment. The school is well placed to make further progress by building on its many strengths and addressing the areas for improvement identified in this report.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	D	C	C
mathematics	B	B	C	C
science	B	A	A	A

Key

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

A: well above, B: above, C: average, D: below average, E: well below average, E very low*

The table shows that in the Year 2000 the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was in line with the average for pupils in all and similar schools. In science, their performance was well above that in all and similar schools. The pupils' overall performance was above that found nationally and in similar schools.

Inspection findings indicate that children at the Foundation Stage make generally satisfactory progress and most achieve the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum before entering Year 1. They make particularly good progress during more formal lessons and this helps them to acquire good literacy and numeracy skills. However, they often make insufficient progress in independent work and in activities which they choose for themselves.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards which are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve above average standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards in writing in the current Year 6 are relatively weaker than those in other aspects of English. However, the hard work carried out by the school in recent years to raise standards in writing is reflected in the high standards achieved by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. At both key stages, pupils achieve at least appropriate standards in all other subjects, and exceed the national expectation in art and design and in aspects of design and technology. In physical education, the great majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres unaided by the time they reach the end of Year 6. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work. They listen attentively, show interest and enthusiasm, respond well to challenging tasks and are keen to take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of an excellent standard throughout the school. This is apparent in assemblies, classrooms, playground and dining hall.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show confidence and a mature sense of responsibility; they demonstrate this when working independently and in groups. They show respect for other people's values and beliefs.
Attendance	Good. Slightly above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	very good	very good

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

During the inspection, the teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed. In 88 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good or better, and it was very good or better in 47 per cent of lessons. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning.

The teaching of children at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teaching is most effective during more formal whole-class sessions, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons. It is less secure, however, in helping children to make the most of their independent learning and in extending their thinking when they engage in activities which they choose for themselves.

Teaching at both key stages is generally of very good quality and is sometimes outstanding in literacy and numeracy lessons. This enables most pupils, at all levels of attainment, to establish a good knowledge of the key skills of learning. In science, the teaching of experimental and investigate work is a particularly strong feature, which helps pupils to make rapid progress in developing their skills in scientific enquiry. The teaching of ICT is also of consistently good quality. Its imaginative and effective use helps pupils to extend their learning in other subjects. At both key stages, the high standard of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs by the specialist teacher, supported very effectively by class teachers and support staff, enables these pupils to make very good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage. However, there is scope for improving the quality and value of some of the learning experiences in activities where children are not taught directly. At Key Stage 1 and 2, the school provides a good quality, rich and stimulating curriculum. A very good range of extra-curricular opportunities is provided for older pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision throughout the school. The work of specialist teacher and support staff has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. Specific and measurable targets in individual education plans help to support pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through assemblies and across the curriculum. Positive adult role-models and good opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities contribute significantly towards the rapid progress made by pupils in their personal development. Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School provides a very good level of care. Good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. Excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour. Very good educational and personal support and guidance. Good procedures for improving attendance. Good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and for using the information to inform planning. Generally good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, although scope for further improvements in science, history and geography.

A very good partnership has been developed with parents, nearly all of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very effectively and liaise closely with the governing body to provide good direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by co-ordinators and all staff. These are important factors in creating a purposeful and positive ethos for learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governing body and headteacher co-operate very successfully to ensure that all statutory requirements are met appropriately.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate performance and set targets for improvement in English and mathematics which are appropriately challenging.
The strategic use of resources	Highly effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed very efficiently.

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.
 The governors successfully apply best value principles.
 The school is well staffed and appropriately resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Children receive the right amount of homework. • The teaching is good. • Parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • Parents are well informed about their children's progress. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>A significant minority of parents feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. <p>A relatively small minority of parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would like more information about their children's progress; • would like the school to work more closely with them.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find that the school makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, although most of it is for older pupils. They also find that the school works closely with parents. The arrangements for reporting to parents on children's progress are similar to those in most schools. However, there is scope for improving the current end of year written reports on pupils' progress, by placing more emphasis on identifying areas where pupils need to improve.

The headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue strengthening procedures and provision, and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The attainment levels of children on entry to the Foundation Stage are generally in line with those found nationally. Pupils at all levels of attainment make generally good, and at times very good, progress during their time in the school, and by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, overall standards are above national expectations.
- 2 Comparative information, based on the Year 2000 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of seven year old pupils in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics was well above both the national average and the average for pupils in similar schools.
- 3 Comparative information for pupils aged 11, based on the Year 2000 tests, indicates that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was line with both the national average and the average for similar schools. In science, the pupils' performance was well above both the national average and that for similar schools.
- 4 Key Stage 2 national test results for the three years up to 1999, indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is in line with the national trend. During the same period, there was no significant variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender.
- 5 Inspection evidence indicates that the large majority of children at the Foundation Stage reach the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Children make good progress during more formal lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy. However, a significant number are capable of making better progress during independent activities and those that they select for themselves.
- 6 Inspection evidence for Key Stage 1 indicates a picture which is consistent with national test results. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national expectation, and standards in science are above the national expectation. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress during their time at the key stage.
- 7 Inspection findings for Key Stage 2 indicate a better picture in English and mathematics than that indicated by the most recent national test results. In English, overall standards at the end of the key stage remain in line with the national expectations, but standards in speaking and listening, and reading are above the national expectations and a significant minority exceed expectations in writing. The school has identified writing as an area of relative weakness, and its success in addressing the issue is reflected in the high standards achieved in writing by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. In mathematics, standards are above the national expectation and reflect the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards in science are above the national expectations. Throughout the key stage, pupils at all levels of attainment, make generally good, and often very good, progress in relation to their prior learning. Those with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

- 8 In English, the great majority of pupils, at both key stages, make very good progress in speaking and listening. By the age of seven, the majority are confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their work. This was evident when pupils in Year 2 acted out the life of Florence Nightingale. They showed a good capacity to improvise and to adapt their speech effectively. Older pupils, at Key Stage 2, use their skills very effectively to express ideas in lessons and in special events, such as a mock election. Their increasing ability to vary expression, in order to engage the listener, and to pay close attention to what others say, is a strong feature in their learning. Pupils, at both key stages, make very good progress in extending their skills in reading, and reach standards which are generally above the national expectation. Younger pupils quickly acquire a very good understanding of phonics, word families and spelling, and this helps them to become fluent and confident readers. At Key Stage 2, books are very well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels, helping those of differing ability to make rapid progress. Many older pupils read challenging books, with excellent fluency and expression, and talk confidently about events and characters in the stories they have read.
- 9 In writing, pupils make rapid progress at Key Stage 1, and a significant proportion exceed the national expectation by the age of seven. Nearly all pupils spell common words accurately, and higher attainers use question marks, apostrophes, connectives and metaphors correctly to add interest to their stories. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2, although this is not yet fully reflected in the end of key stage national tests. A substantial proportion of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 achieve standards which are above those expected for their age, and a significant minority of Year 6 pupils exceed the national expectations. Average and higher attainers invariably use correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures, paragraphs and interesting vocabulary to add interest to their writing.
- 10 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment make very good progress in developing their numeracy skills at Key Stage 1. They count reliably and read, write and order numbers to a 100 and beyond with much accuracy and confidence. By Year 2, most have a very good grasp of the number system and demonstrate increasing confidence in using mathematical language appropriately. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the extension of the number system. This is reflected in their grasp of negative numbers and in their knowledge of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Some older pupils show an increasing understanding of equations, and recognise the value of this knowledge in calculating more efficiently.
- 11 In science, pupils at both key stages make good, and often very good progress. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired a good fund of knowledge and understanding through a wide range of carefully structured tasks. They observe carefully, are able to classify plants according to observable characteristics and know the basic principles of conducting a fair test. This rate of progress is maintained at Key Stage 2, where standards exceed the national expectation by the time pupils reach Year 6. The scientific knowledge and understanding of older pupils are clearly conveyed in drawings, diagrams and notes, which they convert into graphs, when necessary, before drawing accurate conclusions. Their scientific enquiry skills are particularly well developed and they show a good capacity to record data systematically, using appropriate charts and tables. Throughout the key stage, pupils are good at explaining their results and giving reasoned hypotheses for why they think things happen as they do.
- 12 In information and communication technology, standards in Year 2 are at least in line with the national expectations and above these levels in aspects of communicating and

handling information. Standards in Year 6 are above the national expectations. Throughout the school pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in relation to prior learning.

