

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST LAURENCE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110845

Headteacher: Miss B G Martino

Reporting inspector: Mrs P C Cox  
19178

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Inspection number: 191261

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arbury Road Cambridge
Postcode:	CB4 2JX
Telephone number:	01223 712227
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Connolly
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Names of team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs P C Cox Registered Inspector	Science Information technology Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught Leadership and management
Mr J Bayliss Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mr S Fowler Team Inspector	English Design and technology Music	Equal opportunities Special educational needs The quality and range of curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs C Perrett Team Inspector	Areas for learning for children under five Mathematics Art History Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Laurence's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in a housing development on the northern edge of Cambridge, but serves a wider community, due to its denominational character. There are 224 pupils on roll, of whom 11 have English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic heritage. Fourteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is an average proportion nationally. Twenty per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs; this is also close to the average. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs, at 3.5 per cent, this is above average. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the school, but, overall, children are close to the average for their age. The standard number for admission to the school is 35, which means that at least some children under five must be taught in a mixed-age class.

Religious education and acts of collective worship were inspected separately by a diocesan team.

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

This is an effective school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2. The children who are under five make good progress and achieve standards above those expected for their age. Teaching is satisfactory, and for the older pupils it is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and the management of the school is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils make good progress in English throughout the school and in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, and their standards are high in these subjects.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well.
- Children who are under five make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school has close links with the parents of its pupils, who make a strong contribution to the school.

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

- Plans for school improvement do not reflect a long-term view and staff are not involved sufficiently in development planning.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced.
- Attainment is not high enough in aspects of information technology at both key stages, and in history, geography, and in design and technology at Key Stage 2.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to parents and carers of all pupils in the school.*

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in January 1997. Its many strengths have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved, particularly at Key Stage 1. Standards achieved by pupils have risen in English, mathematics and science, but not in design and technology, and have fallen in history and geography at the end of Key Stage 2. Planning has improved for most subjects and the monitoring of teaching and standards are now established practice. Provision for pupils' cultural development is better, and procedures for monitoring attendance are now secure. Governors have improved their role in monitoring the work of the school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A	A	A	very high A* well above average A
Mathematics	B	A*	A*	A*	above average B average C
Science	A	A*	A*	A*	below average D well below average E

In 1999, the National curriculum test results at Key Stage 2 were well above average in English, and in mathematics and science their results placed them in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This was also the picture when compared with similar schools<sup>1</sup> and with the test results in 1997 and 1998. The trend in improvement has been similar to the national trend. The standards of the pupils presently in Year 6 are above average in English and science, and in mathematics they are well above average, and this is reflected in the test results for 2000. There is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year than in previous ones. Pupils are making good progress in all three subjects.

The test results at Key Stage 1 in 1999 showed that pupils attained levels well above the national average in reading and that standards in writing and mathematics were average. The test results for 2000 show that standards have risen in writing and mathematics, but have fallen slightly in reading. This is consistent with the findings of the inspection. Results have risen appreciably since 1996. Standards in science are above average. Pupils are making good progress in English, and in mathematics and science their progress is satisfactory.

Standards in information technology, at both key stages, are generally at an average level but are not high enough in some aspects. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in most other subjects and reach appropriate standards. However, they do not reach high enough standards in history, geography and design and technology at Key Stage 2 because they do not have sufficient learning opportunities in these subjects.

The children who are under five in reception make good progress in many areas of learning and they are attaining standards higher than is usual by the time they are five.

<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are generally enthusiastic about their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Almost all pupils behave well and follow the school rules carefully. While there are a few pupils who find it difficult to control their own behaviour, staff generally deal well with them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and are characterised by respect and consideration. Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils attend school regularly and are punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons throughout the school. It is good, and occasionally very good, in 40 per cent. For the children under five teaching is always at least satisfactory and is good in 46 per cent of lessons.

At Key Stage 1, teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons and is good or very good in 31 per cent. The majority of the good teaching is in Year 1, but, in this year, teaching is also, occasionally, unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons. It is good, and, occasionally, very good, in 43 per cent. The most effective teaching takes place in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is, occasionally, unsatisfactory in the lower key stage. Music teaching is good, and sometimes very good, throughout the school. Where teaching is at its best teachers transmit considerable enthusiasm to their pupils, have good subject knowledge, and use interesting teaching methods. The less successful teaching is not planned well enough to meet the needs of all pupils and lessons proceed slowly.

Teaching in English is always at least satisfactory and is often good. The skills of literacy are taught well and pupils learn well. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall, although it ranges from good, to unsatisfactory. The skills of numeracy are generally taught effectively and teaching is good in the upper part of Key Stage 2, and, overall, pupils' learning is good.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and, consequently, they make good progress. In English, mathematics and science, the more able are usually given an appropriate challenge and reach the standards of which they are capable. However, in many other subjects all pupils undertake the same work and this does not meet the needs of the more able. Support staff make a good contribution to the work of the school.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad but it is not balanced sufficiently. The timetable is not designed efficiently and time is wasted at the beginning of the day. Some subjects do not receive enough time to give sufficient learning opportunities. The curriculum for children under five does not give them an appropriate programme in all areas of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Systems for identifying and supporting pupils work well and they are enabled to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The promotion of pupils' personal development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Procedures for assessing progress are good and are used appropriately.

The school works well in partnership with parents. They feel very welcome and make a significant contribution through fund-raising and the support they give to their children at home. Some parents make a valuable contribution to the work of the school by helping in lessons.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership for the school. Management is satisfactory overall, but staff are not involved sufficiently in planning for school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and carry out their roles effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Systems for identifying priorities for development mainly work effectively and appropriate action is taken.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its resources well to achieve its targets.

The accommodation is satisfactory and there is an adequate number of teaching and support staff. There are sufficient resources for most subjects. However, those for history and geography, and for information technology at Key Stage 1, are limited.

The governors and headteacher have a good understanding of the ways in which good value can be achieved and apply them effectively.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour in the school is good and their children are helped to become mature.</li><li>• Pupils are taught well and make good progress.</li><li>• The school is managed and led well and works closely with parents.</li><li>• There are high expectations and the school is approachable with questions or problems.</li><li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• A few parents expressed concern about the amount of homework.</li><li>• A small number of parents felt that there was some favouritism in the school.</li></ul>

The pre-inspection meeting with inspectors was attended by 24 parents, and 52 parents' questionnaires were returned. The findings of the inspection mainly support the positive comments by parents. The school and other agencies do provide a basic range of extra-curricular activities, but a charge is made for some of these. The amount of homework is generally similar to that set in other schools. No evidence was found during the inspection to indicate favouritism.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

1. The National Curriculum tests in 1999 at Key Stage 2 show that pupils were attaining levels in English that were well above the national average and were average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics and science, pupils' results were very high compared nationally and with similar schools. Standards have been high since 1997, and have improved since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. The findings of the inspection indicate that standards are still above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics for pupils currently in Year 6. This is reflected in the results of the 2000 National curriculum test results, which are slightly lower than in previous years but still at a level that is higher than the 1999 national results. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5 in all three subjects is lower than it was in 1999, but still above the national average for that year. The school set a considerably lower target for attainment in English for 2000, because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class was higher than in the past. This target was greatly exceeded. The target for mathematics was also lower and this was reached. Pupils are making good progress in these three subjects.
2. At Key Stage 1, the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show a level of attainment in reading which was well above average nationally, and when compared with similar schools. Results were similar to the national average in writing and mathematics. The test results were much higher than in the previous three years when they were well below average. The teachers' assessments in science indicate that pupils' attainment was well above average. The findings of the inspection indicate that the attainment of pupils, presently in Year 2, is higher in writing and mathematics, and slightly lower in reading, in comparison with 1999 tests. This is reflected in the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests. In science, standards are above average. Pupils make good progress in English and their progress in mathematics and science is satisfactory.
3. Overall, on entry to reception, children have an average level of attainment, although there is a very wide spread. Their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are above average. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The sound, and often good, teaching and wide range of learning opportunities have a significant effect on the children's progress, and give children a good start to their school life. By the age of five, the children have exceeded the expectations in most of the recommended areas of learning, and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. They display above average attainment in English and personal and social development. Most are developing a good mathematical understanding; some have already acquired a good depth of knowledge and understanding of the world. In creative development, most children are attaining above the expected standard and their physical development is average for their age.
4. In English, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average. They listen with good understanding to each other and their teachers, answering questions clearly and in detail. Pupils' reading skills are above average. Most read with fluency and accuracy, and use a variety of strategies to identify unknown words. Standards in writing are also above average. Pupils write simple stories, poems and factual accounts, with consistent use of punctuation and correct spelling. They make good progress in all areas, building rapidly on their skills and knowledge.
5. In mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards above the average. They understand patterns in number and apply their knowledge to solving problems. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and use data-handling skills to produce block graphs. They use simple fractions with confidence.

