

INSPECTION REPORT

St Vincent's RC Lower School

Houghton Regis

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 109631

Inspection Number: 191022

Headteacher: Mrs P Cotton

Reporting inspector: Mr C Gray

Dates of inspection: 16th – 18th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706970

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the appropriate authority must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. Every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school should receive a free copy of the summary of the report within ten working days of receipt of the summary by the appropriate authority. A charge not exceeding the cost of supply may be made by the appropriate authority for any other copies of the report and/or its summary provided to any person who asks for one.

The appropriate authority should make a copy of the report and the summary available for inspection by members of the public at such times and at such a place as may be reasonable.

Any enquiries about this legislation should be addressed to the OFSTED Compliance Helpline
Tel. 0171421 6567

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hammersmith Gardens Houghton Regis Bedfordshire LU5 5RG
Telephone number:	01582 862456
Appropriate authority:	Diocese of Northampton
Name of chair of governors:	Fr Kieran Magovern
Date of previous inspection:	13 th –17 th May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
C Gray, Registered Inspector	Mathematics; Information technology; Music	Attainment & progress; Teaching; Efficiency of the school
T Mastin, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour & personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance & pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents & the community
D Buckle, Team Inspector	English; Design and technology; History; Geography; Special educational needs	Leadership & management; Staffing, accommodation & learning resources
D Cullen, Team Inspector	Science; Art; Physical education; Areas of learning for children under five	Curriculum & assessment; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social & cultural welfare

The inspection contractor was:

Beaumont Education & Consultancy Services

Horseshoe Cottage
School Lane
Scaldwell
Northamptonshire
NN6 9LD

Tel: 01604 881720

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1 - 5

Characteristics of the school
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

6 - 32

Attainment and progress
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Attendance

Quality of education provided

33 - 75

Teaching
The curriculum and assessment
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

The management and efficiency of the school

76 - 97

Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five 98 - 109

English, mathematics and science 110 - 136

Other subjects 137 - 175

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 176

Data and indicators 177

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4.
- Pupils make good progress across the school.
- Pupils behave very well; they have good attitudes to learning and strong relationships with adults and with one another.
- Pupils' attendance is good.
- The provision for under-fives is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school gives the pupils good support, welfare and guidance.
- The school has built up a good partnership with parents who in turn give very good support to the school.
- The school is run efficiently.
- The headteacher and deputy head share a clear educational vision.
- The school has a very good, Catholic ethos.
- The school gives good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school does not carry out regular checks to establish a clear picture of the effectiveness of teaching.
- II. Future educational developments are not sufficiently tied to budget planning and their successful achievement is not closely monitored.
- III. Teachers do not make enough use of recording the levels of pupils' attainment on their past work.
- IV. The length of the school day at Key Stage 2 is less than the recommended amount.

The weaknesses are very much outweighed by what the school does well. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Following the inspection in 1996, an action plan was produced to tackle the key issues and to improve other concerns raised in the inspection report.

The school's curriculum has been improved by the adoption of schemes of work, giving useful guidance to teachers in most subjects. Assessment procedures are used well in English, mathematics and science to give information about pupils' attainment and progress and there are satisfactory systems in most other subjects. The provision for higher attaining pupils has been improved and the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in National Curriculum tests has increased; teachers group pupils by prior attainment in English, mathematics and science and give different work to these groups, though teachers' expectations of brighter pupils are not always sufficiently high. Systems for monitoring teaching were set up after the last inspection, but have had to be interrupted because the headteacher has had to be involved in class support to a far greater extent than planned because of staffing difficulties. There has been less progress in improving the school development plan than might have been expected, caused by the change in senior management and the reconstitution of the governing body.

Overall, the progress made in the majority of areas where concerns were noted previously has been satisfactory. The school is soundly placed to make further improvements and meet its targets, because it is led by a conscientious headteacher, deputy head and governors. They receive the commitment of a hard-working staff and the whole-hearted support of parents, and the school is improving further.

• **Standards in subjects**

This table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
Reading	A	A	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
Writing	A	A	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
Mathematics	A	A	<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

The inspection found that attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine is above average in English, mathematics and science. It is average in information technology.

In the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 is good in history and satisfactory in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory in all other subjects.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 9 years
English	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. It is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons, good or better in 50 per cent, and very good in a further 4 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in 4 per cent of lessons.

Teaching in Key Stage 2 is not as consistent as in the rest of the school. The deputy head has good teaching skills but has not yet been in the school long enough to share her expertise.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good; this is a strength of the school and stems from the Catholic ethos which enlightens the school.
Attendance	Good; attendance levels are above the average for schools of this type. There is no unauthorised absence.
Ethos*	Very good and of a clear Christian nature; pupils have good attitudes to their work and very good relationships with adults and with one another.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory overall; the headteacher and deputy head give good leadership and share a clear vision of future developments. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and development planning is in the early stages and is currently insufficient.
Curriculum	Good; the school offers good equality of access to all its pupils and has planned a broad and balanced curriculum. Assessment is satisfactory, though a few non-core subjects lack arrangements for regular assessment.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good support from all the staff with whom they come into contact. Staff supporting pupils with learning difficulties have a firm but friendly and caring approach which encourages pupils to be independent. The special educational needs co-ordinator knows all the pupils well and gives good support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall; good provision for spiritual development and very good provision for moral and social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. There is good provision of support staff.
Value for money	Good. Pupils enter the school with average attainment and from broadly average backgrounds; they make good progress and leave with above average attainment overall; they receive a good quality education.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- V. The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life
- VI. They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems
- VII. The school keeps them well informed about the children's progress
- VIII. The school enables children to achieve good standards of work
- IX. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities
- X. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on the children
- XI. The school achieves high standards of good behaviour
- XII. Almost all children enjoy school

What some parents are not happy about

- XIII. The instability caused to a class by staff
- XIV. The lunchbreak is too long for the youngest

The inspection team endorses parents very positive views about the school in all the items they are happy about. The school did face staffing difficulties last year and there were interruptions to learning; the school has done its best to overcome these difficulties. The youngest pupils are tired by the end of the afternoon but no more so than the under-fives usually are.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To improve the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

XV. Develop systems for the regular monitoring of teaching across the school in order to identify areas for development. (78-81)

XVI. Improve the quality of development planning by:

- tying future projects more firmly to budget planning;
- including with each target a criterion for success which is easily quantifiable and measurable;
- extending the planning cycle to cover more than one year. (81; 92-97)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Make more use of levelling pupils' work which is kept in portfolios, in order to provide further evidence of pupils' progress and to give staff more experience of assigning National Curriculum levels. (8; 60; 127)
- Make greater use of systems of assessment in geography, history, music and physical education. (57-59)
- Ensure that the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 accords with recommendations. (45; 52)

Numbers in brackets indicate a reference to the main paragraphs in the full report where the weaknesses are discussed.

·

INTRODUCTION

- **Characteristics of the school**
- 1 St Vincent's Lower School serves the Roman Catholic community in Houghton Regis, near Dunstable in Bedfordshire. The school is for children aged four to nine, and has 115 full-time pupils (63 boys and 52 girls) plus five boys and three girls who attend part-time in the reception class because they are only just four years old. These numbers are similar to those at the time of the last inspection; the school is small compared with most first and infant schools.
 - 2 Children enter the reception class in the term after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 full-time children in reception plus eight part-timers; altogether, 22 were under five. Most of the children in reception have had experience of some sort of pre-school provision. Children's attainment on entry is broadly similar to the national average.
 - 3 The socio-economic background of the pupils is broadly similar to national averages. Approximately ten per cent of pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal, which is a little below the national average for first and infant schools and lower than at the time of the last inspection, when it stood at 19 per cent. Just under one per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language and approximately three per cent come from ethnic minority groups; these figures are similar to most schools and are not much different from the situation at the last inspection. There are 33 pupils on the special needs register; at approximately 29 per cent, this is well above the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, and, in percentage terms (1.7 per cent), this is a little above the county and national averages. These figures are a little higher than at the last inspection.
 - 4 The school has a mission statement, "May God's love shine in our lives as we care and share and learn together." As a Roman Catholic school, it takes the mission of Jesus Christ as the centre of all it does and has six priorities:
 - to practise the gospel teaching of trust, honesty and forgiveness;
 - to provide a safe, caring, challenging, happy and prayerful environment;
 - to recognise the God-given talents of all and to ensure equal opportunity;
 - to encourage each child to do his/her best;
 - to value each member of our school, treating everyone with respect and courtesy;
 - to encourage self-respect and self-discipline.
- 1 The school development plan for 1999/2000 has a number of targets for each term; amongst those for the current term are:
 - staff to undergo training in the use of the Internet;
 - set targets of attainment for the year;
 - review the special needs register;
 - prepare for the building of the nursery;
 - implement the national numeracy strategy;
 - celebrate the school's Silver Jubilee.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	10	12	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
		Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys Girls Total	11 11 22
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School National	100 (80) 82(80)	91 (74) 83(81)	100 (93) 87(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
		Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys Girls Total	11 10 21
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School National	95 (80) 82(81)	91 (72) 86(85)	95 (96) 87(86)

.....
1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
Absence		National comparative data	4.6
Unauthorised		School	0
Absence		National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Fixed period	Permanent	Number
			2
			0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	4
	Satisfactory or better	96
	Less than satisfactory	4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Attainment