- 13 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. They benefit greatly from the expertise of the specialist teacher for special educational needs, and from the high quality support provided by class teachers and learning support assistants.
- 14 The school makes very good provision for all pupils, meeting their particular needs in terms of gender, background and ability. In all of these categories, the great majority of pupils make consistently good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 15 In all other subjects, pupils at both key stages work at levels which are at least in line with national expectations. Standards in art and design and aspects of design and technology are above the national expectations. In physical education, nearly all pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6, and a significant number achieve higher standards.
- 16 Standards of literacy and numeracy are generally above those expected for pupils' ages throughout both key stages. The highly successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements throughout the school.
- 17 The governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, which take full account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school should get close to achieving those set for the end of the current academic year.
- 18 Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving standards. Compared with figures published in the last inspection report, the proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2 has increased from 57 per cent to 77 per cent in English, from 52 per cent to 73 per cent in mathematics and from 76 per cent to 100 per cent in science. More significantly, the proportion of pupils exceeding the national expectation and attaining Level 5 has improved considerably in all three of the core subjects. In addition, the school has been able to raise significantly the standards achieved by pupils in ICT throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 19 The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards the school and their behaviour is excellent. The pupils enjoy school. Their record of attendance is good, and slightly above the national average for primary schools. Holidays and illness account for almost all absence and the rate of unauthorised absence is very low, below that found nationally. The vast majority of the pupils arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

- 20 Relationships throughout the school are excellent and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress, irrespective of ability, gender or background. The pupils are well mannered, friendly and helpful. They understand the 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour, which stem from the Mission Statement and which encourage them to "Be kind, Be fair, Be honest". Incidents of serious misconduct are extremely rare. There was one permanent exclusion last year, for behaviour which the school considered to be totally unacceptable.
- 21 The pupils are enthusiastic about all activities. This is reflected in their very good attitudes to learning. In lessons across the whole curriculum they are attentive and eager to learn. They settle down quickly at the beginning of each lesson and sustain good concentration, trying hard with practical and written work and always keen to answer questions and contribute to class discussion. When working with a partner or as part of a group, the pupils are exceptionally co-operative, very receptive of others' ideas and suggestions and very willing to help one another. This was evident in a physical education lesson for pupils in Year 6. Pupils worked out of doors, investigating different types of jumps. In spite of the extremely hot weather, they worked very effectively in their allocated groups, persevering to try to complete the task in the time allotted, and demonstrating very good team skills.
- 22 Throughout the school, the pupils' excellent behaviour in class and their very positive attitudes to learning are contributing significantly to the standards they achieve. The pupils behave equally well in the playground, in the dining room and in assembly. In their movement around the building their behaviour is exemplary. A sense of spirituality was evoked as they lined up in complete silence, waiting to go into assembly. During the assembly they listened attentively and joined in the singing and prayers with considerable reverence.
- 23 The pupils take good care of their school. All areas of the building are clean and tidy and the extensive grounds are entirely free from litter. The pupils enjoy examining the many interesting artefacts which go to make up the very high standard of display in classrooms, corridors and the library area. During the lunch break, a group of Key Stage 1 pupils were trying out the various percussion instruments on display in the library. The careful way in which they handled the instruments and their sheer delight in listening to the different sounds they made typified the outstandingly high level of behaviour and attitudes which prevail throughout the school.
- 24 When presented with opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, the pupils respond very positively. From a very early age they have jobs to do, such as 'leading the line' when moving around the building, collecting in books and helping to tidy the classroom. For example, when the time came for the Year 1 pupils to finish their role-play activities, they went to great lengths to leave the 'clinic' neat and tidy before returning to class for the plenary section of their literacy lesson. Pupils assume additional responsibilities as they get older. All the Year 6 pupils have the chance to be prefects during the course of their final year in the school. They carry out a wide range of duties, such as distributing and collecting class registers and helping to organise games for younger pupils during the lunch break. The prefects' strong sense of duty is exemplified by the way in which they immediately take up their positions as door monitors as soon as the bell summons the end of play time or lunch time, thus assisting with the safe supervision of pupils as they move around the building.

- 25 The pupils contribute generously to the wider community through their fund raising efforts for a wide range of charities. During Lent they organise cake stalls, concerts and other activities in support of the Good Shepherd appeal. They also provide on-going support for the homeless, a local children's hospice and the Catholic Association for Overseas Development (CAFOD). Activities such as these strongly uphold Christian principles of caring for people in need and provide valuable opportunities for the pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 26 The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2, and satisfactory at the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, the teaching in 88 per cent of the lessons observed was judged to be at least good, 47 per cent was very good or better and 11 per cent was excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.
- 27 The quality of teaching for children at the Foundation Stage is generally satisfactory and sometimes good, but there are some shortcomings which need attention. All of the lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, and the teaching in 40 per cent of lessons was good. The teaching is most effective in more formal situations, such as literacy and numeracy lessons, but is less secure in helping children to make constructive use of opportunities to work independently or to make the most of activities which they choose for themselves.
- 28 Teaching at the Foundation Stage gives high priority to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. The good co-operation between teaching and support staff is an important factor in the effectiveness of provision in this area. Children are helped to settle quickly, to develop confidence in expressing themselves and to work sensibly and happily with others. This enables children to contribute effectively, during literacy and numeracy lessons for example, and take greater advantage of the range of learning opportunities provided for them. The teaching is effective in promoting generally satisfactory progress by the great majority of children towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning and is most successful during more formal, whole-class lessons in English and mathematics. Although time is allowed for pupils to engage in independent work and activities which they choose for themselves, such activities often lack a sense of purpose. Some activities are over-directed by adults, limiting the scope for children to respond creatively. There are also times when there is insufficient interaction between adults and children during activities, and opportunities to extend children's thinking are sometimes missed.
- 29 At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is generally very good. All of lessons observed were judged to be good or better, 57 per cent were very good and seven per cent excellent. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is also very good. Over 95 per cent of lessons were at least good, 55 per cent were very good or better and 15 per cent were excellent.
- 30 The teaching of English and mathematics is regularly of high quality. The very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is an important factor in the consistently good progress made by pupils at both key stages in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

- 31 The teaching of English is never less than good and is mostly of very good quality. Over 70 per cent of the literacy lessons observed were judged to be very good or better, and 25 per cent were excellent. At both key stages, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. Lessons are well planned and follow closely the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. This enables pupils to develop their skills progressively as they move through the school. The imaginative selection of texts to stimulate interest and extend pupils' thinking is a consistent feature. The skilful use of the overhead projector, to present the main text and supporting images and phrases, enhances learning in classes for older pupils. This was particularly evident during a lesson in Year 4, when pupils examined a poem by Hilaire Belloc. The pupils responded with a sense of awe to some of the images projected. The outstanding teaching captured pupils' imagination, increased their appreciation of poetry, and extended their awareness of how punctuation can be used to enhance writing.
- 32 The teaching of English, at both key stages, is carefully structured to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. Much of the teaching is lively and exciting, helping pupils to learn at a fast pace and encouraging very positive attitudes towards the subject. Teachers share the learning objectives of lessons with the pupils, ensuring that they are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Although the setting of formal individual targets for improvements has not yet been introduced, the school is now well placed to do so. In all aspects of English, the arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are generally good. Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are some very good examples of how teachers' comments help pupils to improve their work.
- 33 The teaching of mathematics is consistently of very good quality. The teaching is always very well planned, and work is matched carefully to the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Much thought and preparation is evident in all lessons, and teaching is very well guided by the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental starters to lessons are conducted very effectively, and this captures pupils' interest and attention as well as enabling them to consolidate their numeracy skills through practice. The very good level of expertise demonstrated by teachers is an important factor in promoting pupils' numeracy skills at both key stages. This is regularly reflected in high calibre questioning, which probes pupils' thinking and extends their understanding. The valuable and constructive support provided by classroom support staff makes a significant contribution to the learning and progress of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.
- 34 Throughout the school, the teaching of science is always of at least good quality and it is often very good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, which results in pupils making good progress at both key stages. The high quality of the opportunities created for pupils to engage in scientific enquiry is a very strong feature in the teaching, which promotes high levels of interest by pupils and significant gains in their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are very well prepared and organised to meet the needs of, and extend, pupils at all levels of attainment. This ensures that pupils are actively involved in purposeful learning at all times. Teachers value the contributions made by their pupils, and this encourages them to develop a high level of confidence in expressing their ideas and explaining why they think things happen as they do in their investigations.

- 35 In information and communication technology, teaching is good, and often very good, at both key stages. This enables pupils to gain confidence and appropriate skills in the early stages and make rapid progress at Key Stage 2. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, planning is well conceived and expectations of the pupils are high. This enables pupils to make confident use of the good facilities available in ICT. At both key stages, the constructive use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography is a very good feature in the teaching. This extends pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to support their learning in work across the curriculum.
- 36 Throughout the curriculum, teachers make good provision for pupils at all levels of attainment and respond effectively to the differing needs of boys and girls. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. The very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote very good progress by pupils. Very good teaching is provided by the specialist teacher for special educational needs who also acts as the co-ordinator for all provision for such pupils. Their work is supported by good quality individual education plans. This enables the pupils to work systematically towards the realistic and manageable targets set for them.
- 37 In other subjects, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils, and opportunities are generally taken effectively to extend literacy and numeracy skills. In art and design, and design and technology, the teaching promotes successfully the pupils' creative development. At both key stages, the teaching of physical education is generally effective in helping most pupils to make steady progress in their physical development. Swimming is taught very effectively, enabling nearly all pupils to swim at least 25 metres before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 38 The school has made significant progress in improving the quality of teaching since the full inspection in 1996. The proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has increased from 90 per cent to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 11 per cent to 47 per cent. Perceptive leadership by senior managers, hard work by all staff and the successful implementation of initiatives, such as the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly towards better quality teaching throughout the school.

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

- 39 The school provides a good quality, stimulating curriculum for the pupils at both key stages. It is appropriately broad, balanced and relevant and meets successfully the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although the curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage is broadly satisfactory, it is not always as challenging as it might be when the children take part in learning activities which are not taught directly.
- 40 Since the last inspection, the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved considerably and has benefited greatly from the very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The same can be said for information and communication technology, with the newly established suite giving pupils many more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through interesting and relevant learning experiences. Another area which has broadened since the last inspection is the provision for extra-curricular activities, which now includes a well balanced programme of sporting,

creative, musical and intellectual activities, which serve to enhance and enrich the statutory curriculum.