6. In science, at the end of the key stage, pupils carry out investigations and make predictions about their results. Their understanding of the properties of materials is good and their knowledge of plants and animals is very good. However, their knowledge of sound and electricity is below average, and they do not make enough contribution to the experiments they undertake. Pupils make satisfactory progress, overall, in both topics, developing their understanding through soundly-planned activities. However, progress in science is uneven across the curriculum.
7. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English is above average in all areas. They listen very carefully and show a good grasp of quite complex and abstract ideas. Most recognise the main themes of books and understand how language is used to create an atmosphere. They use reference books well for research in other subjects. Most pupils are confident writers, adapting their writing well for a range of purposes and audiences. They produce well-organised pieces of work with precise use of language, although their presentation is unsatisfactory overall.
8. In mathematics, at the end of this key stage, standards are well above average. Pupils have a very good grasp of numbers and a well-developed ability to apply their knowledge to problems. They work with co-ordinates in four quadrants and have a good understanding of shapes and measurement.
9. In science, pupils reach above average standards. They conduct experiments and understand well how to make them fair. However, they do not develop the ability to design their own experiments throughout the school. Their knowledge of living things and materials is strong. Pupils have a secure understanding of physical processes such as light but their knowledge of magnetism and electrical conduction is at an average level.
10. At Key Stage 2, progress is good overall in all three subjects, but this masks a variation through the key stage. Progress is generally satisfactory in the earlier years, where work is mostly appropriate and proceeds at a sound pace. It accelerates towards the upper years. This is because lessons proceed at a very rapid pace, are based well on what pupils know and understand, and challenge and stimulate them.
11. In information technology, pupils make sound progress and reach the expected levels of attainment at the end of both key stages. By the time they are eleven, pupils have well-developed word-processing skills and use computers and the Internet for research. However, their skills in modelling and control are below average because they have not have enough opportunity to extend them.
12. Pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively and the National Numeracy Strategy is being used appropriately. However, there is not a consistent emphasis on developing and extending pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Whilst teachers emphasise correct language, they miss many opportunities to employ a range of writing styles and techniques through the broad curriculum. Pupils have some experience of using graphs, charts, measurements and number throughout the curriculum, but not frequently enough in geography, design and technology and information technology. Nevertheless, information technology skills are developed appropriately across the curriculum.
13. In most other subjects, through both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve similar standards to pupils in other schools. However, they do not make enough progress in history, geography and design and technology at Key Stage 2 because they are given too few structured opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. Consequently, standards are not high enough.
14. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive work that is matched appropriately to their abilities and make good progress in lessons. There is particularly good provision within

15. the literacy hour where pupils undertake structured programmes of work suited to their needs with individual support. The school has developed a whole-school policy for the education of more able pupils and teachers plan work to match these pupils' individual needs. The more able pupils generally make appropriate progress and reach suitable levels of attainment. Deficiencies in the standards of their progress, identified during the last inspection, have been addressed successfully. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
16. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen in English, mathematics, and science, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, standards in history, geography have fallen. Efforts were made to improve design and technology after the last inspection, but the subject has received less attention recently and standards have fallen back. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards, and has set realistic but challenging targets for improvement, based on previous attainment, for future years.

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

17. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good overall. The generally positive situation found at the time of the previous report has been maintained, although there continue to be incidences of inappropriate behaviour from time to time. The Christian ethos promoted by the school permeates all its activities. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. There were no exclusions, either fixed term or permanent, in the last reporting year. Inspectors confirm the view of most parents that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible individuals.
18. Children under five settle quickly into school routines and build up good relationships with adults and with each other. They are co-operative with each other, amicably sharing equipment and taking turns. They enjoy the activities, and are keen and eager to learn. They are polite, attentive and well behaved, and learn good work habits. They have good social skills, and are developing aspects of their independent learning well.
19. Throughout both key stages, pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. In most lessons, they listen politely and attentively to the teacher and to each other. They are courteous and helpful to each other, to staff, and to visitors. The pupils respond appropriately to instructions from teachers and settle quickly to work. They usually work well together and individually, and show an interest in their work, although their attention wanes when teaching is not sufficiently challenging. Most pupils are keen to participate in question and answer sessions and do so in a sensible and mature way. They readily take turns and show a willingness to apply themselves to whatever task is presented to them. Pupils are keen to collect rewards for good behaviour and good work. They enjoy conversations with each other and adults and listen with interest to what is being said, for example, when discussing their views of the school and the part they play in its activities. The attitudes displayed by most pupils create a positive atmosphere for learning to take place when lessons are interesting. When lessons are not interesting or suited to their needs, pupils sometimes stop paying attention.
20. Very little inappropriate behaviour was observed during the inspection. When it occurs, most teachers use effective strategies to settle their pupils. They are sensitive to the needs of individuals. The overall standard of pupils' behaviour in classrooms, in the playground, when moving to the hall for assembly or the playground for games, is good, and often very good. Pupils' behaviour is good during break times and is satisfactory, though noisy, when they have to stay indoors because of inclement weather. The pupils play well together at all times. No evidence was seen, during the inspection, of any oppressive behaviour of any kind. In discussion pupils say that this kind of behaviour is very rare. Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs due to behavioural difficulties receive appropriate support. This contributes to the good behaviour that is seen throughout the school.

21. The pupils respond very well to the school's provision for their personal development. They have some opportunities to assume responsibility, which steadily increase through their school life. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils undertake their monitor and other responsibilities sensibly. Relationships are good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other, both in lessons and elsewhere. Pupils of all ages mix well together at playtimes and lunchtimes.
22. Present levels of attendance, though somewhat below the average for similar schools nationally, are satisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence varies depending upon the number of poor attenders in school. In recent times, it has reduced significantly. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. When instances of lateness occur, they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons. Timekeeping throughout the day is good.
23. Pupils enjoy school. Their good attitudes to school, good behaviour, good relationships and positive response to the opportunities provided for their personal development, all make a strong contribution to the effectiveness of their learning and the standards they attain.

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

24. Throughout the school, teaching is at least sound in 95 per cent of lessons. It is good, and occasionally very good, in 40 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in five per cent. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the quality of teaching at both key stages, particularly Key Stage 1, since the previous inspection, when there was a high level of unsatisfactory teaching.
25. Teaching in the early years is always at least satisfactory and is good in over four out of ten lessons. The teachers work well as a team, planning a wide variety of stimulating activities to extend the children's learning in all areas. The mixed-age classes makes it difficult for the teachers to plan lessons for children under five, according to the recommended areas of learning. Teachers generally plan for National Curriculum Programmes of Study and therefore the Desirable Learning Outcomes<sup>2</sup> for children of this age are not planned in a systematic way. Overall, however, teachers work hard to ensure that the needs of all the children are met well. Numeracy and literacy lessons are taught in ability groups, which ensures that work is matched appropriately to the children's ability and that they make maximum progress. Although the two-year age range in each class is managed well by the teachers, opportunities are limited to plan for the younger children's personal and social development. There is no permanent classroom support at the moment, but good use is made of volunteer helpers who are briefed well by the teachers, and the support they give has a positive impact on the children's learning.
26. At Key Stage 1 teaching is good in almost a third of lessons, and, occasionally, very good. In Year 1, it is occasionally very good, but also sometimes unsatisfactory. In Year 2, teaching is always satisfactory and, on occasion, good. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good in almost half of lessons, and, at times, very good. Teaching is usually good, and sometimes very good for Years 5 and 6. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory in the lower part of the key stage.
27. At both key stages, most lessons have a clear structure, with regular opportunities for pupils to learn through practical work. Teachers are usually precise about what they want their pupils to learn. Most teachers' plans identify specific objectives for learning, and they share these with the pupils. A good atmosphere is established within the classroom, and pupils are encouraged, from an early age, to adopt positive attitudes to learning. Teachers have sound knowledge of most subjects, but knowledge of geography is not always secure and there is some confusion between art and design and technology.

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<sup>2</sup> *The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five. The skills, knowledge and understanding which are deemed to provide a suitable foundation for young children are described in the Government's guidance document "Desirable Learning Outcomes for Pupils entering Compulsory Education".*

28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well-supported by a large number of learning assistants who consistently give good quality support. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable objectives and this is a particularly good feature of literacy and numeracy planning. Regular assessment procedures allow teachers to identify learning difficulties and this has contributed to a significant decrease in the number of pupils on the register of special educational needs. Support staff are generally deployed effectively but there are occasions when they sit unoccupied during the introductions to lessons, and this wastes their time. Overall, they make a good contribution to the work of the school. The more able pupils generally receive appropriate work in English, mathematics and science and are challenged to make suitable progress. In other subjects, however, they often have the same work as other pupils and therefore do not reach the standards of which they are capable. This is particularly the case in history and geography.
29. There are good relationships and high standards of discipline in most classes. The limited resources are used effectively, but time is frequently wasted, particularly at the beginning of the day. The sessions before and after prayer time are often not planned for carefully enough and therefore do not provide learning activities. Most teachers are aware of the attainment and progress of their pupils in English, mathematics and science and use day-to-day assessment satisfactorily. Work is, normally, matched appropriately to pupils' attainment and the more able pupils have appropriately challenging work set for them in English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects, pupils often do the same work, which limits the possibilities for the more able.
30. Literacy is promoted well throughout the school. Teaching is always at least satisfactory in English and is good in almost half of lessons. The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively and teachers are developing their expertise in using it to good effect. Literacy is developed appropriately through some other subjects of the curriculum, but this is not consistent. In science, history, and geography, opportunities are missed to develop these skills because there is an overuse of worksheets and copying from the board. Numeracy is generally promoted well. In mathematics, teaching is sometimes good and this generally has a positive impact on pupils' learning, but it is also sometimes unsatisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy is generally being used effectively in all classes, and particularly well at Key Stage 2. Some work in science and geography enables pupils to develop skills in numeracy, through measurement and calculation, but, again, opportunities are missed, particularly in design and technology. Information technology is used appropriately in both subjects, for drafting and redrafting written work and for some activities in data-handling. Teaching is often good in science, and is particularly effective in music.
31. The best teaching is characterised by the use of stimulating activities that involve and interest the pupils. Teachers show considerable enthusiasm that they transmit well to their pupils. They intervene with probing questions that accelerate pupils' learning. A variety of teaching strategies is used, which suit the aims of the lesson. The pace of lessons is lively, and pupils have targets regularly set for their progress. Teachers give clear instructions and support and challenge pupils during the lesson. Expectations of behaviour and attainment are high and pupils become totally involved in the lesson.
32. This was the case in a particularly effective music lesson with the oldest pupils: a very challenging activity was set for pupils, who were creating descriptive sounds to perform. A very good range of instruments was used and pupils were encouraged to be creative in their use of instruments, which included a glass of water. The pupils rose to the challenge and, as well as developing their composition skills rapidly, also improved their ability to use verbal description. Very effective learning was also apparent in the sessions with a visiting poet, who inspired pupils by his own example, and through good strategies for developing creative skills.
33. In some unsatisfactory lessons teachers are not sufficiently aware of the level at which pupils are working and therefore set them inappropriate tasks. On one occasion, although planning

and preparation were undertaken carefully, the teacher had misunderstood the curriculum guidance and the activity provided did not build effectively on pupils' knowledge and understanding. In one lesson there were too many activities for the teacher to manage and support, and some were undemanding. In another there was too little guidance for pupils and they became rather confused. These weaknesses are occasionally compounded by a lack of class control. Overall, however, control has improved since the previous inspection.