- 1 Provision for the under-fives is currently in Class 1. Children enter the class in the term after their fourth birthday and attend either the morning or the afternoon session; the September intake attends full-time in January whilst the rest remain part-time. Reception and Year 1 pupils are in the same class as the four-year-olds. At the time of the inspection, 22 children in this classes were under five. Children's attainment when they enter the nursery is broadly in line with the national averages, as the baseline assessment shows.
- 2 By the time they are five, children's overall standards of attainment are in line with the national expectations as set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. In language and literacy and personal and social development, most children's attainment is above what is expected; in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development, most children attain standards which are broadly in line with what is expected. This is a better picture than at the time of the last inspection, when it was found that "At times, the very large class is daunting for these four year olds ... sometimes they appear bewildered and are silent learners."
- 3 Pupils' overall attainment when they leave the school at the end of Year 4 is above average, which is a considerable improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. In 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, results in the National Curriculum tests showed that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was very high in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Results in teachers' assessments for science were above average. Results at the higher level (Level 3) were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics; in teachers' assessments for science, the percentage at Level 3 was below average. However, the teachers' assessments for Level 3 in mathematics were very much lower than the test results and there is some doubt about the low figure in science. This is because teachers have limited experience of levelling work, as the scrutiny and portfolios show.
- 4 When compared with the results of schools in a similar context, the school's overall 1999 results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Comparison with previous years' results shows a consistent picture of above average results since 1996, though there was a slight decline in 1998, caused by a larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs in the group which took the tests.
- 5 The school analyses the results of national and a range of other tests, especially those from the voluntary Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests at the end of Year 3 and Year 4. Last summer, it was found that the pupils in both these year groups had not performed as well overall as they had done when they took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. The principal reason for this was found to be that teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment were not always high enough. Disruptions to learning caused by staffing problems also contributed. Good teaching for the Year 4 pupils in mathematics and for the Year 3 pupils in English (by the same teacher) have remedied this situation well.
- 6 The school does not analyse pupils' attainment by sex, other than what is shown by National Curriculum test results. There was some evidence in previous years' results to suggest that girls performed better than boys and to a greater extent than is so nationally; however, this difference was not repeated in the 1999 tests and inspectors found no evidence of a significant difference in performance of boys and girls.

- 7 In English, mathematics and science, the findings of the inspection are that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4 is above average. This is slightly different from the 1999 National Curriculum test results, and reflects the fact that there are more pupils with special educational needs in both Years 2 and 4 than was the case last year; the 1998 test results and the school's targets for 2000 corroborate this view. Also, there is some tendency for pupils to perform better in tests than they do in their day-to-day work.
- 8 In English, pupils' standards in speaking and listening are well developed across the school. Pupils listen attentively in class to the teacher and to their classmates, answering questions and joining in discussion appropriately. They speak clearly in assembly or when reading at the school Mass.
- 9 Standards in literacy are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read fluently and accurately. Average and lower attaining pupils use letter sounds to work out words they are unsure of; higher attainers make sensible predictions about how a story might continue. By the end of Year 4, most pupils read a reasonably wide range of books although few make independent choices. Higher attaining pupils use the library classification system successfully.
- 10 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write clearly and neatly with joined script. Pupils spell most common words accurately and use letter sounds to make good attempts at more difficult words. By the end of Year 4, whilst higher attaining pupils write fluently with neatly formed handwriting, the writing of average and lower attainers is less well formed and often untidy.
- 11 In mathematics, standards in numeracy are good; by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of number facts and place value. They use standard measures for weight and length and are familiar with common shapes. Pupils use information technology to construct graphs. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they have a good recall of times-tables facts. Regular practice of mental skills means that they are developing considerable agility in this aspect. Pupils learn about perimeter and higher attaining pupils measure the sides of irregular polygons accurately and test Euler's law about solids. Pupils collect data which they display in diagrams, tables and graphs and then analyse.
- 12 In science, there is a strong emphasis on investigations. Year 2 pupils understand what is meant by "fair testing" and Year 4 pupils use mathematical skills in collecting personal statistics in connection with work on the human body. They are mostly able to make predictions and hypotheses based on the information they find.
- 13 In information technology, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4 is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 use word processing to edit text, turning a piece of continuous prose into verse by inserting paragraph marks after the rhymes. They use a graphics package in art and basic data handling programs in mathematics. Year 4 pupils combine text and images to make party invitations and experience control technology with the screen turtle.
- 18
18 **Progress**
- 14 Children make good progress overall across the school and this is a direct result of the quality of teaching. Improving the provision for higher attaining pupils was a key issue in the last inspection report. The school has made satisfactory progress in this area and higher attaining pupils are generally making similar progress to other pupils. Pupils are grouped by prior attainment in all lessons for English, mathematics and science, as well as for some other lessons, and different work is usually given to higher attaining pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, the work given to these pupils is not sufficiently more challenging than work given to average pupils. This means that on these occasions, their progress is limited.
- 15 Average and lower attaining pupils also benefit in this way from work matched to their need and expectations of these pupils mean that their progress is appropriate. Pupils with statements of educational need are well supported and make good progress measured against the targets on their individual education plans. There are no significant variations in the progress of boys or girls. The school has set appropriate targets for future attainment.

- 16 Children who are under five make good progress overall in the reception class. Progress in personal and social development is good; children settle well and quickly, and understand the familiar routines of the day. They respond well to instructions and know right from wrong. Progress is good in language and literacy and in mathematics. In reading, children enjoy stories and pictures. In writing, they recognise many letters and are aware of upper and lower case. In mathematics, most children order numbers up to ten; they count in tens and understand the concept of addition. Children make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory progress in creative and physical development.
- 17 In English and literacy, pupils make good progress across the school overall, though progress in writing slows down in Year 4, where standards of presentation have slipped. Progress is good in reading: in Key Stage 1, pupils acquire skills systematically to improve accuracy and fluency, by regular practice at home and in school. In Key Stage 2, whilst pupils read books of increasing difficulty on the reading scheme, their reading for enjoyment does not improve at the same pace. Several pupils in the reading sample reported that they do not read every day at home.
- 18 In mathematics and numeracy, pupils at both key stages make good progress. Number skills are developed carefully in Key Stage 1 and pupils learn to count backwards and forwards, subtracting and adding amounts mentally. They show a developing understanding of pattern in number. Progress slows down in Year 3, where the teaching depends heavily on worksheets, but picks up again in Year 4 because of the quality of the teaching for this mathematics group.
- 19 Pupils make good progress in science at both key stages. Pupils are already used to practical experiments in the reception class; this develops well so that, by the time they are in Key Stage 2, pupils write a careful analysis of how they will carry out a test, what they will need and what they think will happen. They draw effective conclusions from their results.
- 20 Progress in information technology is satisfactory at both key stages. Reception children learn basic mouse skills and pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop these when they design pictures using the program *Splash!* in art lessons. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use their knowledge of different applications to combine graphics and text. They are familiar with information technology in a range of subjects and are used to turning to the computer as another tool for learning.
- 21 In the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 is good in history and satisfactory in all the rest. At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory in all other subjects.

26

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 22 Children who are under five settle into school well and quickly. They soon follow class routines and understand the reason for them. They change for physical education and fold their clothes; only a few need help with cuffs or top buttons, though, as one would expect, only a few have so far mastered laces or ties. They behave well and wait patiently to take turns.
- 23 Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have good attitudes to learning. They respond well in lessons, listen well to instructions given by teachers and show good concentration in their work. Pupils are able to work independently or collaboratively as required.
- 24 Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good; this is a strength of the school and stems from the Catholic ethos which enlightens the school. Pupils' manners are excellent and reflect well on the examples set by staff. Pupils are consistently courteous to each other, staff and visitors. An inspector was very pleased to be taken in hand by two five-year-olds who took him to see the climbing apparatus, explaining its use. Movement around the school is orderly and respect is shown for property. A whole-school target this term has been to move to literacy and numeracy lessons quietly and this is being achieved successfully. There have been two temporary exclusions but no permanent ones in the past twelve months.
- 25 Pupils have very good, constructive relationships with each other and with members of staff. All

pupils play well together at lunchtime and playtime in a variety of pastimes. Relationships in the classroom are very good; pupils are both respectful and supportive of each other. Pupils have very good relationships with the staff and appreciate the guidance provided on all matters. Racial harmony is firmly established.

- 26 Pupils' personal development is good. Older pupils act as mentors to younger pupils. Pupils in Year 4 take responsibility in such matters as the distribution of games resources at lunchtime, collection of registers and the monitoring of behaviour of younger pupils in school corridors. Pupils respond very well in accepting such responsibility and this contributes well to the pupils' personal development.

31 **Attendance**

27 Attendance levels at the school are good and above the average for schools of this type. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at the school on time and registers are taken promptly allowing lessons to begin on time. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

32 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

32 **Teaching**

28 The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. It is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons, good or better in 50 per cent, and very good in a further four per cent. It is unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons. This is broadly similar to the findings at the last inspection.

29 Teaching is good for the under-fives; it is good in 80 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 20 per cent. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good; it is good in 70 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 30 per cent. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory; it is good or better in 27 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 64 per cent and unsatisfactory in nine per cent. Teaching in this key stage is much more variable than in the other two phases, where it is generally consistent. The best teaching in the school was observed in Key Stage 2, but the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is also to be found in this key stage - though it must be said that the majority of this particular teacher's work is sound - the school has no weak teachers.

30 The teaching of pupils under five is good and children are given a good start to their education. A strength of the teaching is the encouragement of personal and social development. Support staff are used well and the nursery nurse teaches literacy and numeracy well. Teaching is also good in knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory in creative development and in physical development. A weaknesses in the teaching of the under-fives is the lack of provision of large, wheeled toys for outside use.