- 41 The pupils in Year 6, have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Recently, these pupils spent some time at the Hothersall Lodge Activity Centre, where they participated in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. Here different activities were provided, under close supervision, in order to foster a range of skills and to promote aspects of initiative and responsibility.
- 42 Since the last inspection, the school has made very marked improvement in its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' planning for all subjects now takes account of all of these dimensions. In addition, the school's strong Catholic ethos and its clear and consistent commitment to Christian principles underpin all of its work and permeate all aspects of school life.
- 43 The pupils' spiritual development is promoted extremely effectively throughout the school. School assemblies are very reverent occasions, with a deep sense of spirituality stemming from the pupils' excellent behaviour as they file into the hall in absolute silence and wait for the assembly to begin. During the inspection, a very moving sense of spirituality and reverence was evoked by the quality of the singing, particularly when the whole school sang the Lord's Prayer in perfect harmony. Staff create many opportunities in lessons for the pupils to experience a feeling of awe and wonder. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, as the pupils investigated the effect of air resistance on paper helicopters, the pupils were filled with excitement and wonder when they tested the 'spinners' to see which one was best. A totally different sense of spirituality was created, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, in response to a poem, "Nobody". The class listened with immense sensitivity as one of the pupils explained why this poem meant so much to her.
- 44 Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is outstandingly good. In accordance with the school's mission statement, every person in the school community is encouraged to be kind, fair and honest. These three strands form the basis for the code of conduct and the 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, helping to uphold the code of conduct and to foster a very caring, supportive environment in which the pupils can grow in confidence and self-esteem. In lessons, the pupils have many opportunities to work with a partner or as part of a group, and this helps to promote their social development by encouraging mutual support and good teamwork. They have lots of opportunities to take responsibility inside school. For example, the reception children love to 'lead the line' into assembly, the literacy and numeracy monitors at Key Stage 1 classes put out the resources before the lesson begins, and the prefects in Year 6 help to supervise younger pupils during wet play times. In a wider context, the pupils consider moral and social issues outside of school. During the inspection, in a geography lesson, the Year 4 pupils expressed their disapproval at the amount of litter in the local area and commented on the damage done to a nearby playground. They were given time to reflect on how the younger children in the neighbourhood might feel about it.
- 45 Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has made changes to its religious education scheme of work and the pupils now study two different faiths each year, to help give them an informed understanding of other religions. In subjects such as art and design, information and communication technology and personal and social education, the pupils extend the

knowledge gained in religious education. For example, in a Year 6 personal and social education lesson, the pupils began by reflecting on the previous day's religious education lesson about a Hindu wedding. They went on to compare similarities and differences between a Hindu and a Christian wedding, and to discuss other cultural differences and how these are to be appreciated and not condemned. The lesson was one of a series on racism and was particularly helpful in preparing the pupils for their imminent transfer to secondary school. In subjects such as English, history and geography, the pupils develop a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions. In geography, for example, the Year 2 pupils were comparing their own locality with a contrasting locality, Blackpool. In doing so they learnt about seaside holidays, which have always been very much a part of the British way of life.

- 46 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school maintains an appropriate register for special educational needs which complies with the National Code of Practice and meets statutory obligations. The organisation of the curriculum is exceptionally well co-ordinated. Support is provided in short, highly focused, withdrawal groups, individual support or in class support. Detailed individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated, specific and appropriate targets, are drawn up for all pupils requiring them. Reviews of individual educational plans are carried out regularly and the parents are invited to attend these meetings and receive written confirmation of changes to targets. Pupils with statements of specific needs have full access to mainstream education and achieve similar standards to their peers.
- 47 The school is entirely successful in implementing the governors' policy for equality of opportunity. All of the pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or background have equal access to the whole curriculum. The good quality learning resources reflect the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Through careful planning of their use, the pupils are helped to develop very positive attitudes towards other cultures and religions. Such opportunities frequently occur through the use of carefully chosen texts in literacy lessons and through other subjects, including art and music. Great care is taken in lessons to involve all pupils through well focused questions and a high level of positive interaction during group activities. Support for pupils at different levels of attainment is a strong feature of literacy and numeracy lessons. Tasks are well planned and appropriately challenging. In these lessons, provision is enhanced effectively by well briefed classroom assistants and volunteer helpers who know the pupils well.
- 48 The school is particularly effective in promoting the pupils' personal and social development. In each class an effective health education programme is taught, which includes appropriate attention to drug misuse and sex education. The school receives much valued assistance from the school nurse. The pupils are taught essential facts and provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to make informed choices, now and in the future.
- 49 The pupils' learning is supported effectively by the well established links which the school has built up with the local community. Various authors, footballers, scientists and reptile keepers are among those who have recently visited the school, adding a valuable additional dimension to the statutory curriculum.

- 50 Strong links are well established with local nursery schools and also with the secondary high school to which most pupils move at 11. An appropriate induction process enables the pupils to transfer smoothly. The Year 6 pupils always spend some time visiting the high school to sample a variety of lessons before they move. A smooth system exists for the transfer of appropriate records and attainment data.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 51 The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils and is successful in ensuring their welfare, health and safety. Child protection procedures are very good, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority. The school works in close co-operation with a range of external agencies to ensure that the needs of all the pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are provided for. The school nurse is a frequent visitor to the school and gives excellent support in a number of ways. She talks to new parents at the induction meeting, held prior to their children starting in the reception class. She also makes a valuable contribution to the programme of study for personal, social and health education for pupils throughout the school. As a guest of honour, the school nurse officially opened the 'clinic' in the Key Stage 1 role-play area and provided lots of relevant resources. These are helping to develop the pupils' language and to stimulate some very realistic role play.
- 52 The pupils' personal development is promoted very successfully and monitoring arrangements are very good. All teachers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the pupils in their care and are preparing them to be responsible citizens. Through many areas of the curriculum, in assemblies and during the daily life of the school, the pupils learn to work together, to care for their own health, to be aware of the needs and feelings of other people, to protect the environment and to respect cultures and beliefs which are different from their own. Older pupils are strongly encouraged to take an interest in current affairs. Prior to the recent General Election, the Year 5 pupils held a very convincing mock election, with an elected candidate for each of the main political parties. The pupils made very good use of art work and persuasive language to produce manifestos, posters, leaflets and rosettes. The project stimulated the pupils into gathering a great deal of information, from newspapers and other sources, about the real election campaign. The whole school benefited because the candidates gave their election speeches in front of the whole school and because the Year 5 class mounted a very impressive election display in the school corridor.
- 53 The Year 6 pupils benefit from an annual residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre. At the pre-inspection meeting the parents and carers spoke very highly of this valuable opportunity for the pupils to gain confidence and independence. A very impressive display inside school shows the pupils taking part in a wide range of outdoor adventurous activities. It also includes some very meaningful written comments about what the pupils feel they have gained from the experience.
- 54 Arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. The code of conduct stems from the mission statement. The 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour are displayed prominently in classrooms and other areas of the school. To encourage positive attitudes, good behaviour and hard work, the pupils are presented with a whole school target each week, with suggestions for the weekly target coming from the pupils themselves. Targets might relate to being a good friend, making the right choices or being fair. Two

or three pupils from each class are rewarded each week, in the Merit assembly, for their success in the target area.

- 55 The school's arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements and the importance of regular attendance and punctuality is emphasised in the home-school agreement, which has been introduced since the 1996 inspection. The pupils' record of attendance is consistently good and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average for primary schools.
- 56 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are generally good and particularly good in English and mathematics. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory tests are set throughout the school in both subjects. The results are analysed carefully and used effectively to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets for improvements. Although the school has not yet introduced the setting of formal individual targets for improvements by pupils in English and mathematics, it is well placed to do so. In most subjects, the practice of keeping samples of work produced by pupils, which are accurately assessed and graded is contributing towards a good level of consistency by teachers in their assessment of pupils' work. Teachers' marking is also constructive in recognising what pupils have attained and setting appropriate new challenges. Good use is made of information gathered from the assessment of pupils' work to inform the next stage of teaching and learning.
- 57 The monitoring and supporting of pupils academic progress are carried out effectively in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and most other subjects. However, there is scope for strengthening current arrangements for monitoring and recording pupils' progress throughout the school, in science, history and geography, which are not yet sufficiently systematic.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 58 The school has established a very good partnership with parents and carers. At the pre-inspection meeting the parents expressed their appreciation for the Christian values which the school promotes, for the way in which older pupils care for younger pupils and for the pupils' general politeness and good manners. Analysis of the parents' replies to the pre-inspection questionnaires revealed that almost all the parents and carers would feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. The vast majority consider the school to be well led and managed and are of the view that teaching is good. Most of the parents and carers feel their children are making good progress and are helped to become mature and responsible. The great majority are happy with standards of behaviour and are of the opinion that the school expects its pupils to work hard and achieve of their best. The inspection findings support all these positive views.
- 59 A significant minority of the parents and carers are of the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. The inspection findings are that the range of extra curricular activities provided for the pupils is very good. Activities, after school and at lunch time, include country dancing, a computer club, a recorder group and various sports, according to the season. In addition, team games, such as rounders, are organised in the lunch break and all the Key Stage 2 classes can take part, on a rota basis, at least one day a week.