34. Marking is generally undertaken regularly and accurately. Teachers make supportive and encouraging comments, but rarely use their marking to evaluate learning or to set further targets for pupils' attainment. Through both key stages, a suitable amount of homework is set regularly.

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

35. Although the school provides a satisfactorily broad curriculum, it lacks balance. There is a proper concentration on the development of literacy and numeracy, but the organisation of the curriculum has meant an over-emphasis on the delivery of English and mathematics at the expense of other curriculum areas, particularly history, geography and design and technology. Although this emphasis has helped to considerably raise standards in those two core subjects, it means that pupils do not have experience of other subjects, throughout the year, and this limits a systematic development of knowledge and skills in these subjects. The curriculum in information technology is not yet balanced well enough because pupils do not have sufficient experience of the areas of control and data handling.
36. The curriculum provides for the development of literacy and numeracy effectively within the guidance offered by the national strategies. Current timetabling arrangements, where classes have small amounts of time to fill before and after prayer time, mean that lessons are often lacking in focus at the beginning of the school day and that time is not always used effectively. Although the weekly book club is very successful in raising funds for the school and in encouraging pupils to develop a love of reading, it is a further interruption to curriculum delivery.
37. The curriculum for children under five is not planned appropriately to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes. These children are taught in classes with pupils in Year 1 which presents teachers with difficulties when planning, so the curriculum is generally planned to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. This is inappropriate for young children as important areas, such as personal and social development are not planned systematically, and activities are very prescribed, with few opportunities for children to make their own choices. However, when the children first enter school they are not expected to join in the school's literacy and numeracy strategies, and they are introduced to them appropriately once they become settled.
38. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal and social education. There are policies for behaviour, anti-bullying and the development and growth of the whole person. These are monitored effectively and offer good support to the school curriculum. Issues of drugs awareness and sex education are covered appropriately within the curriculum programme.
39. The issue raised in the previous report, relating to the lack of clarity in the provision of learning objectives in teachers' planning, has been addressed successfully, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Lesson plans show clearly what teachers want their pupils to learn and these objectives are usually shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. The headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators monitor curriculum planning and delivery of English, mathematics, and science, effectively, and governors have begun to be involved in this process. Discussions with co-ordinators indicate that the school is planning to develop this good practice in other areas of the school curriculum.



40. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum throughout the school. All pupils requiring additional support have individual learning plans and the pupils with statements of special educational needs receive individual support. The co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher, and the specialist support teacher, to ensure that pupils withdrawn from lessons to receive extra help, undertake work that is closely related to that provided for other pupils in the class. Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable decrease in the number of pupils on the register for special educational needs. This can be attributed to the strong leadership of the co-ordinator, good support from the support staff, and early identification of pupils' learning difficulties. The school has also developed suitable learning opportunities for educating the more able pupils, and class teachers are required to plan their lessons to provide challenge for these pupils.
41. Although the school ensures equality of opportunity for pupils of different genders and ethnic backgrounds, overall, provision for equal opportunities is unsatisfactory. The school generally provides equality of access for the majority of pupils to make appropriate progress within the curriculum. However, a significant number of pupils receive instrumental tuition during curriculum time. This arrangement means that pupils miss part, or all, of the same lesson each week which limits their access to the National Curriculum, and not all teachers are enabling pupils to catch up on what has been missed. Pupils who misbehave in lessons are occasionally withdrawn from class and take no further part in the lesson, which also limits access to the curriculum. The school makes good use of educational visits to enrich the curriculum, such as those to Ely Cathedral and local museums. The school welcomes visitors to enhance the curricular opportunities it provides. During the inspection, a writer, who visits the school regularly, presented a number of lessons, throughout the school, that stimulated the pupils and successfully extended their creative development. Activities of this kind make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development, as well as to their academic learning.
42. The school provides opportunities for a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the curriculum. Some parents have concerns about the lack of activities provided directly by the school. Inspection evidence provides some support for these views, as very few activities are provided without additional charges being levied which might present problems to some.
43. The school has good links with the local community. These links have some strong features, particularly those associated with its close relationship with the local Catholic parish. There has been good improvement in the school's strategy for links with the local business community, since it was found to be a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Regular Sunday masses, held at the school, cement relationships between school, home and the church community. Good links exist with local partner institutions. Close liaison with local secondary schools on a number of levels, and exchange visits that are much appreciated by pupils, ensure that when the pupils leave school they move smoothly, and happily, to the next stage of their school life.

#### *Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*

43. Opportunities for pupils to cultivate their personal development are satisfactory, and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, as they were at the last inspection. The school's Catholic ethos permeates school life. Pupils are encouraged to care for each other, and value the beliefs and ideas of others. Opportunities for spiritual development during the short assemblies are limited, but there are very good opportunities during the longer Catholic celebrations. The pupils sing hymns and choruses tunefully with meaning, compose and play their own musical compositions, giving a real spiritual feeling to these events. There are some opportunities to explore the wonders of the world through the curriculum, for example, when the youngest pupils looked at caterpillars and pupae, but these are not always fully exploited.

44. Opportunities for pupils' moral development are good. A strong moral code pervades the life of the school, and all pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The school promotes good behaviour, so that pupils are aware of the needs of others, and the oldest look after the youngest. Good work and behaviour is celebrated through the school's 'Rays of Sunshine' board, and pupils value the distinction when their achievements are recognised.
45. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Relationships are good, and pupils generally work co-operatively without fuss or disagreement. Pupils act as monitors in class, performing jobs to enhance the smooth-running of the class. The oldest pupils prepare the hall for assemblies and work the overhead projector efficiently. They carry out fund-raising activities, which enhance their awareness of the needs of others, but, generally, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their initiative.
46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. Pupils learn about their own culture through the curriculum, in subjects such as art, music, literature and history. The pupils go on a variety of visits to museums and places of interest, which greatly enhance understanding of their own culture. Numerous visitors are invited into school, such as theatre groups and an author, and these occasions provide other opportunities for cultural development. Pupils learn about other cultures in their geography lessons, when they learn about settlements in other parts of the world, such as Africa, and links with Japan and Australia give opportunities for pupils to share facts about their different ways of life. The school has established links with Jewish and Muslim communities, so enhancing the pupils' awareness of different faiths. This area of the pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection, and goes some way to preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society.

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

47. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good and enhances the quality of education provided. The positive situation found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and parents appreciate the support their children are given. All members of the school community work together to provide an environment in which the pupils feel well cared for and secure. All staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals and this enables them to respond sensitively and positively to their personal needs. The resulting supportive atmosphere within the school is conducive to learning. The pupils are happy at school and turn confidently to adults when they need help or advice.
48. Mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They have received training and the appropriate support they provide during lunch times has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. First-aid and fire safety arrangements are satisfactory and the school provides a safe and supportive environment in classrooms and public areas that facilitates learning. The school's procedures for dealing with the very occasional accident are secure, and appropriate records are maintained. Proper attention has been paid to the hazard presented by the pond that was unfenced at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of the toilet facilities has improved, but could benefit from further attention.
49. The school's procedures for child protection are satisfactory and they meet statutory requirements. The designated member of staff has received relevant training. Class teachers and support staff are aware of their responsibilities and are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge.
50. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance have improved since the time of the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Records for attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous and there are good procedures to deal effectively with any unexpected absence.
51. The measures that are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and eliminating oppressive behaviour, are good overall, although they are not always implemented consistently

across the school community. Rewards and sanctions are well understood and accepted by pupils. The procedures allow the pupils to take advantage of the opportunities for learning presented to them in an environment in which there is an absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, set good examples which encourage pupils' learning.

52. Targets in individual education plans, for pupils with special educational needs, are generally precise and are monitored regularly. Outside agencies are used well to support such pupils. The specialist teacher from the local learning support service gives good support to the school on a weekly basis. She monitors the progress of a large number of pupils, assesses them and gives advice to teachers. The school makes good use of the local resource centre to provide extra resources for pupils with special educational needs.
53. The school's arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. Formal arrangements are sound, although records of achievement are not used. Informal arrangements, which benefit from the teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are good. The procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils needing special support are well defined.
54. Assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science are good, and offer useful, information to guide teachers in their planning. Procedures are developing satisfactorily in information technology. There is a clear whole-school agreement about the assessments and records to be maintained. There are regular end-of-term assessments in literacy and numeracy and assessments in science on completion of each unit of work. These assessments allow co-ordinators to set targets for each year group as well as to identify pupils who may need extra support. This process is strengthened by the use of the optional standard assessment tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. At present, assessment procedures in other subject areas are less well developed, but this is something that the school has plans to address. Procedures for the assessment of learning achieved by children under five are effective. The teachers know their children well, and they keep detailed records of attainment, particularly in mathematics and English, and teachers use these to plan for the teaching groups.
55. Assessment of pupils' special educational needs is satisfactory. The school has introduced assessment procedures at Key Stage 1, such as those undertaken by pupils in their second term in Year 1. These procedures enable teachers to make an early identification of pupils' learning difficulties and to address their needs at an earlier stage. These have contributed to a significant decrease in the number of pupils on the school register of special educational needs. There is a school marking policy but this is applied inconsistently, particularly with respect to providing pupils with regular commentary on the standard of their work and how well they are achieving their targets. Pupils are not left with a clear picture of how they could improve their work.
56. The results of assessments are generally used appropriately to plan further lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. Work is set at suitable levels for the range of attainment in the class and this helps pupils build effectively on their existing knowledge and understanding. However, although there are some examples of extension work being planned for the more able, in many subjects work is set at the same level for all pupils. This practice means that more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, on occasion, and the less able are given tasks that they are unable to complete effectively.

