

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLY CROSS R.C V.A PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 109244

Headteacher: Mrs E Jeffery

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Ellis  
20980

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 June 2000

Inspection number: 190787

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 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dean Lane  
Bedminster  
Bristol

Postcode: BS3 1DB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Yardley

Date of previous inspection: 02/12/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs S Ellis	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Art Special Educational Needs	The school's results and achievements How well the pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
Mr M Whitaker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mr J Collier	Team inspector	Science Music History Geography English as an additional language	How well the school cares for its pupils
Mrs C Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equality of opportunity	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

The inspection contractor was:

South West Education Services, 4 Wordsworth Close, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 5SQ.

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

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holy Cross is an average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic School for boys and girls aged 4-11. It has 204 pupils, two of whom have English as an additional language. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity but a significant number come from further afield to attend this Catholic school. Pupils' attainment on entry covers a very wide span but, taken together, is typical of that found nationally. Twenty-one percent of pupils have special educational needs and twelve percent come from minority ethnic backgrounds. These figures are similar to the national average.

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

Holy Cross is an effective school which helps pupils to reach the standards they should by the age of seven and by the time they leave the school in mathematics and science. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and about one third is good, mainly in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. The headteacher and governors strive to improve the school but have been hindered in Key Stage 2 by uncertainties about staffing. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Children get a good start to their education in Reception where the teaching is good
- National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were very high in 1999 in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools
- Results at Key Stage 1 have improved this year so that almost all children are at the nationally expected levels and some have done even better
- The school is a welcoming and friendly community which has the well-being of children very much at heart
- Personal targets are set for all pupils to show them and their parents what they need to do to improve
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future and is well supported by the governors in managing and planning improvements

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

- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 and the rate at which pupils learn in these classes
- Standards in English at Key Stage 2, particularly writing
- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology
- The depth in which subjects are taught and the richness of the curriculum
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When it was last inspected in December 1996 there were significant weaknesses in Reception and Key Stage 1. This is no longer the case. Many improvements have been made and standards have risen. This has been achieved by the appointment of a new team of staff who work well together to improve the quality of education. Standards have also been rising at the end of Key Stage 2 but there is a significant backlog of underachievement. The pupils who missed their chance to have a good start to their education in Key Stage 1 are now in Key Stage 2 and those in Years 3 and 4 have not yet caught up. Most of the other action points from the last inspection have been dealt with except that there are still shortcomings in the curriculum. Governors' information for parents does not yet meet statutory requirements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	D	C
Mathematics	C	A	C	A
Science	E	A	C	A

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

Standards in mathematics, reading and writing achieved by pupils in Key Stage 1 have not improved over three years but this year's work indicates a marked difference. Seven year olds are on target to reach the expected levels and many are doing even better. Results at Key Stage 2 have improved in English and science. Results are very high in mathematics and science when compared with schools similar to Holy Cross. Boys do slightly better than girls which is the opposite to the national picture mainly because the school has targeted boys' achievement over the past two years. The trend for improvement in all three subjects was broadly in line with that found nationally. The work seen this year indicates that most pupils in Key Stage 2 are reaching the expected level in mathematics and science but much of the work in pupils' books is of poor quality and does not truly reflect pupils' achievements. Standards in English, particularly in writing, are not high enough although the school is on course to exceed its targets for improvement. Throughout the school pupils' achievements in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory. There are too few children with English as an additional language to make a judgement on their achievements. Those pupils with statements of special educational needs make sound progress but others do not make fast enough progress to help them overcome their difficulties.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The youngest pupils are eager to come to school and enjoy their learning. As they get older many pupils lose interest and do not give of their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons and mix well on the playground but a significant number cause disturbance in some classes and prevent others from learning.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory relationships but pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. Too few use their initiative, develop self-discipline or consider the consequences of their behaviour.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

In Reception pupils develop a positive attitude to school, they learn to work hard and to make decisions for themselves. This good start is not built upon successfully as they get older. In some lessons behaviour deteriorates. Some pupils have difficulty keeping to the school rules and need constant reminders in lessons. They take little pride in their work and see no reason to make an effort.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Of the 48 lessons seen 92 percent were satisfactory or better, 27 percent were good and two percent were very good. Eight percent were unsatisfactory. Children in Reception are consistently well taught. In Key Stage 1 teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make sound progress. Throughout the school teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory but there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise reading, writing and number skills in other subjects. Teachers work hard to maintain discipline in lessons. The temporary teachers in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to turn the tide of underachievement from Key Stage 1 but this will take time to redress. Evidence from pupils' work indicates many weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2. These stem mainly from low expectations. Much of the work is mundane and teachers are not ambitious enough in what they expect pupils to achieve in lessons. As a result the pace of learning is too slow at Key Stage 2. The work is often not well suited to the needs of all pupils in the class. Too little importance is placed on producing neat and accurate work. Marking is not well used to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the foundation stage in Reception but unsatisfactory elsewhere because information and communications technology is not fully taught. At Key Stage 2 subjects are not planned carefully enough to help pupils build on their learning step by step and subjects are not covered in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support staff play an invaluable role in helping these pupils, especially those with statements of special educational needs. Appropriate procedures are in place but they are not implemented consistently. There is too little information about individual strengths and weaknesses to tailor work specifically for them. Targets are not sharply focused or checked often enough to measure success.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Insufficient evidence available on the very few pupils in school on which to make a judgement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Unsatisfactory for personal and social development at Key Stage 2. There are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to use their initiative, to make decisions about their learning or to work as groups.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows and cares for its pupils well. It has many ways to help them improve their behaviour and attendance and sets targets for pupils to meet.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school tries to involve parents in the education of their children but does not always succeed. Often the response to invitations to visit school is poor, especially in Key Stage 2.

The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils. It is a welcoming and friendly

community where pupils feel at ease. The curriculum for the foundation stage in Reception is well suited to the needs of young children. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the provision for information and communications technology does not meet requirements. At Key Stage 2 the curriculum is unduly narrow. There is not enough variety to keep pupils interested. Pupils do not build on their learning progressively as they move through the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is determined to raise standards. The developments at Key Stage 1 have been well managed but uncertainties about staffing have hampered improvements in Key Stage 2.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to the work of the school and support the headteacher well. The Chair devotes much time and energy to ensuring that the governors fulfil their role. Information provided for parents does not meet statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher keeps a close eye on test results and takes steps to put right any shortcomings. The school compares itself regularly against similar schools and with other local Catholic schools. Test results are used to predict how well pupils should do in the future.
The strategic use of resources	The school spends its money wisely but does not do enough to check whether the purchases have been useful or have made a difference to pupils' learning.

There is an adequate number of teachers and support staff but there are on-going difficulties in recruiting suitably skilled temporary teachers to cover long-term absences. There are too few resources in some subjects, including a shortage of non-fiction books, few materials for teaching pupils with special educational needs and shortfalls in information and communications technology equipment. The school is suitably accommodated with adequate space.

The headteacher and Chair of Governors work well together to secure school improvements. They have a clear insight into the school's performance compared to others and take action to address shortcomings. The Chair keeps a very close check on finances. The school considers the principles of best value when making spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interesting range of activities</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> </ul>

The team agrees with parents' views except that the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to become mature and to develop good work habits. Some parents expressed concern about bullying but the inspection team found no evidence to substantiate their concerns.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the end of their year in Reception, when children come to the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all are on course to achieve the goals expected of them. They are well equipped to start the early levels of the National Curriculum. Children make good progress throughout in Reception and many achieve more than could be reasonably expected. This is particularly evident in the areas of personal and social development and language and literacy where a significant minority of children start from a low base but catch up by the end of the year.
2. By the age of seven, over the past two years, standards in reading and writing have not been high enough. In national tests results in reading in 1999 were well below the national average and pupils did only slightly better in writing. Standards in reading were below those attained in similar schools whilst those in writing were about the same. There has been no improvement over three years. In mathematics, standards were in line with the national average and better than those attained in similar schools, but there has not been a consistent trend of improvement over the last three years. The results of teacher assessments in science in 1999 fell below the national average. However, the work seen this year in all three subjects indicates a marked improvement with almost all the pupils achieving the expected level whilst many are exceeding it. These improvements stem from the appointment of a new Key Stage 1 team coupled with the improved provision in the early years. The current class of Year 2 pupils is the first to have benefited from a good start in Reception. At both key stages boys do slightly better than girls in all core subjects, an opposite picture to that found nationally. There is no evidence to explain this unusual trend other than that the school particularly targeted boys' achievement in writing in 1998.
3. When compared to other schools nationally, standards in 1999 in mathematics and science were average by the age of 11. These results compare very well with those achieved by similar schools. Standards in English fell below the national average but were in line with those achieved in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected level in English was high compared to the national picture, whilst for mathematics and science it was close to the national average. Results have fluctuated over the past three years but the overall trend for improvement has been similar to the national picture. The work seen this year indicates that most pupils are achieving the expected levels in mathematics and science and a few are exceeding it. Standards in English are not high enough, particularly in writing, although the school is on course to meet its target for this year's end of Key Stage 2 tests. The target for mathematics is also expected to be achieved. Much of pupils' written and recorded work in all three core subjects is of poor quality and does not truly reflect the pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Years 3 and 4 there is a legacy of low standards from Key Stage 1. The appointment of two temporary teachers is already beginning to make a difference and there is a marked improvement in the quality of work in pupils' books since their appointment, particularly in Year 3. However, the backlog of underachievement will take time to redress.
4. Achievements in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1 are adequate for work in other subjects. Pupils use their reading and writing skills effectively to help them learn in other subjects. However, the picture is different at Key Stage 2 where achievement in literacy is not good enough. There is too little evidence of written work in other subjects, such as history and geography, to provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise and

improve their skills. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not reading fluently; they struggle to sound out unfamiliar words and this impairs the understanding of what they have read. Older pupils read a range of popular modern authors with increasing accuracy but few enjoy long established fiction or appreciate a wide range of literature. Weaknesses in written work are mainly due to inaccurate spelling, errors in punctuation and a lack of fluent handwriting. In one Year 5 history lesson pupils struggled to write a few lines of a chimney sweep's diary. Similarly, pupils are not sufficiently adept at handling numbers quickly and accurately. Many pupils in Year 6 lack confidence in calculating multiples and cannot easily recognise whether or not their answers might be reasonable. Pupils do not use numeracy skills enough to help them learn in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, pupils did not consider using measurements to make a scaled-down plan of building construction equipment.