- 60 Some parents would like the school to work more closely with them and keep them better informed in relation to their children's progress. The inspection finds that the school works very closely with parents and carers and that the overall quality of the information provided for them is good. However, there is room for improvement in the pupils' annual written reports by placing greater emphasis on what the pupils could do to further improve the standard of their work and by providing separate sections for the reports on information and communication technology and design and technology. A very good feature of home-school communications is that parents are given advance information on topics to be covered in all areas of the curriculum. This helps them to support their children's learning in various ways, for example by visits to places of interest, retrieving information from the Internet and borrowing books from the public library. In preparation for a history lesson, the Year 2 pupils had researched the life and work of Florence Nightingale and this provided a very good starting point for class discussion.
- 61 Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report, formal meetings and regular correspondence the parents and carers are kept very well informed in relation to school policies and procedures, the mission statement and the code of conduct. Since the last inspection, a home-school agreement has been implemented. Parents and carers were consulted in drawing up the agreement, which explains clearly what they may expect of the school and what the school expects of parents and pupils.
- 62 Parents and carers make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning at school and at home. They assist in classrooms, accompany staff and pupils on educational visits and help make costumes for school productions. Strong parental support for the home-school reading scheme is having a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school. The children begin taking their reading books home in Reception and this fosters a love of books from an early age. The school organises numerous information evenings for parents, such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs workshops, sacramental meetings and curriculum sessions. These activities are usually well attended and play a very important part in helping the parents and carers to be fully involved in their children's education. The Parents', Teachers and Friends Association raises considerable funds for the benefit of all the pupils. For example the association subsidises the cost of educational visits.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 63 The quality of leadership and management is very good. The perceptive and purposeful leadership of the dedicated headteacher, and the strong support provided by a knowledgeable and committed deputy headteacher, are important factors in the good progress made by the school since the last inspection. The headteacher works closely with senior managers and the governing body to provide clear vision and direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by a talented and hard working staff.
- 64 Governors show a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, and are proud of the progress which the school has made in recent years. Their increasingly purposeful involvement in the work of the school is an important factor in the improvements achieved since the last inspection. Appropriate governing body committees have been established, and they work effectively and successfully to ensure that statutory requirements are met. Governors for key areas, such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, liaise effectively with co-ordinators. The insight they gain, through working in the school or visiting classrooms, helps the

governing body to assess and appreciate the progress which the school is making and contributes towards informed decisions about areas for development.

- 65 The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely with co-ordinators for subjects and aspects of the curriculum. This contributes greatly towards the commitment for improvement which exists in the school, and is an important factor in the highly successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Co-ordinators play an important part in producing and updating subject policies and schemes of work which help teachers to set appropriately challenging work for pupils at all levels of attainment. Their work contributes strongly towards the good quality of teaching which now exists. The school is now well placed to continue to improve by building on existing strengths and addressing the weaknesses identified in this report.
- 66 The school's mission statement is communicated effectively to parents through the school prospectus. The school sets out to: "help children grow in their relationship with God and each other through a broad and balanced education, which aims to increase children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the curriculum and other activities. The practice of the Catholic Faith is seen as fundamental to the whole life of the school". These aims are consistently reflected in all of the school's work.
- 67 The governing body ensures that the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are successfully implemented and that the school provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. The school makes good provision for all pupils, irrespective of gender or ability.
- 68 Good procedures have been established for monitoring teaching and the curriculum, which form an important part of the school's strategy for performance management. Teachers are keen to improve, and increasing emphasis is placed on self-evaluation and reflection. The school has focused in particular on monitoring the teaching of literacy and numeracy in recent years, but has also made considerable progress in improving the teaching of information and communication technology. The headteacher and deputy headteacher visit classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of curricular provision, and are sometimes supported by relevant subject co-ordinators. Criteria for evaluation are agreed with class teachers in advance. The feedback from lesson evaluations is considered during interviews with individual teachers, and personal targets for improvement are agreed for the year ahead. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by the headteacher and co-ordinators. Increasingly good use is made of information and communication technology to store information and track pupils' progress.
- 69 Responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of the curriculum are shared appropriately and defined clearly. Curriculum planning is scrutinised by relevant co-ordinators in order to check balance and provision in their subjects. Senior managers maintain a careful overview, to check that appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy as well as information technology skills in work across the curriculum, and to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

- 70 Well conceived school development planning procedures enable the school to move steadily towards the targets identified. Targets for improvements are listed clearly and appropriate information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. This includes deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible, and criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives. The effective use of the plan to inform spending, ensures that money is spent appropriately on relevant educational priorities.
- 71 The requirements for staff appraisal are met through the annual personal interviews, which form an important part of the school's performance management procedures. Strong emphasis is placed on staff development. Teachers, support staff and governors are given opportunities to attend relevant in-service training, and there are good procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school.
- 72 Very effective use is made of all funding. Good use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. The relatively large amount of money carried forward from the last financial year was in anticipation of the acceptance of proposals to establish nursery provision at the school.
- 73 The governors' finance committee liaises closely with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and bursar to oversee financial matters efficiently and effectively. School administration is highly efficient and makes very good use of information technology to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. The school is also well supported by expertise provided by the local education authority. The last audit of finance by the local authority found the financial systems and procedures established at the school to be of a good standard. All of the audit's relatively minor recommendations have been addressed.
- 74 The increasing attention given to monitoring school performance is a good feature in the work of the governing body. The headteacher provides regular information to enable governors and senior management to compare the school's performance with similar schools as well as the national picture. Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.
- 75 The governing body also seeks to secure best quality and value when purchasing resources and arranging for work to be completed. Much of this is done in conjunction with the local education authority. The successful initiatives to improve the accommodation since the last inspection provide good illustrations. The governing body sought three estimates for installing double glazing and laying carpets. They considered the merits of each bid, in terms of the likely improvement in quality and cost effectiveness, before making a final decision. As a result, the quality of provision was improved and good value for money was secured.
- 76 All resources are very well managed. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are managed and deployed very effectively.
- 77 Very good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation and school grounds. Classrooms are appropriately spacious, the computer suite provides a valuable additional facility and the playing field is a valuable asset. Nearly all areas of the curriculum are well resourced, but there is scope for improving the availability and use of resources to support learning activities at the Foundation Stage.

- 78 Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the quality of the internal environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work which are of a very good standard. They are used very effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements, support their learning, and promote enquiry.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 79 In order to raise standards and quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- i) improve the progress made by children at the Foundation Stage during independent work and in activities which they choose for themselves by:
- * planning more carefully in order to define the purpose of particular activities, and to ensure an appropriate degree of challenge for pupils at different levels of attainment;
 - * organising a higher rate of intervention by adults in order to consolidate and extend children's learning;
 - * ensuring that appropriate resources are available to motivate and stimulate children.

(paragraph reference: 5, 28, 39, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 89)

In addition to the key issues above, the following recommendations arising from areas of relative weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- 1) Improve the quality of the end of year written reports on pupils' progress by:
- placing greater emphasis on identifying areas for improvement;
 - providing separate sections for the reports on ICT and design and technology.

(paragraph reference: 60)

- 2) Strengthen further the arrangements for recording and monitoring pupils' progress in science, history and geography.

(paragraph reference: 57, 113, 117)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	36	41	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	216
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	37

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	13	12	12
	Total	28	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (100)	96 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	200	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	13
	Girls	13	13	17
	Total	23	22	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	73 (86)	100 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	23	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (75)	80 (82)	90 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	216
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	30.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	394,504
Total expenditure	388,025
Expenditure per pupil	1,772
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,848
Balance carried forward to next year	30,327

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	216
Number of questionnaires returned	161

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	42	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	49	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	53	42	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	39	12	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	35	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	47	11	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	37	25	5	7

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

- 80 The school's provision for children at the Foundation Stage is in the reception class. Overall, the school provides an appropriate range of experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
- 81 The general levels of attainment of children entering the school are in line with those expected nationally. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is generally satisfactory, and most children are on course to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Teaching is most effective during more formal whole-class lessons, such as those for literacy and numeracy, and this helps children to make significant progress. However, teaching is less secure in helping children to make the most out of independent work and benefit fully from activities which they select for themselves. This means that many children make insufficient progress during such activities. These shortcomings are consistent with the issues identified by the last inspection and remain as priorities for the school to address.

Communication, language and literacy.

- 82 Teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory and most children achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. The school provides an appropriate range of experiences and activities to develop children's language and literacy skills. The implementation of the literacy hour is effective in developing children's early reading and writing. Children enjoy stories and rhymes, joining in familiar ones with enthusiasm. Children enjoy conversations with each other, but staff do not always make the most of opportunities to interact with children in freely chosen activities, such as construction or imaginative play, and this limits the development of their speaking skills. Formal teacher directed activities help children to recognise familiar letters, sounds and words. Interesting games reinforce the learning at home and develop children's confidence in building simple three letter words. Older children are beginning to write their own simple sentences using some recognisable letters, sounds and words. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's understanding of sounds and letters through play and routines, and planned activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the age and attainment levels of the children. As at the last inspection, there are insufficient opportunities for children to write independently through teacher directed activities and those children choose for themselves. For example, the writing corner and imaginative play situations lack high quality materials and ideas to stimulate children to write for a variety of purposes. Most children read simple books with confidence, using letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. Although there is a reading area, it is lacking in comfort, and children's enjoyment of books is restricted by the limited range on offer.