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

57. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those who spoke with inspectors before and during the inspection, find many things to like about the school, which they think is a very good one. Their children like school. Behaviour is thought to be good. They feel that St Laurence's is a caring school that provides well for their children. Parents are comfortable approaching the school when they have worries or concerns, and are very happy

with the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. They are well informed about the progress made by their children. They feel that the school is managed well, works closely with parents, has high expectations, and encourages their children to become mature and responsible individuals.

58. Inspection evidence supports parents' views about the support provided by the school, the level of behaviour and the ease with which parents can approach teachers when in need of advice. A very small percentage of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concerns about some aspects of the school's provision, in particular the amount of homework and the provision of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence finds some support for the provision of extra-curricular activities, but none to support the concerns about the amount of homework, which is appropriate.
59. The school has good links with parents that provide enrichment for pupils' learning experiences. In general, the good features found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. The opportunity provided for parents to meet socially, at a coffee morning each week, demonstrates the school's commitment to its partnership with parents. Links have recently been supported by the introduction of a home-school agreement that provides for commitment by the school, parents, and the pupil, to the improvement of standards. Formal implementation is late but arrangements will be fully in place in September. Parents and other helpers are warmly welcomed into school and are encouraged to participate in its work. Those able to help in school are used well to support teachers and pupils in class. Parents provide sound support for their children's homework. The involvement of parents and other volunteers in the work of the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
60. The parents of pupils with special educational needs feel that their children are well supported. They are kept closely informed of their children's progress and regular review meetings are held. Parents are particularly appreciative of the 'booster' lessons that are arranged in school for literacy and numeracy.
61. The involvement of parents, and pupils, in social and fund raising activities is very good. The Friends of St Laurence's organisation provides considerable financial support for the work of the school. Help with, for example, playground improvements, and contributions to the provision of learning resources, are much appreciated by the school.
62. The quality of information provided formally by the school is variable. Overall, it is satisfactory. Newsletters are very well produced containing a variety of examples of pupils' work, which stimulates parents' interest. Both the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, provide parents with range of relevant information presented in a well-produced, user-friendly, way. However, both fail to fully meet statutory reporting requirements; parents do not receive all the information to which they are entitled. In this respect, there has been no improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Parents are informed of their child's progress and development on a termly basis through consultation evenings, and annually through a written report. The quality of the latter varies from teacher to teacher but overall they are of sound quality. The reports meet requirements and, generally, provide a satisfactory summary of what the pupils have done and can do. However, many reports contain identical comments and most do not provide parents with sufficient information on how their child's standard of work compares with that expected for their age, except at the end of each key stage.
63. There are regular opportunities, formal and informal, for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. The headteacher makes herself available at any time to meet with parents, and teachers are happy to meet with them informally, before or after school. A good partnership is established with parents when their children begin school. As a result, children settle quickly into their new surroundings.

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

64. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership for the school. There is a caring and positive tone, and suitable aims and values that are reflected well in the school's life and work. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and to develop appropriate policies. They are successful in providing an atmosphere in which pupils feel valued, and develop confidence and self respect. The targets set for National Curriculum test results for Years 2 and 6, in 2000, were realistic, taking into account the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in those years.
65. Management is satisfactory overall, and its standard has been maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher gives a clear direction for the work of the school, particularly towards raising standards in the core subjects and maintaining a strong Catholic ethos. Aims to provide a balanced curriculum and raise standards, however, are not being achieved fully throughout the school. Although test scores in English, mathematics and science at the end of the key stages have risen, this improvement is not evident in some other subjects, particularly history, geography and design and technology. The better test results are being achieved partly through effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies, but there has also been a narrowing of the curriculum.
66. The headteacher and senior staff have monitored teaching, mainly in literacy and numeracy lessons, and used the results to address the weaknesses identified. Monitoring has been evaluative and weaknesses have been identified effectively, and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was identified as an issue. As a result, teachers have received support to develop their teaching techniques, although some weaknesses remain. Most of the relevant issues are being tackled, but all the factors that should be addressed to ensure school improvement have not been identified. This is particularly the case for the balance of the curriculum.
67. Systems for development planning are adequate. The headteacher has a generally appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has suitable plans to address the identified issues. Subject co-ordinators have appropriate responsibilities, which they undertake with enthusiasm and a developing understanding. However, due to a teacher exchange and the employment of newly-qualified teachers, many subjects do not have a permanent co-ordinator and are being managed under temporary arrangements. While this has worked adequately for information technology, this has not been the case for some other subjects, such as history.
68. Most co-ordinators are beginning to take responsibility for ensuring the improvement of standards in their subjects, and this has been most evident in English and mathematics. The standard of work is monitored and test results are analysed to identify areas for development. The headteacher monitors teachers' planning to ensure coverage of the core subjects. However, the planning, and pupils' work in other subjects, is not monitored rigorously, and the school is, therefore, unable to ensure that the curriculum is being covered suitably. The temporary nature of some co-ordinators is also a contributory factor in this weakness in monitoring. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been managed effectively. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives good leadership and works closely with the headteacher, class teachers, support assistants and outside agencies.
69. Development plans are detailed and costed, with criteria for success and responsibilities allocated. Co-ordinators identify their own priorities for improvement and expenditure. While these make a contribution to forward planning, co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in whole-school planning for development. The plan has appropriate targets for achievement and success criteria. The progress of the plan is reviewed regularly by senior staff and governors. However, while planning is linked to the budget allocation, it is undertaken for little more than one year, without a strategic view of the present position of the school or where it is to be in the future.

70. The governors are committed to the school and involved in its work through their role in development planning and reviewing progress. The governors' committees operate effectively and some governors are frequent visitors to the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and hold management to account for the standards achieved. They have each been linked to specific subjects, and are developing their knowledge of the school through their involvement in monitoring teaching and learning in their designated subjects and reports they receive from subject co-ordinators. However, they are insufficiently involved in the initial stages of strategic planning, reacting to proposals for development rather than proposing them. Most statutory responsibilities are carried out, but there are omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.
71. The school, with effective support from the local authority's financial adviser, has good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it, which are low compared with similar schools nationally, are used appropriately to support pupils' learning. There is satisfactory identification of priorities for development, related to improving the quality of education and raising standards, although opportunities are sometimes missed by governors to seek other options to those put forward by the headteacher. As yet, they have few independent strategies. Prudent use is made of the monies available to the school and governors have not been afraid to take unpalatable decisions, such as recent redundancies, in order to protect the best interests of the pupils at times of financial stringency.
72. The school benefits from the substantial support provided by the Parish, and by the Friends of St Laurence, and has a record of success in bidding for additional monies. Good budget setting, monitoring and control procedures are in place. The use of financial planning procedures is effective. These are implemented effectively by the headteacher, ably supported by the recently appointed finance secretary, who has a good appreciation of her role and responsibilities which she has begun to perform conscientiously and well. There is well-directed support from the chair of the school's finance committee who is very well qualified to undertake his duties.
73. The specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is generally well targeted. The use of such funds, by the school, has a positive impact on the quality of learning provision for the pupils who are supported, such as those who benefited from the provision of booster classes, or those with special educational needs.
74. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are good. Good use is made of the information available from the school's computerised management system and there are effective financial and administrative procedures in place. The recommendations of the school's most recent audit report have been addressed effectively and the school's administrative systems and procedures are implemented well. This is an improved picture since the time of the previous report when it was noted that 'school administration is not consistently efficient or effective'.
75. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies. In addition to the support of administration activities, where computerised systems are well used by the school's conscientious clerical staff, the school is moving positively and effectively to use and embrace the Internet, e-mail, and multimedia.
76. Overall, the governing body ensures the school's spending is well evaluated to ensure that the most economic, effective and efficient services are provided for the pupils and staff. Members are aware of how the school's funding and standards compare to the local average. They endeavour to ensure that the school receives the best value from its resources.
77. The school is staffed appropriately and there are sufficient suitably-qualified teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is a good mix of age and experience of teachers, with none having been at the school more than eleven years. Parents feel that the balance of male

and female teachers provides good role models. There is a good range of support staff to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs and they are generally deployed effectively. They are well trained, work closely with class teachers, and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. All members of staff are committed to the well-being and support of the pupils. In their various ways, they make a good contribution to the effective running of the school, which enhances the quality of education provided by the school. Induction and mentoring procedures in place for the newly-qualified teachers, and the exchange teacher relatively new to the school, are good and have rapidly made them feel valued and a full part of the school community. Provision for staff development is appropriate.

78. The quality of accommodation overall is satisfactory. Internally, classrooms are of reasonable size and provide appropriate facilities for the effective delivery of the curriculum. However, some large class sizes put pressure on space and the layout of Key Stage 1 classrooms is cramped. The newly completed classroom extension will overcome the latter, and will also enable the school to provide more appropriate library facilities than those presently in place. Some public areas and classrooms provide a stimulating environment, but this quality is not consistent. Teachers make good use of the accommodation available. The school benefits from a number of specialist areas that enhance the quality of education. These include a good-sized hall and some specialist areas, including a small computer suite serving Years 3 and 4. There is no specialist accommodation for children under five.
79. The age and design of the school makes it difficult to keep clean. The school caretaker and his cleaning staff work conscientiously to achieve an acceptable level of cleanliness, but there are areas of the school that are untidy, somewhat dirty, and not in keeping with the image that the school wishes to project. In spite of the efforts made by the school to improve them, the standard of toilet facilities are barely satisfactory.
80. There is sufficient playground space, of good quality, for the size of the school. Grassed areas are extensive and well maintained. They are used appropriately for outdoor environmental studies. The pond area that presented a safety hazard at the time of the previous inspection has been securely fenced, but has been allowed to become overgrown and is not in use at present. Play equipment, such as in the adventure playground area, is of good quality. It is, presently, being supplemented by additional equipment suitable for children under five.
81. The quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory overall. The range and quality have not improved since the time of the previous inspection, and spending on them has received low priority in recent times of financial pressure. There are plans to start rectifying some of the weaker areas of provision, during the present financial year, as additional funding becomes available. Provision in the majority of subjects is satisfactory, but no better. In history and geography learning resources are unsatisfactory and the limited information technology resources for Key Stage 1 are old and slow. There is a lack of variety of construction equipment for use by the children under five.