31 The quality of English teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced well, though weekly planning grids do not show lesson objectives. Occasionally, independent work is insufficiently challenging for average and above average attaining pupils. The use of questioning is good at Key Stage 1 and teachers use follow-up questions to extend pupils' thinking. In Key Stage 2, there are good features to the teaching of the Year 3 group, such as the development of creative writing, but the teaching of writing to the Year 4 group contains little opportunity for extended writing. The handwriting of some average and lower attainers is allowed to be careless.

32 The teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. A strength at Key Stage 1 is the quality of questioning, especially for the youngest pupils. This is used to check the extent of understanding and to lead the pupils on further. At this key stage, the tasks given to higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenging. In Key Stage 2, the class teachers swap over year groups so that the Class 4 teacher takes the Year 3 group and the Class 3 teacher teaches the oldest children. The teaching in this latter group is good, and high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve have brought the pupils to higher levels than they reached in the end of Year 3 tests in the summer. Teaching in Year 3 is not of the same standard and pupils' progress is limited by the use of work sheets and unclear explanations.

33 Science teaching is good across the school. Teachers have high expectations and create opportunities for pupils to show initiative, which promotes the development of the skills of enquiry, systematic investigation and recording. Lessons are managed well and resources are generally well organised and used imaginatively.

34 The teaching of information technology is satisfactory at both key stages. A strength of the teaching is

- the use of whole-class introductions at the start of an activity, which are generally well chosen to link well with other areas of the curriculum. A weaknesses is that, though all teachers keep a record to show who has used which programs, there is no way of ensuring that all pupils are spending the total time intended in contact with computers.
- 35 In the other subjects of the curriculum, teaching is good in history at Key Stage 1. Teaching is satisfactory in art, design and technology, music and physical education at both key stages and in history at Key Stage 2. The teaching of design and technology is good in Year 2. No judgement was possible in geography because of insufficient evidence.
- 36 Teachers generally have a satisfactory knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and expertise in science investigations is good. The teaching of mathematics in Year 3 is too reliant on unconnected worksheets.
- 37 Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are generally high and pupils respond accordingly, though standards of written work in Year 4 are not always as good as those in Year 3. Expectations of what pupils can do are less consistent. All teachers group their pupils by prior attainment for English, mathematics and science and groups are generally given different tasks; but the tasks given to higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenging and are sometimes only slightly harder (and occasionally no harder) than the work given to average pupils. Expectations of lower attaining pupils are generally appropriate although there are occasions in mathematics when one or two find the task too hard.
- 38 Expectations of behaviour are mostly high. Good behaviour is very much the norm for each classroom and this produces a very good classroom ethos where pupils want to work hard and improve. Nine out of ten parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that teachers enable their children to attain high standards. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils, though a few pupils in the oldest class are not always adequately controlled; this affects the progress of none but themselves since other pupils are very self-disciplined.
- 39 Teachers' planning is of a satisfactory standard. Teachers plan on their own; though this is generally appropriate, there are occasions when this prevents the sharing of expertise - for example, in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Lesson objectives are clear in much of the planning, though the weekly literacy plans contain none. Other lessons sometimes have objectives which are either vague or too numerous; but, mostly, the use of objectives enables teachers to focus on what it is pupils are to learn and to choose appropriate and interesting activities and resources.
- 40 Time is mostly well used within lessons, which have appropriate pace and are usually divided up into sections for whole-class teaching, individual or group activities and final sessions to bring the class together. The exception is the start of the day; Key Stage 2 pupils are intended to come into school earlier than those in Key Stage 1 in order to give them a longer day, but, in practice, they do not settle down to work any sooner and their day is little longer.
- 41 Good use is made of support staff. The nursery nurse teaches the under-fives for literacy and numeracy; she does this well and it means that all the other pupils can be taught in year groups for these subjects instead of being in mixed-age groups as they are in the afternoons. The special needs co-ordinator is well deployed and gives good support to her pupils.
- 42 All teachers make good use of questioning to bring out what pupils already know and what they have learned in introductions to lessons and in final sessions. Good links are made with previous lessons. This was well demonstrated in a mathematics lesson for Year 1 pupils who were learning about the concept of weight. The teacher asked very specific questions to ascertain the level of each child's understanding and take him further; this also involved tactfully silencing those who were very keen to answer so that the slower responders had a proper opportunity to think and reply.
- 43 Good use is made of homework at both key stages and parents' involvement in this is good and is an important factor in pupils' good progress. The work stems directly from classroom activities and develops pupils' understanding, though there was one occasion when insufficient time was left in a lesson to talk about requirements clearly. The oldest pupils who were heard to read (a small sample)

spend less time reading at home than younger ones, and all of them said that their parents no longer read to them.

44 The use of day-to-day assessment is good for the under-fives and satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. The quality of marking is good across the school and is supported by a good policy. Many examples of helpful comments were seen in pupils' books and teachers often redirect the next day's lesson because of how pupils had responded in their work. There was the occasional example of rushed marking in mathematics, when incorrect work was ticked.

45 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by assistants and by class teachers. Teaching is good within the whole class and in small groups and for individuals both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers, support staff and voluntary workers have good relationships with the pupils. They explain work well and give good feedback. Games and sometimes computer software programs are used to good effect to keep pupils' attention - for example, to improve their letter and sound recognition skills.

50 **The curriculum and assessment**

46 The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum for pupils at both key stages which meets National Curriculum and statutory requirements. The curriculum for pupils under five is good and planned appropriately, linked to the desirable learning outcomes and covers the six areas of learning. Pupils are well prepared for the next area of development. Staff are very aware of preparing pupils for leaving at the age of nine. Sex education is dealt with as it arises, although there is no policy. The Life Bus visits the school annually in connection with health and drugs awareness. . Health and drugs education follow a similar pattern. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to show personal initiative and for social development, which develop from the positive ethos in the school; for example, voluntarily bringing in work to enhance class topic work and responsibilities, such as monitoring behaviour around the school.

47 Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well, although numeracy is still in its early stages. Every class has a literacy and numeracy hour each day when pupils are taught in year groups. The recommended length of the school day for Key Stage 1 is constant at 22 hours, but the 23½ hours intended for Key Stage 2 is not being fully used.

48 Pupils receive a rich and varied curriculum with appropriate balance between subjects. Activities in reception focus on National Curriculum subjects in preparation for work in Key Stage 1. In particular, part-time pupils are taught in a small group in order to offer them an equally rich curriculum.

49 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and fulfils the recommendations of the Code of Practice. All pupils work on the subjects of the National Curriculum and enjoy equal opportunities, regardless of ability, sex, race or background. Pupils' individual education plans provide targets for attainment and progress. The school has a policy for more able pupils and recognises the importance of meeting their needs; however, the different tasks they are given do not always offer sufficient challenge.

50 Since the previous report, the school has made satisfactory progress in the organisation of the curriculum. All subject areas, except physical education, have newly drafted policies and schemes of work; physical education had no scheme of work at the time of the last inspection. The schemes of work now detail the progression of skills from year to year and give a yearly breakdown of knowledge and understanding. Long and medium term planning is thorough and gives good continuity and progression between year groups and the key stages. Short term planning, however, is inconsistent, as it sometimes lacks both detail and learning outcomes.

51 The wide range of extra-curricular activities is good and enriches pupils' learning. Activities are organised by teachers, parents and assistants and include football, drama, violin, recorders, guitar, a mathematics club for the more able, science club and dance.

- 52 Assessment procedures satisfy statutory requirements; they are satisfactory overall and good for the under-fives. In the early years, the county's baseline assessment is used to analyse progress and highlight difficulties, and this works well. Profiles are drawn up for socio-emotional aspects and co-ordination, which are completed before pupils enter the main school at five. Continuing profiles in English and mathematics are completed.
- 53 At Key Stages 1 and 2, procedures are used well in English, mathematics and science to give information about pupils' attainment and progress and to affect future planning. Assessment in science takes place from the child's entry into main school. In reading, the Suffolk Reading Scale and the Nelson test are used. Spelling is assessed diagnostically throughout the school. In reading, writing and spelling, targets are drawn up to assess progress; tests in English and mathematics for Years 3 and 4 are evaluated and Level 3 pupils are targeted for extension activities.
- 54 There are satisfactory systems in most other subjects, though some of these are new and have not yet been used to influence planning. Systems of assessment are not used in geography, history, music or physical education.
- 55 In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, profiles of work provide a secure system for monitoring pupils' progress; however, these have only just been started and the samples are not dated or given National Curriculum levels. Teachers have insufficient experience of levelling pupils' work.
- 56 A good marking policy promotes a consistent assessment of attainment throughout the school and pupils are benefiting from positive comments.
- 57 Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. Although some targets in the individual education plans lack precision, there have been improvements lately. The weaknesses found in the previous inspection have been largely overcome. Continuing assessment by the co-ordinator and termly reviews that relate to pupils' individual learning plans inform teachers' subsequent planning. Appropriate adjustments are made to learning activities to ensure progress.