Mathematical development

- 83 Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Provision has improved since the last inspection, but there are still some areas to be developed further in order to ensure

children make the progress they are capable of. The numeracy strategy is appropriately implemented and has a positive effect on children's attainment. Children respond particularly enthusiastically to the mental element of lessons, and enjoy exploring numbers to 100 as they confidently count in twos and tens. Higher attaining children count forwards and backwards with increasing confidence. Occasionally the length of the sessions is too long for the children and they become a little restless and distracted, which limits their progress. The language of mathematics is developed well. This was evident when the teacher took children on a walk around the school to develop their understanding of positional language. They excitedly followed instructions to turn right or left and to locate objects which were next to, underneath or above. Learning is reinforced well as children use computer programmes to further develop their understanding of positional vocabulary. Children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Beans and sunflowers are measured, and sizes are compared and recorded. Children further consider size, shape and position when playing with construction toys or emptying and filling containers in the sand play. However, a lack of planned adult intervention limits their progress, and there are missed opportunities to extend children's mathematical thinking when they work at the number table or play with games such as dominoes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

- 84 Children develop a sound understanding of the world around them. They have an appropriate range of opportunities to explore man made and natural materials. For example, they observed the growth of the tomato and courgette plants as they began to produce flowers and then vegetables. Children's understanding of living things was extended as, armed with bug boxes, magnifying glasses and clip boards, they set out to explore the school garden searching for 'mini beasts'. Children were very involved in the activity and came back into class excited about their discoveries. However, the activity was not followed up sufficiently well and staff missed opportunities to encourage children to talk about their discoveries and record their findings in an interesting way. Children learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. They become confident and competent in using the mouse to work through well selected computer programmes. The availability of construction toys allows children to design and make their own models. However, adults do not interact sufficiently with children in this context to help them extend their ideas, nor do they create sufficiently challenging activities for older children.

Physical development

- 85 Teaching is satisfactory and most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Children make good progress in handling pencils, crayons, modelling tools, construction kits and malleable materials. Regularly structured physical education lessons provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop spatial awareness, control of their movements and an understanding of the importance of regular exercise. However, a lack of appropriate equipment sometimes limits children's learning. For example, a well-planned lesson to develop children's throwing and catching skills was severely limited because the balls being used were too small for most children to catch. A lack of resources to be used inside and outside, such as small climbing and

balancing equipment, still limits opportunities for children to develop further their skills in this area.

Creative development

- 86 Teaching is satisfactory and most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Provision for creative development has improved since the last inspection, but further work is needed in order to ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable.
- 87 Children enjoy an appropriate range of experiences in art, music and story. However, imaginative play situations are not sufficiently well planned. Situations such as 'The Teddy Bears Picnic', are well conceived but lack a sufficiently wide range of stimulating resources to promote further children's imagination and extend their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. A range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Suitable activities are available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. However, tasks are often too teacher directed, or lack purpose or suitable materials to extend children's ideas. For example, an interesting and suitable activity involved children making masks. However, a lack of appropriate resources limited the children's creativity. Materials such as clay, paint and sand are available for children to explore, but they are not available as regularly as they should be in order to ensure children make better progress in developing ideas and skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 88 Teaching is successful in helping nearly all children to achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Children enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is very good. They respond exceptionally well to the rules and routines of the school. They share and work together in a variety of situations, such as when playing games or building models with large bricks. Strong emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and of what is right and wrong. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to be polite and kind to each other, and to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. They spontaneously clap the efforts of their classmates as they successfully answer questions and complete tasks. The sharing of assemblies and celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, provides high quality opportunities for children to appreciate the significance of belonging to a religious community and the importance of the Catholic ritual and celebrations.

Teaching

- 89 Teaching overall is satisfactory. During the inspection, all of the lessons observed were satisfactory and 30 per cent were good. Teaching is most effective during more formal teacher directed lessons, usually conducted as full-class lessons. Here, the teaching is effective in capturing children's attention and extending their learning, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills. Medium term plans provide an appropriate framework for learning covering the six areas of the curriculum. Relationships at the Foundation Stage are very positive, and contribute towards excellent behaviour by the children. Staff are calm, kind, sensitive and very caring. This ensures that children feel secure and are happy to leave their parents and carers at the beginning of the day. Praise and encouragement are used well to

promote children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is particularly effective in more formal situations, such as literacy and numeracy lessons, where activities are focused well on specific learning intentions and good adult questions and comments extend children's thinking. However, short-term plans do not always contain sufficient detail about what children need to learn in relationship to the stepping-stones. On-going learning activities, such as construction toys, sand, structured play, and craft activities, do not feature sufficiently prominently in the planning and, as a result, there are missed opportunities to extend learning through these important areas, and ensure children make the progress they are capable of in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Activities are sometimes too adult directed, and staff miss opportunities to extend learning through appropriate interaction in well planned, quality activities which children have chosen for themselves.

- 90 Baseline assessment is shared with parents and is used effectively to identify children's strengths and weaknesses. Staff maintain a useful tracking system, which records children's progress towards the early learning goals, in communication, language and literacy, and mathematics, but the arrangements for monitoring progress are not so well developed for the other areas of learning.

ENGLISH

- 91 By the age of seven, pupils attain standards which are well above the national expectation in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is consistent with the most recent national test results. Pupils at all levels of ability make very good progress in relation to their prior learning.
- 92 The overall standards attained by pupils aged eleven are in line with national expectations and consistent with the most recent national test results. However, standards in speaking and listening, and reading are above the national expectation and a significant minority of pupils exceed national expectations in writing. The school has identified writing as an area of relative weakness and is working hard to make improvements. The success of initiatives to raise standards is reflected in the performance of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, where standards in English are above those expected for pupils' age, and significantly better than those achieved in the current Year 6. Improved teaching, supported by the very successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, enables pupils to make good, and often very good, progress in lessons and contributes toward their good achievement in relation to prior attainment by the end of the key stage.
- 93 At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. They benefit greatly from the setting of work which is appropriately challenging and from the high quality support provided by class teachers, the specialist teacher and support staff.
- 94 In speaking and listening, pupils make very good progress at both key stages and achieve high standards. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to think carefully about their work and contribute ideas. They do this very successfully, expressing themselves clearly, and using interesting and grammatically accurate language. Speaking and listening skills make a positive contribution to the excellent behaviour and orderly running of the school, as pupils listen attentively to adults and follow instructions carefully to improve their work and behaviour. In assemblies, pupils listen reverently to music and story, joining in effectively when appropriate. In

lessons, pupils make good use of the many opportunities they have to express their ideas and opinions, confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously. They demonstrate an increasing capacity to engage adults and each other in conversations, which indicates a growing maturity. They listen with interest to the views of others, showing a respect for their contributions. By the age of seven the pupils are confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their work. This was evident, for example, when they acted out scenes from the life of Florence Nightingale. They expressed themselves clearly, and adapted their speech very effectively to represent the various characters and events. By the age of eleven, pupils talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts. This was apparent when older pupils contributed their views during a mock election and made good use of persuasive language to convince others about the merits of their point of view. Throughout the curriculum, a particularly strong feature of the learning is the pupils' ability to vary expression and vocabulary to engage the listener.

- 95 In reading, pupils make rapid progress at Key Stage 1 and build effectively on this very good start at Key Stage 2. This enables a substantial proportion of pupils to exceed the national expectations by the end of both key stages. The school provides a wide range of high quality and challenging books and texts to foster pupils' love of books, and develop their independent reading skills. Pupils are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes. As well as reading for enjoyment, they recognise the importance and value of reading in order to live a full and independent life. For example, they benefit from imaginative tasks such as reading a map, timetables, ordering on the Internet and reading a bank statement. As a result of a very literate environment, pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 are aware of authors and illustrators and are able to identify the main characters and events in their favourite books. Lower attaining pupils read simple stories with accuracy and understanding. An understanding of phonics, word families and spellings give them confidence in tackling unfamiliar words and this has a very positive effect on the progress they make in becoming fluent and confident readers. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read aloud with considerable confidence, adapting different voices for the characters in their stories and using an interesting 'story telling' voice which holds the attention of the person listening to their reading. Very high attaining pupils are already reading demanding texts, such as Harry Potter, and show an interest in other reading material, such as poetry and information books. Pupils take books home regularly and family members are encouraged to hear their children read in order to help improve further their progress in reading.
- 96 At Key Stage 2, reading standards are now moving well above those expected nationally. Books are very well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels, and pupils are fluent readers of a wide range of texts. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. Mature readers are encouraged to choose challenging books, such as 'The Diary of Anne Frank', and they show a very good understanding of the complex and emotional issues surrounding the events of the heroine's life. Pupils draw inferences from the text and empathise with their favourite characters. Lower attaining pupils use a variety of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. Pupils develop good independent research skills as they use dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias, CD ROMS and the Internet to extend their learning. They choose books because of particular interests or because they enjoy a particular author or genre. By the age of eleven, many pupils read challenging novels of their own choice, and discuss confidently the plot, characters and style of books.