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

82. The governors, in partnership with the headteacher and staff, should now:
- ensure that the curriculum has appropriate balance, so that:
    - the children under five receive a programme planned to their particular needs;
    - all subjects receive adequate time to cover the curriculum in appropriate detail at both key stages;
    - all pupils have equal access to the curriculum;  
(paragraphs 13, 35, 36, 40, 65, 86, 95, 127, 132, 134, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 145, 154)
  - improve strategic planning for school improvement by:

- ensuring that the school development plan reflects a long-term view of the school;
  - involving all staff and governors in the initial process of development planning; (*paragraphs 66, 67, 69, 70*)
- ensure that pupils make appropriate progress in all aspects of information technology, at both key stages, and in history, geography, design and technology at Key Stage 2, by:
- implementing a systematic development of pupils' skills, and ensuring that these subjects are given sufficient time to provide a worthwhile experience for all pupils; (*paragraphs 11, 12, 15, 29, 35, 65, 127, 129, 140, 145*).

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

- some statutory requirements are not met in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus, (*paragraph 64*).



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons or part lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	34	55	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	224
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	32
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	45
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	21	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	12	14
	Girls	20	19	20
	Total	36	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (70)	84 (70)	92 (64)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	20	17	21
	Total	35	30	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (68)	81 (59)	100 (55)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	17
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	28	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (85)	91 (93)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (52)	78 (72)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	17
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	28	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (75)	91 (89)	100 (96)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	216
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	339,958
Total expenditure	333,841
Expenditure per pupil	1,539
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	6,117

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	52
Percentage of questionnaires returned	23

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	62	12	2	0
The teaching is good.	73	21	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	60	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	37	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	31	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	33	25	4	2

**Other issues raised by parents**

A few parents felt that there was some favouritism in the school.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

83. The provision for children under five at the last inspection was reported to be good and this remains so. Children enter the reception year in the September before they are five, and, because of the planned number for admission, they are taught in three classes that contain Year 1 pupils. They attend mornings only for the first half term, to give them time to settle, and then attend full-time. Virtually all of the children have pre-school experience, which prepares them well for entry to school. They enter school with a range of abilities which overall are as expected for this age. During their reception year, children make good progress in many areas, and by the age of five, they exceed expectations in most of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the recommended areas of learning, with the vast majority of children working within the early stages of the National Curriculum.

#### *Personal and social development*

84. Children make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development, and, by the age of five, attainment in this area of learning is above that expected for their age. The children know the routines of the class well, and are clear about what is right and wrong. They are happy to come to school, and settle to activities quickly with the minimum of fuss. All children behave well, and are polite, saying “excuse me” and “thank you”. They respond positively to the teachers’ high expectations, and to the caring ethos of the classes. They learn from the good role models of the Year 1 pupils, develop good relationships with each other and with adults.

85. Children persevere well at the tasks they are set, become confident, and develop a good degree of independence. They look after their own possessions well, for example, by hanging up their coats, and putting their ‘book bags’ away without reminders. They learn to share and take turns, for example, when using the computer. Children change their clothes for physical education lessons confidently, and place their clothes neatly away. They develop good levels of concentration, and are interested in their learning. They move between groups and activities sensibly, responding in a mature way to the different teaching groups. The children show respect for school equipment, and tidy up efficiently after themselves. The children learn good work habits, are keen, interested and eager to please, and achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry.

86. Although there are no specific plans for this area of learning, many opportunities are provided for the children to develop their personal and social skills. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory; it takes place, continually, through the daily routines. The teachers set good role models, and have high, consistent expectations of behaviour. They know their children well, and respond to their individual needs. There are missed opportunities, however, to further develop the children’s personal and social skills through activities such as ‘snack-time’, which is difficult to organise because of the mixed-age classes.

#### *Language and literacy*

86. During the reception year, children achieve well in relation to their attainment when they enter school, and, by the age of five, attain standards that are above average. Most of the children attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes easily, and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. Their speaking and listening skills are well-developed; the majority express their thoughts and ideas clearly, with a good grasp of vocabulary. Children learn to sit for long periods on the carpet during whole-class sessions, listening to contributions of others with interest. They enjoy books, and even the youngest children identify simple, repeated key

words in their reading books. The more able children read simple texts accurately, and fluently, with a clear understanding of the story. By the age of five, the children all write their names, and know letter names and their sounds. They know that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. They also know that names begin with a capital letter. The more able children are beginning to write independently, and children of all abilities sequence pictures and sentences, successfully, to tell a story.

87. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory, and often good. In Year 1, pupils have their literacy lessons separate from the reception children, this enables the teachers to introduce the 'literacy hour' appropriately, when the children are ready. By the end of the reception year, the children are integrated well into the school's literacy strategy and enjoy the big books, which prepare them well for work in Year 1. The teachers use every opportunity to enhance and develop the children's vocabulary. Children are set interesting activities to stimulate and encourage them to write and talk. The teaching of reading is continually developed, and children are expected to take their reading books home every night to share with their parents. This early emphasis on the acquisition of reading skills, and the daily practice given, ensure that the children make good gains in their learning.

### *Mathematical development*

88. On entry into the reception year, attainment is above the national average. The children make sound progress in the development of their number work and, by the time they are five, their attainment is above average, and they are working well within the early stages of the National Curriculum. By the end of the reception year, children are integrated well into the school's numeracy strategy. The children count and order numbers correctly, to at least twenty, recognise simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, and make accurate, repeated patterns with their shapes. Many children know their numbers to one hundred, and count accurately in tens. The more able children recognise patterns in number, and they quickly calculate one more than, and, one less than. All the children know the terms 'shorter' and 'longer', and use these effectively when measuring their feet. They solve simple addition calculations to ten, and write their answers using correct mathematical symbols. Children use simple co-ordinates to place items on a map. They collect data when they carry out a survey of their favourite colours, and the most popular name for the class teddy, and record their findings in bar charts.
89. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. The children are taught in ability groups, where appropriate activities are set to challenge all abilities and ensure effective gains in learning. The children benefit from the structure of the numeracy hour, where their mental agility is encouraged, and strategies are taught to enable children to do simple addition and subtraction calculations. Effective use is made of the good support in the classroom by parents and students to ensure that all groups of children understand and achieve the task. This has a very positive impact on the learning for all the groups of children.

### *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

90. Children enter the reception with a variety of experiences, and levels of knowledge that are generally above those expected for the age. During the reception year, the children make sound progress developing this knowledge and understanding, and, by the age of five, attainment is above average. They investigate the school environment, looking for plants and 'minibeasts'. They successfully identify worms, woodlice, caterpillars, snails, ants and spiders. The children know where they live and that Cambridge is a city. Some children can name the countries of the British Isles. They use the computer to type their names, and have well-developed skills when using the mouse, clicking and dragging icons around the screen. Most children have computers at home, but opportunities are given in school for the children to practise their skills. Given their attainment on entry, achievement is satisfactory.
91. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is sound. The teachers use all situations to widen the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. A wide variety of activities is

offered to the children to enhance their learning in the classroom. A series of visits to places, such as a local castle, where the children look at old and new buildings, ensures that the children make positive gains in their learning.

### *Creative development*

92. Children develop their creative skills well during the reception year, and this, and their positive attitudes to creative work, result in good gains in their learning. By the age of five, the children have attained standards above those expected for this age. The children use paint well to paint pictures of themselves. Their painting skills are developed well, and they mix paint to produce numerous colours for the elephant Elmer. Children use coloured fabric to make weavings in 'hot' and 'cold' colours. They handle scissors and glue competently, to make models of fish and tadpoles, when making an underwater mobile. They are beginning to use their observational skills well when using chalk, pastel and paint, to create effective representations of bones and skulls. Children cut and stick pieces of fabric to make colourful flower collages, and use their knowledge of shape to make competent collages of houses and vehicles. During their music lessons, the children develop their listening skills well, identifying the parts of the music that sound like 'funny bones'. They have a good sense of rhythm and clap complex rhythms accurately. They handle instruments correctly, and use them to compose their own, interesting, interpretations of 'funny bones' music.
93. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. A variety of different activities is planned for the children, which provide many opportunities to experience different media, and develop different techniques. For example, the children applied paint, using cotton buds rather than brushes, when painting fish bones, to enable them to exercise greater control in creating thin lines. Teachers use questioning effectively to ensure that the children use their observational skills to draw exactly what they see. Good use is made of the expertise of a music specialist to enhance the musical skills of the children, and to develop their appreciation of music successfully.

### *Physical development*

94. The children make sound progress in the reception class in their physical development, and, by the age of five, achieve standards which are typical for the age. Physical education lessons are planned weekly, when the children use the school hall and playground. During these lessons, the children run, skip, hop and jump, using the space well, and have a good awareness of others. They change direction and speed promptly, and develop good control over their movements. Children show dexterity when handling a range of small tools, such as scissors, spreaders, brushes and pens, and manipulate small construction apparatus, effectively, to make a variety of models.
95. Teaching in this area of learning is sound. Opportunities are given in physical education lessons for the children to enhance their physical development by offering them a range of activities that present challenges. Emphasis is put on the quality of movement, which means that the children really try hard to achieve the standards required by the teacher, and this, and the children's very good attitudes have a positive impact on learning. There is, at present, no separate outside area available for children under five which would provide continuous access to opportunities to further develop their physical skills, but this will be available soon. The mixed-age classes present organisational difficulties in allowing the reception children to play on wheeled toys, or climbing frames, so there are limited opportunities to further develop their abilities in a less formal situation.

## **ENGLISH**

96. The 1999 National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, indicated that levels of attainment in English were well above the national average with a large proportion pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Standards were also well above average when compared to

similar schools and have risen since the last inspection. Over the last three years, attainment overall has remained well above the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 was well above average, and broadly in line with the national average in writing. Over the last two years, attainment at Key Stage 1 has risen considerably from a low base in 1998. In previous years, standards in reading were better than those achieved in writing, but the school's efforts to improve attainment in writing have resulted in higher levels in writing in 2000. The recently published test results for this year suggest that standards have been maintained at the end of both key stages, and these levels are confirmed by the findings of the inspection. There are no significant differences in the levels of attainment of boys and girls, with both performing well in comparison with the national average. The literacy hour, which is now well established, provides a good framework and support for teaching and learning and the vast majority of pupils make good progress, throughout the school, in all aspects of literacy.