62

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 58 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and very good in moral and social development. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained this strong approach and the pupils continue to benefit.
- 59 Pupils' spiritual development is good. It is underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos that is successfully promoted and supported by St. Vincent's priest, who is the chair of governors, the headteacher and all the staff. The local community also plays an important part through the weekly school Mass. Through assemblies, Mass and prayers (morning, lunchtime and evening), pupils are encouraged to develop their own spiritual awareness and to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Assemblies also give pupils the opportunity to be involved.
- 60 Provision for moral development is very good. The school's ethos and mission statement, which underpin all school aims and policies, promote a very strong moral code with positive values. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and demonstrate respect for each other, honesty, care and courtesy. All adults in the school set the children good examples. Behaviour in the school is very good and efforts are recognised in the form of certificates and stickers. Personal rights and equality are strongly promoted at all levels and the school also fosters awareness of the needs of others, such as linking up with a Nigerian school and sending money and materials, such as pens and pencils, for others less fortunate.
- 61 Provision for social development is also very good. The school fosters opportunities for pupils to extend social and personal understanding. Older pupils collect and deliver registers, monitor behaviour to and from assemblies, tidy physical education resources and the library, help at lunchtimes, tidying tables and being responsible for tray allocation and reading to younger pupils. The school's ethos, mission statement and aims promote responsibility and taking part. Parents appreciate

the strong social traditions evident in the school and particularly mention the family atmosphere. The chair of governors is also actively involved in this aspect of each pupil's development.

62 Cultural development in the school is satisfactory. Awareness of pupils' own culture is developed through history, geography, art, music, collective worship and assemblies. Assemblies also promote understanding of others' beliefs and faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism and African cultures. Pupils visit other Christian places of worship but no visits have been made to those of other faiths. A bank of multi-cultural resources and religious artefacts is being built up, encouraged by the support of the governors. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs further enriches cultural experiences.

67 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

63 The school makes good provision for the welfare, support and guidance of pupils in a caring secure and safe environment. The school positively promotes very good standards of behaviour. Parents are very supportive of the school's ethos and this has a positive effect on their children's learning.

64 Academic progress is satisfactorily monitored. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal but the practice is good and ensures that the school is aware of pupils' achievements in this area. There is good monitoring of academic progress of pupils with special educational needs. Staff know pupils very well throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the increased responsibility which is given as they progress through school life.

65 Pupils new to the school receive good pastoral care and guidance. Particular care is provided at the beginning of the younger pupils' time in school in ensuring that they become integrated into school life in a comfortable confident manner. Staff provide good and effective role models to children and this promotes good relationships with the pupils.

66 The school procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are very good. Parents respond well to the procedures for informing the school about their children's absence. The school has good child protection procedures and the promotion of the well being and health and safety of the pupils is effective. The school has good procedures for dealing with accidents, illness and the administration of first aid. Risk assessment of the premises is effective and ensures a safe learning environment. There are no health and safety issues although the governors are aware of the potential problems with the use of the car park by parents, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day.

71 **Partnership with parents and the community**

67 The partnership with parents and the community is good overall and a strength of the school. Parents take an active part in school life and are very supportive of the school's ethos. The school has a very strong commitment to ensuring that this partnership continues and is developed further. Pupils take books and reading records home regularly. Parents are informed of their children's progress each term through informal meetings with teachers. Annual reports on pupils' progress are comprehensive; they provide information on their attainment and progress and set targets for improvement. They meet statutory requirements. Parents receive regular information on the life and work of the school. This partnership with parents and the parental support provided in school make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

68 Liaison with middle schools is good and pupils visit on induction days, to familiarise themselves for the move to the next stage of education. Teachers from the middle schools visit St. Vincent's to meet the pupils and explain about the work and activities they will be doing.

69 The school has very good links with the church. There is a real sense of the school's being part of the Catholic community and this link provides the strong basis of the school's ethos. Members of the congregation as well as parents attend class assemblies and the school Mass.

70 The school has strong links with the local community and these make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils attend the local residential home and have presented concerts to the residents. A local business has sponsored the school's football team in ensuring that the pupils were appropriately equipped. Pupils responded to this in writing and offering their thanks. A business partnership has been involved with the school in raising levels of pupils' attendance, and it is in connection with this that the whole-school target about moving to lessons quietly was set.

75 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

75 **Leadership and management**

71 The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher share a good, clear educational vision for the school and this is one of its strengths. They are committed to raising standards, especially for higher attaining pupils and pupils in Key Stage 2, and to maintaining the strong Catholic ethos in the school that is justifiably so important to the parents. In furthering this latter commitment, the headteacher has been tireless in pursuing permission and funding to provide suitable accommodation for teaching children under-five.

72 The governing body gives good general support to the school. Some governors are closely involved on a day-to-day basis as support staff or voluntary helpers and the chair of governors, St. Vincent's priest, makes regular pastoral visits. The recently reconstituted governing body has adopted specified curriculum responsibilities and is now in a better position to review and monitor the work of the school, but these initiatives are too recent for their effectiveness to be judged.

73 The new deputy headteacher is leading the changes in numeracy by example with verve and enthusiasm. Because this is a small school, all teachers have management responsibilities, mostly as curriculum co-ordinators, including the headteacher. Co-ordinators provide good informal support to their colleagues. They monitor planning though they are a little tentative in offering criticism to colleagues. Subject policies have been effectively reviewed recently and appropriate adjustments made in light of national changes. The role of co-ordinator is just developing beyond this: co-ordinators have formulated action plans for their subjects and governors have asked them to produce a three-year rolling programme for replacement of or additions to resources, but this is so far their only involvement in budgetary matters.

74 Since the last inspection, the school has experienced staff changes, including the head and deputy. Long-term staff absence has meant that the headteacher has been involved in class support to a far greater extent than planned. Despite this, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and standards have continued to rise. The casualty of the situation has been progress on the action plan from the last inspection report. Issues relating to the development of the curriculum and assessment have been satisfactorily addressed, as has increasing the provision for higher attaining pupils; the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in National Curriculum tests has increased significantly. However, systems for monitoring teaching, set up after the last inspection, have had to be interrupted and there has been less progress in improving the school development plan than might have been expected. The staffing situation is now more settled and the school is in a sound position to make further improvements and to meet its targets.

75 The monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is unsatisfactory overall with some satisfactory features in recent initiatives. Staff work closely together to plan an effective curriculum. Recent improvements to the planning process ensure that teachers' half-termly planning is checked by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to ensure coverage. However, there is no further review to evaluate outcomes systematically. The school analyses the results of national tests and non-statutory tests at Years 3 and 4. It has successfully identified and improved areas of weakness in Key Stage 2 and there have been significant improvements in mathematics and writing in 1999. The local Reading Partnership initiative this year is focused appropriately on lower attaining readers in Year 4 and improvements in standards are already apparent. However, whilst the headteacher is aware of the teaching strengths and weaknesses of the staff, there are no systematic procedures in place to monitor

the effect of teaching on pupils' attainment. This position remains little different from what was found at the previous inspection.

76 Curriculum improvements and whole-school developments for this year are clearly identified in the school development plan. However, the plan does not extend beyond the current year. No responsibilities are allocated and there are no links to budgeting. Measurable ways of identifying the success of initiatives are not included. This makes it difficult for staff and governors to come easily to a clear view of the long-term plan of the school's development. There has been little improvement in this area since the previous inspection and it remains unsatisfactory.

77 The school implements its aims, values and policies well. Its mission statement, which is a prominent feature of all but the most recent main documents, stresses the need to care and share within a Christian community. This and the commitment to high attainment is evident in all that the staff do. The large majority of parents strongly support the school's aims and values, which encourage the creation of a school community in which pupils feel valued and at home. The school ethos is very good. An equal opportunities policy has recently been completed that confirms the good practice in the school, where all pupils benefit from all aspects of the curriculum.

78 Special educational needs are organised well by the experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She receives admirable support from the headteacher. However, the co-ordinator's position as the designated governor for special educational needs is inappropriate, since the role of this governor is to hold the school to account for its work with pupils with special educational needs; the school plans to rectify this. The school fully implements the Code of Practice and makes early identification of pupils with special educational needs including those of above average attainment. The latter is an improvement on the previous inspection.

79 Most statutory requirements are met except for some of the required information provided for parents in the prospectus and the governors' annual report. Omissions are : national comparative figures for National Curriculum tests; the rates of pupils' authorised absence; admission and provision for pupils with disabilities; the use of funding allocated for special educational needs; professional development undertaken by staff and the school's sporting achievements.

84 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

80 The school has sufficient and appropriately qualified teachers to teach the curriculum successfully. There are good levels of classroom support, especially for the youngest pupils and those pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is good. Whilst there are occasional disturbances caused by the school's semi-open plan nature, they were not found to be a problem; the school has worked effectively to remove the "disruptions" described in the last inspection report. Learning resources are generally satisfactory with good features, notably in science.

81 Staff are appropriately qualified with a good range of teaching experience. They have the expertise and enthusiasm to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and the under-fives. The good number of committed support staff make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. Their skills, abilities and interests are used well to support pupils' learning; for example, teaching the youngest pupils during literacy and numeracy lessons, giving good support in design and technology and teaching pupils to play the guitar in a lunchtime club. In addition, an experienced nursery nurse effectively co-ordinates the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The administrative, premises and welfare staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and are valued members of the school community. Some of them have dual roles - for example, the caretaker helps pupils with literacy as part of the local Reading Partnership initiative.

82 Arrangements for the professional development for staff are adequate. All staff received recent training in the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies enabling the schemes to be successfully introduced to the benefit of pupils. Teacher training is not specifically linked to the school development plan but the school's and teachers' individual needs are kept in satisfactory balance when deciding priorities. Yearly consultations with the headteacher are an adequate

alternative to the formal staff appraisal that is in abeyance at present. Although there are no explicit induction procedures for new teachers, there is a useful and informative booklet to enable them to settle in quickly.