- 97 In writing, pupils at Key Stage 1 make very good progress and attain standards which are well above national expectations. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils spell common words correctly and make very good attempts to spell more complex words. They write very interesting stories and accounts, observing the rules of punctuation accurately, and using full stops and capital letters appropriately. Higher attaining pupils use question marks, apostrophes, connectives and metaphors effectively to add interest to their stories. They write for a variety of purposes, such as imaginative letters from Persephone to her grandmother. Punctuation, adjectives and adverbs are chosen well to 'tug at Persephone's grandmother's heart strings'. Letters create a picture of fear and misery as she begs her Gran to fetch her home. Handwriting is almost always very neat and well formed, with pupils making good progress in learning how to join their letters and develop a legible style.
- 98 At Key Stage 2, pupils develop progressively their ability to write for different purposes and audiences, using a wide range of styles. The work of Year 4 pupils provides excellent examples of the high standards pupils across the school are now reaching, as the literacy hour impacts on the quality of teaching and learning. The pupils' accounts of their day out to Martin Mere brings the whole day alive for the reader. Imaginative vocabulary and well-ordered detail, interspersed with feelings and anticipation, paints an interesting account of the trip. "I knew it was going to be a good day," completes the account given by one pupil, leaving the reader feeling they have shared a wonderful day, to be remembered for a long time in the child's memory. Pupils extend their writing skills very effectively in other subjects, such as science. They use appropriate layout and vocabulary to enhance their work. They use their writing skills to plan experiments, record their analysis of data and write up their research. Creative writing is enhanced by the good use of grammar, such as metaphors, similes and well-chosen adverbs and adjectives. Poetry is given a high profile and pupils are having some of their work published by the World Wild Life Fund. Poems such as Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky' encourage pupils to explore the meaning of words and to experiment with language, using a wide range of interesting vocabulary and expressions to enhance their written work. Year 6 pupils use information technology very well as they send e-mails to pupils in other schools. They adapt the particular style appropriate for such letters, enhancing well their skills in modern technology and communication.
- 99 Teaching at both key stages is of a very good quality and sometimes it is outstanding. During the inspection, all of the lessons observed were at least good, over 70 per cent very good or better and 20 per cent excellent. Lessons are well planned and all the programmes of study are effectively covered. All teachers are confidently implementing the National Literacy Strategy, and the use of booster classes is having a very positive effect on achievement. Teaching is very carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Class and group targets provide a clear focus for learning, ensuring that pupils are very clear about what it is they are expected to achieve. Although the setting of targets for individual pupils to further enhance their progress is not yet in place, the school is well placed to introduce this arrangement. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used very effectively to check that pupils have understood the lesson, are ready to move on to the next stage of learning or need further help to reinforce their understanding. Speaking and listening is given a very high profile, and staff ensure that pupils are listened to carefully and encouraged to express their views. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority and pupils'

knowledge and understanding of basic skills are apparent in their extended writing across the curriculum. Imaginative and challenging opportunities for extended writing ensure that progress in this aspect of English is very good. Teachers use humour, praise, comments and questions effectively to motivate pupils, check understanding and extend thinking. Pupils confidently offer answers to teachers' questions, knowing that even if their answers are incorrect, the teacher will help them to discover for themselves the right answer. Pupils are constantly reminded of the strategies they need to improve their work such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation. When teaching is very good or outstanding, expectations are particularly high and the teacher's enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. In these lessons teaching is lively and exciting and mundane tasks such as the use of correct punctuation are made exciting and interesting. For example in Year 4, the use of poetry by Hilaire Belloc captured pupils' imagination, increased appreciation for poetry and developed well their understanding of how correct punctuation can greatly enhance written work. Such teaching moves pupils' learning on at a fast pace and encourages very positive attitudes to the subject.

- 100 Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and attainment, resulting in very good discipline and high standards. Teachers use a range of appropriate and high quality resources to support the teaching of literacy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and tasks are always very well matched to pupils' individual needs. Support staff are used very effectively to give additional help to designated individuals and groups of pupils. Their contribution greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the pupils. Throughout the school, very good class management promotes a very good response by pupils and excellent standards of behaviour. Pupils respond positively to their teachers' high expectations, and work very hard to improve their skills in reading and writing. Co-operation is encouraged and pupils work well with each other, exchanging ideas and negotiating roles. Pupils are very eager to learn, stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress and the standards of achievement.
- 101 Assessment and record keeping are very good. National Curriculum tests and other school tests are used very effectively to identify areas for school development. Teachers mark work on a regular basis, and their detailed comments help pupils to improve their work. Homework is set to extend work done in lessons and to check that pupils have fully understood new learning.
- 102 The curriculum now meets all of the statutory requirements. Since the last inspection, the school has been very successful in raising standards in English, and this is particularly reflected in the significantly better results now achieved by higher attaining pupils. Monitoring of lessons and planning has had a very good impact on the quality of the teaching and learning. All areas of weakness highlighted have been addressed with considerable rigour and enthusiasm.

MATHEMATICS

- 103 The standards achieved by pupils aged seven are well above those found nationally. The 11 year old pupils achieve standards which are above those found nationally. The great majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs make very good progress at Key Stage 1, and at least good progress at Key Stage 2. Standards at Key Stage 1 reflect the most recent national test results. At Key Stage 2, standards are better than the most recent national test results. This is due to the continuing positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is no significant variation in the pupils' performance in terms of gender.
- 104 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils count reliably and read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond with much skill and confidence. Brisk and lively mental work at the beginning of lessons helps the pupils to acquire very good skills in the recall of basic number facts. The teaching is particularly effective in helping the pupils to develop a range of strategies for solving problems. The pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of number patterns and sequences. They are quick to recognise sequences, including odd and even numbers. By Year 2, most of the pupils have a very good grasp of the number system. They can understand and use the vocabulary of comparing and ordering numbers to 100 and beyond. They recognise that the position of a digit signifies its value, and their understanding of place value is very well developed. The very good quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 effectively underpins the pupils' progress. The work is very well planned so that it builds effectively on the pupils' prior learning.
- 105 By Year 6, the pupils demonstrate an increasing grasp of the extension of the number system. This is reflected in their understanding of negative numbers and in their knowledge of the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages. At both key stages, the pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities they are given for mental work, where they often demonstrate their growing capacity to use their skills in a variety of situations. For example, in a Year 4 class, engaged in solving fraction problems, they were able to find quickly a hundredth of 5,200 using their knowledge of division by 100.
- 106 Throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils' accuracy in calculating using the four rules is of a good standard. They have rapid recall of essential facts and can apply their increasing skills with much accuracy. Some of the oldest pupils are beginning to understand the nature of equations. They understand the use of brackets to determine the order of operations and they understand why the commutative, associative and distributive laws apply to addition and multiplication and how this knowledge can be used to calculate more efficiently.
- 107 In all classes, the pupils benefit greatly from a variety of well planned activities which supports effectively the work related to shape, space and measures. The teaching introduces the pupils to precise mathematical language, which the pupils use effectively in the course of their work. The younger pupils use accurate mathematical vocabulary when describing some of the properties of three and two dimensional regular shapes. Older pupils show increasing confidence and proficiency using a range of measures. They know how to measure angles to the nearest degree and, in calculations, they understand how to find the size of the third angle of a triangle when only two angles are known. By Year 6, the pupils have a good grasp of work related to finding perimeters, areas and volume using appropriate formulae.

- 108 At Key Stage 2, the pupils are introduced to handling data. They make good progress collecting information, recording their results and interpreting their findings. They benefit greatly from the very good quality of the teaching which helps them to understand and use an appropriate range of graphs, charts, diagrams and frequency tables. The Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of measures of average. For example, in work related to their test results, the teaching introduced the pupils to relevant mathematical language which they used appropriately to find the mode, median, mean and range of the test results.
- 109 Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress using and applying their mathematical skills in a variety of appropriate situations. The pupils organise their work effectively and present their findings in a clear and well ordered manner. The standard of their presentation is always of a high order. The pupils benefit from planned experiences in other areas of the curriculum to develop and use their mathematical expertise. For example, in Year 1, they used a Venn diagram to classify some characteristics of various animals. In a Year 2 class, they demonstrated increasingly accurate measurement skills when recording science work on growing beans. In another class, Year 3 pupils measured the temperature in science work. They showed increasing skills reading the calibrations on the Celsius scale.
- 110 The work in mathematics is well supported by the use of relevant computer work. This is a good feature in all classes, with programmes very well chosen to reinforce and extend the pupils' mathematical skills.
- 111 Throughout the school the quality of the teaching is very good and often of a high calibre. The teaching is always very well planned and the work is matched carefully to the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Much thought and preparation is evident in all lessons and the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented effectively. The pupils particularly enjoy the mental starters and respond keenly to the well planned content evident in all lessons. The quality of class control and management is of a high order and the pupils respond with behaviour which is excellent, so that no time is lost and lessons have very good pace and purpose. Teachers' high level of subject knowledge and expertise allow them to support pupils' learning very well. This is often reflected in the high quality of questioning which probes pupils' thinking and extends their understanding. Lesson objectives are shared with the class and evaluated during final plenary sessions. The results are used appropriately to plan further learning and to help the pupils to build progressively upon their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject. Classroom assistants and volunteer helpers provide valuable support in most classes. They make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and progress particularly those who have special educational needs.
- 112 The school is particularly successful in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, which has played a highly significant part in raising standards of numeracy since the last inspection. Since then the proportion of the pupils reaching Level 5 has increased. In addition, the quality of teaching has also improved significantly and much better use is made of assessments to plan future work. The subject is very well co-ordinated. Test results are analysed effectively and teaching is monitored carefully. The subject makes an important contribution to the school's aims. Mathematics is well resourced and the work is allocated an appropriate

amount of time. The content of the work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