### *Speaking and listening*

97. Progress in speaking and listening is good and pupils listen well, and speak confidently, by the age of seven. They enjoy stories and make sound progress in their ability to follow verbal instructions and understand information given to them. Pupils talk clearly, at increasing length, and are given opportunities to develop this skill in their regular speaking and listening lessons, which encourage respect for one another. By the age of eleven, pupils are confident to offer their own views and comments and hold constructive discussions in collaborative situations when given opportunities to do so, for example, when pupils in Year 6 were changing the meaning of text by using misprints. They are given regular opportunities to share their achievements with others in the classroom but opportunities to speak to a wider audience, such as at prayer times, are limited.

### *Reading*

98. Overall, standards in reading are above average by the end of each key stage and well above average in some year groups. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read accurately and with understanding. They enjoy books and make good progress, building up their reading skills throughout the key stage. Pupils talk about the characters in stories and the parts that they like best, and show increasing satisfaction and confidence in their reading. By the time that they reach the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are fluent readers; the majority have reached a good, and some a very good, standard. Many pupils read books for enjoyment and talk about their favourite authors, the books that these authors have written, and why they particularly enjoy them. Pupils are encouraged to read different kinds of books and other reading matter such as newspapers, magazines, and computer programs, as a means of developing their research skills. Although resources for reading are generally satisfactory, class libraries need developing further.

### *Writing*

99. Pupils' attainment in writing is generally above average by the end of each key stage. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 as they practise handwriting and learn spellings regularly. Good use is made of resources, such as a post office in one classroom, to develop writing skills. For example, pupils had been given the opportunity to write to their grandparents and these had then been posted in the post box. The large number of adult helpers in Key Stage 1 classrooms allows class teachers to focus their teaching on small groups of pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are forming letters accurately and developing legible handwriting. They write in different formats, including stories, poems and letters. Most pupils are able to develop their ideas into a sequence of sentences, usually punctuated by capital letters and full stops, and more able pupils write in a structured and interesting way. For instance, in Year 2, one pupil had used alliteration in a poem about the sun, while another had written a nonsense poem using rhyme.



100. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils adapt their writing for a range of purposes. They write letters, create mood by the use of language, and write in extended form, for example, one pupil had written episodes of a science fiction novel. Suitable planning and redrafting skills are evident, for example, in a Year 6 project on newspapers, and, in Year 4, where pupils had written a comparison of two Shakespearean plays. Good use is made of visiting specialists to develop writing and, in Year 3, for example, pupils developed their creative writing skills very well in response to a lesson taken by a visiting poet. Pupils have opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects such as music and religious education, but this is less obvious in areas such as science, history and geography. Although writing standards are good, insufficient attention is paid to the presentation of written work in Key Stage 2.
101. Pupils generally respond well in lessons and are often very enthusiastic about their work. They manage to concentrate for long periods, trying hard to succeed. Most pupils work together in a friendly and helpful manner, and work diligently on independent tasks. A number of examples of spontaneous appreciation were observed, for instance, when pupils in Year 3 read out their poetry. They enjoy good relationships with their peers, teachers and helpers and appreciate others' contributions to lessons. However, there are a small minority of pupils throughout the school, whose behaviour is challenging.
102. Teaching is at least satisfactory and is good in many lessons. Teachers prepare and manage lessons well in the literacy hour, following detailed plans and ensuring the best use of available time. They have high expectations, offer good support for the pupils and are always encouraging. Most teachers keep up a brisk pace during lessons and use different strategies to maintain pupils' interest, for example when a Key Stage 1 teacher used a poem that contained the names of his pupils. A number of teachers use humour to maintain good discipline and this was particularly evident in a Year 5 classroom. They have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and make good use of resources, including helpers, classroom support staff and visitors. Teachers plan for pupils with special educational needs effectively and, consequently, these pupils are supported well and make good progress. Homework is used appropriately.
103. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator offers good support to colleagues and has successfully overseen the implementation of the literacy strategy. Regular monitoring of curriculum delivery and planning, in conjunction with the headteacher, and the governor responsible for literacy, has helped to improve standards and formal assessments and target setting are now in place. However, a small minority of pupils regularly miss parts of literacy lessons to participate in music lessons, and this is unsatisfactory. There has been a full audit of the school library, which is not in use at the moment and is soon to be re-sited. The literacy hour has been resourced well with additional financial support from parents.

## **MATHEMATICS**

104. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was well above average, and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was very high. Compared with similar schools, results were very high. There has been a steady improvement in standards during the last three years. This year's tests for eleven-year olds show a slight reduction in the number of pupils attaining at the higher levels, but attainment still remains well above average, and inspection evidence confirms this. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 1999 National Curriculum test results show pupils' attainment overall to be average, but results also show the percentage of pupils attaining the higher than expected level to be above average. This year, results at Key Stage 1 show attainment to be similar to 1999, but with slightly fewer pupils achieving the higher level. Standards have improved over the past three years. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged at Key Stage 2, but these pupils are now achieving appropriately higher levels.

105. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above the national average, and attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is well above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average at Key Stage 1, and average at Key Stage 2. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a very positive impact on numeracy skills throughout the school, and all pupils are developing good, quick, mental recall of number. Strategies are explained well by the teachers, and this has improved pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.
106. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, with pupils building on their competence with number effectively. In Year 1, pupils know odd and even numbers to 30, and some to 50. They add and subtract using the correct symbols, and add two to a given number, in their heads. They recognise simple fractions and find lines of symmetry in simple shapes. In Year 2, pupils cover a wide range of topics, and the rate of learning is maintained. Pupils have a very good grasp of number, and order numbers accurately to one hundred. They collate data in tally charts, bar graphs and pictograms, using symbols to represent their findings. Pupils recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes, and can divide them in half, using simple fractions.
107. At Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are good in relation to their achievements at the end of Key Stage 1, which is the result of the good teaching in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils divide numbers to two places of decimals, and change fractions to decimals and percentages. All pupils have a very good mental recall of number, solving complicated problems accurately in their heads using all four rules of number. Pupils recognise *prime* and *square* numbers and *multiples*. They work out problems related to real life situations, using ratio and proportion. They work with co-ordinates in four quadrants, and investigate the properties of quadrilaterals. Pupils solve linear equations, and use algebra confidently. Pupils in Year 5 find the average, mode, and median, and work accurately with large numbers. They use precise body measurements to solve problems, finding relationships between the different measurements.
108. Pupils are keen to learn and have good work habits, except for a few pupils at the top of Key Stage 1 who do not concentrate well, and whose attention-seeking behaviour often slows the pace of the lesson. However, pupils generally concentrate well on the given task, and help each other solve problems. They enjoy the challenge of the mental activities, and apply this learning to their calculations well. They listen attentively, and respond in lessons positively. The oldest pupils use self-checking mechanisms, sensibly, to see if their answers are correct.
109. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, although there is occasional unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1. Teachers, generally, have secure subject knowledge, and provide the pupils with appropriate activities to meet their needs. This results in pupils' learning being progressively developed. When teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are given little opportunity to contribute their thoughts and ideas, as the teacher does all the talking. The match of work to pupils' abilities is not accurate enough to ensure that there are gains in learning for all pupils, as activities do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.
110. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching of the oldest pupils, but occasional unsatisfactory teaching. Good use is made of the talents of the co-ordinator who teaches Year 6, and has considerable subject knowledge. The good teaching of this group of pupils has a significant impact on pupils' attainment at the end of the key stage. Interesting, appropriately challenging, activities are set for all pupils which develops the pupils' mathematical abilities. There is a constant emphasis on improving standards, and ensuring that pupils thoroughly understand new concepts. In other lessons where teaching is good, pupils respond well to the lively challenging style of the teacher, who is enthusiastic and motivates the pupils well. All lessons are planned well, in accordance with the numeracy strategy, which ensures that the teachers know exactly what they are to cover in the lesson. However, where the teaching is unsatisfactory, there is a lack of subject knowledge by the teacher, the pupils are not given tasks that are well matched to their abilities, and not enough work is set to fill the allotted time.

111. There is strong leadership for the subject. The co-ordinator has considerable subject expertise, and has been responsible for training teachers, locally, to implement the numeracy strategy. The school's numeracy strategy is therefore implemented well, and is having a strong impact on the pupils' understanding of the mental strategies involved in performing calculations. The co-ordinator has monitored the teaching of mathematics, and has a good overview of the quality of teaching of the subject. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers have a clear picture of what their pupils know and understand. Appropriate targets are set to improve standards. Numeracy skills are used in other subjects, such as science, where pupils use graphs to record observations; in music, where the youngest pupils use their knowledge of sets to sort instruments; in geography, where pupils use weather charts; and in information technology. However, these opportunities are not as extensive as they should be. Resources for mathematics have improved and are adequate to enable teachers to deliver the numeracy hour.