5. Throughout the school standards in information and communications technology are below the expected level and pupils do not do as well as they should. By seven pupils can control the mouse to operate simple programs but are unfamiliar with using the keyboard for wordprocessing. They are unable to convert lower case letters to upper case, for example. By the age of 11 pupils continue to have limited skills. There are few opportunities for pupils to use computers regularly and insufficient equipment to meet all the demands of the National Curriculum.
6. In Key Stage 1 most pupils are achieving as well as they should in all other subjects of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient evidence to report on pupils' achievements in music throughout the school other than singing which has improved since the last inspection. For other subjects the picture is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection although attainment in art has now improved. By the age of seven the level of work seen in art, history, geography, design and technology and physical education is typical of that found in most schools. Higher attaining pupils are pushed to achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Those with special educational needs are effectively helped by support staff to achieve the tasks set for lower attaining pupils and some receive regular, carefully structured teaching to help them make the progress necessary to overcome their difficulties.
7. At Key Stage 2 pupils are not doing as well as expected and do not make the progress they should. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with specific reading and spelling difficulties, struggle to keep up with much of the work. Consequently, they lose interest and so lag further behind. By 11 achievement in all non-core subjects is not at the expected levels, with physical education being the exception. This represents a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection although standards in history have declined. Too little work is undertaken in history and geography to enable pupils to cover the subjects in sufficient depth and pupils are hampered by their difficulties in literacy. The presentation of work in pupils' books is unsatisfactory. In art pupils do not build on their skills as they move through the school so that, although there is some evidence of good quality work, skills are not taught systematically to enable pupils to do as well as expected. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are limited and they have not experienced developing skills using a range of materials. In Year 3 pupils had real difficulties evaluating the design of picture frames. In Year 4 pupils were attempting to make a picture frame using cardboard whereas pupils in Year 2 have already made them out of wood. Significant gaps in Year 6 pupils' understanding of moving parts and fixing techniques prevented them from producing realistic designs.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to school, overall, are satisfactory. Pupils arrive at school happily and

are keen to get on with the day's work. In lessons, younger pupils are full of enthusiasm. Children in Reception making clay models of fish, for example, were delighted to show their models to staff, full of pride in the finished product. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils were keen to demonstrate their skills to the rest of the class. Less positive attitudes prevail in some Key Stage 2 classes particularly where the tasks set are mundane or ill-matched to suit pupils' needs. In these situations pupils of all abilities acquiesce in their learning rather than positively involving themselves in it. Some pupils, of all ability ranges and backgrounds, become restless and inattentive leading to unsatisfactory learning. They have not yet acquired good work habits in terms of perseverance, effort and pride in their work. The previous inspection report observed a similar picture, but in reverse - then the less satisfactory attitudes were found in the Key Stage 1 classes.

9. Behaviour is generally satisfactory, a judgement which broadly reflects the findings of the last report. There have been two fixed-term exclusions during the preceding year. Children joining the Reception class are quickly and effectively introduced to the school rules and code of behaviour. Throughout Key Stage 1, behaviour is generally good. Pupils work well individually and in groups. Good behaviour is praised and rewarded with class or table points and misdemeanours are dealt with firmly and consistently. In Key Stage 2 classes, learning is impeded by inappropriate behaviour on the part of a minority of disaffected pupils. Twenty-nine percent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concern regarding behaviour and concerns were voiced at the parents' meeting about bullying. Although behaviour in the playground is boisterous and there is regular 'rough and tumble' play, there is no evidence of aggression or threatening behaviour towards any group of pupils. Pupils of both sexes, all races and all ability groups play together. At lunch, pupils eat together sociably and with reasonably good manners. Pupils comply readily with the instructions of mealtime supervisors. Pupils are friendly, welcoming and polite to visitors, ready to fetch a chair or hold a door open. School buildings and resources, for the most part, are treated sensibly and with consideration.
10. Relationships between pupils, particularly younger pupils, are positive. In Reception, pupils' personal and social development is good. In Key Stage 1 pupils co-operate in lessons and readily acknowledge each other's good efforts - sharing poems in a Year 1 literacy lesson for example - with spontaneous applause. Older pupils show care and concern for younger ones, particularly those who are paired up as 'buddies' when children start in Reception. Teachers in Key Stage 1 treat pupils with courtesy and politeness and pupils respond accordingly. In Key Stage 2, relationships between teachers and pupils are more formal and more distant. Although pupils are treated properly, a certain lack of rapport is evident. In Key Stages 2 pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, there are committed enthusiastic pupils, keen to take advantage of personal development opportunities such as the Year 5 playground dispute mediation initiative. However, too many pupils are unconcerned about the consequences of their own disruptive and negative behaviour on others' learning. Some talk whilst the teacher is teaching whilst others indulge in other off-task behaviour. Some simply ignore the lesson, apparently bored. Pupils in Key Stage 2 classes are not given sufficient opportunities to use their initiative. They are not sufficiently involved in the day-to-day running of their classes or the school and they are insufficiently involved in the management of their own learning. In lessons, many are passive and lack any sense of urgency, waiting to be told what to do or to have materials delivered to them. Consequently, the pace of their learning is adversely affected.
11. Attendance is satisfactory. The authorised absence rate, at five percent, is broadly in line with that of primary schools nationally. The unauthorised absence rate, at 1.1 percent, is above the national average. The school is aware of the problem, which is

largely accounted for by a handful of pupils from a few families. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Punctuality is acceptable, although there are a minority of pupils who are persistently late. Registration is carried out promptly and efficiently. Registers are properly maintained.

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

12. Pupils are consistently well taught in Reception. In Key Stage 1 teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching evident in Year 2. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when there were significant weaknesses in Reception and at Key Stage 1. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is currently satisfactory overall but the picture is complicated by staff absences and turnover. Evidence from previous work in pupils' books indicates many weaknesses at this key stage. However, in Year 3 the recent appointment of a temporary teacher is beginning to turn the tide of underachievement and to change pupils' attitudes. Year 4 has been taught by a succession of supply teachers with varying degrees of success. During the inspection the supply teacher had inherited a class with many difficulties but was nonetheless making strides in improving discipline and standards of behaviour.
13. Teaching in Reception is effective because the teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and provides an interesting range of activities to meet the needs of all children. The wide range of methods used helps children to learn new skills and to practise them in a number of different ways. Her enthusiasm and lively presentation inspire the children. They are eager and keen to join in. There are many opportunities for them to take responsibility, to use their initiative and to make decisions for themselves. Activities are pitched at the right level so children make progress irrespective of their prior attainment. Children with special educational needs receive extra help from skilled support staff and achieve alongside their friends, as well as following a carefully structured reading and spelling programme which is geared to meet their needs.
14. The consistent features of good teaching throughout the school are mainly concerned with the ways in which teachers present, demonstrate and explain the theme of the lesson and in how they question pupils. In a Year 5 science lesson the teacher used open ended questions effectively to encourage pupils to think about how they could demonstrate the movement of the earth around the sun. Lessons are well organised and pupils understand what they are to do. Teachers manage the pupils well and those in Years 3 and 4 were seen to persist with their high expectations of behaviour. These teachers exercised clear authority and encouraged pupils to concentrate on the task and to work hard. However, this proved time-consuming since many of the pupils have lost interest in learning and expect to be bored in lessons. In other classes, on some occasions, teachers allowed standards of behaviour to deteriorate and did not intervene early enough. Where teachers were working with individuals and small groups, for instance, some pupils gave up on their tasks and caused unnecessary disturbance to the whole class. Sanctions and rewards are not implemented consistently between teachers and even in the same class on different days. For instance, teachers declare that they will not respond to pupils calling out but in practice frequently do so.
15. Teaching was at its best in a dance lesson with Year 3 pupils. Here, the teacher had good subject knowledge and made certain that pupils understood what they were to learn. The lesson clearly built on pupils' previous learning and improved their skills still further. Pupils worked at a good pace; they enjoyed the variety of music from different cultures and interpreted it in their own ways. The teacher's love of music and dance translated to the pupils and caused one to exclaim 'You can hear the music dancing inside you!' In contrast, where teaching is less effective, teachers are unclear about what it is they expect pupils to learn from a lesson because they are much too concerned with what the pupils are to do. Many of the activities are mundane and lack sufficient variety to hold

pupils' attention. Pupils are not always building on their learning lesson by lesson. In some lessons pupils are bemused by the activities they have to complete, rather than challenged by them. There are few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to make decisions about their work. In a Year 2 art lesson, for example, adults distributed all the materials and equipment. One pupil in Year 6 sat waiting for a ruler to be delivered to her. In literacy, most of the tasks are undertaken individually, with scant evidence of collaborative work.

16. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. It is particularly good in Year 2 where the teacher has high expectations of the pupils' ability to appreciate literature and encourages them to become 'critics'. She plans work which is varied and challenging. Pupils rise to the occasion and enjoy their work. Consequently, they have developed a good appreciation of books. Basic skills are thoroughly taught in Key Stage 1 where teachers have identified a weakness in phonic skills and now give greater emphasis to this element of the literacy hour. However, confusion arises in pupils' minds when handwriting strings do not follow phonic rules and teachers do not always clarify these misunderstandings. All teachers plan thoroughly for literacy and base their planning firmly in the National Literacy Strategy.
17. There are many weaknesses in the teaching of numeracy and at Key Stage 2 40 percent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. The root of the problem often lies in a mis-match of work which fails to meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, they become frustrated and do not give of their best. The range of equipment purchased for teaching numeracy is not used adequately to help pupils understand numbers. Practical equipment to support oral work was rarely seen and best use is not made of support staff during whole class mental mathematics. Computers are not used enough for pupils to practise and improve their skills in other subjects.
18. During the inspection the new teachers in Years 3 and 4 had thoughtfully planned activities at the level expected for pupils of this age in literacy and numeracy, only to find that some of the tasks were too difficult. They thoughtfully evaluated their teaching and the impact on pupils' learning and took steps to redress the imbalance. Most of the literacy teaching seen in these two classes was judged to be good. However, evidence from pupils' previous work and from the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 indicates many shortfalls across all subjects. Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils either in terms of quality or quantity of work. As a result pupils' rate of learning is too slow at Key Stage 2. There is a lack of urgency in many lessons. Insufficient care is given to accuracy and presentation and pupils continue to make unnecessary errors. Presentation does improve somewhat in Year 5 but deteriorates again in Year 6. Pupils do not take enough pride in their work and see little reason for making a real effort since work is not always marked or is unduly praised for little achievement. Homework is not used effectively to support and extend what has been learnt in school and is not tailored to individual learning needs.
19. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace of work was not fast enough and pupils made too little progress. This was often a result of the work not being well suited to pupils' needs. In numeracy, for example, the new teacher's expectations were too ambitious, pupils were unable to get on with their work and so time was lost in waiting for help and explanations. In a history lesson the method used failed to challenge and inspire the pupils so they lost interest, became noisy and restless, and little was achieved in the time available. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because there is too little information about individual strengths and weaknesses to enable teachers to tailor work to their very specific needs. Too often they are doing the same work as the rest of the class, only at a slower pace. Too little specialist teaching is provided for those with specific reading and spelling or numeracy difficulties.

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

20. Children in Reception enjoy a rich and varied curriculum which is carefully planned to take account of all the areas of learning recommended for young children. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when there were shortcomings in the provision for the under-fives. Children are now steered progressively through the curriculum so that they can reach the goals expected of them by the time they leave the class. The areas of learning are appropriately dove-tailed in to the early levels of the National Curriculum although there is some unnecessary duplication when areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world are also represented in the early science curriculum.
21. The curriculum provided at Key Stages 1 and 2 has some significant weaknesses. At Key Stage 1 this is mainly because of shortcomings in information and communications technology coupled with limited opportunities for fostering personal development. However, at Key Stage 2 the curriculum is unduly narrow and coverage of many of the non-core subjects is inadequate. At the time of the last inspection pupils were not receiving their curriculum entitlement in art, design and technology and information technology. Pupils are still not receiving adequate provision in those subjects and the current inspection also revealed sparse coverage of history and geography at Key Stage 2. Too little time is spent on these subjects and there is scarcely any recorded work in pupils' books. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills related to those subjects. Not enough attention is given to design and technology, music and art and pupils do not develop their skills year by year. Provision in information and communications technology, which has remained unsatisfactory since the last inspection, does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
22. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been fully adopted. Appropriate time allocation is given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Following the last inspection, steps were taken to improve the way in which the curriculum is planned on a year by year basis so that pupils could build on their learning as they moved through the school. However, these plans have not been fully implemented and have now largely been superseded by the adoption of national guidelines. Thus a whole-school approach to subjects is still in its infancy and there is too little information about what pupils have already done. Consequently, teachers new to the school have too little information about what has gone before and what the pupils need to learn next. As at the last inspection, the development of thinking and practical skills in mathematics and science is not sufficiently fostered. For instance in science, during the inspection pupils watched a video of an experiment rather than having the opportunity to undertake an investigation for themselves.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school. Those with statements benefit from the invaluable help of support staff but for many others, their individual learning needs are not being adequately met. Good procedures are in place for identifying children's needs early in Reception. Appropriate procedures are in place throughout the school for implementing the Code of Practice but these have not been consistently maintained and implemented during the absence of a permanent co-ordinator for special educational needs. Teachers have set current targets for individuals but previous plans indicate significant gaps in provision. There is too little information about individual strengths and weaknesses to pinpoint specific weaknesses. Consequently, many of the targets set are not sharply focussed or adequately tailored to suit individual needs. The school does not check the progress of these children often

enough and many of the plans and reviews are undated.

24. Provision for health, sex and drugs education is planned appropriately within the framework of the science curriculum. Evidence from pupils' work indicates limited coverage of these important issues. There is insufficient emphasis on the personal development of pupils through regular activities such as 'circle time' in which pupils can discuss issues which are troubling them or listen to the views and opinions of others with tolerance and respect. The absence of a school library limits opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research and personal study.
25. There is a satisfactory programme of visits to local places of interest and a number of visitors come to the school to enhance pupils' experiences. There are few extra curricular activities, the regular ones being limited to a netball and football club. The school has close links with the parish and pupils are involved in fund raising for a wide range of charities. There are few opportunities for the pupils themselves to organise mini fund-raising events or to make decisions about who should benefit from their efforts.
26. The strengths in the provision for pupils' spiritual development lie in the way in which teachers value the pupils' responses in lessons and encourage them to reflect on issues. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils are given opportunities to consider their concern for each other and their surroundings. In a science lesson in Year 2 pupils were enthralled by what they discover about the life story of a tadpole. In dance, Year 3 pupils were invited to reflect on how the music made them feel and responded with sensitivity. Efforts have been made to involve the pupils in making the school an attractive environment where pupils can appreciate the beauty of the natural world through the planting of an indoor garden and wild flower planters in the playground. A quiet area in the hall and a nature area with a pond provide peaceful areas for quiet contemplation.
27. The school works hard to teach pupils about moral values. Pupils are aware of classroom rules and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The majority of pupils understand in principle the impact of their conduct and attitudes on other members of the school community. However, in practice, the behaviour of some pupils in Key Stage 1 and rather more pupils in Key Stage 2 often undermines the learning of the majority. The school has a wide variety of systems and initiatives for improving behaviour but there are inconsistencies in the way in which these are implemented. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily promoted through a range of songs, dance, music and literature. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school from a wide range of backgrounds who come to talk about their experiences. The school makes good use of resources from a local multi-cultural resource centre to promote pupils' understanding of the richness and variety of different traditions. Music and dance also make a valuable contribution to this provision. However, the superficial study of topics in history and geography limits opportunities for pupils to increase awareness of their own heritage. Similarly, in conversation pupils showed a lack of awareness of how art and music contribute to and reflect our cultural heritage, thus revealing some shortfalls in the curriculum.
28. Too few opportunities are provided to adequately promote pupils' social development. The lack of provision for the practical aspects of subjects limits opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, sharing and discussing ideas. For instance pupils do not carry out enough investigations and experiments together in science or collaborate in composing and performing a piece of music. Pupils are not given opportunities to organise appropriate aspects of their own learning. For instance in Key Stage 2, pupils do not undertake investigative topic work in history and geography or use reference books to find information for themselves. Although the older pupils are involved in caring for younger ones, the school gives them few opportunities for developing a sense of social

responsibility. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that pupils were developing a mature attitude by being offered opportunities to take part in decision making and play their part in the corporate life of the school through a school council but this no longer exists.

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

29. The school cares for the pupils and is very much concerned for their well-being. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The headteacher is responsible for child protection procedures; all staff have received training on the subject and all are aware of the action to be taken in cases of concern. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. A member of the governing body, who is an expert in this field, and the resident caretaker carry out regular inspections of the premises. Contracts are in place for regular safety inspections of fire equipment, electrical and physical education apparatus. Fire drills are held regularly. Arrangements for first aid and medical emergencies are entirely satisfactory. Staff are assiduous in reminding pupils of the health and safety aspects of practical lessons such as art or swimming.
30. The school is a caring community. It has many ways to help pupils both practically and emotionally. The headteacher invests much time and energy in supporting pupils and their families. There are good procedures in place to enhance pupils' learning through improving punctuality and attendance. Classes with the highest attendance rates are given rewards and the names of pupils who consistently arrive on time are entered into a weekly raffle. Posters are displayed spelling out the negative effects of lateness on both latecomers and their classmates. Latecomers have to sign in and explain their lateness. The families of persistent offenders are contacted, first by the school and then by the education welfare officer. Unexplained absences are similarly followed up. The headteacher does whatever she can to dissuade parents from taking term-time holidays but she has to recognise that the pressure to save money on some families by holidaying in term-time is considerable.
31. Equally positive initiatives are in place to help pupils conform to the school's behavioural requirements. Pupils are well grounded in the school's behaviour code when they first enter the Reception class. In subsequent classes, a number of procedures are used to reinforce good behaviour. Pupils can earn class points or points for their table; there are awards for the 'worker of the week' and certificates for particularly good work, effort or behaviour. Behaviour is thoroughly monitored. Lunch-time supervisors record particularly good or poor conduct. Where behaviour is unacceptable, a report system, which involves parents, is set up. At lunch-time, the school provides play equipment and the services of a trained play leader to channel pupils' energies into constructive play. Those who would sooner not engage in the physical vigour of the playground may retreat to a 'quiet corner' in the hall. In some classes, there is evidence of inconsistency in the teacher's approach to managing behaviour. Poor behaviour may be overlooked, ultimatums issued but not followed up and both rewards and sanctions are over-used, so that the currency becomes devalued. A parent at the pre-inspection meeting observed that behaviour sanctions were not imposed firmly enough with pupils getting too many warnings. Putting errant pupils' names on the board becomes ineffective when a third of the class are so identified. However, the school is particularly successful in eliminating any form of harassment, whether sexual, racial or directed towards a particular minority such as pupils with special educational needs. No such conduct was observed during the inspection.
32. As a result of the last inspection report, the school was required to develop procedures for the effective assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. This has been achieved successfully and there are now satisfactory procedures for assessing