- 83 The pleasing single storey accommodation adjoins the church buildings. It contains a good amount of space, meets the needs of pupils and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. Recent improvements have successfully linked the offices and school hall to the classroom accommodation and provide a suitable space for the school library. The attractive school grounds have both hard and grassed surfaces that provide ample space for the pupils to play. Each class in Key Stage 1 uses a colourful climbing frame on a safe surface in turn at playtimes, thus extending their physical skills. From Class 1 there is access to a secure play space where large toys can be used by the under-fives. Internally, the school is bright and attractive with stimulating displays reflecting the pupils' work. Small spaces leading off classrooms are used well to accommodate small teaching groups and to provide ready access to computers. The spacious resources room doubles as a television room. The large hall, although rather cold at times, provides a good space for physical education, music, assemblies and serving dinners.
- 84 Resources throughout the school are adequate for the curriculum and for the age range of the pupils. The book stock has been improved considerably since the previous inspection as a result of the establishment of the new library and for use during the literacy hour. It is now satisfactory. The library houses a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction books suitable for the age and attainment of the pupils. The new, bright and colourful group reading books in Key Stage 1 enable pupils to read with enjoyment. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and generally easily accessible in classrooms. Resources for science are good. Topic boxes covering work in the National Curriculum are neatly stored and easily accessible. All classrooms have easy access to at least two computers and these are used effectively to support work in other subjects. The school is building up a supply of suitable software to support work in art, geography and history.
- 85 Resources for art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are all satisfactory in quality and quantity and easily accessible. Class 1 houses a good quantity of good quality resources suitable for pupils under-five. However, there are no wheeled toys. Resources for special educational needs are also good including a laptop computer with suitable software for one-to-one work and to assist the co-ordinator with record keeping.
- 86 Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from experienced and qualified staff. Good use is made of small rooms within the school to provide sufficient spaces to ensure quiet working conditions for groups to aid concentration.

91

The efficiency of the school

- 87 The overall efficiency of the school is good, a picture similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. The budget is drawn up by the headteacher and the governors' finance committee, which is ably led, and ratified by the governing body. The school is clear as to its educational priorities, though they are not securely tied to the budget through the school development plan. However, available finances are targeted at these priorities; for example, the school security has recently been improved with the attractive link between the two buildings.
- 88 Teaching and support staff are put to good use. Classroom assistants are used well and the use of the Nursery Nurse to teach the under-fives for literacy and numeracy in order to produce single year groups is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives good support and is well deployed. The school uses specific grants and the money allotted to it for special needs appropriately and due accounting is made.
- 89 Resources and accommodation are used well. The school is semi-open plan but staff and pupils do their best to overcome the problems presented by lack of walls; for example, a whole-school target for the term is to move quietly between spaces for literacy and numeracy lessons. There is a number of small rooms, which are well used for group work or information technology and pupils are good at

moving independently into a vacant area. Resources are appropriately stored, given the restrictions on space, and are used well in activities, which relate directly to lesson objectives.

- 90 Financial control and school administration are good. The school office is well run by the efficient school secretary; routines are clear and properly carried out. The school fund is audited annually, though the local education authority has not audited the school accounts since before the last inspection. Accounts are reconciled on a monthly basis and the finance committee keep a close watch on expenditure levels. Staffing difficulties in the previous year placed a severe demand on available finances but the budget is on course at least to break even.
- 91 A key issue in the last inspection report was to “Continue to develop the process of school development planning in order to evaluate more accurately the outcomes of the school’s work.” The school has not made as much progress as it might have done on this issue; this is partly because of long-term staff absence and the change of headteacher; however, the newly reconstituted governing body has begun this process - for example, in a recent initiative, co-ordinators were asked to produce a three-year programme of resources’ replacement.
- 92 Since the last inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly. Pupils enter the school with average attainment and from average backgrounds; they make good progress and leave with above average attainment overall; they receive a good quality education. Notwithstanding the high unit costs, the school gives good value for money.

97 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

97 **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

93 On entry to the school, children's attainment is broadly average; children make good progress overall, so that, by the age of five, the majority of children are achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes recommended for children of this age. The attainment of most in language and literacy and personal and social development is above this.

94 Early years children are in a large class with reception children and a few children from Year 1. The last inspection reported that this arrangement inhibited the youngest; this situation has been improved and the under-fives are clearly secure and happy in their work. At the time of the inspection 22 children in this class were under five.

99 **Personal and social development**

95 By the time they are five, most children are on line to exceed the Desirable Outcome in this area. Children make good progress; they settle well and quickly, and understand the familiar routines of the day or half-day. They participate eagerly in a wide range of activities and, in particular, are encouraged to change for physical education, folding clothes prior to lessons, and to dress again afterwards, knotting ties, and fastening shoes, though only a few have so far mastered these skills. Children look after themselves in the lavatory; they eat co-operatively and sensibly at lunchtime. They work together well in group situations for literacy and numeracy or when acting out role-play situations in the hospital topic corner. Children know what is expected of them in terms of work, respond well to instructions and know right from wrong. They wait patiently to take turns and exhibit good behaviour.

100

Language and literacy

96 Children's attainment is on line to be above the recommended outcome by the time they are five. Children are very aware of the fact that word carries meaning in a variety of ways. In reading, children respond well to stories, songs, pictures and writing. They show good recall and recognition of key words, such as words from a television programme. Children show particular interest in these matching activities. Appropriate use is made of books and children have a growing confidence, as was shown when an inspector shared a story book with a small group. Computers further enhance reading.

97 In writing, there is a clear understanding that writing carries meaning. The variety of letter and matching activities promotes recognition and supports knowledge of the appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. The main writing project at the moment involves writing letters to record the experiences with the two class teddy bears that are looked after by the children on a rota.

98 In speaking and listening, children develop a good vocabulary through talking and sharing experiences, including through role play (hospitals) and sharing the experiences of adopting the teddy bears. In lessons children ask questions and respond with enthusiasm. They follow instructions and ask politely if they need help. Even asking to leave the room is done in a mature way: "May I leave the room?" - this was said without any prompting.

103 **Mathematics**

99 Children's attainment by the time they are five is on line to be broadly average in this area of development. Progress in mathematics is good. Most children order numbers up to ten; they can count in tens and can understand and apply the concept of addition by adding together small amounts. Children show considerable ability in mental mathematics, counting forwards and backwards, using "more" and "less" and were working towards National Curriculum levels in this aspect.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

100 By the time they are five, most children are likely to have attained the Desirable Outcome in this area and they make good progress. Children show growing confidence and talk about friends and families, and imagine their class teddy bears are friends who are adopted and looked after, groomed and fed on a rota basis. Children's knowledge of the use of materials is evident in making teddy bears and in their ability to use their own designs. Children's computer expertise is developing with confidence, such as the animated alphabet in the language and literacy lesson. Children also act out ideas and experiences satisfactorily in role play areas, as in the hospital corner.

105

Creative development

101 Children are on line to reach the Desirable Outcome by the time they are five. Progress is satisfactory. Children develop their ideas through painting, drawing and collage work and this stimulates language development as does role play. Creative skills are developed through the use of a wide variety of textile media which encourage exploration of texture and shape, such as the teddy bear material designs. Children enjoy making music and sing a range of familiar songs and rhymes with enjoyment.

106

Physical development

102 Children's attainment in this area is in line with what is expected and they make satisfactory progress. Children change for physical education; in indoor movement, children show satisfactory ability in using both equipment and body parts to move around the room. Children help set out the apparatus and show good control. Fine motor skills are developed through writing, drawing, cutting and sticking, working with construction equipment, using flexi-toys and bricks, working with sand and water trays to promote digging, sieving and pouring skills. Outdoor equipment includes the activity frame, a tunnel and a variety of small equipment. The range of outdoor equipment does not, however, provide enough opportunities to practise balancing skills and there are no large toys for riding about on.

103 The quality of teaching in the early years is good overall. Teaching is good in language and literacy and in mathematics. These subjects are taught by the nursery nurse in order to release the class teacher to teach all the Year 1 pupils. This is a good use of staff and promotes good progress. Teaching is also good in knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social development; in creative and physical development, teaching is satisfactory.

104 Staff are very aware of the needs of children and plan accordingly. Personal development is carefully monitored using a socio-emotional profile and there is a day-to-day system of assessing progress in all areas. Staff have high expectations and work well as a team. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to other children and are offered a full curriculum. Those children who are part-time in the afternoon are taught separately at times, in order to provide them with teaching in language and literacy and in mathematics. The early years department is a strength of the school.

109

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

105 The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests in Key Stage 1 show that attainment was well above the national average in reading and writing. When compared with similar schools attainment was also well above average. This is a considerable improvement on 1998 results where reading was above both national averages and the results of similar schools, and writing was in line with national averages but below that of similar schools. The improvement is partly explained by the decrease in the number of pupils with special educational needs in 1999 when compared with 1998 and by the school's focus on improving writing during the year.