## **SCIENCE**

112. In 1999, the National Curriculum test results for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, and teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, showed that attainment was very high when compared with the national average, as was the number of pupils attaining the higher level. Comparisons with similar schools showed that standards were very high. Over the last three years, results have consistently been above average, and rising. Inspection findings show that, at the end of both key stages, attainment is still above the national average; this is reflected in the National Curriculum test results for 2000 which show that almost all pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level and nearly half of them attained the higher Level 5.
113. From an early age, pupils carry out investigations, make sensible predictions, observe, and arrive at conclusions. By the end of Key Stage 1, they carry out more complex investigations such as finding out which materials are waterproof, and testing whether articles will float. However, they make too little contribution to the designs of their investigations. Pupils have very good knowledge of how to classify animals. For example, they know that mammals and birds are warm-blooded, and that mammals are distinguished by giving birth to live young. Pupils' knowledge of reversible and irreversible changes is very well-developed, for instance, they know that water turns to steam when boiled, but that it can become liquid again when cooled. They record their findings reasonably accurately, using written, drawn and diagrammatic explanations. However, their knowledge of electricity and sound is not developed to the appropriate level.
114. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils conduct experiments, understanding how they must be fair and that one variable can be altered without affecting others. Pupils' knowledge of living things is very strong; they have a clear understanding of the structure, and function, of the organ systems of both humans and plants. However, although they know the basic process of photosynthesis, they do not understand the purpose of it. Pupils describe methods such as filtration and evaporation, using the correct terminology. They have detailed knowledge of the effects of thermal and electrical insulation. Pupils have a very good understanding of forces and energy, but their knowledge of magnetism and electrical conduction is under developed. They do not, however, have frequent enough opportunities, throughout the school, to design and carry out their own tests, rather than tests designed by teachers.
115. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2, particularly for the pupils in Years 5 and 6, and this is directly related to the teaching pupils receive. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, build securely on their skills and knowledge through the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate an increasing understanding of how animals are suited to their environment. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a very good knowledge of animals and how certain features fit them for their habitats. For example, pupils in Year 5 know that the ability to fly requires a combination of features, including weight, aerodynamics, strength and body structure. There is clear progress in all aspects, particularly when teachers engage the

interest of pupils with challenging work. However, progress in developing investigative and experimental science is only satisfactory because standards in this important aspect fail to keep pace with those in others.

116. The development of pupils' ability to follow correct scientific procedures, when conducting experiments, is satisfactory. There is marked progress in some lessons, when the pace is particularly rapid and when it is adjusted to match the rate of pupils' learning. Pupils, sometimes, present their investigations well, and written observations are frequently reinforced with diagrammatic and graphical information, however, this is not always the case and pupils' work is often marred by the lack of care in presentation.
117. Teachers are fully aware of, and use naturally, the appropriate scientific vocabulary, and this also develops pupils' understanding well. The more able pupils are further challenged, on occasions, for example, during a Year 6 lesson when pupils investigated the most appropriate habitat for different animals. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well, at a personal level, and make good progress. Throughout the school, there is a suitable awareness of the environment and man's effect on it, and pupils learn to think about the importance of respecting the environment.
118. Pupils' attitudes to work are good at both key stages. They enjoy investigations and work very well with partners, and in small groups. They share equipment such as their 'bird beaks' in Year 4, and discuss issues sensibly. Behaviour is good. Pupils are trustworthy, interested, and usually eager to learn.
119. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, throughout the school, and is good in Years 5 and 6. The previous inspection report criticised the standard of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1, and the quality of teaching is now better. At that time, expectations were too low, and the programme for science lacked structure. Teachers have worked very hard to develop the subject, and to raise their expectations, and this has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching. Satisfactory use is made of resources, and in the better lessons this use is very imaginative. Planning for lessons is structured well, with a clear idea of what pupils are to learn. Although tasks are not often planned at different levels for the more and less able pupils, they are, occasionally, open-ended in style so that pupils are able to progress at their own rate.
120. The management of pupils is usually good, based on warm, supportive and positive relationships. The best lessons succeed because of the challenge that teachers present, allied to a good rapport with their pupils. Teachers have appropriate expectations, and their pupils know what is expected of them in terms of standards and behaviour. However, the marking of work, in many classes, has insufficient questioning and challenging of pupils' findings, which would help them to reflect more and in more depth and indicate how work can be improved.
121. There is sound leadership in the subject. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed; satisfactory progress has been made and standards have risen since then, particularly at Key Stage 1. There is a satisfactory scheme of work and the enthusiastic co-ordinator has developed suitable measures to assess and record pupils' progress. However, test results are not analysed carefully enough to identify areas that are less well-developed so that the curriculum can be adjusted. The subject provides some support to both literacy and numeracy, with an emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary and the use of measurement and data. However, in many lessons, pupils are either copying text from the board or completing given text. This practice limits pupils' opportunities to develop and use their independence and their skills in literacy.

## **ART**

122. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but evidence obtained from the scrutiny of pupils' work displayed around the school, examination of teachers' planning and talking to

pupils shows that standards, at the end of each key stage, are similar to that in other schools. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. A broad range of learning opportunities is provided for the pupils, which include the elements of drawing, painting, printing, sculpture and textiles. Pupils develop their skills as they move through the school, and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs do the same tasks as their peers and make similar progress.

123. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use paint and collage, effectively, to produce a collaborative interpretation of the Creation. They make three-dimensional flowers using recycled materials, and use stuffed painted tights to make branches for a tree. They mix colours well to paint leaves using realistic colours, and use different types of paper to make collages of swans on water. Pupils in Year 1 paint pictures of their designs for a playground, and are beginning to appreciate a sense of perspective. Pupils at Key Stage 2 develop their skills of collage to make three-dimensional pictures of different gardens during the school topic on gardens. They use a variety of media to achieve the desired effect, for example using stones for a path. The oldest pupils use batik to create patterns on their tee shirts, and use brightly coloured textiles to make African tiles. They apply paint very effectively using different brushes to create a picture in the style of Monet.
124. Too few lessons were observed to form a judgement on the quality of teaching, but the planning shows that teachers offer a range of activities to cover all the elements of the curriculum. There has been no monitoring of the teaching of the subject, but the co-ordinator monitors planning to ensure there is correct coverage of the subject. Resources are satisfactory, but there is a lack of examples of large prints from a variety of cultures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

125. As no lessons were seen during the inspection week it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching throughout the school. Judgements on standards and progress are based on a scrutiny of planning, work on display, and discussions with pupils.
126. At Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve standards which are appropriate for their age. Pupils have opportunities to experience construction activities through building and construction kits. They develop their cutting skills effectively by making collages, using a variety of materials, and they help to make a dragon for the Chinese New Year. In Year 2, pupils make three-dimensional birds, competently, and design and make wooden decorative flowers using hand tools. Simple, but appropriate, plans of the school environment were evident in one Year 1 classroom, and pupils design and write postcards as part of their work on the Post Office.
127. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards which are below that appropriate for their age because they have too little opportunity to develop knowledge and skills across the key stage systematically. There are inconsistencies in experiences between year groups; one class has had very little opportunity to experience any design technology throughout the year. Although there are good examples of design technology projects that have taken place in some classes, there is little evidence of recent work, or of a systematic approach to the development of knowledge and skills. Although pupils talk about the visit of the Construction Road Show, and their project to build a 'jinks' type model, they are less secure on appraising their own products and suggesting ways of improvement. In Year 5, pupils use textiles to make fashion designs, and to build wooden bridges. In Year 3, pupils design time-machine models, and make mirrors in preparation for their first communion.
128. The co-ordinator for design and technology is currently on a teacher exchange and the teacher temporarily managing the subject has many other responsibilities. The subject has had little attention recently, and standards have not been maintained, at Key Stage 2, since the last inspection.

## GEOGRAPHY

129. Standards at Key Stage 1 are similar to those in other schools and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 2, standards are below those in other schools and progress is unsatisfactory. Current standards at Key Stage 1 are very similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, but they have declined at Key Stage 2.
130. At Key Stage 1, pupils display a secure knowledge of map work, involving world geography, and are able to identify the continents on a map. They identify the position of Cambridge, on a map of the United Kingdom, and know in which direction they need to travel to go to London, Scotland, or Wales. They have appropriate experience of making simple charts or maps, using pictures and symbols. Pupils discuss, in simple terms, how the climate affects peoples' lives and know that countries further south are warmer.
131. At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their map work skills. In Year 6, pupils use aerial photographs and grids to make a sketch map. They have an appropriate knowledge of using co-ordinates, and the majority are confident with Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils in Year 5 are developing their understanding of the impact of global warming with the valuable contribution of a member of the British Antarctic Survey. However, throughout the key stage, pupils' recall of previous work is poor and there is no systematic development of skills.
132. The low teaching time allocation, and current organisation of the curriculum at both key stages, sometimes means that pupils forget what they have learned when there are long gaps between topics. Knowledge of the locality is under developed and pupils know little about the geographical features of other localities. They are not familiar with comparing and contrasting localities and do not have an appropriate understanding of the uses of land or the growth of settlements.
133. Pupils, generally, have positive attitudes towards geography. They are motivated by practical activities and want to contribute in discussion, although they have difficulty in using correct vocabulary. In lessons, behaviour is usually good and pupils are interested in topics. For example, pupils in Year 5 were totally involved in a talk on the Antarctic, given by a visiting speaker. They concentrated throughout and were eager to ask and answer questions. Occasionally, pupils lose interest when the lesson is undemanding and does not develop their skills well enough.
134. At Key Stage 1, teaching is always satisfactory and, occasionally, good or very good. Teachers use geographical language in their introductions well. They encourage pupils to justify their answers, and they use resource materials effectively to support teaching. In a very effective lesson with Year 1, the teacher used the work done during a train excursion, the previous week, to develop pupils' mapping skills. The preparation had been very careful and structured, so that pupils were able to build on their skills rapidly and progressively. Pupils often make good progress in individual lessons but are unable to do so overall because the experience they receive is too fragmented.
135. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall and, on occasions, good. However, it is also occasionally unsatisfactory. When teaching is most effective, resources, visits and visitors are used well to develop skills. When teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of the demands of the curriculum and do not set tasks that build on previous knowledge and understanding. While individual lessons are generally effective, the overall experience for pupils is not because they do not receive a satisfactory curriculum.
136. There is an adequate scheme of work for geography, but it is not being used well enough to raise standards at Key Stage 2. The programme being taught is not coherent and does not build skills and knowledge progressively, or consistently. The subject receives too little

attention and there has only been a small amount of geography work this academic year. The standard of pupils' written work is unsatisfactory and marking is not used constructively to help pupils improve their work. Information technology does not make a strong contribution towards pupils' learning.

137. The co-ordinator is temporary and has been unable to ensure the maintenance of standards. Resources are sparse and the school does not have an adequate supply of good-quality atlases for the oldest pupils.