achievement in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There is, however, no agreed system for judging how well pupils attain the skills necessary to use information and communications technology nor is there any assessment of the standards that pupils achieve in the non-core subjects. The information gleaned from the baseline test when children enter the school is used effectively, in particular to alert teachers to any pupils who may have special educational needs. Statutory tests and teacher assessments in the core subjects are properly carried out at 7 and 11. Other standardised tests are administered at the end of each year in Key Stage 2 and a reading test is given twice a year. The results enable teachers to keep useful tracking records that help them to gauge the progress of each pupil. They are also used to set the targets for attainment in the national tests for English and mathematics at 11. In addition to the standardised tests, regular pieces of English and science work are collected in each class and assessed against National Curriculum levels. These are useful and build up a picture in the pupils' portfolio to illustrate how learning is developing. Regular tests in mathematics also help teachers to judge attainment and progress. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not reviewed regularly enough and, in some cases, when a review does take place, similar targets have to be set again because they were not tuned carefully enough in the first instance to meet individual needs.

33. The school undertakes a systematic analysis of test results and has a bank of data that is properly used to influence teachers' planning and their delivery of the curriculum. National test results in English at the end of both key stages have been analysed, for example, and revealed weaknesses in spelling and punctuation amongst the younger pupils and an inability to infer information from a text amongst the older ones. Targets to improve standards were drawn up and acted upon. Similar analysis of work in mathematics guided teachers last year to concentrate on improving familiarity with multiplication tables and in science this year to a better understanding of 'Forces'. As well as school-wide targets, pupils are involved in drawing up individual targets. These may be connected with work and/or behaviour and personal development. Parents discuss the targets with teachers and review them after a period of time. This is a helpful initiative and assists pupils to become aware of their own learning by giving them goals towards which they can aim.

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

34. Parents are satisfied with the school in most respects. The great majority say that their children enjoy coming to school. They consider that children are expected to work hard and they feel that the school helps their children to become mature. Their concerns centre on the amount and quality of homework, the number and range of extra-curricular activities and on behaviour. Although the school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, the level of parental disquiet regarding those particular concerns has increased.
35. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. New parents have a meeting at school before their children start to attend and they are invited in to receive an explanation of the baseline assessment (the school's assessment of the child's basic skills on entering school). These meetings are well attended. Parents have two formal opportunities a year to meet their children's teachers. In the autumn term, parents are given individual appointments to discuss children's targets and progress against these targets is reviewed in the spring term. Pupil reports are issued in the summer term and parents are given the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss them. Few take up the offer. Pupil reports themselves are satisfactory insofar as they comply with statutory requirements. Reports on children in Reception are detailed and helpful, describing the child's personal development and progress against the desirable learning outcomes for

children of that age. Reports on pupils in subsequent years are descriptive rather than evaluative. In regard to some non-core subjects there is little more than a description of the class's work over the preceding year. Regular newsletters are issued, which are appreciated by parents. There is no provision, however, for giving parents advance information regarding the topics the children will be studying in the ensuing term or half-term, an omission noted by parents at the pre-inspection meeting. Governors' information to parents does not fully meet statutory requirements.

36. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education. Parents were consulted over the home-school agreement, although ultimately only a minority troubled to sign and return it. Similarly, few parents respond to invitations to review progress towards targets set on individual education plans. Meetings have been arranged to explain the working of literacy and numeracy hours. At the request of the majority, meetings are usually timed to commence immediately after school, which some working parents feel disadvantages them. Parents make a useful contribution to the work of the school. A number of parents volunteer to work in class, hearing readers and helping with art.

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

37. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and effectively steers its work. Most staff share a common purpose and work well together. The school has identified the right tasks for the future. However, prolonged staff absence, including that of the Deputy, and other associated uncertainties have prevented the school moving forward as quickly as had been planned. The headteacher keeps a close eye on the quality of teaching in the school and sets targets for teachers to work towards. There are improvements in teachers' planning, for example, as a result of her intervention. However, much time and energy have been taken up with monitoring teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4. The steps taken here in terms of recruiting skilled staff are at last beginning to improve the quality of learning for these pupils. The planned monitoring of pupils' work, through sampling books, has been delayed. This requires urgent attention since it gives a clear picture of pupils' achievements in Key Stage 2 and what needs to be done to improve them.

38. Staff with management responsibilities who are well established understand what is expected of them and what needs to be done to secure improvements. Each subject manager has developed an action plan with targets and these are regularly reviewed to check how well initiatives are working. There is a useful timetable for monitoring each subject which includes scrutinising teachers' plans, observing lessons and looking at pupils' work. This programme is in its infancy and the priority has been correctly given to the monitoring of literacy. The subject managers for numeracy and science are currently absent and other staff are caretaking these roles. In addition, the co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs has been managed temporarily in the absence of a permanent co-ordinator. Many other co-ordinators are new to their roles. At present, there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers. Four of them have been appointed within the last three years and three of these have less than three years' experience of the teaching profession. However, this is balanced by experienced teachers who have served the school for many years, although two of them are absent at present. Effective temporary teachers have been hard to find and Years 3 and 4 have had a number of changes in the past two terms. At the time of the inspection, the uncertainty over staffing for the Year 4 class remains.

39. There are sound procedures for introducing new members of staff to the school and every effort is made to acquaint them with their prospective pupils, with their responsibilities and with school routines and lesson planning. The professional

development of all staff is regularly discussed and the deputy headteacher audits staff needs and arranges suitable training in line with the school's development plan. The programme has continued during his absence. The school also supports the classroom assistants in their requests for professional development. The school is well served by the support staff who work effectively in both key stages. The newly appointed secretary is very efficient and helps to minimise the administrative burden on the headteacher. She is an asset to the school in that she undertakes her duties professionally, is consistent in her approach and fosters positive relationships with parents and children.

40. The leadership and management of the school understand how well the school is doing compared to others nationally, to schools in the local cluster and to other local Catholic schools. They regularly analyse results and check pupils' progress against their prior attainment. Baseline information is used effectively to evaluate progress throughout Key Stage 1. The school has made significant improvements in the foundation stage and in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when there were found to be significant weaknesses here. A new team has been appointed and the Key Stage manager has effectively implemented change. Where shortcomings have been identified steps have been taken to overcome them. The school recognised, for example, that pupils were experiencing difficulties in spelling and so the teaching of phonics was examined, changes implemented and resources improved. Similarly, the outcome of data analysis indicated that boys were underachieving in writing. This has been successfully addressed and boys are outperforming girls. The school is on course to meet its literacy target for this year.
41. When the school was last inspected there were concerns about the composition and role of the governing body. Since then, many governors have been newly appointed and now they make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. They have good levels of expertise and are thorough in their approach. They have confidence in the headteacher and question and debate issues openly so as to secure the best for the school. They understand its strengths and weaknesses because they are kept well informed about standards. Governors have subject responsibilities and some link up regularly with the co-ordinator so as to gain a clear picture of what is happening. This is particularly evident in literacy and early years where the responsible governor has a good insight into the provision. However, statutory duties are not fully met in as far as there are shortcomings in the curriculum for information and communications technology and there are some omissions in the Governors' information for parents.
42. At the time of the last inspection another weakness related to planning for the future. This has now been addressed and the school has a comprehensive plan for the coming year outlining what is to be done, who will do it, how much it will cost and how success will be measured. A timescale for implementation is not included within the plan and so it is difficult for governors to check that the school is on target to achieve its aims. The plan is not securely founded in a framework for long-term improvement since this document is still in draft form whilst staff and governors are consulted.
43. The Chair of Governors, together with the headteacher and secretary keep a shrewd eye on spending. They have easy access to up-to-date figures and regularly check income against expenditure. They know what they have spent, what they have bought and how much is left. However, there are few systems for checking that the purchases are making a difference to pupils' learning. Specific grants, such as that allocated to numeracy, are correctly targeted on equipment. However, there was no evidence of its use during the inspection despite the fact that some pupils need such equipment to help them make sense of what they are learning. The Chair is keenly aware of the principles of best value and is helping the school to apply them. Governors regularly compare the school's results with others, they challenge the headteacher to account for standards and

quality, they consult with the local education authority and the diocese about what works well or otherwise, and then check that they are getting best value on their purchases. The school's decision to lease computers, rather than purchase them, for instance, was made following these principles. The school had a large underspend at the time of the last inspection and was therefore judged not to be providing adequate value for money. Given the school's current efficient financial management, coupled with the improvements in Key Stage 1 and the standards achieved to date in Key Stage 2, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

44. There are shortcomings in resources in several important areas. The school has identified the need to increase the range of non-fiction books and the lack of a library means that pupils have limited opportunities for personal study. Pupils with special educational needs do not have enough specialist materials for supporting their learning in a structured way. Computers now need updating and there are not enough computer programs, particularly to enable the control and modelling requirements of the curriculum to be taught. Younger pupils in an art lesson were hampered by the poor quality materials that they had to use for a drawing activity and, despite some purchases, there are limited artefacts to support the history topics.
45. The school has adequate accommodation. Classrooms are large enough for the numbers and ages of pupils and displays are mounted in all areas of the school. They are more stimulating in Key Stage 1 where there is much more work from pupils on display than in some Key Stage 2 classrooms. Much has been done recently to improve the outside areas with the help of workers from 'The Prince's Trust' and there are plans to improve the junior playground.