- 113 By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment is generally above the national expectations, and some of the older pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected for their age. Pupils at all ages and levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. Throughout the school all pupils make particularly rapid progress in developing their scientific enquiry skills and, at Key Stage 2, they achieve very high standards in this aspect of the subject.
- 114 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have developed a good fund of knowledge and understanding through a good range of carefully structured tasks within a topic approach. They know how to construct a simple electrical circuit and are able to represent this in a correctly labelled drawing. They are able to make observations of how common materials change when heated, and represent their findings in a scientific way. They can classify plants and animals according to observable characteristics and make good use of the school's wildlife garden for this purpose. A good range of investigations, such as finding out about what seeds need to grow or which materials will be best for insulating sounds, serves very well to develop the pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. They know how to make their tests fair and they are able to draw simple conclusions from the observations they make. In a lesson on classification of familiar items as 'alive,' 'dead' or 'never alive' they showed high levels of reasoning as they decided which category was appropriate for each object.
- 115 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have developed very good levels of knowledge and understanding across the full range of the subject. Their scientific understanding is clearly conveyed in drawings, diagrams, charts and tables and, when given the opportunity, they are able to convert their data into graphs and draw accurate conclusions. They can represent different electrical circuits in diagrams, using the correct symbols to represent each component. They have a good understanding of the interrelationship between predator and prey, and can represent this in food chains, using the correct scientific conventions. They have a very good understanding of physical processes and can describe with accuracy the forces acting in different situations, using the correct scientific vocabulary. Throughout Key Stage 2 the pupils are developing very good scientific enquiry skills through a good range of practical investigations, such as how to separate salt and sand, the effects of different substances on teeth and whether two eyes see better than one. The pupils are very good at recording data systematically in charts and tables. They make accurate use of a variety of appropriate instruments, such as stopwatches and force meters, to measure variables and collect the data they need. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the pupils showed high levels of independent scientific enquiry in their investigation of the forces affecting paper helicopters. They were able to plan their investigations, identify the variable factors involved, measure the rate of drop and record their data in tables they devised themselves. Throughout the key stage pupils are good at explaining their results from the data they have obtained and giving reasoned hypotheses for why they think things happen as they do.

- 116 Due to the school's timetabling arrangements it was not possible to see science being taught in Years 4 and 6 but, in the lessons seen elsewhere, the teaching was consistently good and sometimes very good. All the teachers seen during the inspection have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and they plan for them to have maximum opportunities to be involved in practical science learning. This is a significant factor in the high levels of interest and understanding shown by the pupils and the quality of their learning in science. The lessons are very well organised and prepared so that pupils of all levels of attainment are given the appropriate levels of challenge in the tasks set. This ensures that the pupils are actively involved in purposeful learning at all times and contributes to the very good progress made in lessons. The teaching strategies employed by the teachers create a climate that is highly conducive to learning. They value the contributions made by their pupils and are very skilful at using pupils' answers and observations to develop their learning. As a result of this the pupils show high levels of confidence in expressing their ideas and in explaining why they think things happen as they do in their investigations. The good relationships within the classes help to maintain the excellent levels of behaviour that play a significant part in promoting the very good progress made by pupils in their science learning.
- 117 The subject is well managed and the scheme of work provides a secure basis for meeting the subject requirements. Since the last inspection standards have continued to improve and there is now a strong emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry skills. Effective systems are in place for monitoring the teachers' planning in order to identify any strengths or gaps in subject provision. Analysis of the Year 6 test results enables the school to monitor successfully how well it is meeting the needs of its pupils and to inform decisions about the resources needed for the subject. The teachers' own systems for assessing how well pupils are doing in lessons are effective in deciding the next learning steps. However, more needs to be done to achieve an effective whole school system for recording the progress of individual pupils as they move through the key stages. The subject is well resourced and the school makes good use of external resources, such as Martin Mere, to enrich the pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 118 At the end of both key stages, standards in art are above the national expectation and higher than at the time of the last inspection. During their time in the school, the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- 119 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons in design and technology. However, the examination of work completed by pupils during the year indicates that standards, at both key stages, are at least in line with the national expectations and the standards at the time of the last inspection. Some of the work produced at Key Stage 1 is of high quality. Pupils, at both key stages make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 120 In art and design, pupils at Key Stage 1 respond to and explore ideas enthusiastically. They use a variety of materials very effectively to design and make their own illustrations and models. They use paint confidently to paint pictures and make prints of a high standard. Careful preparation by their teachers, who draw well on ideas from other

cultures, provides pupils with a rich variety of stimuli. Pupils respond with a high level of interest, and draw very well on such ideas to produce highly imaginative work. In Year 2, for example, pupils investigating patterns examined Hindu work from the Indian culture. They produced some striking designs of their own, based on those which they had examined. The shapes were well formed and bold, and colours were combined very effectively.

- 121 At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to benefit from a rich variety of experiences and make consistently good progress. The regular use of a sketch-book is a good feature, which enables pupils to collect visual information to help them in their work. They produce good quality direct observational drawings. This was apparent in Year 4, for example, when pupils produced detailed drawings of split fruit. As at Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of art from other cultures. In one lesson inspired by such examples, pupils produced some intricate designs for their own jewellery. Pupils also make good use of the ideas and techniques of famous artists from their own and other cultures. This was apparent, for example, in Year 5 when pupils based their work on the style of William Morris to produce responses of a good quality. By the end of the key stage, pupils manipulate materials confidently to make images and artefacts. This was evident when pupils in Year 6 made very good use of ideas, gathered over a period of time, and selected imaginatively from a wide range of materials, to design and make different types of headware and masks. They commented on the methods they had used and explained constructively how they might have improved their work.
- 122 In design and technology, pupils make steady progress in extending their skills in designing and making a product and evaluating what they have produced. A very good feature at Key Stage 1, is the effective use made of simple techniques for creating movement. In Year 1, for example, pupils used a simple lever technique, to produce a picture with a moving part. Pupils in Year 2 produced good quality hand puppets. In both projects, pupils set out their designs carefully and took time to evaluate their final product. Some of the work produced by older Key Stage 1 pupils, during the year, is of a high standard. For example, the construction of a model removal van, using dowel rods for axles, had required accurate measurement and very good cutting skills. The pupils had used good finishing techniques to produce a product of high quality.
- 123 Pupils at Key Stage 2, build very effectively on this good start. They begin to take account of user preferences and recognise that their products need to meet a range of different needs. They take these requirements into account, for example, when completing projects to design and make a money container, plan design and make a sandwich, and make simple musical instruments. By the end of the key stage pupils produce detailed, clearly labelled plans of their intentions, and show an ability to reflect on their designs and make changes as difficulties arise.
- 124 The teaching of art is of high quality at both key stages, promoting consistently good progress by pupils and high standards. Very careful planning and preparation of lessons, which provide pupils with a rich variety of stimuli, are strong features in the teaching.

- 125 The teaching of design and technology is good, and often very good. It achieves a good balance between designing, planning, making and evaluating and gives pupils access to a wide range of materials.
- 126 In both subjects, class management is a very strong feature, which promotes an excellent response by pupils and contributes towards their outstanding behaviour. The very effective co-operation between class teachers and support staff results in a good level of intervention in the work of pupils, and this has a particularly positive effect on the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- 127 Both subjects are co-ordinated very effectively, and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully. The needs of all pupils, irrespective of gender, background or ability are met very effectively.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 128 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe history at Key Stage 2. However, scrutiny of the work produced previously by the pupils, both in their books and on display around the school, discussion with pupils and the evidence from the sample of lessons seen at both key stages indicate that the standards in history and geography are broadly in line with the national expectations at the end of both key stages. During their time in the school, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress in the development of their history and geography study skills.
- 129 In history, by the age of seven, the pupils show a good understanding of the distinction between past and present. This was evident, for example, in their studies of Florence Nightingale when they compared children's lives in Victorian times with their own lives. They were adept at identifying similarities and differences, for example in education and in people's working lives. The pupils use appropriate language relating to the passing of time and can allocate pictures and events in the correct chronological order. They know some of the ways in which they can find out about the past and use, very competently, a range of sources of information, such as photographs, books, artefacts and computers for this purpose. In a visit to Preston museum, the pupils gained very good levels of factual knowledge about what it was like to live 100 years ago. They dressed appropriately in clothes of the time and experienced at first hand a typical schoolroom and a washing day.
- 130 By the age of eleven, the pupils have widened their fund of historical knowledge, to embrace the more distant past. Their history study skills are developed to a satisfactory level through an appropriate balance of activities. A visit to Astley Hall gave pupils in Year 3 good quality opportunities to learn about how people lived in Tudor times. For example, they discovered what it was like to write with a quill pen and how to seal letters with wax. As a result of this visit they made good gains in knowledge about different aspects of Tudor life and recognised the contrast with the present day. In Year 4, the pupils gained good levels of understanding about some aspects of Roman Britain when they were given the opportunity to dress in Celtic and Roman costumes, play Roman games and make their own Roman jewellery. Class based lessons are firmly grounded in the further development of history study skills and, by Year 6, the pupils are able to explain the difference between fact and

opinion and discuss the reliability of different sources of historical information. Some work in Year 6 made good use of contemporary documents to study the work of local people and the child mortality rate in Victorian times.