- 106 The inspection findings are that pupils' attainment in the current Year 2 is above the national averages. The difference is explained by the larger number of pupils with special educational needs in this class and is reflected in the school's targets for the National Curriculum tests in 2000. Attainment is also above average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4.
- 107 Standards in speaking and listening are above national averages. Pupils have many opportunities to listen and extend their vocabulary during lessons and in presentations at assemblies. Most pupils listen attentively in class to the teacher and to their classmates, answering questions and joining in discussion appropriately. They explain the layout of their Cinderella invitations clearly to an adult. They have a reasonable range of technical vocabulary from other subjects; for example, they talk knowledgeably about sliding mechanisms going up and down and from side to side in design and technology. Pupils explained their work in religious education confidently and clearly in front of an audience of parents during school assembly. By the end of Year 4, most pupils use language appropriately on both formal and informal occasions. They understand the conventions of group discussion and give way to others allowing them to speak. They make their own contributions confidently, using correct grammar.
- 108 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read fluently and accurately. Average and lower attaining pupils use letter sounds to work out unfamiliar or forgotten words. Lower attaining pupils use picture cues to relate part of the story and higher attainers make sensible predictions based on the 'story so far'. Most pupils know the difference between information and story-books and where to find them in the library. By the end of Year 4, most pupils read a reasonably wide range of books although few do this independently. They understand the purpose of such devices as headings, font changes and columns in text. Most pupils use alphabetical knowledge to use indexes effectively. Higher attaining pupils make use of the library classification system to locate successfully books on particular topics.
- 109 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write clearly and neatly with joined script. Capital letters and full stops are generally used accurately. Some higher attaining pupils also use speech marks and question marks. Pupils spell frequently-used, simple words accurately and use letter sounds to make good attempts at more difficult words. By the end of Year 4, whilst higher attaining pupils write fluently with neatly formed handwriting, the writing of average and lower attainers is less well formed and often untidy. Vocabulary is generally limited and there is very little extended writing. Writing shows some understanding of adjectives and the past and present tenses of verbs.
- 110 The progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good overall. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English in Key Stage 1. The good, consistent support, linked closely to their individual learning plans, from the special educational needs co-ordinator enables pupils with special educational needs to progress well. Pupils' good progress in speaking and listening and in reading continues through Key Stage 2. In writing, progress is good in Year 3 and satisfactory in Year 4 leading to higher standards in Year 3 than in Year 4. This is partly due to the large number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 4, coupled with disruptions to learning caused by staff changes last year. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to listen with greater concentration through shared text sessions during literacy hour. For example, in Year 1, pupils listen for the rhyme and rhythm in the 'Michael Rosen Rap'. Pupils speak with increasing confidence through responding to teachers' questions during introductions to lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 2 improve their expressive speech when reading from play scripts, during guided reading, listening carefully for their cues. In Key Stage 1, pupils systematically acquire skills to improve accuracy and fluency in reading which is constantly reinforced by teachers, support assistants and parents. In Key Stage 2, whilst pupils read books of increasing difficulty on the reading scheme, their reading for enjoyment does not improve at the same pace. Lower attaining pupils in Year 4 make good progress when working with their adult partner on the local Reading Partnership scheme. However, higher attaining pupils do not progress equally well. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils soon learn how to form their letters and to write their own name. They write for an increasing range of purposes such as letters, invitations, diaries and stories. However, there are few examples of poetry. In Year 3, pupils soon acquire a good understanding of parts of speech using verbs, adjectives and suffixes accurately. They produce extended stories with good punctuation and spelling. Steady progress is made in Year 4 with pupils using word processing to draft and revise their work.

- 111 Pupils at all levels of attainment have good attitudes to their work. Most of them respond eagerly to their teacher's questions. They concentrate well during introductions to the literacy hour except in Year 4 where the lack of pace causes some restlessness. Attitudes to reading vary considerably with some older pupils lacking enthusiasm for the books on the reading scheme. Pupils co-operate well, working effectively in groups - for example, in Year 4 when composing humorous sentences. Most pupils take great pride in the presentation of their written work; however, some of the work in Year 4 falls below these high standards. Behaviour is generally very good and resources are used carefully and sensibly.
- 112 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2 with good features in Year 3. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is sound. They have embraced the National Literacy Strategy and most teach it with enthusiasm. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and most have high expectations. Occasionally, independent work is insufficiently challenging for average and above average attaining pupils. Teachers' long and medium term planning is good but lesson plans do not always outline precisely what it is that pupils are to learn. Introductions to lessons are usually appropriate and informative with well-chosen texts for whole-class reading. Questioning is good at Key Stage 1 with teachers using follow-up questions to extend pupils' thinking. Questions are less well focused at Key Stage 2, especially in Year 4. Teachers give good feedback to pupils when marking work and comments are used well to guide pupils' progress. Most teachers set targets for pupils to improve their work but these vary in quality from class to class. Regular homework, including reading and spelling is used effectively to extend pupils' learning. It is particularly suitable for pupils with special educational needs, where it is closely linked to their individual learning plans.
- 113 The curriculum is broad and balanced, with opportunities being given to extend pupils' writing outside the literacy hour, usually through topic work. For example, in Class 1, taking Barney and Cuthbert Bear home inspires pupils to write letters about their adventures. The drama club gives opportunities for older pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the school makes good use of the information they provide. Key Stage 1 and non-statutory tests are analysed, areas of weakness identified and action taken to overcome them. For example, the Reading Partnership is raising standards for lower attaining pupils in Year 4. A portfolio of pupils' written work gives some guidance to expectations at each year group but work has not been annotated to match National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinators are aware of this weakness and plan to make improvements. Whilst teachers' planning is checked by the co-ordinators to ensure coverage, teaching is not monitored and there is some inconsistency in teaching standards across the school.
- 114 The Literacy Hour is taught in single year groups and good use is made of support staff to ensure that the needs of the youngest pupils are met. These arrangements have contributed to the good standards of attainment in literacy. Book resources have improved considerably since the last inspection with the addition of suitable big books and lively and attractive group reading books. The new library is just beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' reading, though the key to the classification system is not aimed at younger pupils. Pupils have been consulted about the kind of books they would like as supplies build up. Additional books from the local library loan scheme effectively supplement books in classrooms for topic work.
- 119 **Mathematics**
- 115 Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is above the national average; this is an improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection when they were found to be average. In the National Curriculum tests in 1999, results at Level 2 and above were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Results at Level 3 were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. Pupils are attaining slightly higher in the tests than they do in their work across the year and this is related to teachers' day-to-day expectations.
- 116 Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of number facts. Nearly all can count in fives and tens well past 100 and most can also count in multiples of ten, forwards and backwards. Pupils have a good understanding of place value; for example, they explain that 160 has 16 tens, not just six. They weigh objects in grams and measure lengths in centimetres accurately; they have worked with two- and three-

dimensional shapes and know the names of the most common and how many sides they have - in fact, their mathematics groups are named for three polygons. Pupils have used information technology to construct graphs showing the ages of children in their class.

- 117 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, their attainment is above average. They have a good recall of times-tables facts and chant them as a form of introducing the lesson - nearly all keep up as far as twelve-times. Regular, quick practice of mental skills means that they are developing considerable agility in working out answers in their heads. They are learning an easy method for long multiplication in which lower-attaining pupils also have some success. Higher attaining pupils work out addition sums with four digits. Pupils learn about perimeter and higher attaining pupils measure the sides of irregular polygons accurately. In work on three-dimensional shapes, pupils have tested Euler's law concerning the relationship between faces, edges and vertices. Pupils collect data which they display in Carroll diagrams; they learn to use a variety of graphs and average and higher attaining pupils construct scatter graphs - for instance, plotting height against shoe size. They were interested to discover that the tallest children did not have the largest feet.
- 118 Progress is good across the school overall, including that made by pupils with special educational needs. The youngest pupils learn to match quantities with the appropriate digits; their number formation is neat and generally accurate, though a few lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 still reverse some figures. Year 2 pupils build up their awareness of number bonds; for example, they investigated all the ways of making seven when using two dice. Progress in Year 3 is not as good because work is tied to a succession of unconnected work sheets; nonetheless, progress is satisfactory. Pupils here learn to round numbers to the nearest ten; they add two amounts of money mentally, with results up to one pound. Progress in Year 4 is good. These pupils took the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests at the end of Year 3; the school analysed the results and found that pupils had not progressed as well as expected since the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1. A combination of good teaching and high expectations has raised these pupils' attainment this term.
- 119 Pupils use their numeracy skills across the curriculum; for example, they count backwards in hundreds in history to count the passing of the centuries; in design and technology, they use skills of measuring and calculating required lengths; in science and information technology, they collect and analyse numerical data.
- 120 Pupils' responses to lessons are good overall and very good in Year 4 in response to the exciting teaching. Most pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and look forward to investigations. They use equipment sensibly; for example, Year 1 pupils were learning about weighing and used bucket balances very carefully to balance a teddy bear with the necessary number of cubes - it took quite a lot, but there was no silliness or carelessness.
- 121 The quality of teaching is good overall; it is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In the latter key stage, teaching is very strong for the oldest pupils but variable for those in Year 3. A strength of the teaching is the teacher's high expectations in Year 4. Expectations elsewhere in the school are not always as high as they should be; all teachers divide their classes appropriately into groups based on prior ability but the tasks given to higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenging and are not very different from those given to average pupils. Another strength is the quality of questioning, especially for the youngest pupils. This is used to check the extent of understanding and to lead the pupils on to make further discoveries. A very good example of this was when the Year 1 pupils were weighing objects; the teacher made sure that the group understood exactly what is involved in the concept "heavier than" and led them to predict which side of the balance would go down.
- 122 Work is generally well marked with valuable comments for the pupils to make improvements, though there were examples in the work scrutiny which were wrongly marked, leading to inaccurate levelling of the attainment. There is a satisfactory system of assessment and recording of pupils' progress which is augmented in Year 4 by a series of assessed assignments - a practice well worth spreading to all classes.
- 123 The school's adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy has been effective and is contributing to the good standards in numeracy. The arrangement of classes to produce an extra group to avoid mixed-

year teaching is working well; to achieve this, the reception children are taught mathematics by the nursery nurse and she does this well.