## **HISTORY**

138. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, show that standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are lower than those in other schools. This is a deterioration since the last report when standards were at the expected level. The pupils do not have sufficient exposure to the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2, to enable historical skills to be developed systematically. Pupils' achievements by the end of Key Stage 1 are, however, at a similar to those seen in other schools.
139. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and learn a sense of time by looking at old and new buildings and photographs. Pupils in Year 2 learn about historical events, such as the Fire of London, and begin to appreciate the value of first-hand accounts by looking at the diary of Samuel Pepys. They know why the fire started and why it spread so rapidly. They effectively compare the standard of buildings then, with today's buildings, and realise that a fire today would not have such far-reaching consequences.
140. Pupils at Key Stage 2 do not sufficiently develop the skills learned at Key Stage 1, as they only study one block of work a year, and the gaps between the blocks are too great to develop skills adequately. Pupils throughout the key stage study the same topic each year, which, this year, is Britain since the 1930's. The pupils' knowledge about the period is considerably enhanced by a visit to a local place of interest, where role-play is very effectively used to create the atmosphere of the period. Pupils in Year 6 know the main facts about the Second World War, but have no clear knowledge and understanding of why it started and the impact it had on the world. They do not have adequate recall of work they covered in previous years, and there is a lack of insight into the particular characteristics of different periods, such as the Tudors. They do not recognise similarities between periods, for example, the persecution of the Jews in the 1940's, and the persecution of the Catholics in Tudor times. Although there is some evidence of pupils using the Internet at home to research the period, most of the work covered in all the pupils' books is a collection of facts. Opportunities are missed for pupils to use these facts to develop a deeper understanding of the lessons that can be learned from history.
141. No lessons were observed during the inspection as geography was timetabled for this term, so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. Examination of teachers' planning shows that there are insufficient history lessons planned during the year, thereby giving limited opportunities for pupils to develop their historical knowledge and understanding. The use of trips to local places of interest provides a very good focus for each topic, and helps to bring the period being studied alive. However, the range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding are not developed sufficiently well throughout Key Stage 2 because of a lack of curriculum time. Resources for the subject are unsatisfactory, as the school has a lack of artefacts for the pupils to handle, but articles are borrowed from the local museum loan service, which helps to overcome this deficiency.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. Attainment at the end of both key stages is broadly close to national expectations at both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress throughout the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

143. At the beginning of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing their skills and confidence. They experiment with graphics when importing them into text. By the time they are seven, pupils have secure keyboard and mouse skills; they open and close programs. Pupils save and print their work and many are developing the ability to make informed decisions when changing the font and size of the print. They use technical vocabulary, such as, 'hard drive', 'menu', and 'icon', correctly and naturally. Some mathematical programs are used, particularly at Key Stage 1, for pupils to practise and refine their mental skills. Pupils have adequate experience of using computer programs for drawing and producing pictures.
144. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have sound word-processing skills and they are confident in cutting and pasting text. Some pupils in Year 6 display high levels of knowledge as they talk about their involvement in producing the school's good-quality newspaper. They use the scanner and digital camera to illustrate the text. Pupils are familiar with the use of CD-ROMs and the Internet for research in subjects, such as history and geography. The pupils in Year 4 communicate with their Australian pen friends by e-mail.
145. The oldest pupils visit the Kingswood Centre where they have many opportunities to develop a range of abilities with information technology. They have used the programmable robot to develop basic skills in control. However, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their control, modelling, and monitoring skills at both key stages. There are good individual examples of work in this area, such as repeating patterns in Year 2, but skills are not developed by building on what has been learned previously. Pupils do not have sufficient experience of activities, such as controlling events in a pre-determined way and levels of attainment in this strand do not always match ability. Work in data-handling is also under-developed at both key stages. Pupils, occasionally, collect information and use computer programs to produce information in a variety of ways. Those in Year 6 have some experience of producing bar graphs and pie charts, but there are too few opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the full range, such as scatter graphs.
146. Progress, both in lessons and over each key stage, is generally satisfactory. Pupils develop their skills progressively through the school and progress is most significant in word-processing skills. However, progress is slightly better at the end of Key Stage 2, because teaching is more effective in developing specific skills. In addition, resources are of better quality at this key stage, and give pupils greater opportunity to develop their skills.
147. Pupils' response at both key stages is usually good and often very good. Pupils enjoy working on the computer, are disappointed when they are not chosen and display great excitement when they get the task right. They work together co-operatively and support each other in undertaking the task. In discussion, pupils are very confident and use the language of computers with great maturity.
148. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although there are occasional unsatisfactory lessons. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place and teachers base their lessons on this guidance. Lessons are focused appropriately on developing specific skills and knowledge and these are built on carefully. Information technology is used frequently in lessons both for word-processing and research. Staff expertise and confidence has improved since the last inspection and teachers use the technology confidently in their own work. Where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, the tasks are not planned well enough and too many activities, in a number of subjects, are taking place in the classroom.
149. The co-ordinator is temporarily managing the subject, during the year-long absence of the permanent post-holder on a teacher exchange. She fulfils the role with understanding, but has a number of responsibilities that limit the time she is able to devote to the subject. Resources are generally adequate at Key Stage 2, but not at Key Stage 1, where computers are mainly old and ill-matched. Teachers work hard to overcome these difficulties but a consequence of their arrangements is considerable movement between classes for the youngest pupils. A start



has been made in co-ordinating the resources at Key Stage 2 so that teachers can teach larger groups at the computers, but, as yet, the computers do not share common formats and programs. The co-ordinator is developing suitable methods of assessing and recording pupils' attainment, and teachers are beginning to use these effectively.

## **MUSIC**

150. Standards achieved by pupils at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are appropriate for their age, and are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. At Key Stage 1, the teaching of music is closely linked to other areas of the curriculum and centres on the literacy focus for that week. In Year 1, pupils listen carefully to a piece of music and recognise melodic phrases representing their story of 'Funny bones'. They select and sort instruments and say which of the range of percussion instruments made a 'bone noise'. Pupils create simple compositions and appreciate the musical effects of different instruments and sounds.
151. Pupils at Key Stage 2 listen critically to music. They distinguish the instruments being played and discuss the musical elements of a piece, for example tempo, volume and rhythm. After listening to Ravel's 'Bolero', pupils in Year 3 were able to represent both the melody and the accompaniment through dance. Older pupils understand how to develop mood and feeling in their music and, in Year 6, pupils compose their own sequences of music to represent areas of the school.
152. Pupils respond enthusiastically in music lessons. They behave well, listen attentively, and enjoy demonstrating the skills that they have acquired. They are appreciative and encouraging towards each other when performing in class and are able to compose, develop and refine their musical creations. Pupils have access to a wide range of good quality instruments, many of which have been bought as a result of money raised by the school choir. However, creative use is also made of less refined instruments, for instance, when one pupil made musical contributions by blowing through a straw into a jug of water. Music has strong cross-curricular links to literacy, mathematics, and physical education.
153. The subject is led very well by a very enthusiastic music co-ordinator. Although only coming into school on a part-time basis, she has a major effect how well the music curriculum is taught, throughout both key stages, being responsible for almost all lessons. Teaching is good, and often very good, in all lessons due to her specialist knowledge, effective planning and enthusiastic delivery. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their music lessons, building rapidly upon their skills and knowledge. However, pupils do not have music lessons often enough to make good progress overall. The school choir makes a significant contribution to the school, and also to the parish, by singing at the parish church, and at the local residential home. Music composed by pupils in Year 6 is played regularly in the local church.
154. A large number of pupils receive extra music tuition in the form of recorder, violin, guitar and piano lessons. Many of these pupils attain very high standards in music. However, while many of these lessons take place out of school hours, a significant number of pupils have their tuition regularly during lesson time. This limits their access to the National Curriculum and has a negative impact on their progress in other subjects.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

155. There were no observations of lessons in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, so no judgements can be made on the standards achieved at this key stage. The games element of the curriculum is planned for this term, so no gymnastics, dance or athletics were seen. Pupils' achievements in games at Key Stage 2 are as expected for pupils of this age, as was found at the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils throw and catch balls with a fair degree of accuracy, and develop these skills as they move through the key stage, making satisfactory progress. They learn to adjust their

throwing to enable a partner to catch the ball, and use overarm and underarm techniques appropriately. Pupils learn the specific skills for games such as cricket, rounders and soft ball, and, by the time they leave school, they can play games with due attention to rules.

156. All the pupils go swimming, from reception to Year 6. A high priority is placed on pupils learning to swim, and, by the time they leave school, all achieve at least the minimum standard of being able to swim competently and safely for at least 25 metres. Many older pupils are competent swimmers.
157. Pupils enjoy their lessons, listen to instructions carefully, and concentrate well on their tasks, endeavouring to improve their skills through practice. They generally work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, practising and improving their skills.
158. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching of the oldest pupils. Teachers plan lessons carefully to develop skills effectively, and ensure that pupils make gains in their learning. All teachers have secure subject knowledge, and give clear instructions and meaningful demonstrations to highlight teaching points. Good use is made of pupils to show effective practice, and inspire their classmates. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and, in the best lesson seen, additional challenge was given to the most able pupils to further develop their skills.
159. The subject does not enjoy strong leadership, as the co-ordinator has many other responsibilities and physical education is not a priority. There has been no monitoring of the subject, and there is a lack of a firm structure to guide teachers with their planning. The co-ordinator does not check teachers' plans to ensure the correct coverage of the subject. There is no curriculum map to inform teachers when each element is to be taught, and how skills are to be developed progressively. The balance of the subject is therefore difficult to check, but it appears to have weaknesses, as there is insufficient emphasis on gymnastics and athletics. The curriculum is enhanced, however, by the use of local talent, for example, when members of the local football club come into school and run training sessions. There are limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities, but the co-ordinator does run a mixed gender football club. Resources are just satisfactory, but there are insufficient mats for pupils to work on, in groups of less than three or four. This is unsatisfactory, as pupils' gymnastic skills cannot be satisfactorily developed if they have to wait too long for their turn.