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

46. In order to raise standards and to improve the rate at which pupils make progress the staff and governors should:
- 1) Improve the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 by;
    - using a wider range of teaching methods to capture pupils' interest
    - expecting more work from the pupils in the time available
    - expecting a better quality of work from the pupils, especially in the way it is presented
    - marking pupils' work regularly and using marking more effectively to show pupils what they need to do to improve
    - planning activities which are tailored to meet the needs of all pupils
    - adopting a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. (paragraphs 12,17, 18 and 31)
  - 2) Raise standards in English at Key Stage 2, particularly in writing. (paragraphs 3, 4, 64 and 65)
  - 3) Raise standards in information and communication technology throughout the school by implementing all the requirements of the National Curriculum and developing pupils' skills in using computers to help them learn in other subjects. (paragraphs 5, 101, 102 and 103)
  - 4) Improve the quality of the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
    - covering all subjects in greater depth

- providing a wider variety of activities within those subjects
- planning subjects more carefully so that pupils build on their learning year by year and lesson by lesson
- making better use of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects
- offering opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to use their initiative, to work as groups and to make decisions.  
(paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 25 and 28)

5) Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by carefully assessing their strengths and weaknesses, planning specifically to help them overcome difficulties, providing appropriate resources for teaching them and then reviewing their progress regularly. (paragraphs 19, 23 and 32)

47. In addition to the above issues the following less important issue should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- ensuring that the governors' information to parents meets statutory requirements.  
(paragraphs 35 and 41)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	27	63	8	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)		204
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		41

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	16
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	24	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (60)	80(60)	90 (63)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83(60)	80(70)	83(77)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	7	8	12
	Total	15	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (75)	69(85]	85(89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	8	8	12
	Total	16	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (78)	69 (78)	85 (93)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	153
Any other minority ethnic group	10

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5:1
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	366098
Total expenditure	353032
Expenditure per pupil	1740
Balance brought forward from previous year	7049
Balance carried forward to next year	20115

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	204
Number of questionnaires returned	45

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	38	2	4	4
My child is making good progress in school.	53	22	18	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	42	20	9	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	38	24	9	0
The teaching is good.	36	47	9	4	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	38	24	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	33	11	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	42	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	36	18	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	38	40	11	7	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	9	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	11	33	22	16

## **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**

48. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they celebrate their fifth birthday. The majority has attended some form of pre-school provision. A significant minority has limited social and language skills in contrast to those who are well equipped to start school. Taken overall, attainment on entry covers a very wide span but is broadly average. During their time in reception children benefit from good teaching. They make strides in their learning so that by the end of the year almost all have reached the goals expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage and some exceed them. All are well equipped to begin the early levels of the National Curriculum.
49. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory in language and literacy and mathematics, but there were significant shortcomings in all other areas of learning. The major weakness lay in the provision for personal and social development. These issues have been well addressed and the provision for the under fives overall is good, whilst a particular strength is the provision for personal and social development. The teacher has a good understanding of the early years curriculum and plans activities thoroughly to meet the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs.

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

50. By the end of the reception year most children are confident, active learners. They are excited and interested in activities and enjoy sharing their learning. They are well adjusted to the routines of school life and know how to listen as part of a large group or how to work in a small group. They take turns and share equipment sensibly, such as by sharing plasticene out equally between their friends to make model boats. Children were seen offering to help one another with aprons. They are taught what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and that they must accept the consequences of their misdemeanours. They are learning to make decisions for themselves and use their initiative. At planning time children select activities and resources, use them sensibly and tidy away helpfully,
51. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Staff provide positive role models and make sure that the children feel valued, safe and secure. They take time to explain how to behave well and why. Relationships between the adults and children are very positive. Exciting, interesting activities are presented to the children in a lively, enthusiastic way which inspires them to participate and gives them the confidence to succeed.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

52. Children do well in this area of learning because talk is valued by the teacher and links are effectively made between the spoken and the written word. Teaching of language and literacy is good. Children are taught how to take turns in class discussions, to ask questions and to explain their ideas. Most children make rapid gains in developing their vocabulary because the teacher is particularly adept at stressing important key words to convey teaching points. In mathematics, for instance, a lesson on symmetry targeted vocabulary such as 'the same', 'matching', 'symmetrical', and 'repeating'. Staff continually stress the importance of listening carefully and encourage children to respond thoughtfully in discussions. When experimenting with floating and sinking objects, for example, children were able to restrain their enthusiasm for putting objects in water until

they had predicted what might happen. Some use complex sentences such as 'I think it will sink because the bottle is long and the water isn't hard enough'.

53. A love of books is fostered from an early age and the written work is skilfully linked into much of the curriculum. In the role play area, (a vet's surgery) children were seen attempting to write out prescriptions and labels for animal cages. Some attain particularly well and can write simple words, either from memory or by sounding them out. Reading skills are well taught. Most children read regularly at home and at school so that by the end of reception they can read simple sentences accurately, whilst a few are quite competent readers. They talk confidently about their favourite books and can retell familiar tales. They appreciate the rhythm and rhyme in books like 'The Gingerbread Man'. In one good literacy lesson, as a result of careful planning, appropriate activities matched to different needs and effective use of support staff, children were seen to make good progress in developing phonic skills and understanding of the text.

### **Mathematics**

54. Teaching of mathematics is good and children make a good start to numeracy. They acquire appropriate matching, sorting and number skills and develop good mathematical vocabulary. Most can count objects and write numerals correctly to ten, whilst higher attaining pupils are challenged to solve problems involving addition and subtraction. Children's progress is good in mathematics because the teacher uses a variety of methods which make sure that they are continually building on what they have already learnt, whilst having opportunities to practise skills in many different ways. During the inspection the focus of work was on pattern; some children were making patterns of two colours with paints or sticky paper whilst others tackled the challenge of threading beads of three colours. Some were printing patterns and others were using mirrors to explore symmetrical patterns. Two children worked on the computer using a 'magic' brush to draw symmetrical pictures. Consequently, everyone made good progress, learning that symmetry meant 'the same on both sides' and that patterns have to repeat.

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

55. Children enjoy a wide range of activities to help them learn about the world around them. They are encouraged to explore for themselves, to be curious and to investigate. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection but is now a strength. The teacher balances direct teaching and demonstration with opportunities for children to learn through first hand experience. Through skilful questioning children are led to discoveries. When testing objects to find out which floated on water, children posed their own questions like 'What happens if we take the top off the bottle?' and 'What happens to a brick with holes in it?' Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where it was not quite so effective, too much time was spent in large group discussion with many children watching and waiting, thus limiting the time available for small group, active learning and for evaluation.
56. Evidence from children's work indicates that they have made good progress in covering a wide range of topics through a variety of methods. They know about plants, for example, and were eager to make sure that the wildlife garden was adequately watered on a hot day. Following work on maps and journeys, some children chose to make their own large maps during play activities. They have tackled real life 'problems' such as how to make a sandwich with two complementary fillings. The children are confident with the computer and can use the mouse to operate a simple program.

### **Creative development**

57. The limited range of opportunities found at the time of the last inspection has been redressed and children now enjoy a wide range of activities to promote their creative development. During the inspection one good lesson was seen in which children used clay to model a fish. The teacher demonstrated techniques, established the code of behaviour and then allowed children to develop their own ideas in their own time. All their efforts were valued so that no two fish turned out to be the same. The children worked with enjoyment, behaved very well, and shared resources with only rare disputes.
58. Children's work indicates that they have explored colours, texture and form using a wide range of materials. They have learnt how to create different colours gradually adding more white to create a colour wheel. These shades have then been incorporated into their animal paintings which proudly sit alongside Sir Stanley Spencer's 'St Francis and the Birds'. No musical activities were observed during the inspection.

### **Physical development**

59. Children attain well in PE lessons. They move confidently around the hall, using the space well and showing good awareness of others. Good teaching and detailed planning mean that children develop their skills and confidence lesson by lesson. Prior to the inspection they had learnt about body shapes and different ways of moving. This was then reviewed before new skills were introduced, such as how to copy actions and sequence two consecutive movements. The teacher extended the learning by expecting the children to use two or three travelling actions to cross a piece of apparatus and to incorporate a body shape into the sequence.
60. Children rise to the teacher's high expectations of behaviour. They know that it is important to listen and to use equipment sensibly in order to keep safe. Routines are well established to provide a good grounding for later school life. In class lessons children handle tools, such as scissors, sensibly. They can manipulate plasticene and clay to make recognisable models. They concentrate earnestly, such as when trying to fold a piece of paper in half accurately, making the edges meet so as to create two matching halves.

### **ENGLISH**

61. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were at the expected levels at the end of both key stages. Subsequently standards deteriorated in Key Stage 1 but improved in Key Stage 2. In 1999 the proportion of seven year olds reaching the expected level in reading and writing was lower than the national average and below that achieved in similar schools for reading. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have now improved considerably in Key Stage 1 and almost all the pupils are attaining the expected level, whilst about one quarter are exceeding it. At the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in the 1999 tests was well below the national average but, in contrast, the proportion exceeding this level was above average. Overall, the performance of eleven year olds was not as good as that found nationally but the same as that found in similar schools to Holy Cross. Inspection evidence indicates that, this year, most pupils are achieving the level expected of them in reading but, from the work seen, there are many weaknesses in writing. Unusually, boys do slightly better than girls in tests which is the reverse of the national picture. The school effectively targeted boys' achievement in 1998.
62. Success has been achieved at Key Stage 1 by a rise in teachers' expectations coupled with careful analysis of weaknesses. The team has correctly tackled the teaching of phonics and this is reflected in improvements in pupils' spelling. Additional support staff time has been allocated to Year 1 to accelerate the progress of lower

attaining pupils. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 has been less successful in helping to raise standards in writing and teachers are not ambitious enough in what they expect pupils to do in the time allocated to English.