124 The subject is well managed by a hard-working co-ordinator. She has a very clear vision for the subject and a good perception of the strengths and weaknesses, even though she has been in the school since only September. She monitors planning carefully but as yet reviews pupils' work only informally. There are plans to begin the monitoring of teaching by giving all teachers the chance to observe the co-ordinator's class; this is a good idea, but no monitoring has been possible yet.

129 **Science**

125 In the 1999 teacher assessments for National Curriculum testing, the number of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The proportion at Level 3 was below the national average and well below that for similar schools; however, it is likely that teachers were over-cautious in this judgement.

126 The inspection findings corroborate this overall picture: pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave the school at the end of Year 4. This gives a better picture than at the time of the last inspection, when it was found that "a number of pupils in each class are attaining standards above those expected nationally." At the end of Key Stage 1, good attainment is evident in skills shown in measuring and in collating information and recording it in simple ways - for example, bar charts. Pupils have a good understanding of the concept of "fair testing" and conduct their practical investigations with care. In Year 4, good attainment is evident in pupils' knowledge of the human body and in their ability to collate information and record it in a variety of complex ways.

127 Scrutiny of pupils' past work reveals a high standard in content and presentation. There was a strong emphasis on investigative science and pupils were encouraged to conduct fair tests and make predictions in Year 2, to add input from research, to interpret and to use information technology in Year 3, and to predict; hypothesise and interpret in Year 4. In all age groups, there is strong evidence of the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as information technology skills in Key Stage 2.

128 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school strongly promotes investigative science. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good and secure knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and physical processes. They are beginning to collate data and fill in charts containing personal statistics. By the end of Year 4, pupils are showing confidence in how to use science; they predict outcomes and make hypotheses.

129 Pupils across the key stages are keen and motivated. The strong school ethos of caring and respect filters through and influences the subject. Pupils listen attentively, show confidence in contributing to discussion, concentrate to achieve results, work collaboratively in groups and help each other.

130 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. As a result, pupils make good progress in acquiring scientific knowledge and skills. Teachers have high expectations and create opportunities for pupils to show initiative, such as in measuring in Years 3 and 4, when pupils showed initiative in devising systems for collating data. This promoted development of the skills of enquiry, systematic investigation and recording. Lessons are managed well and teachers show good strategies to maintain discipline and keep lessons running at a good pace. Resources are generally well organised and used imaginatively; for example, making joints from wood and elastic bands or skeletons from strips of paper in Key Stage 2. Resources for science are good and are centrally organised and clearly labelled. There are specific topic boxes for some subject areas.

131 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Under her leadership, the scheme of work, with long and medium term planning, has been developed, including good systems of assessment. The school portfolio includes progressive examples of investigative work to promote teachers' expectations and assist their judgements on pupils' attainment.

136 **OTHER SUBJECTS**

136 **Information technology**

132 Standards of attainment are in line with what is expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and when the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, as was the case at the time of the last inspection.

133 Pupils in Year 2 use a word processing program to edit text; they load a poem from a file prepared by their teacher, which is connected with literacy work, and they use the cursor and carriage return keys to insert line breaks, to make it appear as a poem should. They are familiar with some of the technical vocabulary, such as “carat” and “floppy disc”. They use a graphics package to produce pictures in art lessons and they sort images into a Venn diagram in mathematics. Year 4 pupils combine text and images to make party invitations; they use word processing to write play scripts during the literacy hour. Planning shows that pupils at both key stages experience control technology with the screen turtle (software in which pupils program a turtle to move about the screen) and simulations with adventures like “Flossie Frog”.

134 Pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The youngest pupils are introduced to mouse control through a talking book; they understand what a menu is and navigate backwards and forwards, listening to the text and activating the animations. Year 1 pupils develop these skills by moving symbols onto a pre-prepared graph to show the class’s favourite colours. Year 2 pupils develop data handling skills further by producing individual graphs to show class ages and Year 3 pupils begin to learn about databases when they collect and process personal information, such as height and eye colour. Older pupils use a CD-ROM to search for information on topics connected with work in science and history.

135 Pupils’ response to the subject is good. Pupils show interest in their work and co-operate well in pairs. Young pupils were fascinated by the talking book and were eager for their turn. Older pupils readily use computers as part of other lessons, such as literacy, numeracy or history.

136 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. A strength of the teaching is the use of whole-class introductions at the start of an activity. These are generally well chosen and prepared and link well with other areas of the curriculum, such as science and art. All teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, though the older machines are not as easy for people used to PCs. Weaknesses in the subject are that pieces of work in the portfolio are undated and bear no National Curriculum level. Also, though all teachers keep a record to show who has used which programs, there is no mechanism for ensuring that all pupils are spending the total time intended in contact with computers.

137 The subject is satisfactorily managed by the co-ordinator; planning and support for teachers is good and the portfolio is a good way of monitoring standards across the school, if the work is graded. However, as the co-ordinator is part-time, opportunities for her to monitor teaching are limited. Good use is made of the school’s accommodation, with computers in a number of small rooms which are easily used by the surrounding classes.

142 **Art**

138 It was not possible to observe any art lessons during the inspection, so no judgements on the quality of teaching have been made. Judgements are based on work scrutiny, display evidence, art portfolios, talking to pupils, interviews with the co-ordinator and an examination of planning. The evidence shows that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress across the school and that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

139 In reception and Year 1, pupils develop the use of different media, such as paint, crayon, pencil and collage - for example, in food pictures and timelines using cartoons - and are beginning to mix

colours. There is also use of textiles in teddy bear making. In Year 2, colour mixing is extended to include work with very wet paint as collage work, drawings using thick and thin pencils, pastels, aerial views, leaf print; art and design and technology combine in making moving and pop-up pictures. In Year 3, pupils move on to press-printing using polystyrene and printing with ink using a template; art work is extended using information technology. In Year 4, art projects are pursued; for example, the topic of fire, using paint, pastel, crayons, charcoal; pupils have made self-portraits, close observational drawings of plants, and computer-produced graphics.

140 Scrutiny of art sketch books and both class and individual portfolios shows that pupils enjoy their art work and take a pride in it, and there is evidence of new learning. Pupils were eager to talk about their work and how they approached it, particularly graphic work using the computer.

141 Good quality displays of pupils' work around the school enhance the learning environment. These, together with pupils' sketch books, show that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Art promotes pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The resources for art are good. The co-ordinator has audited the art resources and installed them in a central area with easy access for all. Books promoting art topics are on view here.

142 The subject is satisfactorily led. The art policy and scheme of work are comprehensive and lay down a clear progression of skills and the promotion of knowledge and understanding, though the new co-ordinator plans to rewrite in the light of new guidance which is expected shortly. Although some monitoring of the subject has taken place, there has been no opportunity to monitor the teaching of art and no whole-school portfolio to show skill progression for non-specialists. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is determined to take the school forward in these areas.

147

Design and technology

- 143 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in designing, making and evaluating overall. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Class 2, where the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator is the class teacher, make good progress.
- 144 Throughout the school, pupils use a reasonably wide range of materials, including construction sets, malleable materials and food to create models; however, card and paper models predominate. Pupils enter the school with low levels of skills such as cutting and sticking. In Class 1, they make steady improvements in these skills through a good variety of activities including cutting shapes to make a simple jigsaw from paper. They discuss how to re-assemble the picture using the shape of the pieces as a guide. Pupils in Class 2 examine picture books to find out how mechanisms such as pop-up and sliding devices work. They use this information to plan their own designs, deciding which materials and tools they will need. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make a series of sketches prior to making their models. And in Year 4 they decide which will be best to make an animal print. Tools are used with due regard to safety in all classes. All pupils make judgements about their work but only in Year 2 does this go beyond simple likes and dislikes.
- 145 Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. Pupils in Class 1 wait patiently for their turn in a small group when mixing Viennese biscuits. They use the squeeze bag with great care. Older pupils watch fascinated as their teacher demonstrates moving pictures in a book. All pupils follow instructions well but occasionally older ones take a long time to settle down to discussion. Older pupils work with considerable concentration to print their initials in exactly the right place, to make the design they planned. Pupils work co-operatively discussing ideas and sharing resources well.
- 146 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good teaching in Year 2. Teachers have suitable knowledge and understanding. They maintain discussions with the class appropriately. Expectations are sometimes not high enough in Class 4, where pupils are not challenged to say why they think their designs work well. In Year 1, when there are too many activities planned at once, the teacher is unable to give pupils the necessary support to make good progress. Long and medium term planning is sound. However, lesson plans vary in quality and do not always outline precisely what it is that pupils are to learn. Good use is made of the expertise and interest of support staff and voluntary helpers to help pupils make progress.
- 147 Design and technology are managed well by the new co-ordinator. There is a sound policy in place. A good scheme of work was put in place in response to the previous inspection but that has now been overtaken by one based upon the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority model. This is being evaluated at present as part of the school's development plan. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning to ensure coverage but no monitoring of teaching takes place. There are opportunities for assessment within medium term planning but this is not consistently used across the school. Resources have recently been improved and are now satisfactory.