- 131 In geography, by the age of seven, the pupils can identify some physical and human features in the environment and can represent these in simple drawings and plans. Pupils in Year 2 were successful in producing their own aerial views of a seaside location, showing human and physical features with reasonable accuracy. They can make informed comparisons between Blackpool and their own locality, for example by giving reasons why Blackpool has more hotels than Chorley and why some shops may be different.
- 132 By the age of eleven, the pupils have had experience of a suitable range of maps in different scales. They know how to use grid references and keys to locate features on a map and can name some countries and continents on a world map. Through their studies of localities further afield, such as in Pakistan and the Orkneys, they are developing a basic awareness of contrasting climate, land use and lifestyle. Fieldwork opportunities in Years 4 and 6 offer good opportunities for pupils to develop their geography study skills. A visit to a local area helped Year 4 pupils to develop a sound awareness of the effects of human activity on the landscape. They were able to express their own views on environmental pollution and how this might be remedied. In a visit to Hothersall Lodge the pupils in Year 6 were able to apply their geography fieldwork skills very well in a detailed study of the width, depth and speed of flow of a river.
- 133 In the lessons seen the teaching was good in both subjects. Lessons are carefully planned and well matched to the abilities and interests of the pupils. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils in terms of both behaviour and application to task, and manage the lessons very well. The visit to the local area was particularly well organised and the pupils were well briefed about the purpose of the visit so that the lesson could be successful in achieving its objectives. The subjects are managed well overall and the recent adoption of the national schemes of work provides a secure basis for both subjects. Since the last inspection, staff development initiatives in history, and better provision for higher ability pupils, have had a beneficial impact, and the level of challenge within lessons is usually appropriate. However, the school has yet to develop a system for monitoring and recording the progress of individual pupils in history and geography. Both subjects are adequately resourced and the enriching use of external visits and resources makes a strong contribution to the progress made by the pupils, particularly in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 134 By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1, standards are at least in line with the national expectation, and they are above in some aspects of communicating and handling information. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
- 135 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are generally above the national expectations, and the great majority of pupils make consistently good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

- 136 The programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the strong emphasis placed on creating opportunities in other subjects for pupils to extend their skills in ICT is a very good feature in the school.
- 137 The youngest pupils quickly develop confidence in using the mouse to control a screen image. As they progress, they confidently access colours and shapes to produce good quality designs. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate good skills in using the keyboard to produce simple text, and in amending the text by deleting a mistake, making a space, or changing to capitals or lower case letters as required. Year 2 pupils demonstrate a good grasp of these skills when they engage in tasks linked to their work in English, for example, to write a set of instructions for making a cup of tea or to write a letter to Santa. During the course of the year, pupils at Key Stage 1 extend significantly their skills in handling information. They use ICT very effectively to present information, gathered during class surveys, in different graphical forms. In addition, they extend considerably their understanding of control technology, and are able to enter a set of instructions to programme a robotic toy to travel certain distances and change direction. By the time they reach the age of seven, pupils make very good use of their ICT skills to search for information on CD-Roms and the Internet, and many of them work at standards which are above the national expectation. This was evident when pupils in Year 2 looked for information about health conditions, as part of their work in science. They were helped considerably by their very good literacy skills, which enabled them to follow guidance presented on the screen and enter key words accurately, as they searched for the required information.
- 138 At Key Stage 2, pupils build very effectively on the good start provided at Key Stage 1, and benefit greatly from regularly timetabled lessons in the computer suite. From an early stage, they work at levels which are above those expected for their age. By the time they reach Year 4, pupils confidently adjust the size, style and colour of the fonts they select to suit the requirement of particular tasks, and confidently incorporate illustrations to complement the text. As they progress, they show increasing competence in editing and refining their work, and are able to highlight and move parts of the text to re-structure their writing. Pupils, at Key Stage 2, make very good progress in handling information. They recognise the need for care and accuracy when searching for information, using the CD-Rom or the internet, and make very good use of their time in the computer suite. This was evident when Year 5 pupils searched for information on the Internet. They accessed the information provided below the title of the web-site, to gain an impression of content, in order to avoid wasting time looking for information which might not be available to them. The ability of older pupils to make effective use of spreadsheets to support their studies is a good feature in their learning. In Year 6, for example, pupils used spreadsheets confidently to help them to plan and present proposals as to how they would spend a particular sum of money to improve the junior playground. In control technology, pupils extend their skills through the use of "Logo". They are able to enter a set of instructions accurately to programme a screen image to draw a variety of geometrical shapes.
- 139 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use ICT to structure, refine and present information in different forms and styles for specific purposes. They exchange information with others in various ways, including the use of e-mail. Their ability to make imaginative use of a wide range of ICT facilities, incorporating text, pictures and sound, to make presentations about particular topics, is a strong feature in their learning, which has been considerably enhanced by the recent purchase of particularly sophisticated ICT software.

- 140 The quality of teaching is good, and often very good, at both key stages. Regular use of ICT facilities in the computer suite and classrooms, at both key stages, is contributing significantly towards the very good progress which pupils are making in extending their ICT skills. During these lessons, the work is pitched at a level which indicates their teachers' high expectations of them. Pupils respond positively to challenging work and show confidence in learning through trial and error. At both key stages, clear explanation and good questioning skills by teachers help to stimulate interest. Pupils concentrate well and are able to apply effectively the guidance provided by their teachers. This helps them to make good use of any opportunities to have access to computers. Class management is very good in all lessons, and this promotes excellent behaviour and a high level of productivity by the pupils. The practice of sharing clear objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, gives them a good self-knowledge of their own learning and contributes towards their consistently good progress. The high level of expertise demonstrated by a number of staff, is an important factor in promoting high standards. At both key stages, teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, background or ability, have access to all aspects of the work in ICT and are extended by their learning experiences.
- 141 The work in ICT is co-ordinated very effectively. This is an important factor in the good rate of improvement since the last inspection. It is reflected in the significantly better standards now achieved by pupils at both key stages.

MUSIC

- 142 The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and 11 are in line with those expected nationally. The vast majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. This represents a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection.
- 143 The younger pupils, at Key Stage 1, sing tunefully. They use their voices expressively when singing songs and hymns. They sing clearly and are able to sustain a steady pulse. By Year 2, the pupils make increasing gains in their learning through their developing composition skills. For example, in one class, they were able to create their own graphic score which they could interpret successfully using a range of percussion instruments. The teaching is effective in helping the pupils to hold and play their instruments with increasing control and skill.
- 144 At Key Stage 2, the teaching helps the pupils to build progressively upon their earlier skills. They sing with increasing maturity. They are taught to breathe appropriately so that their singing has shape, is well pitched and has clear diction. Some of the singing in assemblies has a sense of calm and serene spirituality, especially when they sing in two parts. By Year 6, the pupils make progress in playing tuned percussion instruments, especially when they contribute to school productions. A number of pupils gain increasing skills playing the recorder, using effectively their growing understanding of staff notation.
- 145 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In all classes the pupils are well managed and they respond to lessons with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Their behaviour is always of a high calibre. However, at Key Stage 2, although the teachers try to integrate elements such as performing, composing and appraising into their lessons, the short length of some of these lessons provides too little time for the pupils to create and develop musical ideas.

- 146 Music makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly through the use of singing during school assemblies. The subject is well co-ordinated and enables the pupils to take a full part in the work, apart from the lessons which are too short for the development of composition. The work in music makes a good contribution towards the aims of the school and the content meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 147 Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the national expectations and similar to those apparent in the last inspection. At both key stages, pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during their time in the school.
- 148 In games, pupils at both key stages develop good skills through practice. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils made very good use of their time to improve their skills in catching and throwing a small ball. They made good use of space on the playground, and worked sensibly as individuals, before working in pairs and then in threes to improve their skills. Their progress was helped by perceptive intervention by the teacher to point out ways in which they could make improvements. As pupils progress, they apply their skills effectively in competitive situations, and the skills of many older pupils benefit considerably from their participation in extra-curricular activities. Boys and girls take part in after-school clubs in soccer, cricket, rounders and skittle-ball. They benefit particularly from opportunities to compete against other schools, in leagues and tournaments, in all of these sports.
- 149 In athletics, older pupils make steady progress in extending their skills in various aspects of the sport. During a lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils co-operated very well in pairs and small groups to practise their skills in jumping. They investigated effectively how to increase performance by altering technique, and explored the merits of different types of jumps, such as a standing jump and a combination of jumps, in order to increase distance.
- 150 In swimming, nearly all pupils are able to complete at least 25 metres unaided, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6, and a significant number are performing at a higher level. In outdoor and adventurous activities, the progress of older pupils is considerably enhanced through residential visits to Hothersall Lodge, where they are introduced to the basic principles of rock climbing, hill walking, orienteering and river walking.
- 151 The programme of work in physical education also includes dance and gymnastics at both key stages. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons in these elements of the subject.
- 152 The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good. The lessons were well thought out and achieved a good balance between teacher direction and purposeful activities. The lessons observed indicate that teaching is particularly effective in challenging the pupils to think about ways of improving the quality of their performance, and that pupils respond positively. As in other subjects, very good class management and sensible intervention by teachers in the work of individuals are strong features in the teaching, promoting hard work by the pupils and encouraging them to make good use of the time available to practise their skills. Teachers successfully

ensure that all pupils have access to all aspects of the subject, irrespective of gender, ability or background.

- 153 Pupils, at both key stages, derive great enjoyment from their work in physical education, and respond enthusiastically in all lessons. Younger pupils change into appropriate dress quickly and without fuss and move sensibly through the school to the hall and playgrounds. Older pupils take a pride in their performance and show a strong desire to improve the quality of their performance. Behaviour is consistently of a very good standard at both key stages.