63. By seven pupils have acquired appropriate speaking and listening skills. They can read simple texts easily and with accuracy. In Year 2 they enjoy a wide range of books and styles of writing. The teacher has high expectations of their ability to appreciate literature and encourages them to compare and contrast different authors. As a result pupils learn a great deal about different styles and they talk enthusiastically about their favourite books, giving reasons for their choices. They learn to write in a range of forms and for different purposes including explanatory writing, narratives, questions and answers and book reviews. They have compiled fascinating sets of instructions on 'How to Keep a Dinosaur'. Work in their books indicates sound progress as they learn to improve the structure of their writing, their spelling and punctuation. They learn to join their letters and many are beginning to produce a cursive script. Nonetheless, work in their books is not presented carefully enough.
64. There is a marked decline in standards in Years 3 and 4. The appointment of two temporary staff is already beginning to make a difference and the work in pupils' books, particularly in Year 3, shows a marked difference in quality since the appointment of the present teacher. However, there is a legacy of underachievement and poor attitudes which will take time to redress. In these classes pupils have difficulty listening carefully and articulating their thinking. Many cannot yet read very fluently or with expression so they cannot easily make sense of what they have read. They make brave attempts to sound out words but with little success. In one good lesson in Year 3 the teacher persevered with her insistence on fluency and expression during the shared reading of a poem by Michael Rosen. Similarly, in Year 4, pupils were taught how to successfully decode words like 'opulent', a task they found unduly difficult. Pupils with special educational needs are benefiting from the recent extra reading support which is helping to make up for their unsatisfactory rate of progress to date. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory, common words are often mis-spelt, pupils forget to use capital letters and fail to spot their errors when reading back their work. Handwriting is inconsistently joined and work is poorly presented.
65. As they get older progress is too slow for pupils to catch up. In Year 5 the presentation of work improves and pupils develop the structure of their written work but the pace of learning is not fast enough for pupils to improve sufficiently. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting persist as weaknesses. Most pupils can read relatively fluently and have a reasonable knowledge of popular authors but less experience of a wide range of long established fiction. Teachers fail to inspire their pupils with a love of literature. Pupils' understanding of text beyond the literal is weak and the school is targeting this shortcoming. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' reading is technically correct but few read with expression or enthusiasm. Their reading progress is not monitored adequately since neither the staff nor pupils themselves maintain a record of what they have read. Written work is unsatisfactory in terms of the volume of work undertaken in lessons, the quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Too little attention is given to accuracy and presentation.
66. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The main strengths lie in the detailed planning which helps teachers to have a clear understanding of what it is they are to teach. Their plans are well founded within the National Literacy Strategy. Where teaching is good teachers adopt a lively, enthusiastic approach which inspires and challenges the pupils. They insist on good standards of behaviour, that pupils listen and work with sustained effort. This was particularly evident in Years 3 and 4 where teachers worked hard to promote a positive approach to literacy. Teaching is mainly good in Year 2 and this is demonstrated

by challenging work which is well suited to the needs of all pupils, effective use of technical vocabulary and clear links between all aspects of the literacy hour.

67. Less effective teaching is evident in Key Stage 2 where pupils' work indicates that teachers do not expect enough of their pupils, either in terms of quality of work or quantity. The quality of work in Years 3 and 4 is weak and pupils in Year 6 have not put in enough effort to complete an exercise book for the whole of this year. Marking is not used effectively to show pupils how to improve; some work is left unmarked whilst for others minimal achievement is over-generously praised. Work is often not well suited to meet the needs of all the pupils. The higher attaining pupils are not pushed hard enough and the lower attainers often find the work too difficult and achieve little. Pupils with specific reading and spelling difficulties do not benefit from carefully targeted or structured work to help them improve, so they lag further behind.
68. Many lessons lack sufficient variety to capture the pupils' interest. There is a heavy dependence on exercises from text books which do not give pupils enough opportunities to use their initiative, to take responsibility or to work collaboratively. At Key Stage 2 too little use is made of other subjects to help develop skills in literacy. One good example was observed in Year 6 when pupils worked on the Bristol Zoo brochure, collected on their science trip, to analyse features of explanatory text. Nonetheless, the work seen indicates that many opportunities are missed to develop the teaching points of the literacy hour in subjects such as history and geography.
69. Since the successful introduction of the literacy hour the co-ordinator has identified some shortcomings in the provision and has a clear action plan. This includes enhancing the supply of non-fiction books which is limited at present. She effectively uses the outcomes of analysis of test results to identify weaknesses and to predict future attainment. Boys' writing was successfully targeted as a result of such analysis. Much of her time has been focussed on monitoring teaching and planning. However, the monitoring of pupils' books is yet to take place and this will provide a clear insight into the weaknesses in written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. The end of Key Stage 1 tests in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required national standards in mathematics as being close to the national average although the number of pupils reaching the higher levels was below the national average. The 1999 results show an improvement over 1998 but results since 1996 have fluctuated considerably. Over this period the performance of boys in mathematics has been better than that of girls. The school's test results at the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required national standards in mathematics as close to the national average and the numbers of pupils reaching the higher grade as being close to the national average. The 1999 results show a decline in performance from 1998. However, the school's results compare favourably with those achieved in similar schools to Holy Cross.
71. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that attainment at the end of both key stages continues to be in line with national expectations and standards are clearly improving in Key Stage 1. By the age of seven most pupils are developing confidence with handling numbers and are developing an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They can count accurately in twos and tens, and recognise different number patterns and sequences. Mental number skills are improving and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in working with numbers up to 100. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to devise strategies for solving simple number problems although opportunities for doing so are not yet a consistent feature of teachers' planning.

72. At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils' achievements are in line with expectations but they are not sufficiently adept at handling numbers quickly and correctly. Many have difficulty recalling basic number facts easily. Consequently they are hindered in their ability to solve multi-stage problems. In such situations the majority of pupils are unable to identify the processes necessary to solve problems. For instance, in Year 6, pupils were unable to convert one pint into millilitres, when given the information that three-quarters of a pint is equal to 450ml. Pupils are unused to applying their knowledge in a variety of situations or in other areas of the curriculum. For instance In a Year 3 design and technology lesson on designing a photograph frame, pupils did not employ accurate measurement or knowledge of right angles. In science pupils are not given enough opportunities to undertake their own investigations and accurately record their findings in tables and charts.
73. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy their maths lessons and respond well to the interesting activities provided. Even when they find the tasks difficult, they persevere. In Key Stage 2 inattention, restlessness and mildly disruptive behaviour frequently interrupt the smooth flow of lessons. On occasions this is a reflection of pupil frustration at the mis-match of tasks to their level of attainment. The presentation of work is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but poor in Key stage 2. Low teacher expectations of how pupils will present their work undermine the accuracy of pupils' calculations. For instance, in Year 5, triangles drawn without a ruler and containing no  $90^\circ$  angles are labelled as right angled triangles and marked as being correct. In the same class most pupils know how to construct a graph, but do not do so accurately. This lack of regard for accuracy is not adequately addressed and so the diffident attitude of the pupils is reinforced.
74. The quality of mathematics teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, teachers have established sound routines, which the pupils respect. Group activities are undertaken in a calm, purposeful working atmosphere and most pupils concentrate for appropriate lengths of time even when they are not directly supervised. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively adopted and introductory sessions of mental number are effectively integrated into the main activity. There is an appropriate emphasis on basic skills although there is less evidence that regular opportunities are planned and developed for pupils to use and apply these skills in a range of different situations. Work in pupils' books is marked conscientiously with some good examples of evaluative comments and suggestions for further development.
75. In Key stage 2, the unsatisfactory teaching stems primarily from a lack of knowledge of what pupils already know and can do. Teachers either over estimate what pupils know or provide activities which lack challenge. Assessment activities are not routinely built into teachers' planning and oral number sessions are not used effectively to assess pupils' progress in basic number skills. The same task is frequently given to all pupils in the class, often this is commercially produced worksheets. As a result activities are not well suited to pupils' differing needs and they are frustrated and over dependent on teacher advice and support. In Years 5 and 6, there is a considerable amount of unmarked work in pupils' books, which further undermines the overall quality of teacher assessment. Where work is marked, this consists primarily of ticks and congratulatory comments, with no indication of how pupils can improve their work.
76. In Key Stage 2 teachers are not always sure what they hope pupils will gain from the lesson. Frequently, expected learning outcomes, when they are communicated to the pupils, are merely descriptions of the task. Often the direct teaching is insufficiently interactive and teachers assume that because a few pupils answer their questions correctly, most pupils understand the task. Some lessons lack rigour and pace and

inappropriate behaviour is not always challenged and dealt with effectively.

77. Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Attainment and learning are now satisfactory in Key Stage 1. This represents a noticeable improvement. However those pupils who were in Key Stage 1 at the time of the last inspection have not had a chance to catch up and are still not making satisfactory progress. The school has yet to adequately address the issues of unmarked work, poor presentation, the lack of opportunities for investigative mathematics and under-use of available resources.
78. At present, there is no co-ordinator for mathematics, but the subject is overseen by the headteacher and one teacher in each key stage. Some monitoring of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has taken place through lesson observations and through work sampling. However identified problems, such as the quality of marking in Key stage 2, have not been followed up with sufficient rigour. Evidence from the inspection suggests that resources available to teachers to support the numeracy hour are not being sufficiently used. For instance, mental number sessions in Key Stage 2 are largely devoted to the chanting of tables and teachers have yet to find ways of using the resources in imaginative and interesting ways.