152 **Geography**

- 148 No lessons were observed during the inspection; judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work in files and on display, discussion with the subject co-ordinator, teachers' planning, the scheme of work and discussion with pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- 149 Pupils make satisfactory progress in their mapping skills through the school. In Class 1, pupils learn their way around the school and plot their routes on a diagram using terms such as "right" and "left". Pupils in Year 2 recognise where the woods, bay and cliffs are on an imaginary island of Struay by using the key to help them. By Years 3 and 4, pupils accurately plot features on maps of different scales using two-figure grid references. Pupils develop a sound understanding of place. In Year 1, they identify the differences between their house and the places they visit at weekend. In Year 2, they write post cards to Katie Morag telling her about the differences between their town and her island. In

Key Stage 2, pupils extend this work further looking at Tenby in South Wales. They talk about how the land is used for holiday activities in Tenby, compared with industry near Houghton Regis.

150 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Maps are carefully drawn and shaded and written work is presented well especially the postcards in Class 2. Older pupils talk about their work with enthusiasm showing keen interest, especially in contrasting places. They are polite and very well behaved.

151 No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching because of lack of evidence. Geography is taught alternate half terms with history, which gives sufficient time to developing the necessary skills and understanding. There is a satisfactory policy; the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work is being used and evaluated at present as part of the school's development plan. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning to ensure coverage but no monitoring of teaching takes place. There is a degree of specialist teaching by the co-ordinator in Key Stage 2 but this was not observed during the inspection. There are no systematic assessment procedures. Resources are adequate to cover the topics covered but there are insufficient up-to-date maps. The school is building up a useful supply of computer software programs to support work in Years 3 and 4.

156 **History**

152 Pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. At Key Stage 2, most pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that reported by the last inspection.

153 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Key Stage 1, and therefore judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with the subject co-ordinator, teacher's planning and scheme of work and discussion with pupils.

154 At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a good awareness of the past and of the ways it was different from the present. In Year 1, they gain an increasing understanding of chronology by using a time line representing their school through its twenty five year history. They see how a few of their teachers and helpers have changed by examining black and white photographs from the 1970s and comparing them with today. This is built upon in Year 2 as they study important figures from the world of flight such as the Montgolfier brothers and Neil Armstrong. They become increasingly familiar with historical vocabulary. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make steady progress as they learn about some of the important episodes of Britain's past. They understand the significance of the initials BC and AD and know which period the Romans and the Vikings belong to. They find out about events from the past by using an increasing range of resources, such as pictures, documents and computer software. Throughout the school, pupils record their work in a widening range of ways such as pictures, diagrams, and short written reports. However, there are few structured narratives and descriptions.

155 Pupils' attitudes to history are good. Younger pupils listen well to their teachers and classmates. Pupils in Class 1 behave well and enjoy their work. Pupils in Class 2 watch a video with good concentration and draw pictures with care and precision of the clothes and hair-styles seen. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 speak politely to visitors, taking pride in explaining work they have done in the past. Behaviour is good.

156 The quality of teaching of teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in Key Stage 1, where teaching in the two lessons seen was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the lessons were presented in interesting ways; good use is made of videos, artefacts and music. Teachers link work well to pupils' prior understanding. Links were also made well to numeracy in Class 2 as pupils counted back along a time line in 100s and 50s. Good use was made of voluntary helpers and classroom assistants to support pupils' writing. At Key Stage 2, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length.

157 History and geography are taught in alternate half terms. History is effectively linked to topics in Key Stage 1. This gives sufficient time to develop skills and understanding. There is a satisfactory policy in place. A sound scheme of work was adopted in response to the criticism of the previous inspection. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority model has now overtaken it and this is being evaluated

at present as part of the school's development plan. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning to ensure coverage but no monitoring of teaching takes place. There is a degree of specialist teaching by the co-ordinator in Key Stage 2 but this was not observed during the inspection due to timetable arrangements. There are no systematic assessment procedures. Resources are adequate and are frequently supplemented by teachers and the very supportive parents. The school is building up a useful supply of computer software programs to support work in Years 3 and 4.

162 **Music**

158 Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. This is not as good a picture as at the time of the last inspection; the school cannot give as great a priority to music as it did at that time, because of national initiatives in literacy and numeracy.

159 Pupils across the school sing well in assemblies and in the school Mass, where the quality and sincerity of the singing was a major factor in establishing a very good spiritual atmosphere. Videos of Christmas and Easter productions show clear and accurate singing with good diction.

160 Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are listening to pieces from “The Carnival of the Animals” by Saint-Saëns; they heard the section depicting kangaroos, then enthusiastically made springing-type movements as the notes went up and down the piano. They sing unaccompanied songs from memory tunefully and clearly and learn new songs quickly, though they find pitching difficult when they are not given a starting note.

161 Year 3 pupils are learning songs from the Jewish tradition. They sang “Hanukkah is here” well, with accurate pitching and clear words. They accompany the rhythm with actions and percussion instruments, though a few find it difficult to distinguish the pulse from the rhythm of the words. They are sensitive to changes in tempo and dynamics.

162 Pupils’ response to lessons and whole-school singing is mostly good. Year 1 and 2 pupils were understandably distracted by a man servicing physical education equipment just behind them in the hall, yet they behaved well, nonetheless.

163 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. A strength of the teaching is the consistent use of the commercial scheme which has been carefully planned into the school’s curriculum. This gives an appropriate balance between the strands of the subject. A weakness is that not all classes give music a similar time because of the demands of the curriculum. Also, not all teachers have sufficient expertise in the teaching of class instruments.

164 There is good provision of extra-curricular activities; a number of pupils learn the recorder and guitar at lunchtimes and the school participates in festivals with other local schools every year, as well as the productions at Easter (Years 3 and 4) and Christmas (Years 1 and 2 and reception children).

165 The subject is satisfactorily managed; plans are regularly monitored and the standard of singing is reviewed in hymn practices. However, there are currently no arrangements for monitoring of teaching or for assessing and recording pupils’ progress.

170

Physical education

166 Pupils’ progress across both key stages is satisfactory, a situation which has been maintained since the last inspection. The range of physical activities observed during the inspection included gymnastics using apparatus, games and synchronised movement.

167 Pupils display good control in the majority of activities. In gymnastics, reception pupils show developing ability in using the apparatus, climbing over, under and through the equipment and they know the meaning of ‘find a space’. In the games lesson, Key Stage 2 pupils showed developing confidence in ball skills, and competence in control using a parachute to effect in team activities. The synchronised movement lesson showed pupils’ ability to develop skills working as a team and to move with precision.

168 Pupils’ response in physical education is positive and consistently good. There is high motivation, eagerness and a desire to do well. Entry to and from the hall for both key stages is sensible and controlled. Behaviour is good and this helps the positive response. Pupils are made very aware of safety and control and silly behaviour is not accepted. Pupils are appropriately changed for physical education and follow a strict dress code. All pupils, regardless of age, change and fold their clothes

neatly. Pupils of all ages show the ability to work co-operatively in group and to help each other.

- 169 The teaching of physical education is satisfactory overall. Lessons are initiated by warm-up sessions, clear instructions and satisfactory expectations of both behaviour and performance. Lessons are structured so that pupils develop skills through a sequence of increasingly demanding activities. Learning outcomes are clear and planning is thorough. Staff are appropriately dressed and promote a sensible dress code to ensure health and safety. Good use is made of time and resources.
- 170 The subject is managed by the headteacher, who is very aware of the need to draw up a scheme of work. Resources are satisfactory and kept neatly. Accommodation is good, with ample indoor and outdoor facilities to promote all aspects of the subject. Extra-curricular clubs for football, basketball and top sport further enhance the subject and extend pupils' skills.

175 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

175 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

171 The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, who spent a combined total of nine days in the school. During the course of the inspection, the team observed 26 lessons in whole or in part, attended daily assemblies and the school Mass and observed registration periods and ends of sessions. A sample of pupils from each year group was heard reading aloud. They also discussed their books and talked about aspects of their work. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the hall and around the school was observed, and this provided opportunities to talk to them. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and members of the teaching staff with responsibility for subjects and aspects of school, as well as members of the non-teaching staff. A total time of approximately 30 hours was spent on these observations and discussions. The team scrutinised minutes of the governing body, curriculum and other policy documents, teachers' plans, financial statements, samples of pupils' work in every class, pupils' records and the attendance registers. Before the inspection, the registered inspector attended a meeting with five parents. The results of the parents' questionnaire were scrutinised.

177 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

177 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	115	2	33	12

177 **Teachers and classes**

177 **Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	23.8

177 **Education support staff (YR – Y4)**

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	98.5
Average class size:	29.8

177 Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	233,590
Total Expenditure	234,845
Expenditure per pupil	1,930
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1,255
Balance carried forward to next year	3,892

177 PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	115
Number of questionnaires returned:	53

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	53	43	4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	58	38	2	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	22	63	12	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	35	46	10	8	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	51	8	13	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	45	51	4	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	42	53	2	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	53	13	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	65	33	2	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	68	30	2	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	38	0	2	0

177 Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents took the opportunity to raise other matters. Most of these were in praise of the school and its values. Two parents wondered if the full spread of abilities in a class is adequately catered for; one parent felt that all the staff are not equally approachable, whilst another felt that the communication between parents

and teachers of the youngest children depends too heavily on the children's memory; one parent would like to have workshops for parents on literacy and numeracy; one parent regretted the instability caused to a class by staff turnover last year followed by a job-share in the current year. Another parent commented on the length of the lunch break - couldn't it be shorter and so finish school earlier, as the young ones are often tired?