## SCIENCE

79. The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that standards were broadly in line with those found nationally but very high when compared with schools of a similar kind. Teachers predicted these results accurately. Results on average have improved since the last inspection, though they have fluctuated from year to year. In 1997, for example, standards were well above the national average while in 1998 they were well below. Boys have generally performed better than girls though this varies from year to year. In 1999, for example, girls achieved better results than boys. Inspection evidence and current teacher assessments suggest that, this year, most pupils are on course to achieve the expected level whilst some are exceeding it.
80. Standards in Key Stage 1 in 1999 were assessed as below average in comparison with national expectations with a particular weakness in pupils' knowledge of physical processes. Inspection evidence suggests an improvement in the results this year and attainment is broadly in line with what is found nationally. This improvement is due to some good teaching in Key Stage 1 and to a scheme of work that clearly sets out the topics to be taught. These results mean that standards have at least been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' progress, which was found to be unsatisfactory, is now sound.
81. Pupils in Year 2 now have a secure understanding of physical processes. They list different sources that provide light and can construct an electrical circuit so that a bulb lights up. They know about living things and talk knowledgeably about the life cycle of a frog and a butterfly. They have studied what constitutes a healthy lifestyle for human beings, looking at the type of foods to eat to maintain a balanced diet and the importance of exercise. There is very little in their books about materials and their properties but this is covered sufficiently in Year 1. They carry out some experiments such as how to find the warmest place in the room and are beginning to understand the importance of conducting a fair test and to predict results. Work in books however is often untidy. Some is unfinished and all pupils are covering the same work, despite their different needs. Nevertheless, most pupils are making sufficient progress over the two years in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs. Year 1 pupils find out about materials that are transparent and waterproof and discover which objects are attracted to a magnet. They grow bean seeds to see what is needed to produce the strongest plant.

82. A discussion with pupils in Year 6 reveals that they have a sound understanding of the requirements of the science programme of work though this is not apparent from a scrutiny of their books. In these, the volume of work completed over a year is poor and the presentation is often untidy. Pupils say that they rarely conduct their own investigations though they explain clearly how they would ensure that an experiment is fair. They know that bacteria cause teeth to decay and explain a food chain. They know that salt dissolves in water and that this change is reversible once the water evaporates. They explain what happens when a second bulb is put into an electrical circuit. The work in the books of Key Stage 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, reveals uneven progress. The work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 reflects the input of the various teachers who have taught them. In Year 4, for example, there is satisfactory work in the early part of this school year with plenty of examples of experimentation by pupils. Recent work, however, is less well covered. A reverse picture emerges in Year 3. Work with their current teacher is satisfactory with pupils learning to identify properties such as flexibility in a variety of materials.
83. Teaching across the school is sound although it is rarely exciting. The best lesson included a practical activity that followed on from a crisp introduction about the life cycle of a butterfly. The teacher explained the process clearly, had an actual example of a pupa that fascinated the pupils and then set them a task that involved sequencing events by sorting pictures into the correct order. Pupils reacted positively to the teacher's own enthusiasm. They listened carefully to the explanation and worked hard to complete the task. This does not happen in every class and pupils in Key Stage 2 do not generally have positive attitudes. Those in Year 4, for example, have a legacy of poor working habits and find it difficult to listen and concentrate for sustained periods of time. In Year 6, discussions are dominated by a few pupils while the rest sit passively. Teachers sometimes rely too much on talking to pupils rather than using resources or practical activities to inspire them. In the Year 6 lesson, the showing of a video about animal predators gained the pupils' attention in a way that the earlier discussion did not. Similarly in a Year 5 lesson, the first half an hour was spent in completing a somewhat dull exercise where pupils had to draw the rooms in their house into which the sun shone at different time of the day. This was followed by a simple practical demonstration of how night and day occur using a child on a swivel chair turning to face the sun and then losing it again in the course of twenty four hours. This immediately had an impact on pupils. It gained their attention and consolidated their understanding of the concept through an imaginative approach.
84. Some teachers are understandably anxious about pupils' behaviour and the need to continuously call them to order affects the continuity of lessons. This, combined with an over-ambitious and not entirely relevant programme of work, resulted in one unsatisfactory lesson. Generally, however, teachers plan wisely. They have a satisfactory understanding of the subject but do not always have sufficiently high expectations, especially for the volume and presentation of work in books. There is insufficient use of information technology. The quality of marking varies from class to class. In the best examples, teachers pose questions that help pupils to think or to see how they can improve next time. One teacher, for example, writes, "Do the roots keep the plant firmly in the ground?" when she sees that the pupil has failed to list this function. Often, however, a tick is the only form of marking and this suggests that teachers are superficially assessing how well their pupils learn. This makes it more difficult to plan work to meet the particular needs of all pupils. One teacher during the inspection correctly changed her lesson in the light of experiences in an earlier one.
85. The subject manager has been absent for some time but the action plan and targets for the year are appropriate, with a concentration on improving staff confidence and

expertise in incorporating more investigative and experimental work in lessons. Improvements since the last inspection centre around the scheme of work. It is based on national recommendations but adapted to meet particular school needs. It gives good guidance to teachers about the work to be covered. A recent innovation requires teachers to regularly assess examples of work from each pupil that is then kept in an individual portfolio. This will, in time, enable progress to be charted. This again is an improvement since the last inspection. Analysis of national test results is also proving useful in highlighting areas of the curriculum, such as 'forces', that require attention and this is helping to improve standards.

## **ART**

86. At the time of the last inspection the provision for art was unsatisfactory and pupils were not achieving high enough standards. These issues have been well addressed at Key Stage 1 where pupils are achieving the expected level but pupils could still do better at Key Stage 2. The main improvement has been the recent adoption of a planning system which covers all the required aspects of the subject and provides a framework for developing pupils' skills. This is used more successfully in Stage 1 where pupils' work shows clear progression. Pupils in Year 1, for example, have produced observational drawings of plants using coloured pencils whilst in Year 2 the observational drawings have been done in pastels and show improved observational skills. However, this progression is not evident in Key Stage 2 and pupils' skills develop haphazardly; they are not consistently building on what they can already do. All Key Stage 2 pupils have sketch books but they have only been used well in Year 5 where pupils undertake art in greater depth and with more regularity. In other classes there is scant evidence of a range of work requiring different techniques. As a result the work seen does not match expectations for 11 year olds.
87. The strengths in teaching lie in Key Stage 1 and Year 5 where teachers have a secure subject knowledge, use appropriate technical vocabulary and plan a variety of interesting tasks. Pupils in Year 1 were engrossed in looking in mirrors in their attempts to draw self-portraits whilst those in Year 2 were enthusiastically creating seascapes, following their visit to an art gallery. Clear instructions for the task and effective intervention helped pupils to achieve their expectations. In Year 2 pupils were encouraged to become art critics, evaluating each other's work. Most could do this sensibly and with sensitivity. This was also evident in Year 5 where pupils spontaneously applauded particularly good efforts.
88. The weaknesses in teaching stem from a lack of high expectation, both in terms of the standard of work and the pace at which pupils can work. As a result, some pupils' behaviour deteriorates in lessons. They do not concentrate well or put in enough creative effort to produce good results. There are few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in lessons or to take responsibility. Adults regularly distribute equipment to the pupils rather than the pupils doing this themselves. The lack of materials sometimes impairs the quality of pupils' work. In Year 1 the shortage of coloured pencils and badly worn down pastels meant that pupils had to move from table to table to fetch what they wanted, thus causing unnecessary disturbance. The school has a collection of examples of great works of art but these are not effectively used to ensure that pupils have a wide appreciation of the work of different artists, particularly at Key Stage 2.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. At the time of the last report standards of attainment in design were judged to be satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. From the work seen during the inspection it is evident that this picture remains the same.

90. Pupils in Key Stage 1 undertake an appropriate range of topics which enable them to develop different skills using a variety of materials. Pupils in Year 2 have designed and made some intriguing and imaginative devices for enabling 'Insy Winsy Spider' to climb up the spout. However, from the work seen it is evident that these skills are not built upon systematically as pupils get older. For instance pupils in Year 3 were bewildered by how to evaluate a photograph frame. Pupils in Year 4 make a mock up of a picture frame using cardboard and cellotape. In Year 2, they had carried out a similar exercise but had made their frame out of wood. In Year 6, pupils have watched a video of machines used on construction sites. They are expected to draw a plan of a vehicle indicating moving parts but have very limited experience to build on. As a result, by the end of the lesson the majority of plans are sketchy and of unsatisfactory quality.
91. During the inspection teaching of design and technology was satisfactory. The school has recently agreed upon the planning guidelines to be adopted throughout the school. To date, pupils' experience in Key Stage 2 is limited to one-off projects which are not securely founded in a context of developing sequential skills. There is no control technology aspect to the curriculum and no application of number and measuring skills. The present co-ordinator has only recently assumed management of the subject and until now there has been no co-ordinator for two years. She recognises the need for an audit of resources and for the full implementation of the scheme of work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. No assessment was made in the last inspection report about attainment and progress and judgements this time are based almost entirely on a scrutiny of work and one lesson in Year 2. Pupils' learning is sound in Key Stage 1 but those in Key Stage 2 do not make enough progress. There is, however, insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school.
93. Year 1 pupils consider the different ways in which they get to school and make a simple map of the route they take to a local supermarket using symbols to represent a church and houses. In Year 2, they consider the differences between Bristol and Katie Morag's island to the north of Scotland. They also study an impressive aerial photograph and identify physical and human features of the coastal location. This helps them to draw their own seaside plans and include their own features. Pupils had a positive attitude to this activity though there was no real enthusiasm during the introduction to the lesson. The teacher prepared the lesson well and the aerial photograph focused the pupils' attention. However, the pace was affected by the restlessness of a few pupils and the constant need to reprimand them.
94. In Key Stage 2, topics are touched upon but not studied in sufficient depth and there is not enough work done in any year-group. In Year 3, for example, there is a superficial study of weather and of temperate, polar and desert zones in the world. In Year 4, a study of contrasting life styles in Britain and the Indian village of Chembakolli is not completed in any depth, nor is there any development by Year 5 pupils considering the environmental effects of heavy traffic. Year 6 have very little in their books. A worksheet illustrating the features of a river is cut up and stuck into books with very little explanation and scant attention to the quality of presentation. Untidy work is common in many books and reflects low expectations of teachers.
95. The subject manager is newly appointed this year and has not had an opportunity to scrutinise books or planning and does not have a clear idea of pupils' achievements across the school. She has re-written the policy and there is now a useful scheme of work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Inspectors then commented on the lack of work in books and the irregularity with which geography was taught and little

has changed. Resources are just about adequate to deliver the curriculum. The manager has bought some useful items this year, such as a set of aerial photographs and there are sufficient globes and atlases. The local area is used for geography. Year 1 pupils, for example, look at the different types of buildings near the school whilst older pupils often visit Bristol Cathedral.

## HISTORY

96. Judgements about achievement in history at Key Stage 1 are based entirely on a scrutiny of work in books for this school year. This denotes satisfactory achievement and progress and indicates a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 1 gain a sound understanding that some things are old and some are new by looking at toys and by studying the games that we play now compared to those in the past. In Year 2, they study famous people from the past like Florence Nightingale and learn about famous historical events such as the Great Fire of London. They appreciate that information can be gained from books and from studying real objects, comparing an old toy with a shiny new one, for example.
97. In Key Stage 2, achievement has deteriorated since the last inspection and is not at the level expected. Pupils' work shows that topics are rarely studied in depth and the volume of work is poor in some years, particularly Year 6, where there is hardly anything in pupils' books. Pupils do not make enough progress. Nevertheless, the required topics are all addressed even though they are superficially covered in most classes. Year 3 pupils are already gaining a sense of where periods of British history fall as they construct a timeline in their lesson. Year 4 pupils however have scant knowledge about World War 2 which makes it difficult for their temporary teacher to conduct an effective drama lesson about evacuees.
98. Pupils in Key Stage 2 generally have a diffident attitude to the subject although those in Year 3 are enthusiastic about constructing a timeline. This contrasts with the poor behaviour of some Year 4 pupils in their drama activity and the inattention of some Year 5 pupils in their lesson about the horrors experienced by a child chimney-sweep in Victorian times. These negative attitudes are sometimes due to the uninspiring methods chosen by the teacher to impart knowledge. Lessons often consist of discussions about a piece of text followed by written work. Opportunities for pupils to discover things for themselves are rare.
99. Teaching overall was satisfactory in the lessons seen, though the failure to curb the inattentive behaviour of some pupils caused one lesson to be judged unsatisfactory because pupils made very little progress. In a good lesson, the teacher's keenness and her ability to channel the enthusiasm of the pupils effectively towards a resolution of the problem she had set, enabled the pupils to make good progress. In another lesson, the temporary teacher had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve but was hampered by their poor working habits – habits that have been acquired and not curbed over recent times.
100. The subject manager is new to the post this year and has spent time writing an up-to-date policy and auditing the resources because they were inadequate. Some books and artefacts have been bought but there is still a need for more. One teacher, for example, is providing her own resources for the particular aspect of Tudor life that she wants to study since the school's resources are centred on Henry VIII and his wives. There is now a useful scheme of work that is based on the nationally recommended programme of work and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject manager does not yet have a clear idea of the standards in history throughout the school. She has not observed any lessons, or been given guidance about the value of scrutinising planning or

books as a way of gaining an insight. She has however followed through this year's action plan successfully.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

101. In the last inspection report, standards in information technology were unsatisfactory in both key stages. Pupils made insufficient use of information technology to support their learning across the curriculum. There was no whole school approach to the systematic development of pupils' skills and experience of applications. There has been no significant improvement since the last inspection.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can start the computer, access individual programmes and close them down. They have been given opportunities to use the mouse to make selections while working on simple dictionary or number programmes. They can move pictures on screen and control the mouse with an appropriate degree of hand and eye co-ordination. They develop some familiarity with the computer keyboard and type simple text on screen but knowledge of word processing functions is erratic. For example a Year 2 pupil writes a story on screen, underlines the title using the correct command but centres her work by using the space bar. In Year 2, pupils use a programme called 'Amazing Animals' to find out which animals reproduce from eggs. Also in Year 2, pupils use a roamer to explore direction and right angles. There is no overall scheme in place, however, which will systematically develop pupils' skills in using hardware and software to support problem solving activities in mathematics or recording activities in other subjects of the curriculum.
103. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can access and close selected programmes and undertake basic word processing. Their knowledge of the multiplicity of functions and options, however, is very limited. For instance, Year 6 pupils in an exploratory session did not understand that, in order to change the font or font size, text first had to be highlighted. In both Years 5 and 6, pupils use a data handling programme to convert information to a graphical form. There is no coverage in Key Stage 2 of the required control and monitoring aspects of the information technology curriculum. Pupils undertake occasional tasks and acquire isolated skills which do not add up to a complete picture or coherent overall curriculum for information technology. Skills, concepts and knowledge, when acquired, are not built on step-by-step and no records are kept of individual pupils' experiences.
104. There is considerable expertise on the staff but teachers are finding it difficult to effectively link the use of information and communications technology with other subjects. The school has recently purchased a published scheme which provides detailed lesson plans to teach specific skills in a classroom with access to only one computer.

## **MUSIC**

105. Very little music teaching was seen so there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the teaching of music and pupils' achievements or to assess advances since the last inspection except in singing. In the last report this was deemed to be unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. It has improved and is now of an acceptable standard. Pupils sing enthusiastically and every word of the 'Our Father' can be heard when they perform it in assembly. Year 2 pupils confidently sing each section with other pupils echoing the words. Most of them sing in tune and keep good time with the flute accompaniment. They are conscious of the mood of the prayer. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, a hymn is sung sensitively in assembly and the accompaniment from guitar and flute supports the pupils' tuneful and reverent approach. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to hear music from other cultures during assemblies and in dance lessons.

106. Teachers now plan from a commercial scheme of work that has been adapted for school use. This again is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are supported in delivering the curriculum by sufficient resources that are generally of good quality. These are put to good effect in one lesson where pupils are composing rhythmical pieces of music and writing their parts in simple graphical notation. Pupils work well together in small groups, each one having an instrument and playing a different rhythm pattern covering eight beats. They record their compositions and are pleased when the play-back shows that they have kept together and created an interesting texture of sound. The teacher in this lesson explains the task clearly, has the resources to hand and has good control of the class as they collect their instruments and begin to work in groups. She praises good effort appropriately and structures the lesson successfully so that all pupils have time to perform their compositions at the end.
107. The subject manager is not able to directly observe colleagues' music lessons but she is available to give advice to teachers, particularly about planning. She has achieved the targets for this year that are outlined in her action plan such as the introduction of singing practices for both key stages. For the first time too, the Christmas production involved separate performances from pupils in the two key stages so giving greater opportunities for the younger pupils to shine. However, there are no opportunities for pupils to learn an instrument and no music clubs that operate out of school hours. Musicians do not visit school, though the link governor is aware of this and has made suggestions to the subject manager about how this can be improved. Some older pupils are given the opportunity to sing and perform in a local hospital at harvest-time and at a home for elderly people at Christmas.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Standards in physical education were satisfactory in both key stages at the time of the last report and this continues to be the case. Pupils in Key Stage 1 demonstrate good co-ordination and spatial awareness in their gymnastics and movement lessons. The youngest pupils demonstrate that they can listen well and copy movements demonstrated by the teacher and other pupils. They can create a simple sequence of movement in floor work activities.
109. Pupils in Year 3 continue to build on these skills and are beginning to work more independently and think for themselves while structuring a series of movements using apparatus. These skills are translated in Year 4 into successful sequencing of dance movements. Previous skills are effectively developed through a different medium. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were engaged in individual athletics activities and in a series of lessons endeavour to improve their performance over time. The class teachers provide appropriate guidance and support and most pupils can sustain the activities for an appropriate length of time. The pupils, however, do not always put in enough physical effort, they go off task and many do not take the activities seriously. Most pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 achieve the expected national standards in swimming.
110. Some physical education lessons provide the pupils with sufficient challenge and enough activity to harness their enthusiasm and so they make good progress. Teaching of physical education is satisfactory whilst swimming is well taught. Pupils in Year 3 whose behaviour had proved difficult to manage in the classroom, were enthusiastic and co-operative. They were kept busy and understood what was expected of them. As a result they made visible progress during the lesson and were pleased with their own achievements, both in terms of swimming and with their behaviour. Similarly, in one very good dance lesson pupils were enraptured by the variety of music and the pace of the lesson kept them interested. The teacher's timely and sensitive support helped pupils to develop their skills and gave them the self-confidence to participate. These pupils were clearly building on what they had done before whereas where teaching is less effective the activities are repetitious and pupils become bored. Teachers are distracted from the purpose of the lesson by the need to constantly remind pupils of how to behave.
111. There is a only a limited range of extra-curricular sports activities. A parent has helped with rugby and basketball teaching in blocks of ten lessons and six sessions of coaching in Kwik Cricket have been provided. There are after school clubs for netball and football.